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## Index

Introducing Darius Nelson. 1:03

Growing up on the South Side of Jackson. 3:28

What was that experience like changing schools so many times? 7:17

What's your relationship like with your sister? 14:03

How did your relationship with your dad change after your parents separated? 18:22

The Institute of Divine Metaphysics Research. 26:00

What was the basis of their upbringing in the South? 29:52

What is spirituality? What does it mean? 36:55

What's the difference between salvation and damnation? 41:07

What is gender fluid? What is racialized gender? 48:09

How the expectations of Black men are different from those of white men. 51:25

Being Black and queer is racialized and it warps the perception of a person. 56:28

The process of coming to their gender and sexual identity. 59:12

Navigating family, gender, and sexuality. 1:02:31

The South is home to a lot of Black queer people. 1:08:42

What does it mean to be queer and trans at Jackson State? 1:11:45

Where do you draw your artistic inspiration from now? 1:19:03

The racialized gatekeeping of water. 1:22:49

The politics of water in art. 1:29:15

The white LGBTQ community in Jackson and Planned Parenthood. 1:33:04

Where are these white people coming from? 1:40:17

Who gets resource support and who doesn't. 1:43:58

## Narrator Introduction and Interviewer Reflection

Darius Nelson is a multidisciplinary artist and community organizer in Jackson. Our interview together was enlightening and yet challenging for myself as an interviewer given the fact that they are such a powerful and sure speaker. They are both intimidating in their knowledge and self-assurance while at the same time being incredibly open and welcoming to any sort of question or discussion. Flare, finesse, and intellectuality are how I would describe Darius. They are a proud Jacksonian through and through, and they work tirelessly to provide a voice for their-self, the Black LGBTQ community, and the overall Black community of Jackson through art, interaction, and community organization. They taught me a great deal during our interview, for which I will always be extremely grateful and humbled.

[00:01:03] Pennington: Hello.

[00:01:06] Nelson: Hi.

[00:01:07] Pennington: Hi. How are you?

[00: 01:09] Nelson: I'm great. How are you?

[00:01:10] Pennington: I'm doing good. I'm doing good. A little freezing here in New York but that's fine. Yeah.

[00:01:15] Nelson: It's the opposite here, it's extremely high [laughter].

[00:01:17] Pennington: How hot is it right now? I see your bearing arms and chest.

[00:01:21] Nelson: Yeah. Yeah, and I have on shorts. Um, it, I would give it maybe like a good 83, 84. But also with Mississippi, it's always humid. So that intensifies it even further. But yeah, it's pretty hot.

[00:01:33] Pennington: Yeah, no, I'm originally from Richmond, Virginia. Like, I get the whole humidity thing. It's like it's not even worth it for me to shower in the middle of the day.

[00:01:39] Nelson: Yeah, right. Exactly. Yeah [laughter].

[00:01:42] Pennington: Get out, same quality of musty.

[00:01:44] Nelson: Yeah. Exactly [crosstalk] [laughter].

[00:01:48] Pennington: Yeah. So are you on the road right now?

[00:01:51] Nelson: No, I'm in my car. So today, just so happened to be a busy day for me. Yesterday, I attended an art exhibition—well I was a part of the art exhibition. And I helped clean up today. And then I'm also doing some community work with the organization and some community folks here. We're cleaning up a building that we're trying to like own as a community. And so yeah, I'm just in my car because there's really not space anywhere else for me to like, set up.

[00:02:18] Pennington: Yeah, okay. Fair enough. Okay, well, hopefully you got air conditioning in the vehicle for the time. Yeah?

[00:02:24] Nelson: Yeah, [laughter] I'll be fine.

[00:02:26] Pennington: Got the AC on. Alright, if I see if I see you go down at any point, I'll—I don't know what I'll do. But you know, [unclear] you're on my end. Okay. So we'll get started. Would you please state and spell your name for the record?

[00:02:40] Nelson: Sure. It's Darius Nelson. That's D-A-R-I-U-S. N-E-L-S-O-N.

[00:02:48] Pennington: Okay, cool. And what are your preferred pronouns?

[00:02:51] Nelson: My pronouns are they and them.

[00:02:53] Pennington: Okay, good. Good stuff. All right. So let's just start a little bit with your background. When and where were you born?

[00:03:00] Nelson: Oh, yeah, I was born March 18, 1998—that's a Wednesday—in Jackson, Mississippi.

[00:03:07] Pennington: Okay, all right. Very cool. And can you kind of paint a picture of the neighborhood you grew up in?

[00:03:13] Nelson: Oh, okay, that's interesting. I grew up in like two neighborhoods, the first neighborhood is in Southwest Jackson. It's like right down the street from Jackson State University. It was called Southwest Villages and Apartment. And it's considered like the west side of Jackson. But it's right there on Highway 80. So that highway 80 and highway 18 divide up Jackson, but really South and West Jackson. So that, I've stayed on that side of town for maybe 10 years of my life up until I was 10 or 11. And then, when I was in middle school, I moved to South Jackson. I got closer to like the South Jackson area, the Byram area, which is like, like South-er Jackson. Yeah, I grew up, you know, the rest of my life there. And yeah, I

went to school in both of those communities. I actually went to multiple schools. But yeah, that's majority of what happened.

[00:04:12] Pennington: Okay, well, what was the reason for the move? Initially.

[00:04:15] Nelson: So the first—I lived with my mom and dad when I was at the first neighborhood, so in Southwest Village on the west side. And then my dad—then my mom and my dad separated. And so he moved out of the house. And then it was just me, my mom and my sister—my baby, she was a baby at the time when he moved out. And then yeah, we had to, I guess she wanted to find like a better life for us or like better conditions, because like the Southwest Village Apartments, was kind of crime ridden, and there's a lot of gun violence happening. Someone, like someone that we know personally, that we like love, got shot right beside us. So she recognized that it was not really a safe environment. And so she wanted to get us somewhere. And it was also she wanted us to have like, like our own rooms or like, you know, like an actual like place where we could like feel comfortable. So in the new spot that we moved into in South Jackson, my sister had her own room, and I did, and my mom did as well. And so yeah, that's what happened.

[00:05:18] Pennington: Okay. Why—you said you changed school a few times? What was the reason for that?

[00:05:24] Nelson: Oh, yes. So my mom worked. I think my mom really wanted the best education, the best conditions like for us period like, like, you know, most parents do. And she

was really interested in having like, like, my better or, like, my education also be better. So I was going to like schools on the south side. And I guess, well, I never would—I started off not going to schools on the south side, she worked at a place, you know, you think you've pretty, you've heard of Target before.

[00:05:54] Pennington: Yes.

[00:05:54] Nelson: She worked at Target. And the only Target in Jackson is on the north side of Jackson. And so when she would take me to school, she would take me to school on the north side. And I went to school there because usually they have like a district, you know, policy and you have to go to school where you live. And I live, lived on the south side. But I went to school on the north side. And as long as she could pick me up because she was working on the north side, then I went there or went to Spann Elementary for like maybe two years in my life. It was kindergarten through first grade. And then after that, I went to school back on the west side at Clausell. And then I jumped from going to Clausell to Timberline, which is on the South Side where I was going to be living and I didn't know and then went back to Clausell. And so once I went to Clausell, the second time I was in fifth grade. And then after fifth grade, we moved to south, the south side of Jackson. And that's when I started to go to school at Siwell [Road] for middle school. And they had just built a new school right down the street from where I lived in South in the South Side of Jackson. So then I went to school at [Thomas] Cardozo for middle school, I think for seventh and eighth grade. And then for high school, I went to Forest Hill, which is another school right down the street from me. So yeah.

[00:07:13] Pennington: Wow. That's a lot of, that's a lot of jumping around. So yeah. What was that experience, like changing schools so many times, like changing classes, like making, like making new friends like was that like?

[00:07:28] Nelson: Oh, you know what, to be honest, I at the time, I didn't really, like I wasn't [unclear] to verbalize if it even had an effect on me, or articulate what that would look like, I just knew that, like, I had been to multiple schools and knew a lot of people like, all across Jackson. I think at the time, I probably thought it was cool. And you know, even now I don't like really think anything of it necessarily, that it like really impacted my education or anything like that. Like I really, I was really a part of like a tight community as well. I wasn't raised traditionally Christian. I was raised, like, I don't even know what to call the religion, but I just know that it's like, it's they use the Christian Bible, so the Holy Bible, but it's not really the same teachings. But anyway, that was my community. And I saw those people all the time. So like the school friends I really didn't hang out with. So I don't think that that really had an impact on like, my social life as it was already like pretty conservative already.

[00:08:24] Pennington: Yeah. Okay. Interesting. So, like, tell me a little bit about your mom. Like, she seemed like quite the incredible like, lady, you know, that's hard. It's like if you're working full time, and you got kids take care of like, care of after you know. So tell me a little bit about her and what your relationship with her is like now?

[00:08:42] Nelson: Yeah, I'm really glad that we're like getting into this conversation. I feel like I'm—I'm just now being able to articulate what my relationship is with her. So this is like, kind of



fresh for me. So like, excuse me from like, stumbling on words. But yeah, my mom was born in Chicago—she has a twin sister, they're identical twins—but she was raised in Jackson. She has two siblings—well two other siblings and then her twin sister. She had an older brother and then she has a younger, the youngest brother. So the twins were the middle children. And then she was raised in a house, kind of similar to mine with a similar structure with only one parent. Their father was not necessarily that active physically in their life, but he was financially active. So he paid that for the house note, he paid the bills in the house, but he just was not present. He lives in Chicago. And he still lives in Chicago to this day. So that kind of paints the picture of like my maternal familial, like background and my relation to like my family on that side of the family.

But as far as her, me and her relationship, honestly, when I was younger, I used to think that she hated me. I feel like being queer in a very conservative space is the means for isolation. So a lot of the times where there was misunderstanding or things that were unsaid, I didn't understand it as just a simple misunderstanding, I understood it as hate, or disdain, or, you know. And, you know, we could argue and say that, you know, maybe that was, in a sense, some kind of like, it came from a place from, you know, some kind of disdain or something like that from unresolved issues of her own. But as far as, like, my little self, I really did not feel—I didn't feel like I could be myself, you know, quite honest. I'm just now getting into my early 20s, I'm entering my mid 20s, and I'm just now being able to, like, express myself in the ways that I was, or I am, you know, or I really want to, and I know that my mom, me and my mom's relationship has a big part to do with that. Not that she did not necessarily condone things because I feel like she's—she's articulated this to me that she's always known that I was

queer. But what comes with that is also this unspoken rule that like, you should not act in certain ways. And so like, I think that was the basis of my relationship with her.

And also, I've just come to realize that I was kind of touch deprived or touch starved. And I feel like, I don't know what the reason behind that was. But I feel like in a sense, I did not necessarily feel physical comfort from my mother. So like, we don't really, I've never, when I express myself to her, or when I did express myself to her, I felt like a burden. And so when I couldn't express myself emotionally, and also couldn't be coddled or like, comforted physically, I think that there was a big, big drift in between the two of us and like, a lot of misunderstanding, a lot of like, friction between us. And then when my sister came into the picture—well this happened, actually, when my sister came into the picture. And so like, I was able to have a conversation, like, you know, in my older years, or like, in these recent years with my sister about, like, the relationship between my mom. And my sister recognized that that was like the dynamic, but also that like she took advantage of that dynamic sometimes. And so like, I don't know, I felt like I was both like, my sister's—I wouldn't say caretaker, but like emotional caretaker, while also like my sister recognizing that, like, oh, I can take advantage of this dynamic. And like, if you do something that I don't like, Mom will take, you know, your side—or my side over you. So that dynamic very much so like put a drift in between me—I didn't, I didn't see me being close with either my mom or my sister when I was younger, I did not see that that would happen. Of course, that's completely different now, but yeah, that was what it was like being in a single parent home with two children in Jackson.

[00:12:44] Pennington: Yeah. Okay. And do you—have you like talked—like when you're talking with like your mom has, she sort of brought up any reasoning or like any regrets with how she like, handled those kinds of situations when you were younger?

[00:13:01] Nelson: You know what, to be honest, I've not had this conversation with my mom. I am just now being able to come to these conclusions. And a lot of them have to do with conversation that I had with my sister, the community that I made now, even my father—which that's like a different story entirely. We could get into it. But yeah, I have not been able to articulate it. Because there's a, like a dynamic that or like—what am I trying to say? Like, I feel that because she was able to take care of me, or I used to feel that because she was able to take care of me and, you know, give me my basic needs, like food and shelter, that I should not critique or say anything about the other things that I was missing, or that like I didn't receive. And so it never—okay, I'm sorry, I was gonna text her. But it never, it didn't ever cross my mind to have the conversation and let alone like how I will even articulate to her that I in a sense was like, emotionally neglected, while being, you know, raised by her. So it's not really a conversation. It's a conversation I'm looking forward to because I'm in therapy, and I'm trying to, like, you know, get my—get what I feel not necessarily out of the way, but get it like under wraps or get an understanding of it. But no, it's not something that I've really been able to have a conversation with her yet about.

[00:14:21] Pennington: Yeah, no, that's good. It's like at least like having a therapy, like, be accessible for you to—like, because like, once you say it, it's sort of like, well, that's out and now I have to sit with it.

[00:14:30] Nelson: Yeah.

[00:14:31] Pennington: Yeah. So what's your relationship like with your sister, like, sort of you said, you guys have had sort of talks about your upbringing, like what's your relationship like with her now versus way back, way back when?

[00:14:45] Nelson: Yeah, now we are the best of friends. I actually just hung—she shared that special day with me, yesterday was my first time being in an art show and she came and my mom as well. So me and my sister are probably I think the closest. I would say that's one of the closest people to me like in this moment. Because of like how we both share similar experiences, even though they're not exact. We're able to like talk about things that other people have not experienced or don't have an understanding of, and like really break it down and like be very, very, very honest and transparent about what we feel and what we need. Like, even yesterday, we had like a disagreement. The theme for the art show was like denim. And I thought that I made it very clear to the people that were coming, that I was inviting, that was trying to come to support me that that was a theme. And she says something along the lines of like, No, you didn't tell me. And I think I have a thing, with being called a liar. Because like, this is not the first time that I've like been triggered. And so when she said, No, you didn't like I immediately got up in arms. And we both like had like a kind of like a heated debate about whether I did or did not, and whether she forgot her, you know, she remembered. And yeah, like, afterwards, it was like, maybe like, it wasn't even like a minute later, I was like, I really need to get an understanding of what happened and like where it went left.

And we're able to do that like, often. Like before—aha, when I was younger, that did not exist. We had like a heated—and they usually, because we're both pretty passionate. And we both are very straightforward with our words and precise. And so when things would happen, I would say what I felt and she would say what she felt and we would just be heated for the rest of the day, maybe for the rest of the week, or however long that would go. It was kind of toxic, very much so, not being able to resolve things or not getting past just an argument or a heated moment. But now that I've been able to like because I think a lot what happened was, I went to college, I was able to, you know, get an understanding of other people and that other people express their selves in other ways. And recognize that like, the way that I'm expressing myself may not be the healthiest for me or for other people. And so yeah, like, once I went to college, I didn't really talk to my family like that, even though I lived down the street from my family.

But, like recognizing how to be more emotionally aware, really, I feel like plays a big part in how I was able to mend my relationship with my sister. And so yeah, now we're definitely like two peas in a pod. But before, I think it was very, very intense and stressful environment, not be just because of our dynamic, but because of the way that we had to live, essentially, without a father living as you know, a single parent home. And then also, like, there was just like a dynamic that existed between, like, us individually and our mother, that, you know, we, she verbalized, and I wasn't able to. I, of course, I knew it at the time that like, I feel like I've been treated unfairly, because there were certain things that my sister can say or do that I would not ever be able to do that or I would like, you know, receive like very harsh punishment. But being able to express that and say and like even recognize it and be like, Yeah, I was treated

unfairly. Or like, you know, there were expectations that were set for me that were unfair, or that should not have been placed on me or anyone in the home at all. Yeah, it really definitely mended our relationship.

[00:18:22] Pennington: Okay. Alright. Well, and so you're, you're like, around 10 years old and your parents separated? Around that age?

[00:18:31] Nelson: No, I was actually maybe like five and a half or six.

[00:18:34] Pennington: Okay, five and half, six. So after that point, how did your relationship to your dad change? And where are you guys right now, and sort of that dynamic?

[00:18:44] Nelson: So before my, this is actually, like, before my dad left, before my sister was born, there were so many—there was like an apex point, or like a point where a lot of things happened in my life. But before that, I feel like, I would say that I thought that I was close to my father. We slowly—and this is so weird like to say out loud. But, when I was younger, I slept in, like, I slept with my father, like, I was in the bed with my father often, and my mom and my dad did not sleep in the bed together. And so I didn't recognize it as weird just like, Oh, my dad actually likes me. Or like, you know, he wants to give me attention. And now you know, I recognize that that was not really like the healthiest environment to be in or even if you know if it was because I don't think that people who are supposed to be together have to stay in the same rooms. But I just think that my interpretation of what happened is not the same as what

actually was going on. Like me perceiving that as him like really loving me. It didn't necessarily mean that because he you know, left out the home and yeah.

So at the time, like growing up before he left, I definitely like was very much so attached to him and then even when he left. Because he stayed in Jackson when he left, and we would see him I wouldn't say necessarily often. I would liken in our relationship or the oftenness of how I saw him was like an older brother maybe like an uncle. So yeah, even then, I felt a closeness to him. Maybe because I looked up to him as like, maybe the only like, the male figure that's supposed to be in my life, and I'm supposed to be putting myself up to. And yeah, I feel like—not I feel like. I definitely experienced a lot of physical abuse from him. A lot more, I would say than my sister and when I was younger, I definitely interpret interpreted that as like—he wants the best for me. And you know, he really wants to see me, you know, thrive. Of course, now, I don't think the same and I just don't think that that is necessary to even to discipline them or to, to want the best for them. That is not a necessity in that process. But, yeah, I did. I feel like, when I was younger, I definitely thought we were a lot closer. But when I got older, actually, this year alone, I had to have a conversation with him because I set boundaries or I thought I set boundaries with him earlier on, like maybe last year. Around how me and my sister navigate him, and how he navigates me in that relation.

I'm saying like, Okay, so my sister has always had an awareness that she has not been comfortable or liked, even my father, so their relationship is always been strained since I can remember. And it's because he's been physically abusive and also neglectful. So he would show up whenever, you know. Like, even when I was, when I went to high school, my

sophomore year, he moved out of Jackson to Arkansas. So there were so many things that happened like that he, you know, the choices that he made that literally impacted the way that me and my sister work with each other, but also the way that we relate to him. And even in all of that, I still tried to see that, like he cares. And he and you know, that doesn't take away, or if he does care or he doesn't, but like I tried to see a silver lining that didn't exist. And so yeah, I had to when I got older, like as of recent like, I had to realize that like what I experienced was what I experienced. And that that was not my definition of love, therefore, it was not love in its totality and that's something that I really had to come to terms with now. Because like I recognize love is both the action and a feeling. But the action part is very important as like, you can't just do things out of love, and then expect people to just receive it. Like everybody has different ways that they interpret love, receive love all of those things.

And so I've actually been able to have a conversation with him, because initially I blocked him. He, I think the beginning like January 13 of this year, I blocked him because I told you I set the boundary with him about him speaking to me, in regards to my sister. My sister made it very clear that she didn't want to have anything to do with him. And it just made a very awkward dynamic because I was getting closer with him. I mean with her while also trying to get closer to him. And he wasn't respecting that, and he really expressed that—I—that was my duty as his child to basically you know keep up with my sister. And I, that was, that it struck me, it triggered me it was so many things because it just it made me realize that like, I'm having these conversations with him. I'm being open, I'm telling him things about things I've experienced and the things that he's done to me, and it just doesn't seem that he cares. Especially if this is like one of the only boundaries that I set with you and you don't think that



it's important and you disregard it often. So I blocked him for like six months, I finally had a conversation with him three weeks ago actually. Where I've officially expressed my grievances with him in regards to his parenting. And yeah, like that was such a freeing conversation, but I feel like my relationship with him is very much so still strained because of what I've experienced. And also because I don't know how to navigate that relationship without compromising my relationship with my sister.

[00:24:17] Pennington: Yeah. Yeah. No, it sound—it's like a as we get, or grow older we realize like the parents we had in our mind as kids wholly different stories from who they actually are as like people, like more you find out about—[crosstalk]

[00:24:32] Nelson: Yeah, actually.

[00:24:33] Pennington: In their life or their it like it all starts to make sense. But don't mean it's inexcusable. Don't mean [unclear] with it. You know?

[00:24:40] Nelson: Right, yeah, for sure.

[00:24:41] Pennington: Yeah. 100%. So.

[00: 24:44] Nelson: I think also, it's a thing of like, I'm sorry.

[00:24:48] Pennington: No, go ahead. Go ahead. Continue.

[00:24:50] Nelson: Oh, I was just gonna say something real quick. I think that it's also like really recognizing like that your parents are not just a parent. Like they're human and they are multiple things that you know, at the same time. So, it really it came to me having to literally humanize my parents and recognize that they are very much so capable of fault. And it doesn't make them like evil people. But it just means that they are capable of being held accountable just as I am.

[00:25:17] Pennington: Yeah. 100%. And it's different between, you know, it's between you and your sister, she has her own stuff to work. And it's hard not to want to also like, work that stuff out together as siblings, kind of because you are the only people with enough context of how—you're the only people with context of how you both grew up. That's the only person who will understand, truly understand that dynamic. So yeah, no, that's similar situation to my sister. But, so I just wanted to, your, you mentioned something about your religious upbringing, but that it wasn't like the standard sort of Christian upbringing of the South, like, it was something different. Can you explain that a little bit?

[00:26:04] Nelson: Yeah, so, my parents, both were, I would say, brought into or introduced to, like, what is it? Like, it's called. I'm thinking back to when I was a child, they used to say, like this intro in the beginning to like, really explain what it is. It was like, every time even if you were like a regular occurring member. It was basically like a non-denominational non-religious scientific research organization. And so it's called the Institute of Divine Metaphysical

Research. Where and they basically took the Bible, the I don't know what to call it, that Bible. Is it the Hebrew Bible or what, you know, the Bible that Christians traditionally use?

[00:26:48] Pennington: Right Old Testament?

[00:26:49] Nelson: Yeah, okay. Yeah. Yeah, the King James Version, they would use that Bible. And basically, also use "research". And I put quotations there, because it, I actually, I went to college and got a bachelor's in chemistry. So I actually, like, participated in what research actually was. In some senses. In some sense, it was researched, but it was really like bias confirmation, to be honest. But yeah, it was they basically like, would take like real world events, and then also take their understanding of the Bible, and also like, like, certain definitions real world definitions, and like, come to some understanding of what God is. But all of these teachings were like, essentially came from a man named Dr. Kinley. He had, he says he had a vision in 1931, about the plan for the universe. And he thought that everybody in the world was, or everybody that's, like, alive, is coming to this world as a demon. [Laughter] It's—I'm gonna need to stop laughing. It's not funny, but that that I'm saying I'm laughing because I feel like my understanding or like, my understanding of love, and relationships have stemmed from that understanding that like, people exist on this earth to do harm and to cause harm because of a negative or evil spirit or evil entity. And that really defined my outlook on like, humans. And so—Oh, and also like, my relationship to like punishment too. I forgot to mention that, but like, yeah.

I stayed in there until I went to college, when I went to college, and I experienced what college is, and all the different people in college. All of that had to be like, I had to confront that within myself and really recognize like, this might not be for me. And I say that it was Christian, they used the Bible because I feel like even though I didn't have a traditional upbringing, like, for instance, we wore we was like—[sigh] what do I say? I feel like it was very much so where Christianity or like, traditional Christians have maybe like, what is the word? Like, okay, there were just traditional Christians or Black Christians specifically in the south, dressed up very, very fancy and whatnot, where the big church has all these things. We would wear suits and like, you know, formal dresses and call ourselves doctors. So it was very much so like, in trying to compare it to the traditional church, where there is like, exclusion, while also like flamboyancy, or like, you know, like a lot of like, big expression of self. For us it was like elitism and like classism, and like, you have to align yourself or present yourself in a way that you align to like this is, this is what you are or what am I trying to say? Like, I you need to align yourself in a way that makes you look like you're trying to be something or be what this institution is about. And so yeah, that. That also was a part of like, my upbringing is something that I had to like undo or unlearn, or I'm still unlearning. And then also, I feel like I'm missing something really, really big. But yeah, I feel like yeah, that was the basis.

Yeah, I went to college. And actually, was one class in particular, I took my freshman year, it was World History. And he was talking about religions, he was talking about Christianity, and he prefaced the conversation that we had in that day with that he was a Christian, and that he believes in Christianity, but there are contradictions that needs to be named. And these are contradictions that I've also recognized. Like, a basis of teaching for the IDMR is that we don't

use “Jesus,” and “Lord,” and “God,” to reference the most high. But we use Hebrew terms, “Yahweh,” “Yeshua,” “Elohim”. And then also, that the reason being is because Jesus could not have been the name of the Savior if the letter J wasn't even, like thought of, until like, some 1400 years after he died. And that's actually true. So that's why a lot of like, research aspects of it, you know, that I, that, you know, I still take to this day. That like, they very much so like hit things to the point, but in other ways, like they very much so homophobic and transphobic. And being a queer person, a queer and trans person, you know, in that environment, I definitely felt that that was not something that was attainable to me, let alone anything that I could align myself to, to even like present myself. Like, I felt like I was faking a lot, the more I was living my life for other people. So yeah, I had to essentially, like, divorce myself from that teaching or those teachings and in some ways, the people.

I made it very clear to my mom, but she still attends. And I made it very clear that she can have that belief, and I don't want to judge her, but that I've been harmed in that space, for one. And two, I don't believe it. I don't believe that, that is something that I align myself with. And I would say that it's because I noticed a lot of like, religious people. And or I say, specifically Christians, Black southern Christians, will talk about God in a very, like, familial way as in like, this is our God and not that that is their belief. And so that was a tendency that she would talk about, you know, the teachings are like, you know, their religion. And I had to make it very clear to her that that was not something that I believed anymore, and that I want her to stop using that language. And it's very possible. [To passerby] How're you doing? Yeah, we we're still working on that, or whatever. But yeah, that is basically like my upbringing, in the south. It was still very much though southern. Conserv[ative], like very conservative, very much so—

what am I trying to say? What is southern when I say southern? When I say southern, I mean, like, it wasn't separate from Jackson in that I was still in Jackson.

But it was very much so a closed off environment. And I didn't really like. I knew exactly where I was going, like on Mondays, going to school to home, Tuesday school to home, Wednesdays, school, home, Bible class, home. You know, the same routine, the same people for the most part. And then also another thing I should mention is, it was, I was in Jackson, but it was different in the way that I got to experience people from all over the country. So it was founded in California, the IDMR. But they have several branches, all throughout the United States, and sometimes often multiple branches in one state. And so, oftentimes, this is I think this speaks more to like maybe a Black, a Black tradition that exists where—there is a trust and a leaning into community. So we would go and travel to other branches. And then we would stay with complete strangers, but because they were a part of the IDMR, they opened their home to us and all of the resources that they had available. So I would travel often as a child to all across the south. I've been to California, I've been to the Midwest. And I know a lot of people specifically in the south, it's specifically in Jackson, have not even left Jackson, let alone Mississippi. So that was you know, a lot different for me. And I didn't even recognize that that was something that was different until I got older you know. But yeah, that was basically like the basis of my religious upbringing.

[00:35:14] Pennington: Interesting. Okay, so in terms of like, IDMR like, is it a? Is it a very known sort of sect within Jackson? Like, what's its relationship to the majority Christian Black culture? Because like, it's, it's very different.

[00:35:34] Nelson : Yeah.

[00:35:34] Pennington: You know, is it known to be like, what's, what's the general opinion of the movement itself outside of those that are practicing the religion? Basically.

[00: 35:40] Nelson: I find that a lot of people don't know about it, right. That's why I say it was a closed off environment. Not in the way that many people could not join, because there were plenty of people that have come to that, you know, that specific like b—or branch, and like, you know, somebody has brought them in, or they maybe heard about it through like, their friend or something. Or maybe they were like, because it was in a plaza, with other businesses. And so maybe like, somebody stumbled upon it, and like, you know, walked in, so it wasn't like closed off in that way. It was just closed off in the way that like, we usually knew who was going to be there.

[00:36:14] Pennington: Right.

[00:36:15] Nelson: And so, as far as the relationship to Jackson, or to everybody else in the community, I don't guess people within the community coming to me under this organization.

[00:36:23] Pennington: Yeah. Okay. Interesting. That's so wild. So what is your relationship to spirituality or any sort of religion like now? You know, that was like your upbringing. It's like, you know, it's, you know, it's hard to separate yourself from what you were, what you grew up

on for years, but at the same time, didn't really serve you. So yes, bottom line question what's your relationship to spirituality or religion like now?

[00:36:55] Nelson: Yeah, so I'm actually still trying to define it. I thought it was agnostic. But I don't think that that term serves me because like, I do recognize that, like, power dynamics doesn't necessarily mean that somebody is over me. I just know that I'm not, I am more than me. I am also my community. I'm also like, I'm—there're, I'm so many things. And so I say that I don't like align myself with like, one of the beliefs or the definition of agnostic, but I don't think that there is a single entity that is in control over everybody's comings and goings. I feel like maybe spirituality defines more of what I lean to. But even that, I feel like the general definition of what spirituality is now has been, I wouldn't say tainted, but the definition now is not something that I will align myself, you know, with. Because it's still very much so is—it's like, Christianity rebranded. So we're not using Jesus, we're not using the Bible. We're not, you know, telling people, they're going to hell, but we are saying that your spirit is tainted, and that, you know, it, it just, it reminds me of Christianity in that way, where it's just like, or what I've seen to be Christianity, where it's just like, you need to still do things to present yourself as saved, or as spiritually well. Rather than actually being spiritually well, or actually doing things that are for you.

And so yeah, I feel like now, especially with me, like, recognizing that I'm queer and trans, God is definitely—for me, if there is a god, or many gods, or whoever, they're all queer and trans, as far as I'm concerned. And yeah, like, I also am trying to lean more into connecting with nature, because that is very much so a spiritual thing as well. And is something that I recognized when



I was younger, for myself, but I didn't know how to articulate it. Like I love being by the water. I love being in nature and hiking. I love just like, actually, you know, being around trees, and I say spiritual because, like, I don't have any other words to describe what that is for me. Like, I feel whole and I feel a peace, like, wash over me. And yeah, I feel like also, I'm trying to maybe I wouldn't say this, because I'm still recognizing that even if I find something that maybe I align with, I will there will be something that I don't necessarily align with, right? Especially with whoever is you know, teaching me or like giving you the information, there's going to be something that I may have, you know, I may be up in arms with, about. But yeah, I am trying to. I'm trying to get an understanding of what my ancestral practices were before colonization, even during colonization at the beginning, like of chattel slavery, what people had to do to survive and what they tied themselves to. And I recognize that a lot of times, I can't separate Black Christianity from Black culture, because it is, they are intermingled. And not in the way that like, Christians have to be—Black Christians have to be what they are or like have to be, express themselves in the way that they are.

But a lot of what we have to do as like, racialized people, especially like enslaved people, was to tie what we already knew, to things that were forced onto us. And that's why we're speaking about like, how, like the Christian or the Black Christian faith in the south, is flamboyant in the way that they express themselves. And that's something that I see across the south, across different Black people all the time. So I know that that is a part of the culture. But yeah, at the same time, like, I know that that is not for me. And I know that it's not necessarily have to be my salvation. Because God doesn't just have to exist in one place. And these certain people who believe this one thing are not going to be the chosen people who are going to be saved

from whatever damnation. And then also, because now, I'm an abolitionist, as well, or I'm a student of abolition, I will say. I recognize that salvation and damnation are very much so the exact same thing as jail. And people being protected because they're classed, or because they're white, or not, dark skin. And so yeah, I recognize those similar systems in religion that I did, in, like other social aspects of like, my life, or like other people's lives, and it's not something that I want to mimic, in my interpersonal relationships or in my politic. And so my relationship to religion or spirituality is that I don't want to be a part of organized religion, because there is no one formula that will bring people peace or happiness, or, you know, rest or ease. So, yeah, very much so am like a person who would take things, multiple things from multiple religions, from multiple viewpoints. And I tried to make sure that I'm open minded, while also being willing to be held accountable and hold my own self accountable as well as others.

[00:42:41] Pennington: Right. And it sounds interesting, like you've been looking into like your past a little bit more to discover, like some of the more like, the ancestral practices, like, have you unearthed anything like interesting or something that's like caught your attention? Or that you're like, Wow, this is really like resonates with me. So like, what? What's the [unclear].

[00:43:02] Nelson: So, I may misspeak. So I'm not going to say that I'm, like, very, like, knowledgeable of this topic. This is something I'm still trying to unearth as well. And I should just say something, I have my door open. Because you mentioned air conditioning. I actually don't have air conditioning in my car. But if you hear, it's cool because I'm, the breeze from

outside is still coming in and there's like a slight breeze so if you hear cars coming by, like things like that, that's what that is.

[00:43:29] Pennington: Okay. That's what post-production is for. That's fine [laughter].

[00:43:34] Nelson: But no, okay. Yeah, this is so funny that you ask because of my work in the art show that I did yesterday, spoke to this. So. One of the religion—one of the African traditional religions has a deity and she has many names or they have many names the deity. One of the most commonly known names or the names that I recognize that is Mama Wata. Or Mami Wata is like M-A-M-I. W-A-T-A. And that is like you know how Black folks across the diaspora as like speak we don't necessarily speak proper English as I feel like that is also elitist but yeah. Like the name Mama Wata is speaks to fluidity like in itself because it's like, the name is literally mother water. But also like fluidity in practice. What does that look like? It's something that I had to really think about because I—fluidity is a part of my identity, a lot of my identity actually. I am gender fluid, and I am sexually fluid. Like that is something that I've always recognized about myself. Like, I looked up to Prince when I was younger, of course, I don't know anymore. He's an abuser. But like these very fluid practices have been common things in my life and when, when I, when I recognize that that was something that already existed in like, a religion or in a practice for Black folks, or specifically African folks. I leaned more into it and tried to read more about it. And even I'm using the she and they for their pronouns, but like, she is also gender fluid. Like she has taken on many forms in like a lot of folklore and, and a lot of like, practices and like talks and teachings about her. And she's also has been depicted as a mermaid. And so like, that theme for me, has made me realize that like

fluidity is more than just—like water, or even just being able to change, but being willing to change and being open to change. And not necessarily that you're comfortable. Because changes can make you like not comfortable, or it can shake you up, you know, but just recognizing that it's inevitable, has been something that I've like really tried to lean into. And I feel like that is a core tenet of that teaching is that change is inevitable. And that change is powerful. And that change is human. And so yeah, like really like I've been leaning into what that means as far as like, my interpersonal relationships, my politic, who I call a family, who I call community, what I stand for, what I don't stand for, and like who I—like what teachings I align myself with, and even the people that I align myself with, like, I can't like be assured that they are—that they have my—or are going to care about attention, that they know how to love me, or know how to relate to me. And so the tenant or the core principle of change being inevitable, has allowed me to be a lot more open to closing and opening relationships, and recognize that it doesn't speak to—like nobody has to be evil or good. Like we're all capable of causing harm. We're all capable of bringing joy into somebody's life. So yeah, like that has been something that I've had to like really like, unpack, and I try to make sure that I practice a lot in my life.

[00:47:34] Pennington: That's awesome.

[00:47:35] Nelson: I don't know if I answered your question, though. What was the question? Can you remind me?

[00:47:41] Pennington: Well, just like some of the, I was just asking about some of like, the ancestral practices and figures like you had discovered and like, you answered the question very thoroughly. And then some which is really great. And on the, while we're on the subject of like, gender fluidity, you've talked a little bit about how you identify. Could you describe that a little bit more and explain what that means to you personally, how you, how you came to identify and what that means to you?

[00:48:09] Nelson: Yeah. Okay, well, I first I thought that my gender, like everybody were like, a lot of people who have been taught it was tied to my genitals. And so I call myself gender fluid. Well, I aligned with gender fluidity initially, because I recognized that it wasn't something that was tied to my genitals. And also that, like, it was something that was in my mind, and in my head, and in my, like, how I feel. But now I also recognize that gender is racialized. And that, like, my Blackness is also a part of my gender, and how I'm perceived. Because it can't be separated, and they exist at the same time. And so, um. I feel like, for me, my understanding of my gender, is that my gender is something that is essentially put onto me, right? And granted, like I can speak to how I express myself, but I can't separate that from how people engage with me and how I get access to things and resources and people. And I say that as a person that I know that I'm on like, I am desirable, I'm thin. I'm not necessarily dark skinned. Like there are people who are dark skinned, deeper dark skinned than me. And so in certain spaces, I'm lighter than, you know, folks. I have smaller features. So I like there are certain things that I'm recognizing that like within my race, that I don't have to experience and that is something that is speaking to my gender because like these are things that are, I'm literally given or I'm taken away from because of how I'm being perceived. And I feel like that is

also the Black experience. And specifically like a Black femme or a Black female, Black woman experience. It is being told that you are one thing and then also being removed from that, like, at will, whenever. For instance, like Black women while like, like white women in the United States, like, I think this is like Reconstruction—I'm doing, let me not try to throw an era on it whenever. I think no, it was like a Civil War or like not Civil War, but there was a war happening, it be like World War One where, like men were going over and they needed women to work. What they didn't recognize is women had already been working, Black women had been forced to work since they have been brought into this, to United States. And so that speaks to a cultural understanding that, yes, Black women are women, but only women when we say y'all are. And that is an extreme, I don't experience it in the way that Black women have, or people like that, people that identify as Black women. But I do recognize it as something that is a Black experience, is being told that you are one thing and then being removed from it at will. And not having control over what that is or what that looks like. And how violent that is on your like, the psyche, on my relationship to myself and to other people.

[00:51:25] Pennington: Okay, that's a lot to unpack. Give me a minute. I have a follow up question here. It's just a lot to unpack. Because, you know, you're definitely hitting the nail on the head. So could you make just for further clarification, could you give me one sort of example, you have experienced yourself personally as being sort of you have these expectations put on you but then at the same time, it's, it's never at your volition or your own, like, energy to meet those expectations. Am I getting it right? Kind of?

[00:52:00] Nelson: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So for me, for instance, one thing about my sexuality is I identify as sexually fluid, but I'm also asexual. Or I'm on the asexual spectrum, I would say. And some—excuse me I'm sorry, cutting off my car. I'm trying to charge my phone. But yeah, I say that because there's a trope that exists within the Black community specifically for Black man. [BREAK IN AUDIO]

[00:52:28] Pennington: Oh, hold on. I lost the, I lost your sound. Oh. Hello. I lost you. Oh, no. I can't hear you. No, no.

[00:52:45] Nelson: Can you hear me now.

[00:52:46] Pennington: Oh, yes. I can hear you now. Got it.

[00:52:50] Nelson: Okay, can you hear me now?

[00:52:51] Pennington: Yes, I can hear you. Okay. We're back. We're good.

[00:52:53] Nelson: Okay. Hold on. I was plugging my phone and I think my Bluetooth connected as well. Okay, can you hear me now?

[00:53:02] Pennington: Yes, I gotcha. You're good.

[00:53:08] Nelson: Okay, awesome. Oh. Oh, you can still hear me?

[00:53:14] Pennington: I can still hear you. It's kind of muffled, but I can hear you. Yeah.

[00:53:19] Nelson: Oh, let me see if I can do something else. Hold on. Give me a second here. I'm sorry.

[00:53:24] Pennington: Okay, no worries.

[00:53:43] Nelson: Okay, can you hear me now?

[00:53:45] Pennington: Yes, I can hear you now. We're good.

[00:53:46] Nelson: Okay, great. Awesome. Okay. Um, yeah. So, we're talking about the expectations or being the Black experience, and like how that's tied to gender. So, yeah, I was talking about, like, my sexuality, and like, how I'm both sexually fluid and asexual. And for me, it just means that oh, this is annoying [car alarm sounds].

[00:53:46] Pennington: I was about to say, yeah [laughter].

[00:53:49] Nelson: Okay, yeah. [Laughter] Oh, that just means that I experience an attraction. And I say maybe not sexual, necessarily, because it doesn't necessarily, it doesn't lead me to want to have sex, the attractions, that experience. I've never like envisioned myself. Or I don't often envision myself wanting to have sex with people. I envision myself wanting to be intimate



with people and maybe have a closeness and maybe even physically intimate, like, you know, touching but never anything that necessarily requires sex. But the contradiction that exists is that I'm hypersexual, and I'm always wanting to have sex with people. And I always want to have sex. Like, a masculine thing is that as well, like, you always want to have sex, but being Black and masculine, both, it makes it like something entirely different to where you're like this, you're perceived as, like a caricature, in a sense. And so, I, yeah, I feel like for me, having to navigate that is very much so like, a contradiction, and it makes me have to—I have to be very clear about what I am and what I want. And not because I need to say that to other people, and other people need to know that, but because like, the world tells me otherwise, and it won't allow me to be what I what I actually want to be.

And that's just one way. I really could go all day. But like, I feel like, that is a really, really big thing because like, I've experienced other people. And so it's interesting, because I've aligned myself with people who have been hypersexualized, and are also hypersexual, and like, have had multiple sex partners. And it's not like, I'm not, this is by no means any judgement but recognizing that they've experienced something—maybe traumatic, even, that did not allow them to be themselves authentically and like put a title and a label on them that they didn't really have control over if they could be that or not. They just had to be it. And so yeah, that is very much so what I'm talking about when I speak to like, how, first of all, gender is racialized, and how being Black is a gender in itself. And it's something that warps the perception of a person and expectations are placed onto them without their consent.

[00:56:48] Pennington: Yeah, I mean, probably get it for more than one front, you have like, the expectations that come with like, from outside, an outside community, let's say like white community, and then you also have expectations that come from within the Black community as well. If my understanding is that that is correct, you know?

[00:57:09] Nelson: That's correct. You're right. Yeah.

[00:57:11] Pennington: And what you want it to be and how it should be acting and like everything. It's a, one more, I did another interview like before this of interviewing a Black bisexual gal, and she was like, even the, even there's like diff—even in like the LGBTQ Black community, like different expectations that we will be put on, let's say, like a bisexual woman or gay woman versus like, a gay man, or like a gender fluid like Black, you know, Black man, you know what I mean? So even that, like, that's pretty heavy. I mean, would you like agree with that sort of understanding?

[00:57:44] Nelson: Yeah. Oh, for sure. Absolutely. I feel like, as it regards sexuality, a lot of people. If it's not straight, then it is something monstrous, and it's monstrous in its own ways. Like, just as there are ghouls and vampires and werewolves. It's the same thing with how sexuality as a Black person is perceived. Even to where people will hear me say that I don't really tell many people that I'm ace [asexual]. But when I say that, the understanding is that I am automatically sex repulsed. And you know, that is the case for people as well. But it is not the case for me necessarily. But also it's just unfathomable for folks, or unfathomable for folks to understand a relationship outside of sex to other folks, because of how capitalism I feel like,

has made us believe that the ultimate relationship involves sex, the ultimate relation to another person involves sex and involves a hierarchy of relationships where you're only being catered to your partner, your sex partner. There's just so many things that have been added onto that. And so, if that is not aligned to straightness, then is monstrous. And it's something that we, that is an anomaly. And so yeah, I agree. Sure.

[00:59:09] Pennington: Alrighty. That's so freaking interesting. Okay. So if we could, I mean, I don't—I want to be as like respectful as possible. But would you be open to talking about your—I don't wanna call it like coming out experience because it sounds like you went through multiple phases. It's like it's a continuum of like—

[00:59:31] Nelson: Yeah.

[00:59:31] Pennington: —sort of discovery of identity. Really. Yeah. I guess if we want to call it that. We won't call it the like the moment you came out! [Laughter] But you know, that sort of like cliched thing, how, what, you know, no. So I guess if we just like go through your, your process of, shall we say coming to your identity, both sexual, gender and otherwise.

[00:59:59] Nelson: Yeah, for sure, so I officially came out or I wouldn't even say officially—we. I, the first time I came out like to anyone was so my sister. And I, a lot of people in my life have always known that, like, I'm different and that there was a possibility that I was queer, but it was just like, passed off. Even when I was younger, a lot of people asked me, often adults, would ask me like, you know, have you been thinking about girls? Do you have a girlfriend? I'm

just like, No, I'm focused on my school. I'm not concerned about a girlfriend, that can come later. You know, that's me being in denial. Like you don't want to girlfriend at all. And you don't even, you're not a boy. So, you know, there's just so many things in that. But, yeah, when I told my sister, she was shocked—maybe because we don't really talk about queerness at all, but not because it was me. Like, she was just like, Well, that makes sense. But then she was just like, so—she's like, you see it in her mind, like unraveling. So many things connected. She was like, So when this happened you mean he was? It was just like, yeah, that's I was not straight, at all. Never been. And she's like, okay, and so my sister. And this is also another reason why we're really, really close is because she is making it her mission to understand me, and to like, meet me where I'm at.

And also, like, be willing to be corrected. And so she has, like, made—she's tried to correct her language, or not try, she is. She does correct her language and other people about my pronouns about like, if I'm her sibling, and not her brother. Like, even sometimes I will, like, unconsciously say, like, you know, because I'm your brother. And she was like, No, you're my sibling. And so like, she has like, been a really big part of it, but is a contradiction as well, because she also outed me to my father. It was accidentally. It, she didn't really mean to, but it still happened. Right. And it just so happened that he was not necessary—like, I've not experienced, you know, thankfully, I'm around people who are not necessarily overtly violent to queer and trans people. But yeah, he said that he knew, and you know, he was fine with it. And, you know, at the time, I was happy, that like, oh, you know, he accepts me. But then I had to think and just be like. So that means that you have always been aware, or even aware for a longer time than I have and had this language and not catered to my needs. And granted, that

could be something where you didn't know how to. But it also seems like there was an unwillingness to be that unless I came out to you. And that is unacceptable. Because this is an environment that is not—I don't feel safe. That's literally the main reason why I have not told anyone is because I didn't feel safe. So for you to say that you were aware—and both of my parents actually said that, verbatim, that “I always knew.” And it infuriated me. Later on, when I was like, recognized what that meant.

But yeah, I'm not coming out to my, my mom, or my dad about being trans. I've told them that I'm queer, or gay, because that's what they understand it to be. But, yeah, like—like you said, it's a continuing thing. It's something I'm actually I feel like I changed labels, especially now that I've, like, come out for real I change labels so many times. But that goes back into the fluidity thing, and like the change being inevitable, it's not something that I recognize that I need to have one label or that label will fit me all the time or all of my lives. It's something that will constantly change because that is the nature of humans. And that is the nature of gender, I would argue. But yeah, yeah, I am still in that process. I honestly, genuinely don't know that I will come out to my parents as trans. I just feel like it is a whole other ballpark that they are not ready for, or maybe not, I wouldn't speak to their readiness. I would say that I'm not ready for because it comes with so much. And it requires, like it, with that knowledge, right? If I tell them that I'm trans, it will also mean that they will have to change the way that they relate to me. And that will require a lot more than just simply using my right pronouns. If they can even accomplish that, right? It will require them to undo how they see me entirely.

And so yeah, it's just not something that I'm ready for. But yeah, that is how that has looked during my life. I've gotten the, since that relationship—since that conversation with my dad, I came out to my mom shortly after and like majority of my close family members on my paternal side of the family. I've come out a lot of friends. And you know, honestly, we say come, you were saying that come out, like maybe not be the language and I'm still using it. But I feel like for me, sometimes I don't even tell people, like I just start to express myself in different ways. And you know, you can pick up the straws as you go or pick up the chips wherever they, you know, land. But a lot of times I find that I don't prioritize just telling people what I am, unless I recognize that they are also queer and trans, and they can relate in some way. So yeah, that is what that looks like. Not really catering to the straight people, honestly [laughter].

[01:05:39] Pennington: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But you know, I know, it's definitely like, once you take on, once, like the, how shall we say, cats out the bag, especially when it comes to family members. It's like okay, now I have to be ready for, like, the rigamarole of however long this is gonna take for me to be comfortable with their potential discom—yeah, their potential discomfort.

[01:06:03] Nelson: Yeah. Exactly.

[01:06:03] Pennington: I can imagine I could imagine that to be quite, quite exhausting. Quite exhausted. But as you're saying, you know, you feel the most comfortable, as we will call the term in quotations "coming out", through fellow members of the community, who would get the experience and the language and all of that, so could you talk a little bit about like, tapping into,

like, you know, queer life? Or just Black LGBTQ life in Jackson? And was that a slow process? Or was that something that was like, readily accessible? You know, you found community right way and just like, you know, no issues, never looked back?

[01:06:44] Nelson: Yeah. So I feel like I am, I'm, I am very much so privileged, queer, and trans person, Black trans person in Mississippi. As I, especially now, I am able, I have the ability to be perceived as a man, and like, just fly under the radar, for one. And then two, like, I also am a person that had access to free like education, so I don't have to worry about debt. And I also like, had access to like a big, like, vast network of people. And that also included queer and trans people. Now, at the time, when I was in college, I didn't know you know that so many people were queer, and trans, and Black, and like, right next to me. But once I came out, or once I not came out once I graduated, I graduated in 2020. And that was literally the beginning of the pandemic. And another point, another really, really big point where so many things happened for me, I like had, I started to develop more language for my politic and become very interested in any movement, or organizing or any anything, if possible, in Mississippi, or in Jackson in general.

And so one of my good friends that I like, went to high school with, she told me about an organization called Black Youth Project 100. It's a member led or membership led organization, full of or that organizes through a Black queer feminist lens, and it's full of like Black, queer trans youth. And it's ran by them as well. And so yeah, I got introduced to them. And that was really like that. I, I say that that is, that once was or something that I was comfortable calling my political home. We can get into that later. But for the time being like that

was my political home. And, yeah, I built a lot of our politics around it, because of the aspect of recognizing that people are multiple things at one time. And that seeing that Black Lives Matter has a strange tinge of Black straight lives matter or Black cis lives matters and not like, all Black lives. And so yeah, it gave me that language. And I was definitely able to find through that organization a lot of Black queer and trans people. Specifically in the south. One, because it's so, it's so interesting. The South is home to a lot of Black queer people in the United States, like they we're concentrated in the South. Whether people like, you know, believe it or not. But yeah, the community has always been here and like, as I continue to, like, I told you I joined the organization in like 2020, I've met so many Black, queer trans people in Jackson alone. And like I've been able to like to have the opportunity to go and travel and in Mississippi and see other Black queer trans folks and like become very connected and like even call these people family, you know?

And so, I say that I'm privileged because like, I recognize that there are right now we're talking Black, queer trans folks who don't have access to that and are isolated because that is like what Blackness is. And that is what Black transness is, is isolation. I'm not saying that like that is what people have to take on. But it is a common experience amongst Black trans and queer people that we are often isolated and not able to be authentic. And so yeah, I feel like, I say that I'm privileged because I definitely have access to a lot of like, Black queer trans folks. And, yeah, I definitely, I was able to find it, because of how I was, like my conditions and what I aligned myself with, and also what I was able to align myself with, the resources that I already had access to, and that were available to me. And so yeah, in general, though, because I'm saying this, that I've had access to this network, but this network is also not readily accessible



to other folks. Because of stigma, because of homophobia and transphobia. Because we are in the south. And this is like I feel like this, The South has the whole fascist, anti-Black, like, culture down pat. Like even to the point where like, in our everyday interaction, we're referring to people by their genitals with ma'am and sir. Yeah, it's just, it's we have it perfected and like so, it would make sense that Black trans people down here, Black queer people down here, don't feel safe. Um, but yeah, that is like my relationship to that community. Now at least.

[01:11:47] Pennington: Right, right. But you're it's like you made a noticing like it happened like after you left school, which I think it's so interesting, because as you're bringing up that isolationism, that's one thing I like heard from a lot of folks is who also attended Jackson State University, a lot of the time, you'd be right next to like, you know, right next to queer folks, and wouldn't even, wouldn't even know.

[01:12:09] Nelson: Yes, oh, my gosh! I have so many stories. Literally, when I graduated. I was very active, like my junior and senior year in organizations. And so I've met a lot of people, at Jackson State. And when I graduated, like, I came out simultaneously, or like, that's when like, I was becoming more comfortable in my expression, and all of those things that come with that. But I didn't see other queer and trans people, like from Jackson State, or like, even like necessarily like in my immediate community, like, they may be at a different school. Or they maybe went to like, you know, yeah, they just weren't in my immediate community, I would say. But when I came out, and then when like, as time persisted, as soon as people graduate from Jackson State, literally, people would come out. And it was such a phenomenon to me, that was both liberating to see that, yes, I was around a lot of queer and trans people like even

while I was at Jackson State, but also very sad. Because they, I recognize that they had the exact same experience that they didn't feel safe to be themselves authentically at Jackson State. Or even, you know, that speaks to even like, the bigger the bigger space of Jackson. And, you know, some of these people are not from Jackson, some of these are from Jackson, but like, Yeah, I know, like, now, a lot of Black, queer, and trans folks, like that I met, and I didn't even know that they were until like, after we left, but yeah.

[01:13:47] Pennington: What do you it's like, you talked a little bit about the sort of, underlying or prevailing, like ideology that keeps people, let's say, from like, fully, like fully participating in their own identities, even when I know it, like at in terms of college, like, what do you think that was about at Jackson State? Like, in particular, because I've heard this sort of scenario like before, you know, which is interesting to me, because like college is like, you know, the gunho time where everybody's like, finding themselves kind of. But not really, not really exercising that fully, like what do you think that that was about, you know, not feeling? Yeah.

[01:14:26] Nelson: Oh, well, yeah, for sure. I know, it was about the fact that although Jackson State is the HBCU, a historically Black college or university, it is still very much so like an institution within the United States and it's a part of the education system. And that if we know that, like interpersonal things don't exist in a vacuum, like they speak to the bigger issue and to systemic things, then that is also true of Jackson State. And that it is a white institution in that a lot of times you have to align yourself to—the binary in order to—or into classism, into elitism into a whole bunch of transphobia, you have to align yourself with things that do not allow you to be authentically yourself. And that is literally a common experience. When I, my junior and

senior year, I told you I got more active, but I was joining organizations like the NAACP and Student Government Association. And in theory, right, these are supposed to be organizations that are for liberation, are for advocacy, and like helping people, you know, get their needs met. But these are also the same organizations where I've faced violence, not necessarily someone saying something to me, but how I'm supposed to be presenting myself. Simple as that, like. A lot of times, there was like this belief that we need to be business professional. And you would think like, oh, yeah, of course, like that is a necessity. But like, business professional comes with gender roles. Business professional comes with, like white supremacy, and like, me not being able to have like, something as simple as locs, because I locked my hair after I graduated. And I had a low cut, like, I had, like a really low cut and a line and all that stuff. So like a lot of these things were anti-Black in nature and did not allow a lot of Black folks to be Black or be Black in their authentic, or like, you know, their genuine selves. And so, yeah, I think that Jackson State, like I said, it is very much so still a white institution, even though it is majority Black people that go there, because of the fact that it is essentially a place that hoards knowledge, and wherever you see the hoarding of resources is where you will also see violence in multiple ways. And so yeah, I think that is very much so why a lot of people experienced those things, because maybe they thought that it was it. I say that knowing that I've had access to like a resource that a lot of people don't. So Jackson State was still a resource, but it also was still a place of violence for me. I got a big network from there, I've met so many people and still are meeting people that like are useful for me, and vice versa. But, yeah, while I was there, I just was not able to be who I wanted to be or who I thought like, even, like, I told you, I got, I graduated with my bachelor's in chemistry. I'm not even using that degree, like, those are the expectations that were placed onto me, from my family members,

from professors that I excelled academically in math and science. In which I, you know, I did, and like I understood it, but like, I also was very much so creative. I've always been actually, like since I can remember, I've always doodled, and drawn things, and had very expressive, creative, like conversations, like, you know. I've always been that way. Even when I was in like, you know, grade school, I took like, AP art, like I was like very much so a artist, but I recognize that the world does not treat art, or artists with respect, and also recognize how people related to me even being an artist or wanting to like align myself with that. And I quickly made an adjustment and said that I wanted to be a chemist, or you know, something in the STEM field or whatever. So yeah. Yeah, even violence in that way is just like, people are just not literally able to be their authentic selves in whatever that means.

[01:18:39] Pennington: Yeah, just a wholehearted repression sounds like, yeah.

[01:18:42] Nelson: Yeah, [laughter]

[01:18:44] Pennington: Honestly, but that's so, now to bring up like your relationship to art. Like, let's talk about that. Because I wanna hear about the exhibition you just had and like, what that was themed around and like Mama Wata and denim and all of that. So yeah, so when did like I wrote out the question. So yeah, tell me a little bit about your art. When cuz you said you always had a proclivity for like the artistic. But where do you draw your inspiration from now? And what are you making and what has, as an artist like, how does that fit into your overall identity?

[01:19:22] Nelson: Yeah! So for one I am, I will call myself a multidisciplinary artist as I don't like really confine myself to one type of art. I love all kinds of art, visual, love different mediums within the visual field. I also love music. I love making music. I love to sing. I love dancing. I love acting. I love film. I love, there are so many different ar, mediums and disciplines that I love. And so I can speak to like right now currently. [Break in Audio]

[01:20:01] Pennington: Oh

[01:20:03] Nelson: Maybe since high school Okay, can you hear me?

[01:20:06] Pennington: I lost the last thing you said, but I can hear you now.

[01:20:08] Nelson: Oh yeah, I was gonna say so since high school. I've been like a mixed media type of art—visual artist. And so and just because like, you know, you are not aware of like mixed media is it's just like using—and so instead of like, people who are painters will use like, maybe acrylic paint, or just watercolors. I often use like paints, I use fabric, I use pen, all in one piece. And so like I just, I draw inspiration from different, like, mediums or different yeah media, mediums. So yeah, with that, though, I feel like my art has, like with that recognition that I, that is like my, how I relate to art, I recognize that, like, I don't have to be one thing, and like, it goes back into the whole thing of fluidity. And so that even is about how I express myself. Now, or not even now, I feel like I've always, in some sense, like been a political kind of artists. And I say that not necessarily meaning that like, I speak about maybe current world things or like talk about politicians or even talking about policies, but like, like my expressing of

myself is a politic. And so like, I often talk about things that I've experienced, or things that I see that are contradictions and like, make a statement out of them.

Like, for instance, when I was in high school, we had a little trading cards, and my teacher introduced us, things like how to, making, to make them. And like I excelled in that, like, it was something that I just loved doing. You would sand down regular like playing cards, paint it, and then add whatever you want on there. So I would often talk about like the media and how the media is like steeped in artificial things, or things that are not necessarily like the truth. I spoke to like, being authentic within oneself. And also like the contradiction of that, and also having to be safe, like and having to like, present yourself in a way that may not be authentic and that duality. Like those are things that I was expressing myself, like, I was expressing that in high school. And then like, I went through a period in college, where I was trying to align myself to what I was "supposed to be" quote unquote, or the expectation that was placed onto me. And I, in a sense, like killed that side of myself or really repressed it, like very violently, I would say, because like, I was not really using a lot of color in my or, you know, yeah, I wasn't using a lot of color in my wardrobe. And like, I would just like jeans and a shirt. You know, it wasn't anything really like expressive versus now like I wear a heel, a skirt, I will wear whatever I want, you know.

And so yeah, now like, as far as the art that I did on yesterday, it was about the Jacksonian relationship to water. And so as you know, like the water crisis has occurred in Jackson, but it's always been a thing. And so I wanted to talk about or I wanted to express that in that this is not something that is new. And what that looks like for Jacksonians truly. And so I'll speak more to

that. My, one of my friends that is actually in Black Youth Project with me. We—right when the water crisis happened literally maybe like a couple of days afterwards, we discovered a trail in Belhaven. And Belhaven is a part of like a greater area, like a midtown downtown area in Jackson. And it's also gentry—being gentrified or like. Like with the term Belhaven I will even say that like it started being gentrified once Belhaven became an official community. But like now you definitely see that is completely different than the way that the other parts of Jackson are structured and like developed. And also you can see with the demographic there are a lot of white people, there are a lot of classed people in the downtown and midtown areas.

And so—I—we discovered the trail Belhaven. And it was amazing because we had always been looking for a trail in Jackson, like we literally had a conversation like a couple months before about how we wanted to get back into walking but the only place that we could go to was in South Jackson. And it was a drive for me, and it was also a drive for my friend. And also this is an interesting fact their friend also went to Jackson State [laughter]. But yeah, we found that. We found the trail in Belhaven, and we were walking it and they also mentioned that the trail went to the Pearl River. And this blew my mind because when I was younger my dad would always take me and my sister to the ross—oh shit—The Ross Barnett Reservoir. And that's all the way in like frickin like Ridgeland, in Madison, almost, if not already Madison. So we would take like a good, like maybe 20, 30 minute drive to get there, but we would be by the water and we would always, you know, have fun out there. And so imagine me a 24 year old, recognizing—like always living in Jackson, being in Jackson all my life—recognizing that we could definitely have access. And then also to recognize that not only that I could've had access to water, but there's a beach in Jackson. There is like, it was, it was, it was beyond me

because I'm just like, what, like, What do you mean? Like, what? And so I'm thinking like, okay, maybe I'm the only one who don't know this. Or maybe me and my friend are just two people who just, you know, don't know this.

But I kept asking people, I would ask my family members, I would ask my friends and they all like looked at me, like in disbelief. And to this day, people were just like, No like that, you know, that doesn't exist. I took a video, we recently found the beach, we were able to get there. But like, it wasn't until then that people like really recognized that, oh, there's a beach in Jackson. And it broke my heart. Because it's like a lot of people are, like in the national news, are just not getting wind that we don't have access to water. But that's always been the case. But also on top of that we have been removed from water in multiple ways. We've been removed from water recreationally as well. And it's been gatekept, and it's still being gatekept. And to the point where actually, there is this thing in Jackson that's happening since the water crisis happened. There's an organization called Poor People's Campaign. And they brought one of their, like national members or someone from whoever. He came down and he like, tries to help host more on Mondays. And he, he has people within the community speak on the experiences. And so I went there and spoke to my experience and was basically saying that, like, you know, I was asking the crowd—and these are full of Jacksonian folks—asking them, Did you know that there was a trail in Belhaven that led to the Pearl River? I asked people to raise their hands because like, it's one thing to say that and like get feedback, but I wanted to actually see it. Do you know no Black person, and there were like maybe like a sprinkles of like white people in the crowd. No Black person in the crowd raised their hand and it was like shocking.



But it confirmed something for me that like—we are experiencing violence on multiple ends on multiple fronts and like, what that looks like being a Jacksonian and what you're, literally, what is your relationship to water? And even just the theme of like fluidity, like that was something like water literally became a very, because I'm aligning myself with fluidity, like water is actually something that is of a very core tenant in my life. Not even just that I need it to survive, but that is how I look at my life as fluid. That is how I want to be like I want to be as fluid as possible. And how removing folks from water is violent. Removing folks from water, like just to drink is violent. But removing folks from water where there's a city where the water actually goes through it and at no point is there a way to access it except for the gatekept trail. And then it's even not a defined path through the Belhaven trail because the trail goes from the museum, like the Two Mississippi Museums, to I think it goes all the way to the water treatment plant, the OB Curtis. No, there is two water treatment plants in Jackson. It's the one that didn't crash, it's the other one. But even off of that trail, there is no one defined path that goes to the Pearl River. And so when we finally found it, it was, it was bittersweet, because it's like, wow, I'm finally here, but like, there are so many people who don't know about this that are in Jackson that probably will never know about it.

And so yeah, my piece, my art piece that I put into the art exhibition was about that. And I basically spoke to privatization and what it actually was. I depicted children or Black folks or people who are like have like African features and like you know, darker skin. I cut, I used magazines and cut their faces out and then I took construction paper in different hues or tints of blue and I made afros. And I like used a blue ink pen to like make, texturize the hair and

make the coils and curls in their hair. And I had, my first I did two pieces. My first piece was that I had two hands coming from both sides of the canvas, like coming from like nowhere seemingly, and extending themselves to almost touch each other but go past each other. And in the middle of them. There's this word privatization. And on either side of the both of the arms, there was a couple of different people with afros. And I put that in Jackson, Mississippi. On this side, there was a fabric, a piece of fabric that resembled like water to me. It was like different hues of blue. And it also like existed in like a gradient form from like light to dark, and it had like speckles of light on it. I cut the tops of it and made like waves. And that was the water. And then I also I spoke to like how, Mama Wata, is something that I'm trying to explore like what that looks like for me. I had a reoccurring, like the blue Afro was a reoccurring theme for me, but also Mama Wata. And that it's not just that she's a deity, but she's also water in itself.

And not even just the Pearl River. Like now the Mississippi River is drying up. We don't have access to just water, drinking water anyway. So it was like a multi—it had multiple, like meanings for me. So yeah, I had that and also on either hands, on one hand, it was the government. And I had government, legislature, city council and the governor, like those words. I had the government on the cuffs because it was like two hands that they looked like they were coming from like suit jackets. So yeah, and then I had them coming out of like, gears, so to resemble that they are mechanisms. One was the government, the other was patriarch, and I had patriarch, abuse, power and insecurity on the other. And yeah, like, that was how I depicted my relationship, or like as a Jacksonian my relationship to water and I would say the entire Jacksonian relationship to water. And then on the other one that I did, I

went, what I was going for, was like a story or like a three-part story. But at the last minute I recognized that I couldn't express myself or say what I need to say into two and two like pieces. And so the other piece was that fluidity, literally on the thing, I have "fluidity bring freedom". And so there is a head cut out of what I would depict as Mama Wata. But her hair is not made of blue construction paper and like coiled is made of actual, like I cut out different—I saw, I looked through different magazines and saw water, like literally just water. Somebody maybe standing in water or like just somebody like took a picture of some water. And I cut them out and made them into afro or made like I glued them together and then cut out the cutouts into the shape of a afro and put that on her head and then had her above the fabric, the same fabric that I put on the other one that resemble water for me. And I had that like she is like she's looking over the water. And she's like in the—that she's actually she could really say that she's like the sun or the moon but she's like right on top of the waterfront. And she's looking out onto the ocean. And there are mermaids with heads, like you know, Black people's heads with the same afros, swimming. And so yeah, that was how I did what I did.

[01:30:09] Pennington: That's pretty sick. Yeah, like, it's like you're describing like great visuals, but like, Oh God, what like I wanna see that I wanna see that real bad [laughter]. Like, if I find you on Instagram, after this, I'm gonna be like, send it, send it, send it through.

[01:32:44] Nelson: Sure, yeah ok! [Laughter]

[01:32:58] Pennington: Super, super cool, though, like to take the concept of like everything, like together, like you're speaking to so many different experiences all at once, but the same

time, like you're saying there could be multiple forms of something. And like, there's multiple angles to like one experience of like, not having access to like, just an experience of itself, like being close to water.

[01:33:42] Nelson: Yeah.

[01:33:42] Pennington: And then, like, the ancestral heritage is there. Ah! Love it. But—

[01:33:50] Nelson: Thank you.

[01:33:51] Pennington: Yeah, that's pretty cool. Very, very cool. But speaking of, while we're on the tangent of like, kind of, sort of getting to the whole, like, destruction of the classification systems, if you will? How do you feel? Okay, one second. Okay. What is your experience kind of been like interacting with the white LGBTQ community in Jackson? Because from my understanding, they're two separate and distinct communities.

[01:34:24] Nelson: Yeah. You're very right. Yeah.

[01:34:26] Pennington: Right. So what's, what's been your experience with that?

[01:34:30] Nelson: Okay, so, I currently work as an organizer with Planned Parenthood. I started in November of last year. So just that alone, I really feel like that is my introduction into the white LGBTQ community as my team or the team that I work with is majority Black, but

there was one white person and she was queer herself, or she is queer herself but yeah, I think for the—no, not all of us are queer. But anyway, I, my record. Like being, working for Planned Parenthood in Mississippi is enough experience to recognize that like, oh, there is a difference in how Black people, Black queer people are treated versus white queer people. There's a difference between how Mississippi is treated versus the rest of the world. So I worked with Planned Parenthood, I've said, and I've worked for Planned Parenthood Southeast, and Planned Parenthood Southeast as an affiliate of Planned Parenthood the Federation of America. And so like, there's a national organization, of course, and then there's like, you know, the bulk organizations, and Planned Parenthood Southeast covers Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama. So working for Mississippi, especially around reproductive rights, has been a thing in itself in that the entire case of Roe v. Wade was overturned with the case in Jackson. And back to this whole thing, where so many things are like literally centering one thing. Seeing how the rest of just my affiliate, not even the Federation, but just the affiliate, how they regard our work, because the work that we do is different than the other states, just within the affiliate. Like we have to have different language, we do deep canvassing, we only had one abortion clinic in Jackson, in Mississippi, but there was only in Jackson. And so like our work look completely different than the rest of the state, let alone—I mean to the rest of the nation, let alone just our affiliate. So we will often be doing— [Break in Audio]. Can you hear me now?

[01:36:28] Pennington: Yep, I can hear you. Yeah.

[01:36:29] Nelson: We were often doing more work, I would say, more actual physical work than the other states. And seeing that because the other states had white, or majority white

teams, or I would say majority white as if there was a team, but there was just like one person, maybe two people, but they were both white. And yeah, like our team full of Black people are doing so much work. But we never got any attention or never got any like congrats or any kind of props, nothing, it was just that that was the work that needed to be done. And we did it. And that literally is a common experience amongst like, my experiences of Black queer person organizing in Jackson. Is that like, we have to do the work, regardless like, even if we get access to resources, we have to make a way out of no way all the times. And so that, to speak to that experience, but also while I was able at like, pride events. And one particular pride event, it made me recognize like, there was actually a difference in those two communities, like you said. It was a Black pride event. And I've never, I had never been to any pride event before then.

So it was like my first experience with a pride event. And I had never in my life ever, ever, ever seen so many Black queer people in one space. And it was, it was in a park, at the Fondren park actually. And so I, it was so, so like, it looked like it was maybe like the fair or it looked like it was like, I can't think of like a really big social gathering or a big social event. But there were just so many Black people out there who I assume are all queer or at least like we're okay with queerness or, and transness. But then, like going to white, like tabling in a white pride events in Jackson, it is a different demographic entirely. It was at the point where, like, at the Black pride event they're reaching out to, you know, of course, Black organizations, but like, you can see that white organizations are only aligning themselves with people who take their organizations and their missions to do things that are serving the white organization. For instance, like what is it, Capital City Pride, they don't necessarily work with Black. And

sometimes they fund things, but they don't show up at events they don't like really, like they're not really like vocal. And so that experience is like it's so hard to be in a space, to be in a place—Jackson is like 80, it's rough, 80% Black, and that's a very rough estimate. So I've gone throughout my life only interacting majority—like I can count on like both of my hands, the white people that like I have interpersonal relationships with. And so to be in a space or to be in a place where white people, or specifically white queer people are, in a sense, gatekeeping resources is like bonkers. It's really wild. But yeah, that is literally what is very much so a difference and very much so. Like I speak to like how like the South has like the whole like respectability things like down pack but like even like. And I say like the difference between overt and covert racism, but like both are very violent and have the same impact on people. Because like, yeah, how would you how can you show up in a space that in the majority Black and only still have only white people show up to your event? Like, first, to be honest, where are these white people coming from? A majority community that is already here. So yeah, it is very much, so very different, very weird, actually but it's something that you won't even recognize is an issue until you are put in a place where you see a very stark difference in audience, and, and who gets access.

[Audio Cuts Out]

[01:40:57] Pennington: Hello, you just I just lost year, and you're saying something really important. I want to make sure I get it for the record.

[01:41:03] Nelson: And who gets to, [unclear] organization or who gets to like, have authenticity like, can you hear me though?

[01:41:14] Pennington: I kind of I lost you.

[01:41:15] Nelson: Hello? Oh no what is going on?

[01:41:17] Pennington: Ah, hi. I lost you just a tiny bit like we just rewind maybe the last like 10, 20 seconds of speech. Just because I did lose you a tad there. You kept going.

[01:41:26] Nelson: Yeah. Can you hear me though? Are you able to hear me now?

[01:41:30] Pennington: I kinda, yeah, I am. There's a little bit of a lag, but it's better. It's a little better.

[01:41:35] Nelson: Okay. I'm think there's like a difference in my signal. But let me know if you cannot hear me again. And I can repeat myself.

[01:41:42] Pennington: Okay. Yeah, let's just have a, like wind it all back. The last thing I heard was gatekeeping resources. Let's go back to that.

[01:41:50] Nelson: Yeah. So that that was basically what I was going to end with was, is that you are not able to see that there is even like racism that exists. Because if you're in a majority



Black place, the only people that you interact with are Black people, then you in the sense, you would equate that to be Oh, no racism exists here. But that's not how racism operates. Or that's not the only function that racism operates is overtly or that some white person is like saying something racist to you. It's also in who gets like, the Capital City Pride gets to be an established queer organization within Mississippi that is, like a lot of people know about, they get access to resources, they're constantly getting grants are constantly getting financial support, while the Black organizations don't get any support virtually, and have to pool resources within each other. And then also sometimes align themselves to the white organizations, or for the white organizations to be like, we'll give you this much if you do this. And so yeah, it is it's very much so you can see that there is a difference in how white people, but specifically white queer people, are treated versus and then also what versus like Black queer people, but also I feel like white queer people get to be queer, like Black people like are seen as like Black first and only.

[01:43:17] Pennington: Oop, I lost you again.

[01:43:18] Nelson: Even amongst other Black people. Like I had a conversation recently. Like, it was like, hold on, hold on. I want to see if I can call instead. What would you be comfortable with me calling instead of like being on video?

[01:43:33] Pennington: Well, the thing is, it's on Zoom. Because it needs to be recorded.

[01:43:37] Nelson: Oh, that makes sense. Okay, yeah, I just don't want to keep having to do this and like, you know, repeat but I don't mind. I'm not opposed to it. So I definitely will repeat.

[01:43:48] Pennington: If you don't if you don't mind, I don't mind it's yeah, the only reason is like yeah, I have to for like archival purposes like yeah, I gotta be on Zoom. Yeah.

[01:43:58] Nelson: Oh, that's cool. That's fine. Yeah. I think that so there's an obvious differentiation in who gets to be queer. Because like being Black—oh that's what I was saying. [Unclear] So that was a space that was towards Black cis men and Black queer people. And like basically like, being able to iron out our difference.

[01:44:50] Pennington: Alright. You keep going. I'm sorry to interrupt you. You keep going out. Shoot, why was, why is this happening? Is it me? Is it my connection?

[01:44:59] Nelson: Ever had other means? But like, basically, it was a space where we could say, Oh, am I still going out?

[01:45:09] Pennington: Yeah, you're still going out. I missed like the last time.

[01:45:11] Nelson: I may not have the best service. Can you hear me still?

[01:45:14] Pennington: Kind of, but I'm still worried about like going in and out. Shoot, you know, it's so, it's getting worse. No. Okay. What we can do, because this is like, killing me. Um, well, it's not killing me, but you know, it's like, sort of. Kind of you keep freezing.

[01:46:00] Nelson: Okay, can you hear me now?

[01:46:02] Pennington: Yeah, I can hear you.

[01:46:06] Nelson: Hello? Okay. Okay. I'm not really sure what's going on? I don't know, because I have not moved. And so I don't know, like, why is happening. But did you get what I said? Or what did you last hear?

[01:46:23] Pennington: I can't, I mean, it kept going in and out. I kept getting different. Like I heard resources. I heard grants, I heard yield distribution of resources. Basically I'm missing a lot of you what you're saying is very important. I want to make sure I get it down. I'm missing a lot of it, though. Keeps going in and out. Okay. For the sake of let's just say, audio quality or something like that, would you maybe want to schedule like a part two? And then.

[01:46:54] Nelson: Oh, yeah, for sure. Absolutely. I feel like then I would definitely be able to be in a place that would have better Wi Fi. And I could not have to like be on my charger. So yeah, we can definitely do it again [laughter].

[01:47:05] Pennington: Or like you're in front of a computer and relaxed and not sitting in a car sweating balls off. You know what I mean? Just sweating. You know? Okay, poor choice of words. But yeah, if we could, like, do like schedule a part two, and then, you know, we've I've still got a bunch of questions to ask. So yeah, I feel like, for the sake of the audio quality and everything, like I say what you're saying is really, really important. And I want to make sure it gets recorded properly.

[01:47:33] Nelson: For sure.

[01:47:34] Pennington: Okay, so should we just, I was just gonna say well, and now because we've also been talking for like, two hours. That's.

[01:47:41] Nelson: Okay.

[01:47:42] Pennington: That's lengthy amount of time. So I will email you about doing a part two. And then we'll like get the mishegoss figured out before that next one. Okay?

[01:47:55] Nelson: Okay. Awesome. I can't wait. I'm so excited.

[01:47:59] Pennington: Yeah! I'm very excited. I was so happy to meet you. I was very, very I was. I'm just very excited to be part of the project in general. So like, it was just very cool. You know? [Laughter] Before you go for you go give me your Instagram handle.

[01:48:16] Nelson: Oh, yes, sir. It's so dare, like a daredevil D, A, R, E.

[01:48:22] Pennington: Okay.

[01:48:23] Nelson: And then R-E-E. Alright, then U-S. So that's not how to spell my name, of course, but it's like the phonetic spelling of it. Except for like dare so it's just Dare-E-us

[01:48:34] Pennington: Yep. I think I've found you. Alright, one thing I asked do not judge my Instagram.

[01:48:41] Nelson: [Laughter] I won't judge your Instagram as long as you don't judge mine.

[01:48:45] Pennington: I could. It's pretty good. I never learned how to use social media, but. Okay, sounds good. Amazing following and we will schedule a part two, alrighty.

[01:48:55] Nelson: Okay, awesome. Well, I got your follow up. Great. I'm gonna follow you back. Okay. Wonderful. Cool. All right. Talk to you later!

[01:49:02] Pennington: Talk to you later!

[01:49:03] Nelson: Bye!

[01:49:03] Pennington: Enjoy your afternoon!