

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: Hey, everybody. Welcome to the Kitchen Table Cult podcast where we talk about our experiences in Christian fundamentalism. If you've just joined us, we have one episode before this where we talk about ourselves and introduce our backgrounds and why we're doing this podcast. And if you've been with us since the beginning, thank you so much for your support, we're really excited to do this. Kieryn, you want to talk about our Patreon?

Kieryn: Yes. Thank you everyone who is part of our Patreon and if you haven't hear about our Patreon, we have one. It's kitchentablecultpod on Patreon.com. If you back it, you get the episode a day in advance. There's also different levels where we will hang out and be various levels of inebriated and just talk about his in an after dark style. It helps us keep going, it helps us get Hulu subscriptions so we can watch Handmaid's Tale and report back on it and it's good. Thank you to everyone who's doing it. Please join.

Eve: Yeah, it's really important to us that we're able to do this without imposing on any of our other responsibilities, but also this... I think talking about these thing is really timely and important and it's something that I think is really valuable because, one, in our community, it's really easy to forget that we're not alone and that these experiences have been had by a lot of people. And so bringing people together on the Patreon to talk about what we've all been through and try to understand what we came out of and why we believe what we believe now can be a really healing process. So, come join us, you're not alone.

Eve: So, this week's topic, we're going to talk about the Supreme Court and Roe v. Wade and what Justice Kennedy's retirement announcement means to us who have been following this issue since, oh, I don't know, we knew about anything.

Kieryn: What it was. Yeah.

Eve: As soon as we were old enough to say the words Roe v. Wade, we knew what was up.

Kieryn: It was pretty young. It was... it was young.

Eve: Did you ever go to protests, pro-life marches or protests growing up?

Kieryn: I didn't go to protests, mostly because I lived in a place were there weren't any abortion clinics to protest. I lived with a bunch of crisis pregnancy centers, so we donated a lot to those and held parties for those, but there wasn't any protests that I ever went to. I

don't think I ever did March for Life either, although my parents supported the idea. It was just too many people to keep track of in a parade.

Eve: Well, yeah. And also, getting from Atlanta to D.C. with X amount of kids is kind of...

Kieryn: Yeah, no, that's not a thing.

Eve: ... strenuous. Yeah. We didn't go to the March for Life either, mostly because I grew up in California for most of that time, but we always had fundraisers for crisis pregnancy clinics, we always were subscribing to World Magazine, so we were always kept up to date about everything. It was kind of dinner table conversation material although, obviously, within tactful ways of talking about it. I mean, our parents were not [crosstalk 00:04:13].

Kieryn: There were no real details.

Eve: There were no real details! It was just like, "Yeah, we want to stop America from killing babies." And we'd be like, "Yeah, killing babies sounds bad, let's not kill babies."

Kieryn: I found an entire blog post that I wrote this morning where I was talking about the runaway Supreme Court and how we have murdered an entire generation of people through abortion and I was just like... I mean that was a take. That was a take and a half.

Eve: I mean, we were taught to think that it was, yeah, it was a generational genocide.

Kieryn: Yeah. That was what we were taught, that was the rhetoric. It was all very much like, "These are human beings from the time that the sperm hits the egg, fully fledged in their own right, so anything that goes wrong..." And to sidebar this in a completely different direction, my mom had two stillborns and that really messed with me. Because what happens when their born dead?

Eve: Right.

Kieryn: Like they're alive from conception, right? They're full human beings from conception and then they're born not alive, but they never existed. Like they never had identities, they never had anything, they were only ever inside of my mom's body and as soon as they were out, they weren't there anymore.

Eve: Did you guys have a funeral for them?

Kieryn: Yes. And my parents used that as like a salvation, Evangelical thing. It was kind of gross.

Eve: How did they do that?

Kieryn: Well, my dad just like was the... eulogist. So my dad had the podium and just gave a speech that was come to Jesus.

Eve: Was it a full on altar call?

Kieryn: Oh, yeah.

Eve: Did anybody come up?

Kieryn: No, because most people were already Christians. But my parents were also the kind that was like, "And you don't have to come up if you're shy, you can just say this prayer in your seat," and like did the leading into the prayer thing.

Eve: So, your parents were against any form of birth control.

Kieryn: Yes. They believed that birth control was almost an unforgivable sin. My parents actually fostered two kids between like one of my sister's and the other sister because they felt about being on birth control for the four years between my brother and my next closest in age sister.

Eve: Wow.

Kieryn: Yeah.

Eve: I learned this week that... I mean, I guess I never thought about it, but I learned this week that my parents believed that condoms were wrong.

Kieryn: Yeah, mine, too.

Eve: Yeah, because it was a kind of birth control, so when they did the family planning stuff, they were... my mom was charting her temperature, she was using the Catholic work book to like go through and check mucous quality and temperature and stuff and using that instead of anything else. Because even condoms were interfering with God's will.

Kieryn: Yep. Yep, that was what my mom told me, too. She didn't chart, though. She was really lazy about it.

Eve: How did that make you feel growing up about yourself being born female? Assigned female birth?

Kieryn: I didn't care until I got my period and then everything was bad.

Eve: Yeah?

Kieryn: Everything was terrible after I got my period because I knew what that meant at that point. And that wasn't anything that I wanted, I'd seen my mom's pregnancies go from like bad to worse and I was just 12 and they were going to get so much worse and I had no idea. And that was just something I didn't want for myself because I saw how bad it was and I saw what being a mom meant because I was a mom at that point for one of

my younger siblings and I was just like, "I don't... None of this is a thing that I want to do with my life." And so, then, when I got my period... First, it was in the most humiliating way possible because we were like... We had another family living with us at the time and I was outside doing school and I was wearing like light pink pants and I was sitting on a tree.

Eve: Oof.

Kieryn: And the older girl who was living with us just pointed it out openly, loudly, for my brother and my siblings and her cousin and everybody to hear. And I was just mortified and also thought I was dying. Because I didn't know what a period was.

Eve: Oh, man.

Kieryn: Like, I didn't know that that's what was happening. And so I was just like...

Eve: So you hadn't been warned. Nobody warned you.

Kieryn: I wasn't warned! My mom gave me these books and told me to read them, but like because of purity culture, I skipped over everything that had to do with reproducing. So, I didn't know! I had no idea!

Eve: You self-censored! You self-censored yourself into ignorance.

Kieryn: I did. And my mom was like, "This is fine." But we were also told not to think about sex and that's what... as far as I knew it was, because no one ever bothered to explain it.

Eve: Did you know what sex was?

Kieryn: I mean, vaguely.

Eve: Okay.

Kieryn: Like I knew that sex was this mythical thing that happened in mom and dad's room and then my mom was pregnant suddenly. That was my idea of it for a really long time.

Eve: I must have learned about it pretty early on. I don't remember a time when I didn't have a sense of what it was, but I do remember the... Monica Lewinsky scandal was a turning point in my awareness of it, because I remember being like, "What did Hil-" not Hillary. "What did Bill do wrong? Why is Hillary staying with him? What happened? What's going on? Why isn't she getting a divorce?" Or, I don't know, I don't even remember what questions I was asking, but I remember getting a little bit of a short version at that point.

Eve: I remember getting... I got my period like the day before 9/11.

Kieryn: Oh, shit.

Eve: Yeah. There's no forgetting what happened.

Kieryn: No.

Eve: And I remember... At that point, I wanted to be a midwife, at that point, I had read all of my mom's nursing textbooks and I was really enchanted with the idea of pregnancy because it's kind of incredible what your body can do. And so, I remember just thinking like, "Finally, I'm good for something." Which is like so, so messed up.

Kieryn: That was how my mom approached it to me. She was like, "Yes! Now you can have babies!" And it was like I had fulfilled my purpose in life and I was just horrified.

Eve: Yeah. And then I remember thinking, "But I don't think I actually want to be a mom because I'm already doing all that work." But like, it's really cool what my body can do, but I also... Yeah, I don't know, I felt weird and guilty, like I was going to be abandoning my life's purpose if I didn't have kids.

Kieryn: Yeah. I was definitely taught that I was. That's definitely a point of angst with my parents, especially after I got married and didn't start instantly reproducing. Like that was a thing [crosstalk 00:11:09].

Eve: So, yeah, how did they handle that?

Kieryn: Very passive aggressively. They sent me, one year for my birthday, a 300 page tome that was just printouts from Ancestry.com with me in there and my spouse and like nothing. Nothing else there after that part. I mean, obviously, that was true, but it was just sort of like... The way my mom works is like, there was like obviously supposed to be something there.

Eve: I remember one of my... one of the family stories that we'd always throw around was that my dad's best friend, for my parent's wedding, got them a pack of diapers as their wedding present.

Kieryn: I would've murdered that person.

Eve: And my... I remember like someone, I don't remember which of my parents, like they made a joke of like, "Ha ha, we're going to do this." And I was just like, "Nope. I'm already going to be on birth control and not doing that and I need a break because I've already just raised like five kids, so give me a minute."

Kieryn: Yep. I was just telling people, I'm like, "Yeah, no, give me like a decade," and planning to myself to have my hysterectomy within a decade, which is actually happening now.

Eve: Yeah!

Kieryn: So, [crosstalk 00:12:25].

Eve: So, let's catch everybody up!

Kieryn: Yes.

Eve: Kieryn's having a hysterectomy!

Kieryn: I am so excited. I have been... What's cool is like exactly a decade ago this month, my mom took the pregnancy test that was like, "Oh yeah, we're having another baby," and that was the last... that was my last sibling, that was the one that like was the catalyst for everything.

Eve: I remember you calling me right after that happened and I don't think you were capable of crying at that point because you were so shut down, but if you had been, you would've been crying when you called me because you were so upset.

Kieryn: Yup. I was devastated. I had no idea how to cope. I was just... Because it spelled death for me in a lot of ways. It was just like I ceased being a human being for another nine months and it was terrible. And so, it was then, like that day, I like looked up how to be sterilized and how to get on birth control and how to not have kids.

Eve: Yeah, you have been talking...

Kieryn: And then I got married... It's been so long.

Eve: You've been talking about getting hysterectomy for pretty much as long as I can remember.

Kieryn: Yeah. Yeah.

Eve: So...

Kieryn: And now it's just like... finally. Finally.

Eve: So, we... If we don't have another episode out for two weeks, this is why. Kieryn's recovering. But maybe you'll be like so high on drugs that we'll get... we'll have fun there...

Kieryn: And like it might be entertaining, actually. It's...

Eve: We might have a fun... it's like Patreon only podcast.

Kieryn: Yes, this is the Kieryn on narcotics podcast.

Eve: Yeah.

Kieryn: Talking about what it's like after having a hysterectomy.

Eve: So, I had a funny experience because my wedding anniversary was the anniversary of Roe v. Wade and I didn't realize that when I got married. So our first wedding anniversary, I was like, "We're going to do things, we're going to do this, we're going to do that." And like my ex was like, "But I want to go to the March for Life." And I was just like, "I am not going to that and I know you like..." While I was working pretty near the only abortion clinic that was functioning in the state of Maryland in Germantown. So, I was working about five minutes away from that and so he was waiting tables and so he'd go... and we were sharing a car, so he'd drop me off at work some days when he didn't have a shift and he'd go and participate in the protest in front of the clinic.

Kieryn: Oh, my God.

Eve: And then we'd have lunch afterward and I just remember being like, "Yeah, you can do this, this is your thing, but like I strongly, strongly disagree with this. I think that..." Obviously, I haven't figured out what I believe yet, but I was just very uncomfortable with it. And so when he was like, "Yeah, I want to go to the March for Life on our anniversary instead of going away for the weekend. Maybe we can postpone our anniversary celebration." I was just livid. And we didn't.

Kieryn: Yeah, no.

Eve: And he was like mad about it. And then, the next year, well, he asked for a divorce like right before our second anniversary. So, he did go to the March for Life that day. And I remember like seeing photos and just being like, "I cannot believe this. This is not real. This is not real life." Because it's like... I don't know. It felt like men who thought that they knew what was best for women were getting all up in their emotions about something they didn't understand and were trying to, basically, speak for women without women. So, that's why I had a problem with him going because I was like, "You don't get the issues at stake here because it's never going to directly affect you."

Kieryn: Nope. He will never be able to understand what that is like.

Eve: So, did you... growing up, did you know anyone who had gotten an abortion? Or were you conscious of that?

Kieryn: I hadn't known anyone who had an abortion growing up. Or at least no one who admitted it. Like I'm sure I knew people who had, but no one who admitted it. No one who talked about it.

Eve: I... There were several people who I grew up knowing that they had or, in our church, who had and they talked about it as like this super dark shameful thing that they were never going to be able to stop grieving.

Kieryn: Yeah, like we had some people come speak at our church a couple times during pro-life month or whatever that were like, "I had an abortion and I regret it and I feel really bad and now I'm trying to have infinite numbers of children." It's not...

Eve: So, the politics of Quiverfull wife are really interesting because these choices are not just personal, like my existence is because I have a uterus and therefore I'm useful to this cause and also because God is calling us to this, but also there's this like sense of because America was formerly a Christian nation... Sidebar, it wasn't, they just think it is. Like that this was one of the signs of like the ends times and the signs of our society's downfall and...

Kieryn: It was some verse in Revelation that you could extrapolate easily to be like, "All of these things. Womens in control of their bodies, these things that we think are wrong are right. Oh, my God."

Eve: Right. And so the politics of it... This is what the moral majority was kind of founded around. This is what they discovered that Evangelicals would come and vote for, like this is what would get out. The Evangelical vote was Roe v. Wade and it's interesting because the more I study Evangelical history, the more I realize that the Catholics have always been pretty consistently opposed to abortion, but they weren't political about it so much. And... up until Roe. v. Wade. And then the Evangelicals just were kind of ambivalent. Obviously, there were some that definitely had problems with it, but most of them, it was not an issue until it was turned into a graphic imagination piece that was then turned and used to get people to get out and vote.

Kieryn: And murdering an entire generation.

Eve: We've all seen the Westboro Baptist signs. The super graphic abortion aftermath pictures and those were like really, really common. I remember seeing them in like World Magazine. That was part of our regular media diet.

Kieryn: Yeah, they did not shy away from graphic descriptions of abortion and fear mongering and making it seem like this is the most horrible thing imaginable is to not want to be pregnant, to not want to have a child.

Eve: Right. And it was really interesting because I didn't realize how birth control actually worked until I was already married and starting to do research on all this. Actually, right before I got married, I guess, was when I started doing this research. And I realized, not realized, but I learned that the uterus sloughs off fertilized zygotes at a higher rate without the interference of birth control than it does when you're on hormonal birth control. So like hormonal birth control regulates your cycle so much that you lose fewer fertilized zygotes than if you were not on anything.

Kieryn: Which just blows everything out of the water.

Eve: Right. And that was the moment for me where I was like, "Well, so being on the pill is literally more pro-life." If you believe that life begins at conception, everybody would be

on the pill. But they don't know how the pill works, it's... And that's the piece that's baffling to me is there's so much misinformation about this and it was so fun when I was in Kurdistan with the Peace Corps. I was able to do some sex ed conversations with some of these girls from my school and from other schools in the area and the stuff that they were taught... They knew maybe more than I did growing up. And so we had these really great conversations but it was just kind of baffling to me like in Kurdistan they believe that wind is going to give you a cold, but they know more about birth control than I did growing up.

Kieryn: That's amazing.

Eve: The lack of information that the... depriving women of information about their bodies within Evangelical culture is just stunning to me.

Kieryn: It's intentional because if women had access to that, like if I had access to information about birth control and all that, I would've known that my periods were terrible and not normal well before I was like well into adulthood. I would've known so much more about my body and so much more about like what is and isn't right with it, beyond just that, "Oh, by the way, I'm not murdering babies. I do that with my period." Like...

Eve: And female pain is just not taken very seriously in...

Kieryn: No, it's really not.

Eve: ... in Evangelical culture anyway, so it just... Extending that to your body is very normal, natural part of that. Yeah, we won't take your suffering seriously at any point.

Kieryn: Well, and my parents even glorified suffering, so it was like the more you were in pain like the better you were or...

Eve: Well, right, because that's how you become a more Godly person is...

Kieryn: Right, is through suffering.

Eve: ... through suffering. So, the other thing I learned when I was doing those like sex ed conversations was about how access to birth control and what it does like in a society. Like... Economies do better because women are able to go to college and women are able to like choose who they marry without having any form of coercion. If you get pregnant by a rapist, you don't ever think about marrying them or being- owing them anything...

Kieryn: No.

Eve: ... because you're able to dissolve any sort of obligation or connection to them if you're on birth control or if you're able to access an abortion. And so that blew my mind, it was like yeah, this is like overall... Women die less, women stay in abusive relationships less,

and are able to contribute to the overall welfare of society if they're able to access birth control.

Kieryn: Which is all of the things that we're taught not to do.

Eve: And it's so funny to me because the church is supposed to be doing these things, where the church is like, "Yeah, we care about the welfare of humans and we're like pro-life means we're invested in society and making things better and helping women have better options." But I... The single moms at my church were doing it alone. They weren't really...

Kieryn: They weren't getting help.

Eve: No, they weren't getting help. They were getting slut shamed instead.

Kieryn: Right. And told they should reconcile with their abusive exes who beat them and did whatever.

Eve: Right.

Kieryn: My parents were those people. They felt like they needed to reach out to single mothers and like take care of them and convince them to go reconcile with their abusive exes, so that way they could be whole again. Like there was something broken with them.

Eve: Right because having an abusive father is better than having no father, which is just mind blowing to me.

Kieryn: Like, no, no.

Eve: I would rather have like children have healthy attachment styles and not have a trauma at key developmental stages in their growth than... yeah, than just have the illusion of having a family that's intact.

Kieryn: Yup.

Eve: So, when did you get involved with the politics of pro-life? The pro-life movement.

Kieryn: It's sort of just always been in the background. I also wasn't involved in a lot of pro-life organizations specifically, I was more broadly focused, it was just sort of part of my politics rather than a focus of my politics. So, it was just sort of like... I don't know, its approach is more a part of a platform where its' like obviously abortion is bad because you're murdering like my peers or whatever.

Eve: I was... I mean, we were all very aware of the Supreme Court... like who on the Supreme Court would uphold Roe v. Wade...

Kieryn: I remember following that.

Eve: And I remember like that was why... Like people like the Harris' going to law school or like getting involved in clerking for judges. That's why the judicial system was of any interest was not because of like reforming the judicial system or like helping make it more fair or like any sort of actual Christian...

Kieryn: It was only, "We want to roll back Roe v. Wade."

Eve: It was strictly Roe. v. Wade and it was... there was basically no other reason to care about it. And I remember like the TRAP laws thing being a very interesting piece of this because this was our back door plan for like if we can't overturn Roe v. Wade, we're going to functionally disable it, which is pretty much been successful. So, what does TRAP stand for again? I forget.

Kieryn: You're just bringing on all the fronts right now.

Eve: TRAP is... stands for...

Kieryn: Targeted regulation of abortion providers.

Eve: Okay, so how do TRAP laws work? TRAP laws are like the laws that Wendy Davis was filibustering against that would require abortion clinics be up to certain codes and so that they would be like OR quality clinics when you don't actually need an OR room to perform an abortion safely. So, it would be making things like cost prohibitive, slowing things down...

Kieryn: Just making things hard.

Eve: Yes. Requiring women to see... or uterus having people to see a video of an ultrasound of the pregnancy. Requiring them to wait 24 hours, requiring parental sign offs, notifications of parents, which is like, well, if this is of an incest baby, you're never getting that signed off. Yeah, no, that's not going to happen. Requiring... I don't know, all these things that are just prohibitive...

Kieryn: Making it impossible.

Eve: Yeah, making it like economically difficult, logistically difficult, and just trying to discourage people from having access to it, even if it's technically legal.

Kieryn: Their making you watch a video of an ultrasound is a tactic that they have at crisis pregnancy centers that they do all the time and also making you wait and also just like giving you bad information.

Eve: Yup. Trans vaginal ultrasound requirement that is incredibly invasive and like... Okay, so, I have had those, many of those because where I was living with the Peace Corps, that

was their preferred method of doing a gynecological check up and they're not comfortable. And, also, if you've just been raped...

Kieryn: None of that.

Eve: That's going to be incredibly triggering and traumatizing and I have been in that position where I've been having a trans vaginal ultrasound after having been raped and I don't want that. I don't want to make anybody go through that. That's not fun. That's emotionally intense and exhausting and demanding and to make that a law... That was one of the things that was up for vote in Virginia a couple years back was like requiring women who were seeking abortions to have a trans vaginal ultrasound beforehand and watch the video of whatever was in their uterus before having... yeah.

Kieryn: They were just like, "Let's give you PTSD for this thing that you're already going through."

Eve: Yeah, no, it's traumatic, it's invasive, it's unnecessary. There's no reason for it. So, that was plan B. If we didn't get the supreme court, we were going to take these things through the state legislatures and make it impossible and onerous and...

Kieryn: Lo and behold.

Eve: ... difficult. And they've pretty much done that. Like...

Kieryn: Yeah, there's very little that hasn't...

Eve: That's pretty awful. But yeah, that's the conservative right strategy, like the grass roots organizing at the state level and just working your way up and I think that's what's been overlooked in a lot of these cases is like... They're really, really good at that.

Kieryn: Yeah, everyone is looking to the federal government, they don't realize that it's happening in states. Like it all starts at the grass roots level, it all starts at the state level and then it works up to the federal level and nobody's watching Pence and this is also like his thing.

Eve: Yeah, and this is what's concerning about this is you have a whole bunch of stay at home moms who are all emotionally invested in this fantasy of what an abortion is based off of all these graphic images and graphic horror stories that they've been told. And so they don't... they've got free time, they're going to go knocking door to door and the damages are just not getting...

Kieryn: Or calling their senators or whatever.

Eve: Or calling their senators and they're not getting the... And so, representatives are not getting pushback on the same level from the left speaking up for these things because

they don't think it's a concern. And so you have massive numbers of church ladies who have free time who are going to be politically active on this. It's effective.

Kieryn: Yup. And when all the legislators hear is angry voices demanding they don't do a thing, like...

Eve: They think that's what all they can [crosstalk 00:31:30].

Kieryn: ... that's what they're going to go with.

Eve: Yeah, they think that's what all their constituents believe because that's all their hearing and so they're going to feel hemmed in and required to agree with them.

Kieryn: Even though the vast majority of people, and even though they know the vast majority of people disagree and think that this is wrong...

Eve: Yeah, when you get the whole like...

Kieryn: ... you're going to go with who's loud.

Eve: Yeah, the polling data will show otherwise, but if like 80% of their constituent calls are saying like, "We need to make abortions more difficult to access," then they're going to be having to vote for that. It's really stressful.

Kieryn: It's really stressful. This is why I'm happy I'm not having a uterus anymore. All of the stress will vanish.

Eve: This is why I am very thankful to Obamacare for my IUD and we're going to keep it that way.

Kieryn: Yes.

Eve: Okay, so we had a caller question and I'm going to dial her in. So this is what we're going to do, guys, if you have a question and you E-mail us and you're available and it's an important question, we will call you and get you on air to talk about it with us.

Eve: All right, so we are calling Jennifer.

Jennifer: Hi, you've reached Jennifer's cell phone...

Eve: Oh no!

Kieryn: No!

Eve: We'll call right back.

Eve: Okay, well, if she calls me back, we'll get on there. Do you have anything else you want to talk about today?

Kieryn: I feel like I had thoughts and now they're just gone.

Eve: Okay. Well, we can take a little break.

Kieryn: Oh, I was thinking about like the justices on the Court right now because now that Kennedy is leaving, there's an opening but it's mostly right now a bunch of people who are already on the record of saying they would support an overturn of Roe v. Wade. And some people are like that's not likely, but I have doubts. I have doubts.

Eve: Yeah, well, and it's interesting because the Court, as it exists, has... It has moved, like the Overton Window has like moved to the right further and so the Court used to be fairly centrist and now it's gotten more and more conservative and so anyone that they appoint who's going to be, quote unquote, centrist and going to be much more conservative than we would have had 15, 20 years ago and...

Kieryn: I mean, even when Obama was president, it's going to be more conservative than that.

Eve: Yeah. Everybody, Merrick Garland was super conservative compared to history of justices that we'd had. And yet he looks super liberal compared to everybody who's on there.

Kieryn: Yeah. I remember when Roberts was being nominated and confirmed and everyone was like... Like the only question I remember anyone talking about was where he stood on Roe v. Wade and he was like, "Yeah, if Roe v. Wade came up, I would probably overturn it." And everyone was like, "Cool." And then he was confirmed.

Eve: Yeah. Well, and that's the thing, is like I think we will probably see Roe v. Wade overturned in our lifetime. It's already been gutted, but it will be overturned...

Kieryn: It really has.

Eve: And what it's going to do, and this is thing that I have real beef with pro-life logic on this, because what overturning Roe v. Wade and like restricting access to abortions will do is it will end legal abortions.

Kieryn: Yup. That's it.

Eve: It's not going to stop abortions, it's not going to stop the end... So we're going to have women or people with uteruses dying because they're going to be trying to get back alley abortions, they're going to try to do it themselves, and they're going to bleed out and we're going to have horror stories.

Kieryn: Yup. Like before I realized that abortion was an option for me, my backup plan was DIYing it with like black cohosh and just hoping for the best.'

Eve: With what?

Kieryn: Black cohosh.

Eve: Oh yeah.

Kieryn: It's what I used to like restart my periods and if you take enough of it, it will also do the thing.

Eve: Yeah.

Kieryn: So...

Eve: Go find your local witch.

Kieryn: Yeah.

Eve: Get a brew.

Kieryn: But like that was my plan because I, at the time, I wasn't comfortable with my in-laws finding out that I would've had an abortion if I had one, so I was going to fake a miscarriage. That was my backup.

Eve: Right. Because that's the only way to get sympathy is if God decided that the baby was going to die rather than you.

Kieryn: Right, yeah. Because that's the equation is who matters more. And the pro-life movement is always the unborn fetus, never the person carrying it.

Eve: And it's so ironic to me that these are the people that have no interest in children's rights. These are the same people that will lobby for no protections for children for homeschooling, they will not care if...

Kieryn: They won't vaccinate...

Eve: ... parents are...

Kieryn: ... they won't take their kids to the doctor.

Eve: They won't care if parents are abusing their children, they'll just side with the parents because they think it's a religious liberty issue. And yet they claim to be caring about children. It just... it's mind boggling.

Kieryn: It's only when they're inside and they're not a nuisance. As soon as they're outside and you have to take care of them, well, you're on your own because, well, you're eating resources and not giving back and you just pull yourself up by your bootstraps before you can even walk.

Eve: Yeah because you're obviously a welfare queen, which is like totally really a thing. It's not. It's not a thing.

Kieryn: No. It is hard. I can't even get like SNAP benefits right now and I make \$500 a month. It's ridiculous. It's not... no one is gaming the system, it is impossible. End rant.

Eve: Yup. So, why can't you get SNAP benefits right now? What's the...

Kieryn: Because our rent is \$2,000 and for two people, you have to make like \$1500 a month combined. And even though we don't share bills and I don't pay rent, I can't sign the piece of paper that says I won't share food with my roommate. And I can't do the sorting of keeping my stuff separate and like ensuring that that's not a thing because they make you prove shit. They make you prove that you're poor, they make you show that you're not also helping other people, it's ridiculous.

Eve: Yeah, that is ridiculous. Okay. Jennifer's about to call us right back, she says.

Kieryn: Yay.

Eve: Hi. Can you hear me?

Jennifer: Hello?

Eve: Hello!

Jennifer: Okay, how are those... Hi! [crosstalk 00:38:45]...

Eve: Hey, how are...

Jennifer: ... how are you?

Eve: I'm good. I have Kieryn here.

Kieryn: Hey, can you hear me?

Eve: Can you them?

Jennifer: Sorry, I missed your call.

Eve: It's okay. So...

Jennifer: How are you?

Eve: We're good. We thought your question was really interesting. You want to ask it again?

Jennifer: Yeah, sure! So, my question is... I consider myself a progressive Christian and so I want to know what's the best way to engage with the people who all identify as Christian but seem to, and this is my opinion obviously, but have a warped understanding of Jesus? Like how can I engage with them? And I live in Texas, I have an opportunity to engage with these folks sometimes and they'll turn and say, "I go to church," and I go, "I teach Sunday school," and all this other stuff. But the things that my pastor preaches are pretty different and so... than probably what they're hearing in their churches. And so I don't know the best way... I feel like I'm the best... People like me, we could be like guides or... I don't what's the best way to... We can help because I'm not threatening. Like maybe I'm not threatening, I guess? [crosstalk 00:40:15]...

Eve: Because you believe all the same things.

Jennifer: ... how can I get when people... How can I use that like power for good, I guess, is what I'm curious about.

Eve: Kiernyn, what do you think?

Kiernyn: That's a really good question.

Eve: I... My thoughts...

Kiernyn: I think it's possible.

Eve: I think it is possible. And I think that a lot of it comes down to compassion is an act of the imagination and so when people... I mean, you see this all the time with people who are homophobic and then they meet a queer person and then they're like, "Oh, I get it. Like, you're not scary. You're normal, this is not threatening." And they change their minds. I think it's the same kind of approach.

Kiernyn: Yeah, that's what I generally recommend to people is be yourself, but be kind. So if you see a person and they're have a bunch of kids or whatever and are having hard time in line, just smile, just say hi, just be kind. Like, you don't have to confront them, you don't even have to try to preach at them. Your existence and your kindness speaks more than anything else.

Jennifer: Just how I present myself in life.

Eve: Just be consistently compassionate so when they see you're compassionate toward them and you're compassionate toward this other person and you're introducing them to stories and humans that they wouldn't be exposed to in other ways. Like organically, in their own community. It really, I mean, it changes everything. I mean, it's like you

meet someone and their personal story tells you so much more than anything good learned in a book and that just will open things up. And I think that's a thing is like a lot of these people believe that they're compassionate and they often are very well intentioned and really want to be kind.

Kieryn: They think they're speaking the truth and love, it's just that their version of love is wrong.

Eve: They just haven't been on the receiving end of their kind of love yet, so they don't know how it comes across.

Jennifer: No, that's a really, really good point. Yeah, I mean, I think it's just like Kieryn said, like that preaching at them, which isn't my style anyway, I mean that's not my vibe. But, yeah, just how I present myself or how I would engage just on a human level.

Eve: And I think if you do get into an ideological conversation about it, Jesus was always about the people before the ideology.

Jennifer: Right.

Eve: Consistently.

Jennifer: Yeah.

Eve: And so, that can be your access point is like the human pain comes first.

Jennifer: Yeah. Right. And that's sort of like the way that I think about my faith. It's not so much about doing here on Earth for some eternal reward, which, logically, I don't think probably exists anymore. I mean, in the way that you would think of like traditional Heaven or whatever. Who knows what really happens when we die. But, for me, it's about on Earth, here, right now and what we can do to serve our fellow human beings. I'm not really interested in those kinds of ideological debates, I guess. They're not interesting to me or, well, maybe they're interesting, but they're not...

Eve: They're not practical.

Jennifer: ... motivator for me. They're not like the crux of why I would consider myself a follower of Jesus, if that makes sense.

Eve: Yeah, that makes perfect sense.

Jennifer: It's more of like He is a role model to how I want to live my life. And so, I don't know, but yeah, it's just... Here in the South and in Texas, even in a big, very diverse city like Houston, it's just not that uncommon to be asked where do you go to church or do you go to church. And a lot of people go to church, like comparatively. And a lot of my progressive friends go to church, go to progressive Christian churches or progressive

synagogues or like Faith Life is still a big... It's not considered odd or weird to go to church here like it might be in parts of the Northeast or other parts of the country that are more liberal. So, I guess just... especially in this election cycle, it's just been frustrating to me, a religious progressive, to feel like our voices are not always heard but then I think to myself, "Well, okay, they're not always being heard but..." I don't know, I don't know what I'm trying to say. How do we win people over? Like how do we let people know like you can a compassionate Christian...

Kieryn: Listen...

Jennifer: ... it's a good thing and it exists in the dark, that we exist in the world. I don't know, it's just been something that's been on my mind a lot.

Kieryn: Something that was huge to me when I was a kid was when adults who...

Jennifer: Kieryn, could you speak a little louder? Hang on, I can't hear your voice as well.

Eve: Go for it.

Kieryn: Yeah, so something that was huge to me when I was a kid... When adults would notice something or seem like they noticed that my family life was strange or whatever, is they would just listen to me. The ones who just listened to me and who asked me questions and were interested in my experience and my life meant so much. And I think that can even be extended over to the mothers in these families is like just take an interest in them and when you're talking to them in a group or whatever, prioritize their voices and ask them questions and just listen. And that goes so far because then... They're told they don't have value, children and their mothers like...

Eve: We're told that we don't have value.

Jennifer: Right, okay, right.

Kieryn: So just listening disproves that.

Jennifer: No, that's important to know. I mean, yeah. In teaching, do not roll your eyes or make fun of. Especially young people that are... that maybe, through no decision making of their own, were raised in such a way to reel that this is what they believe is true and right. Obviously, yeah, you don't want to make fun of them or alienate them, isolate them.

Eve: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I think, too, on a sort of different note, but interface dialogue I think can go a long way towards these things and, again, it's just like exposure. If you're talking to these people, inviting them to things that involve diversity in their views so that they...

Jennifer: No, that's a good point.

Eve: ... so that there's...

Jennifer: They have something leading up.

Eve: It's harder to dehumanize the other.

Jennifer: Maybe that's something to talk to people at my church about. Inviting people to have a conversation. I mean, we do things with the synagogue that's next door to us, which is great, but it's a very progressive synagogue. So, even though we're different faiths, we're probably politically, ideologically aligned. So, it would be interesting to have that kind of dialogue with another Christian church that is probably, maybe a politically... in a different... Wouldn't it be interesting to see if we could have protected, peaceful dialogue on that, on something...

Jennifer: I was heartened, I was cheered a little with... I mean if you can use that word for such a horrific thing. I did feel like, with the crisis at the border, with the children and their parents... I was happy to see more conservative Christian leaders speaking out against that. I thought, "Okay. We can find some... Hopefully, there's some common ground we can find on certain issues. That maybe that's the place to start."

Eve: Right, because you don't see pro-life leaders taking a stand for children who are actively alive and breathing very often and so that was really refreshing.

Jennifer: It was. I mean, I hate to say I was surprised, but I was. But I thought, "Okay, well, maybe we can do something with that." But, yeah, I appreciate what you're saying. I think it's just been something... It's just something that's on my mind and whenever I call Ted Cruz's office or John Cornyn's office to complain if the situation allows for it. I always take a moment. Well, I'm a public school teacher and I'm a mom and try to sort of humanize myself with the listener on the phone because some people who work for Cruz or Cornyn is probably going to be different than me. I'm trying to humanize myself to them in ways that I hope that they can relate to. I'll get a kind person on the other line who works for Cruz or whatever and they reengage in a way... I'm always polite.

Eve: I think that's something that liberals don't do well and I think this is one of the reasons that there's this divide. And I know there's a lot of controversy on, yeah, but we shouldn't listen to fascists. But making sure that you remember that everybody on all sides of this conversation is still a human is so important and I think that goes back to what Kiernyn said is just be kind. Just always be kind.

Jennifer: Well, yeah, and it's a lot easier to be mean. I mean, I'm just stating the obvious, but when so much of the dialogue is happening, not being safe, not overtone, just so... You could get nasty and you could get dismissive and rude and... I found myself arguing on Facebook page with some friend of a friend of a friend or whatever and I got really heated and really, really nasty and then I ended up like, "Okay, that's not..." So I ended up like private messaging him and apologizing and saying like I wasn't... I got personal, that wasn't right. And he responded in kind and it was... We certainly didn't agree on

anything really, but... Trying to think about those ways of engaging. [crosstalk 00:51:13]...

Eve: Dialogue is possible if everybody...

Jennifer: ... and more useful than anything else.

Eve: Yeah, dialogue is possible if we slow down, but we got to all be willing to slow down a little bit.

Jennifer: That's true.

Eve: Well, thank you.

Jennifer: Well, I'm so excited for this show! I can't wait to hear the full episode and episodes to come and I'm excited about it.

Eve: Thank you.

Jennifer: But thank you, and thank you Kieryn!

Kieryn: Yeah, thanks for calling. Thanks for submitting questions.

Eve: All right, bye.

Jennifer: Bye.

Kieryn: Bye.

Eve: Well. Anything else for our listeners?

Kieryn: There's not really a good happy note to land on with like with abortion stuff. It's just... it is what it is, so. You're welcome, you get to hold this like we do.

Eve: Yeah, it's hard and there's no real easy answer. I think, like we were talking about with Jennifer, it's just that compassion and remembering that we're all coming from the same place in the beginning of this dialogue, where we want the best for women and children in this country and understanding how to achieve that is where we start falling apart. And so having compassion and remembering our motives together is really important.

Kieryn: There is common ground, you just have to keep track of it.

Eve: Yeah. Yeah. Not get nasty. Keep it human. Humane.

Kieryn: Yeah.

This transcript was exported on Jan 11, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Eve: Well, thanks for listening, guys, and tune in either next week or the week after.

Kieryn: Next week or the week after.

Eve: Congrats again, Kieryn.

Kieryn: Thank you, I'm excited to not have this anymore. Real excited.

Eve: And if we do a Kitchen Table Cult After Dark episode, if you're a Patreon supporter, you get access to that and you can join for it live and it'll be a good party.

Kieryn: Yeah.

Eve: All right. Talk to you later.

Kieryn: See you next week.

Eve: Bye.