

Kieryn: I'm Kieryn.

Eve: I'm Hännah. This is Kitchen Table Cult.

Kieryn: Where two Quiverfull escapees talk about our experiences in the cultish underbelly of the religious right.

Eve: Hi, Kieryn.

Kieryn: Hi, Hana.

Eve: I think this is really exciting.

Kieryn: We have been working together since like 2006. It's been a while.

Eve: Yeah, the first time I remember running into you was when you had your politically incorrect blog.

Kieryn: God, yes, I remember that. I remember that. That was after my Xanga, which was-

Eve: Right, I guess I rant into you on Xanga at some point too through all the people who had done TeenPact and all that. And then there was the ROC that started out of that little bible study in that chat group. And that's the first time we interacted with all you guys.

Kieryn: Yes, yeah, I found ROC through the revolution and a bunch of people's blogs. And then I was like, yeah, this is cool. And then I met one of the people at TeenPact.

Eve: That's right, they had that blog database, didn't they?

Kieryn: Yes, a blog network I think is what we called it.

Eve: A blog network.

Kieryn: Yeah, and also a podcast network at one point.

Eve: Yeah, and wow, yeah, everybody had podcasts.

Kieryn: We were podcasting before it was cool. I remember when Audacity was in beta, and that was when I was using it.

Eve: Yep, that's exactly when I was using it too. I did my podcast. I got back from France, met you guys, and that was in 2005. And then 2006, I decided to start my little literary podcast. And it turned out to be too much work, and I had to fight people for the computer at home, because we had one downstairs that everybody shared.

Kieryn: One computer, yeah.

Eve: One computer.

Kieryn: Yep, in public, so everyone can see what you're doing all the time.

Eve: We had, what is it, Safe Eyes? We had Safe Eyes on ours, but I figured out how to hack it really easily.

Kieryn: We had John Hagee's safety network thing filter. I don't remember what it was called. It was bible something, and then I started doing NCFCA, and I couldn't Google anything, because it was censoring all of it. So my parents had to disable it, so I could actually do research, and then we were just ... We'll just put Safe Search on Google, it's fine.

Eve: So to our listeners, welcome to the Kitchen Table Cult Podcast.

Kieryn: Yay.

Eve: Yay.

Kieryn: Yay.

Eve: Yay. So, Kieryn, you want to explain why we're calling it the Kitchen Table Cult?

Kieryn: Well because most of our school and learning was done around the kitchen table, since we were homeschooled, and that was also where-

Eve: And most of the brainwashing happened around the dinner table.

Kieryn: Yes, exactly, where all of the indoctrination and teaching and cult-like infrastructure happened and revolved around the kitchens in our parents' homes or really just our parents' homes entirely, but the kitchen table is a good metaphor.

Eve: Yeah, and the word, cult, is kind of contentious. I know a lot of people are uncomfortable using that term, people who grew up the same way we did or grew up in my church or in the same series of movements. They don't like the word, cult, because it brings up associations of people living together communally, following a charismatic leader, and a lot of these groups didn't really do that. A lot of these families didn't really have that. But when you look at the DSM definition or the terms, the definition of a cult given by sociologists, they also call it high-control groups or high-demand groups. And pretty much every piece of that criteria was met in both my home and family life and also in our church.

Kieryn: My parents actually left churches, because they couldn't run them. My parents created the cult out of our family after being in an actual cult.

Eve: Yeah, my parents joined an actual cult, because it happened to agree with everything we already believed. And when they started deviating from that, we left.

- Kieryn: Yep, that was pretty similar to my experience. And my parents were like, "Well we should be controlling this group."
- Kieryn: And then the cult leaders were like, "No."
- Kieryn: And my parents were like, "Fine," and then continued to build their own.
- Eve: Yeah, my father was basically like, these guys are getting a little bit demanding in terms of the legally binding agreements to not sue the church or each other in the church without permission from the church, et cetera, et cetera. I don't like people telling me what to do. This seems sketchy. I'm out.
- Kieryn: That was actually the reason that my parents never got into ATI beyond the first introductory course.
- Eve: Yeah, same.
- Kieryn: Yeah, because my parents were like, "No, I don't want someone else to tell me what to do or how I should dress. I want to be the one making those rules."
- Eve: Yeah, my father was like, "They seem kind of controlling. I'm not interested," which is ironic. So why do we want to do this podcast?
- Kieryn: Because I answer the same questions all the time. Everybody asks me questions.
- Eve: Yeah, well you and I both do a lot of interviews for our work with CRHE, the Coalition for Responsible Home Education and also talking about Quiverfull life and being a Quiverfull escapee.
- Kieryn: We've also written a lot about it outside of that, extensively.
- Eve: Yeah, and given what's happening right now politically and in terms of our nation and the news cycle, a lot of the stuff that we grew up with is incredibly relevant to how we got where we are today.
- Kieryn: I feel responsible for a lot of it sometimes, because I was like I remember how all these things we were talking about when I was a teenager, and now I'm watching it come into fruition, and I'm like that's ... Okay, I feel like I can say something about this now, because it's happening. It didn't stop when I left, and I now have the ideas to stop it.
- Eve: Well we were trained in it to be part of it, and we defected. I don't think we're necessarily complicit, but we got all of the information. We got the download, and we were expected to be really upstanding, intellectual, well spoken Republican politicians or politicians' wives or thought leaders. Yeah, I mean that's what NCFCA and TeenPact were trying to do. Now you want to give our audience a little SparkNotes on NCFCA and TeenPact?

- Kieryn: Yeah, so NCFCA stands for the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association. It's basically the homeschooled Christian speech and debate club that competes around the nation. And they teach people how to speak persuasively and debate in hopes of being good, upstanding Christian statesmen and taking over the nation for Christ. TeenPact is very similar to that.
- Eve: Or compelling missionaries.
- Kieryn: Or compelling missionaries, or the wives of people who do this thing.
- Eve: Pastors' wives, statesmen's wives, yeah.
- Kieryn: And pastors' wives, yeah. TeenPact is very similar, but what they do is they have classes in most states, not every state yet. California is like the holdout still.
- Eve: But it's functionally a civics class, a high school civics-
- Kieryn: It is a civics class, yeah, and they take homeschoolers and whoever can get off of school around the capitol buildings in their state. They teach them how their state capital works. They teach them how to pull bills, what all that means. There's constitution drills, where we learn the constitution and where to find the rules in the constitution, which is going to come back to bite them.
- Eve: Is that like bible drills for constitution?
- Kieryn: Yes, there's a question, and you have to look up which section or shout out which section. I had it memorized at one point, and I won, and everybody loved me, because it was great.
- Eve: Nice.
- Kieryn: Yeah, I had like five pocket constitutions at any given point, because I was that kind of a nerd.
- Eve: I wasn't allowed to do NCFCA debate or TeenPact. My family let me do the speech class portion at NCFCA once, but I wasn't allowed to do the debate portion, because according to my father, I was, quote, unquote, already good enough at winning arguments, and he didn't want me to be better. The real reason is we probably just didn't have money for it. And they also didn't want to have the unpaid help out of the house for X hours a week doing outside classes. And then TeenPact was also similarly billed as it's too expensive. We can't afford it, and your father works for the government, so you don't need a civics class. You can just sit with him and talk.
- Kieryn: I got to TeenPact, because there was scholarships that I managed to apply for and get accepted to. But I actually kind of ran a small bit of the TeenPact circuit when I was involved. I was on my way to being one of the interns, and I ran through the Georgia

political machine through TeenPact. That kind of helped me start there. And so then I wound up doing a lot of other local races, because I had connections through TeenPact, and people knew me. So I was weirdly politically involved for being a girl at the time.

Eve: Right, and I, I mean we were very well informed about current events in a certain way. I mean we weren't actually well informed, but we thought we were. We were very actively reading Drudge Report and World Magazine and following the federal political process in terms of the pro life movement and various abortion laws state to state and various homeschool laws state to state. There was a whole lot of political awareness in my world, and we went to protest an abortion clinic in Richmond at one point and did the March for Life at various points.

Kieryn: My mom would have Christmas parties that were dedicated to the crisis pregnancy centers in our area and was basically a glorified fundraiser for CPCs.

Eve: So the reason this world that we grew up in was so focused on these issues was there's this whole eschatology that was driving it. And eschatology is the fancy word for end-times theology. What did your family believe?

Kieryn: That the rapture would come at any ... Well they prayed for the rapture to come at any point. They really wanted to be raptured very much. Their entire existence, and then through that, my entire existence was based on Jesus coming at any point. And that led to a bunch of really fun mental health things but also a bunch of bad decisions that my parents made, because they weren't planning on being on the planet for more than a year or whatever.

Eve: Yeah, I haven't really ever asked my parents how they feel about the fact that they've lived this long, and it looks like the world is not going to end any time soon.

Kieryn: When I was going to get married, when I was engaged, my parents were really against it. And then they told me that, well, maybe the rapture will come before then.

Eve: Was this before you ran away/ eloped?

Kieryn: It was either just before or just after. I think it was just after, because it was when I was engaged, so it was after.

Eve: So funny.

Kieryn: Yeah, they were like, "Maybe the rapture will happen." But they'd also told me that before for other things. They were like, "Well maybe the rapture will happen, and then we won't have to deal with this."

Kieryn: And I'm like, "That's not a thing."

Eve: My family passively believed in the rapture. It was definitely taught in the churches in California that we attended when I was a kid, and our family, my family stockpiled water and cans and dried goods for Y2K. We were eating the freeze dried apple chips for like three years afterward. I think my mom probably would have been more of an adherent to the idea of the rapture. I don't really remember my dad talking about it. I [inaudible 00:13:55] the anticipation of the tribulation was definitely a driving factor. There was all this mindset of America is in a state of crisis and downfall, and we are going to be persecuted for our beliefs tomorrow. This is going to happen, so you need to be prepared to give your life up for Christ and live as if you're going to be martyred next week.

Kieryn: Yep, my parents were the same way, and all of their decisions were really, really short term, because the rapture could come at any time. And everything we went through that was the result of a bad decision they made was persecution and meant that we were going to be rewarded and also that we were ... just another sign that the end times were coming soon, because we were so persecuted because of my parents' bad financial decisions.

Eve: Yeah.

Kieryn: That makes sense.

Eve: So what did it mean to your family to be American? I remember you had the American flag all over your blog.

Kieryn: Everywhere, yeah, my parents thought that, I mean they really believed that America was built on Christianity, that God ordained this nation to exist. And we exist to serve their very specific version of God, and that aligned with Rush Limbaugh somehow. So they thought that we were supposed to be this city on a hill. My dad was ... He voted for Reagan. He really bought into Reagan's theory and the way he presented America. So that carried through my childhood. Yeah, my parents were extremely, extremely into Reagan's idea of America, and somehow that was also the equivalent of what God wanted America to be, and therefore that's what we should be working for.

Eve: Well I mean that makes sense, because the moral majority was founded around getting Reagan into office. And so the idea of voting for him and his existence as a president being a Christian, political statement was very important, because that's how the moral majority got out the vote. Once they made it like this, it is Christian for you to support this guy, then they could get the evangelicals out to vote for him.

Kieryn: What's interesting is that was even before my dad was a Christian. So my parents didn't start out wanting to be the best Christians. They didn't start out Quiverfull. They didn't start out with the idea of homeschooling. That all came later, but the sort of fundamentalist approach and I guess way of interpreting the world, that was already there. Whatever it was in their life had already placed that outlook, and then Christianity just took it.

Eve: Got you. So my parents were also ... They considered themselves first-generation Christians. They grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. My grandparents on both sides are fairly liberal, and nobody really understood why they went as conservative as they did. I mean they got caught up in the Jesus movement, got born again and decided that they really needed a break from their past and wanted to be completely different people and life radically for Jesus. So they went into getting married with the idea of we're going to let God plan the size of our family. We are going to raise these children for Christ we are going to homeschool them. I mean I remember being six or seven and telling one of my neighbor kid friends, "I'm not allowed to date. I'm going to court." And I had no idea what that even was.

Kieryn: My parents introduced me to the concept of courting when I was 10, maybe. That was when they'd heard of it. It took them about that long to get there, because they joined a cult when I was seven, and they were there for two years. The cult is what introduced them to the Quiverfull movement and the cool, fun thing that my parents did, where they believed doctors are literally of the devil.

Eve: Yeah, so that's another thing that really comes into this, is suspicion of authority. So my parents, my dad works for the government and also very strongly distrusted the authority of the government. My mom is a nurse, and they vaccinated us, but there was also definitely an emphasis on, well, but we can also have faith for healing and pray over you and anoint you with oil. And maybe the holy spirit will descend, and you won't have cancer anymore or whatever.

Kieryn: Right, that's how that works.

Eve: But my family didn't really buy into Christian dominionism as such, not in the strict sense. They definitely had a dominionist outlook. They definitely believed that America had been a Christian nation and should be a Christian nation again. I know some groups believed that if America is, quote, unquote, returned to being a Christian nation, then Jesus will come again. And so that's why they're working toward that, get the Auburn Avenue Theology, I believe, is the group that explicitly states that. And my parents weren't that extreme, but I definitely was around a lot of people who were, and that was why they had so many kids, was to raise more good Christians.

Kieryn: Yeah, my parents were here for the taking over the world by out breeding the enemy, so to speak. They didn't subscribe to any prediction of when Jesus would come because of that one verse in the bible that was like no one knows the day or the hour. So whenever anyone predicted when it would happen, my parents were like, "It's not happening then."

Eve: My dad would do the same.

Kieryn: Because we're not supposed to know.

Eve: The same, even though he definitely believed that Y2K was going to be cataclysmic, I don't think he believed that was going to be the return [crosstalk 00:20:21].

Kieryn: Yeah, my parents believed that the rapture, yeah, they believed that it would happen in our lifetime or their lifetime, but they didn't know when. But they don't have any plans of retirement or any longevity planning, because they think that it's pointless. So they just don't plan for it.

Eve: So how does the Trumpocalypse play into the way we were raised? How does this feel to you?

Kieryn: Way too familiar, it feels way too familiar.

Eve: Feels like everything we ever wanted.

Kieryn: Yes, and that's what's horrifying, is it's everything my parents and everything that the community that I was raised in, everything, little groups that I worked with was organizing for. And when Pence was picked as the vice president, Pence is literally friends with HSLDA, which is-

Eve: The Quiverfull wet dream for a president.

Kieryn: Yes, and he's just biding his time. They want him to be there. They want him to be the president at some point. At this point I feel like he's just biding time.

Eve: Any time anyone talks about impeachment, I'm like, "That's nice, but get Trump. Keep Trump in, and get Pence out first." Isn't that what happened with-

Kieryn: Yes, this is what I tell people too, and they're like, "You're nuts."

Kieryn: And I'm like, "No."

Eve: [crosstalk 00:21:33] got his VP out first, because his VP was more compromised?

Kieryn: Maybe.

Eve: I think that's what happened. I could be wrong.

Kieryn: I don't remember.

Eve: Audience, correct me if you want, but yeah, I think that's what happened, and I feel like that, it needs to be the play here again.

Kieryn: It needs to be that way.

Eve: Pence cannot be president, because he's lawful evil. He knows what he's about. He knows how to play the game. He's got a plan.



Kieryn: Right, and he presents nicely. He's not just a terrible, awful human being all the time or at least seeming. He knows how to seem reasonable. It's the most dangerous and insidious part, because he seems reasonable. He can easily dehumanize people while being nice about it. Trump doesn't have that tact.

Eve: I don't think he's persuadable. Trump is incredibly pliable. Trump I feel like is just chaotic neutral. He's a mess, but he is not able to consciously create the kind of damage that Pence could do.

Kieryn: Or is doing, even, and we just don't know about it.

Eve: Well let's take a quick break, and then we can do our proper introductions, so you guys can get to know us for who we are and know how we got to where we're at, how we got out.

Kieryn: Here.

Eve: Welcome back, and I think normally we try to have a guest on or answer a listener question, but today we're going to just introduce ourselves, so you know a little bit more about your hosts.

Kieryn: Hooray.

Eve: Hooray.

Kieryn: Hännah, tell us about yourself.

Eve: Hi, guys, my name is Hännah Ettinger. Let's see, I was the oldest daughter in a Quiverfull family. I'm the oldest of nine. We were homeschooled K through 12, and I mostly stayed at home, helping my mom. I didn't really have a social life, because I was obligated to help raise my younger siblings. My family was involved in Calvary Chapel Vineyard Sovereign Grace Ministry Searches. And when I was 12, we moved from California to Virginia to join Sovereign Grace Ministries. And that's where my family really went hardcore with teachings about courtship, being a stay-at-home-daughter, submission, complementarianism, headship, all that stuff. I went to college, but it was kind of treated lightly. It was kind of a fallback option just in case one day my future husband wasn't able to support me or died. And the idea was, I was going to get married, and that was why I existed, because I was going to get married and have babies and raise more good Christian warrior kids.

Eve: And I went to a super conservative college, but it was kind of a perfect halfway house, because it was a lot more liberal and more normal than home. People actually dated, and sometimes they swore. And you didn't have to regulate modesty stuff all the time, but it was still fairly conservative. [inaudible 00:25:00] was still the fourth member of the trinity, and we had chapel twice a week, so it felt pretty safe. Met a guy there, got married, but we had to court, and as our courtship progressed, my dad got more and more controlling and manipulative, and so we got married pretty quickly to help me get

out, because my father believed that he'd transfer his authority from himself to my husband over me at that point. So that was our out.

Eve: And then my husband and I left Sovereign Grace Ministries together, found ourselves becoming more and more liberal, and we got divorced. And suddenly the world was wide open. Anything was possible, and yeah, since then I've come out of the closet. I'm bi, dabbled in polyamory, worked, lived abroad in the Peace Corps, lived in Kurdistan for two years, worked for Democrat politics and have been focusing on healing from PTSD. I'm 29, I live in Roanoke, Virginia, and right now I'm in school for an MFA in creative writing at Hollins University. I'm writing a memoir, but I also write poetry, creative nonfiction and fiction. And Kiernyn and I work for the same organization on occasion, the Coalition for Responsible Home Education, and I do policy advising for them. How about you?

Kiernyn: I'm Kiernyn Darkwater. I'm the oldest of eight. I have seven younger siblings. I was also the oldest daughter in a Quiverfull family, and I was homeschooled from kindergarten until I graduated when I was 15, because my own school was taking too much time away from raising my siblings and running my parents' home and doing all of the things that the eldest daughters are supposed to do in Quiverfull families. The day they graduated me, they told me that I had learned everything I needed to be a wife and mother, and there was no point in teaching me anything else. I hadn't learned algebra. I was going through all the things that I needed to do to graduate, and I was like, "Man, I'm so behind."

Kiernyn: And they were like, "No, no, you're good. You don't need math, it's fine." So I'd describe myself as an educationally neglected homeschooled student, because my education was entirely based around the gender I was assigned at birth and not actually preparing me for life as an adult human being on my own, because I was supposed to not have autonomy. I was supposed to be a mother and grow more children to take over the nation for God. And in that vein, was involved with TeenPact, Generation Joshua, NCFCA and briefly CFC, even more briefly Awana when I was a small child.

Eve: Yeah, we did Awana for like five years.

Kiernyn: Yeah, and all of these organizations are based around training homeschooled students, Christian homeschooled students to take over the country and bring Christian theology and theocracy to the US and turn it back into God's city on a hill.

Eve: Generation Joshua, do you want to unpack what that was a little bit more? I think that's interesting, and I wasn't directly involved in it.

Kiernyn: Yeah, so Generation Joshua is a sister organization or a child organization of the Home School Legal Defense Association, HSLDA. And HSLDA is why homeschooling law in the US is sort of like the wild west right now. They worked to legalize homeschooling in all of the states in the 80s-ish or 70s. And now they work to keep it unregulated. That way the government, again with the fear of government, stays away from these good, godly

homeschool families who are just having infinite numbers of children to take over the country for God.

Eve: They make it a religious liberty issue.

Kieryn: Michael Farris, yes, they believe that parents' rights are unalienable, god given, divine right of kings level of things and that parents have authority over their children well into adulthood. Specifically parents, fathers have authority over their daughters until their daughters are married. HSLDA or the people that run HSLDA, rather, are huge proponents of headship theology. Michael Farris is extremely into that and also started parents' rights organizations to do that.

Eve: Mike Farris, was he the one who started Generation Joshua?

Kieryn: Yeah, sort of, him and Ned Ryan, who no longer works there, founded Generation Joshua. And Generation Joshua is basically also a program that sherpas kids through and to Patrick Henry College, which is the school that HSLDA runs, that gets Christian, conservative kids into politics.

Eve: Indirectly [crosstalk 00:30:24] founded.

Kieryn: Indirectly, right.

Eve: And is, quote, unquote, no longer involved, but they have their offices in the same building.

Kieryn: But they share an office in the same building. I've been there. I saw the HSLDA office in the Patrick Henry School office.

Eve: I have too. I have too.

Kieryn: They are indirectly related but run by the same people. There's a ton of overlap.

Eve: Generation Joshua was designed to get high schoolers really excited about bringing their faith into politics and then funneling them into future enrollees for Patrick Henry College.

Kieryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative), and then after that into positions of government. There were a bunch of people who were staff members in Bush's cabinet, who came through PHC. PHC elected a bunch of people or helped get a bunch of people in offices all over. I feel like they had a bunch of recent graduates running during the Tea Party time. It was weird, because there was a point where I was like, I know of all of these people that are running in all of these races.

Eve: One of them was a state senator or state legislator in Oklahoma.

Kieryn: Yep, so they have this program.

Eve: After Gen J, where did you go? What happened to you?

Kieryn: After Generation Joshua and TeenPact and all of that, basically after my parents graduated me from high school, I started courting a friend of mine at the time. And my parents really wanted me to be married when I was 16.

Eve: Was that a financial decision on their part?

Kieryn: No, no, my mom has this fantasy where she and I would be pregnant at the same time, and the only way for that to happen was for me to be married at 16. So that way when I was 18, I could have a baby, and we could be pregnant at the same time. Yeah, it's not even a religious thing. It's just a weird thing that my mom had.

Eve: Pregnancy fetish, got it.

Kieryn: My mom wanted me to ... Yeah, she wanted to live vicariously through me, so she wanted me to be married when I was 16. And it was also this gap window of time, where she had just had a baby and wasn't pregnant. So it was the perfect window of time for me to leave before I ceased being a human for the nine months that she was pregnant again and became a broom with arms.

Eve: Your mom was always really sick when she was pregnant, so you had to run the house.

Kieryn: Yeah, her pregnancies were terrible, and they just got worse over time, because again, my parents didn't believe in doctors. So my mom had untreated medical issues while pregnant that she had no way of getting help for. And so she was basically on bed rest for nine months while I did everything from running the household to educating my siblings.

Eve: Now I remember your parents then broke you guys up, and then what?

Kieryn: Yes, because I didn't get married fast enough. So I was like, "I don't want to be married at 16."

Kieryn: And they were like, "That's not allowed." And then my mom got pregnant again, and after my mom got pregnant again, they were like, "Well you've experienced love, so now you're good on that. And since you don't want to be married right this second, since you're a minor, you just can't. And you can't talk to each other, and you can have no more contact. And you just have to go back to being the surrogate mom that you've been since you were eight."

Eve: Because now I'm going to be deathly sick for nine months, and you have to help us.

Kieryn: Exactly, and I was like, "No, I know how to use the computer." So I then plotted for ... They broke us up when I was 17 and a half, so I only had six months to kill until I was legally an adult and could escape and have no repercussions-ish, no legal repercussions. They couldn't bring me back. So I planned, and I worked with Hännah and a bunch of our mutual friends and orchestrated an escape on my 18th birthday. I was so detailed that I started carrying around a stuffed messenger bag with me three months ahead of time, so that way when I left-

Eve: We were [crosstalk 00:34:34] military levels of prepared for anything to happen at any given time, so of course you were prepared.

Kieryn: Right, obviously I was ready for this. So I started carrying around a fake stuffed bag with me everywhere. That way when I left on my birthday, it wouldn't be suspicious. I didn't have my driver's license at the time, but since I was 18, and my parents were going to need someone to drive people around, I managed to convince them to let me get my driver's license. So I did that-

Eve: That was the ploy I used to get my driver's license also.

Kieryn: Months before my 18th birthday. And then because what you need when you get your driver's license is your birth certificate and your social, I just kept those, and I didn't put them back where my mom kept them. And when she asked me about it, I was like, "Yeah, no, I have it safe with my stuff. I'll put it back later." And I just [crosstalk 00:35:25], so I kept all my vital records.

Eve: Key note here, if you are [crosstalk 00:35:27] and you want to escape, have a copy of your birth certificate and know your Social Security number, because even if you don't have an ID, that will make all the difference.

Kieryn: You need both of those things for anything. So if you have them, keep them.

Eve: And any school records.

Kieryn: And take them with you, even if it's a weird Word document that makes no sense. It helps.

Eve: You probably wrote [crosstalk 00:35:49] when your mother was yelling at you.

Kieryn: My transcript is a mess. Half of it is in As, and half of it is in numbers, and I don't know what my mom was doing. She doesn't know what she was doing.

Eve: I'm not sure if my mom just forged my transcript. I'm not sure if I ever actually had grades until I got a transcript, and then I was like, look, I got an A in all these classes, wow.

Kieryn: Yeah, I got an A in math, and I'm like ... I have questions.

Eve: I know I put in the work [crosstalk 00:36:20].

Kieryn: I have serious questions.

Eve: But I didn't think I deserved it, so I wasn't sure. I don't know, I haven't looked at my transcript in a long time. So what are you doing with yourself now that ... Are you still married?

Kieryn: No, so now I am divorced. Yeah, since leaving and escaping and getting married, I moved to the West Coast, got divorced, started transitioning, started school at Laney College to be a machinist, because I was never allowed to work with tools or build anything, because I was a girl, and a uterus made that impossible somehow. So now I'm making my own lathe tools and bending metal to my will, and it's fine. And when I'm not at school, doing school, I am organizing to get all gender bathrooms near my classrooms and institutional queer support. And I'm organizing in the East Bay, because I live in Oakland, California, to build more housing so anyone who wants to live here, can live here. And I work with East Bay for Everyone, and we're the cool YIMBY kids.

Kieryn: I'm a founding board member of the Coalition for Responsible Home Education, and I'm the tech director. And I'm starting the California chapter, and we work to make homeschool safer for students through policies, research, information, just answering a bunch of questions, giving resources to people.

Eve: Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah, CRHE is really fantastic and a very need group, because I think before they existed, there wasn't really any homeschoolers for homeschoolers organization that was having alumni and people who had been homeschooled speaking to the interests of homeschooling and homeschooling parents and homeschoolers.

Kieryn: Yeah, CRHE to my knowledge is one of the only ... I think we are recently not the only organization organizing around the interests of homeschooled children. But for a long time we were.

Eve: Yeah, and I think it's important to note, though, to contrast us with HSLDA, which has been around a lot longer and is fairly well established. HSLDA advocates on the behalf of homeschooling parents.

Kieryn: And that's it.

Eve: It's to keep them out of trouble, pretty much, to keep the state off their back. And we are interested in the rights of children and protecting children from being abused, and so that's why we're trying to fill that hole.

Kieryn: Yes.

Eve: What do you do for fun?

Kieryn: I play video games, and I walk around the lake at pupper o'clock, because I don't have a dog, and I like watching other people's dogs. So between the hours of 4:00 and 8:00, it's pupper o'clock on Lack Merritt, and everyone has their dogs, and it's wonderful. That's what I do to relax.

Eve: I have two cats, and I have a burgeoning houseplant addiction. I have a garden out on my deck that's just ... I've got a little deck area that's full of potted plants. And then inside I've got vines and succulents and who knows what going off everywhere in every corner and going to be very sad in the winter, because I don't get as much light in my house as I would like. So I'm going to have to pick and choose which plants make it through the winter.

Kieryn: Just get shade-friendly plants.

Eve: I do. I have a bunch of them. [crosstalk 00:39:49] Yeah, and I like binging Netflix. I like the new Sharp Objects, and I've been watching Pose and these ... I've been watching Claws. It's real dark comedy, intense TV series.

Kieryn: I've been slowly working through Anne With an E. It's real good.

Eve: It seems like it's really good. I watched the first episode, and the way they depicted PTSD was really fantastic.

Kieryn: That was what sold me on it, was you understand this, okay. And then the period episode was really hard but really good. I was like I feel seen right now. I understand all of that.

Eve: I'm going to have to watch that. Which episode is that?

Kieryn: Yeah, it's like the second or third one. It's real early. I had to not watch it again for another week and a half, because I was still processing it, but it was good.

Eve: Have you watched any Handmaid's Tale?

Kieryn: I have not watched it yet, but I've read the cliff notes of it, and I started trying to read the book. And at some point I was just like I lived this. I know what happens now.

Eve: Yeah, I have watched the whole show, and I find it really comforting, because once you have been gaslit by authorities who are telling you that what you see as problems in reality aren't real or aren't serious, when you see that reality being presented as very real and very serious, it's very reassuring, because it's like, look, I wasn't crazy. I didn't make any of this up, and my reality was maybe able worse in this way or that way, and so I feel less guilty for having PTSD now or whatever.

Kieryn: This is why I should watch it. I just need to re-up my Hulu subscription.

Eve: Listeners, if you want to donate a Hulu subscription to us, you can sign up to our Patreon to pay for us to be able to keep watching Handmaid's Tale.

Kieryn: Please, thank you.

Eve: Next week I think we'll talk more about current events and the Supreme Court, what the retirement of Justice Kennedy means for Roe v Wade and how we feel about that and now that relates to everything that we grew up with. And we'll be taking some listener questions and going forward. We'll kind of break down some of these topics. What is Quiverfull? What is courtship? Why do we believe that our families were cults? What is this whole homeschooling thing about anyway, and why did our parents do it, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera?

Kieryn: How did we get out?

Eve: How did we get out? Yeah, so if you have questions, you can shoot them to us on our website. What's our email address, if people want to contact us?

Kieryn: It is KitchenTableCult@gmail.com

Eve: Yay, you can follow us on Twitter, although we haven't been very active yet.

Kieryn: We have not been active at all, but we could be.

Eve: We could be, we might be.

Kieryn: And donate to our Patreon, so we can keep doing this and also watch Handmaid's Tale and bring you more good content.

Eve: All right, thanks, guys, for joining us. Until next time ...

Kieryn: See you next week.

Eve: Bye.

Kieryn: Bye.