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Kieryn:

I'm Kieryn.

Eve:

And I'm Eve. This is Kitchen Table Cult.

Kieryn:

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

Eve:

Hey, Kieryn.

Kieryn:

Hey, Eve.

Eve:

How's it going?

Kieryn:

It's going good. It finally stopped raining. So, I actually have internet for the first time in eight days.

Eve:

Yay.

Kieryn:

So, I'm excited.

Eve:

Are you warm there? Everybody on the East Coast is freezing.

Kieryn:

Sort of. I have five blankets on my bed. I should be warm. The weather is not objectively cold comparatively. But for California, it's cold.

Eve:

Everybody out here is just like, "I want to die. It's so cold. Let's go see the eclipse and then run inside."

Kieryn:

At that point, I feel like I would just watch it from the window. I'll be like, "It's not worth the frostbite."

Eve:

Yesterday, we had some fun on the internet and we're bringing in our good friend Caris Adel. Hi, Caris.

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Caris:

Hey.

Eve:

We got [Jelle 00:01:30] online last night. Who wants to start it off and talk about what we are bringing up?

Kieryn:

I just buffered all of my tweets. So, I'm going to let one of y'all take it away since you were actually part of the active conversation. I was at Costco.

Caris:

You were at Costco. That's such a Quiverfull move.

Kieryn:

I know. It's the first time I've been to Costco in five years, at least.

Caris:

I hate going because I'm so short that I can't-

Kieryn:

Oh, my God. It's a nightmare,

Caris:

... push the cart. Sounds like no, I don't go.

Eve:

Oh, my God.

Kieryn:

But what happened on Twitter yesterday?

Eve:

After the mega boys from Kentucky, a guy in the native tribal leader's face, during the Women's March slash Native American protests that were happening, the indigenous people march I believe, it was coinciding with the March for Life. So, everybody was there.

Kieryn:

Oh God.

Eve:

Chris Stroop and some others got on Twitter to talk about exposing Christians, private schools. So, that was really good. And the hashtag, I believe was #ExposeChristianSchools. Then Chris messaged a bunch

of us last night and was like, "Hey, we should talk about homeschooling and use the same, basically the same hashtag." We got going on that and just start talking about our experiences in religious homeschooling, and what was wrong with that, and why it was wrong, and how the religion was used as a way to cover up neglect and abuse.

And I think we got a pretty good response. A lot of people were really shocked, which is funny to me because we've been yelling about this for years.

Kieryn:

Right, right.

Eve:

I always get surprised that people think that this is a new story. But I'm glad that people are engaging it.

Kieryn:

Yeah. Caris, what was your experience with the hashtag yesterday?

Caris:

Yeah. So, I did it a little bit different just because, one, I still am homeschooling a couple of my kids and I homeschooled for years. And I think there's something too, like a homeschool parent being like, "Yeah, this is messed up. And it really needs to be fixed." And so, I talked, because I started out as a really conservative homeschooler. And now, I'm definitely not. And so, I talked about how I moved through that and changed and the problems that I found in it.

And so, yeah, I'd never really, like I've processed it in my head, but I've never really laid it out before when I was drafting my tweets ahead of time. I was like, "Oh, wow, this actually makes sense. And I can see the logical progression." And so, yeah, that was really useful. But yeah, I had a lot of people respond and really liked what I said. So, that was interesting.

Eve:

Were they more responding to the stories about your experience as a homeschooler or your experience as a homeschooling parent?

Caris:

More as a parent. There were a few other homeschooling parents that were like, "Yeah, it is like super White and racist and very religious." And so, I think it was good for them to hear that, yeah, this really is, how a large part of it is, and that you can still homeschool well and be regulated and have your kids test it. And it's okay to say like, No, I don't want to do this anymore. Your worth as a parent isn't dependent on if you homeschool.

Eve:

The degree of your commitment to your faith and your beliefs in how your children should be raised is not dependent on how we homeschool or whether not homeschool. It's often these things get tied together.

Kieryn:

Yeah, that was my experience with homeschool parents when I was being homeschooled, was so much of their identity and value and self-worth was dependent on the fact that they homeschooled a certain way and believed certain things. And if you took any of that away, they would just disintegrate and die and have no identity outside of it.

Caris:

Yeah. And so, it's so intertwined. It was actually my therapist that was like, "Maybe you need to stop homeschooling." I was already on the verge of a breakdown anyway. The thought of not doing that was so central to me, even though I wasn't doing it well and I was exhausted, that I just cried and cried and cried because I couldn't imagine not doing it, what that would mean for me. And then, the next day, I was like, "Oh, my God, obviously, I should stop. This is ridiculous." Duh.

Eve:

Yeah, my mom when she was pregnant with the fourth of my siblings, she wanted to put me in a private Christian school in our town. I was going into fifth grade. And she started looking into it a little bit. And then, we did a little tour of the school and came home. And she caught my dad up on what she had done that day. And he got really upset. And he was just like, "No, we don't do that. We are homeschoolers." This was like an identity for him that he wasn't willing to let go, even though he wasn't helping. And my mom was completely overwhelmed.

And he was just like, "No, I can't. I can't. We can't do that. You need to do this because this is what God's called us to do. This is our family thing." And so, before that, my mom had assumed that it was a yearly decision to homeschool to keep going. And at that point, suddenly it became lock-in. This is a roller coaster ride, you can't get off.

Kieryn:

Yeah, my parents started homeschooling not because they thought it was God's calling that came later. But initially, now that I'm an adult and can contextualize the concept of time. It was because my mom was having an affair, and my dad didn't want her to have an affair, and keeping her at home with the kids was the way to ensure that didn't happen.

Caris:

Oh, my God.

Eve:

Wow.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I realized this in therapy a couple of weeks ago. I was like, "Holy shit."

Eve:

Wait, I didn't know your mom had an affair. That's not really relevant.

Kieryn:

Yeah. It was before anything else happened. It was before the turn to being radically evangelical Christians. It was back when things were normal and it was three-

Eve:

It's about controlling a woman and keeping them down at home.

Kieryn:

Yep.

Eve:

Speaking of, Caris, you've got a crazy story, a really wonderful story. We've known each other on Twitter for years and years now. And it's been really cool to follow you or your evolution. And I'd love to get you to just introduce yourself a little bit to our listeners, and then talk about where you've come. Because so far, all they know about you is you were a homeschool mom and you've changed a lot. But that's about it and there's a whole lot more. And it's really cool.

Caris:

Yeah. And interestingly enough that I was homeschooled for three years at two different times. And the first two years was actually out of... My parents not wanting to put me in Black public schools. And so, segue into our topic about race today. Yeah. So, today, I am a liberal Episcopalian feminist. I have five kids. And two of them are still at home. One of them is basically at community college and she just is her own little creative being and is taking school slowly and doesn't seem to mind. So, whatever.

And then, my 13-year-old is still home. But I have three kids in public schools, and they absolutely love it. I grew up in Michigan, and five years ago, we moved to Virginia, and about three years ago, we moved to Charlottesville. So, that has all been very, very fascinating.

But yeah, I grew up, I had experiences with 10 different denominations like meaningful experiences with 10 different denominations up until I was 30. And all of them were various forms of evangelicalism, except for two years at a private Lutheran School. Maybe it's technically but I don't consider it evangelical.

Eve:

Maybe it's Protestant.

Caris:

Right. They hate Catholics, so they have that in common.

Eve:

God. All Lutherans.

Caris:

Yeah. And I got trophies for memorizing the Bible.

Eve:

Did you do Awana?

Caris:

So, I wasn't allowed to do Awana because I went to it as a kid and we walked in. And one of the team leaders had blue hair, and a guy had an earring.

Kieryn:

Oh, no.

Caris:

My friend invited me. I'm six years old. My friend invites me, my mom walks me in. My friend is right there. My mom sees the blue hair and the earring on the guy, and she turns around and walks me out. And I was not allowed to do Awana. And it was so embarrassing.

Kieryn:

Wow.

Caris:

But the Baptist Church in our town had an alternative Wednesday night club program. So, I did that for years.

Eve:

So funny.

Caris:

So, it was essentially Awana, but the conservative appropriate version.

Eve:

I did Awana and it was at a Baptist church in my town. Looking back at the upper-level stuff that was based off of, all their levels were designed around Native American appropriation, like language and terms and concepts, and there's just like, wow, this is so racist. Anyways, total sidebar, but keep going.

Caris:

Yeah. And so, when I was, I guess, just over 30, I left evangelicalism because I realized it was making me hate everybody.

Kieryn:

I feel that.

Eve:

We don't like doing that.

Kieryn:

No, it's not fun.

Caris:

When I was writing my notes out for this, I realized that actually Twitter was the gateway, which is probably why I love Twitter so very much. So, yeah, I turned 30. And my oldest was 11. And my youngest is four. Oh, yeah. I had all my kids by the time I was 26. So, I had five kids under the age of seven, when I was 26, which was -

Kieryn:

That's a lot, that's a lot.

Caris:

Looking back, I'm like, "Wow."

Kieryn:

No.

Caris:

So, I turned 30. And my youngest was four. And so, he was out of preschool, and my oldest was 11. So, she could babysit for a half-hour at a time. And it was the first time that I remember being like, oh, I can breathe. I have a half-hour space, and the kids are old enough to listen and not be running around and toddlerhood. And so, I was just like, "Well, what do I want to do?" And so, I joined Twitter because this is when Christian blogging was really a thing. And I was like, "Oh, I'll be a blogger."

And so, I created my Facebook and my website and all this stuff. And I started following people, and I was still pretty conservative but I was open to more social justice to see type progressive Christians. I think this was like when Rob Bell was big, and so I was reading Velvet Elvis and all that stuff and was willing to question religious things.

And all of the progressive Christians that I was doing and following also happened to be Democrats. And so, I was like, "Well, this is interesting but okay, whatever."

Eve:

So, you grew up assuming that Republicans, right?

Caris:

Right. Oh, yeah. Oh, I created my own bumper stickers during the Fred Thompson campaign and looking back now, I'm like, "Oh, my god he like campaigned on states' rights, "that I was like, "This is so great."

Kieryn:

Oh my god.

Caris:

And I'm like, "Holy Shit."

Eve:

No. Wow, wow, wow.

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Caris:

Hillary Clinton had that thing about the vast right-wing conspiracy and I created-

Kieryn:

Oh, my god, I remember that.

Caris:

You could use to be able to create little buttons like message boards, like basically bumper stickers under your-

Eve:

Oh, yeah. Back when Facebook had that.

Kieryn:

I remember those.

Caris:

Right. And just on different message boards, you could do all these things. And so, I remember creating one that was a proud member of the vast right-wing conspiracy. I was like-

Kieryn:

I also had one of those. I made myself one. I remember that.

Caris:

Yeah. So, reading like Christians were Democrats was like, wow, this is new and interesting. But okay. I had this-

Kieryn:

Do you even count?

Caris:

Leaving the conservative, I was like, "Okay, this is okay." And then, I realized until for a period, a couple of years, like I was still in the evangelical church, but blogging. It start up more about my family and my mom and all this stuff, but it turned towards religion.

Eve:

Okay. So, you're processing whether or not you needed to cut your mom off?

Caris:

Right. And a lot of that was tied into church stuff and just weird church things I've learned, and getting pregnant at 18 or 19, unmarried, did a number on me in dealing with that trauma. And I realized I was being actively taught by my church and all the church environments I had, being actively taught to hate these people that I was getting to know and understand until they would talk about how Democrats are

the devil and blah, blah, blah. And I'm like, "But I know them and they're not." And that's when I realized, like, oh, I'm literally being trained to hate these people. And I was like, "Peace out."

Eve:

Othering is super powerful.

Caris:

So, we did a Bible study at our church during this time. And I actually ended up writing about it. And that was the final straw, but I was speaking up about it and was literally being told, "I don't want to silence you, but stop being so divisive." And I was like, "Okay." So, yeah, it was-

Eve:

Stop complicating our Black and White universe and bringing your colors in here.

Caris:

Yeah. So, I told-

Kieryn:

Stop having nuance. God.

Eve:

God. That's being divisive.

Caris:

And a lot of the religious books I was reading happen to be by Episcopalian people. And I was like, "Oh, this is interesting." So, I went to an Episcopalian Church, and I came home and told my husband, "Either I'm going to be an Episcopalian or I'm done going to church because I can't do it anymore." And so, he's like, "Well, we're going to go to church together. So, I guess we're going to become an Episcopalian." And so, it's this-

Eve:

Stop being so divisive.

Caris:

I know. Oh, man, it is. I know hierarchy doesn't inherently mean things are good, obviously. But it is so nice knowing that if you have a damaging pastor, there are layers of authority over him. And it's not just some guy who wanted to start a church and can't do whatever they want. I really appreciate them.

Eve:

Yeah, having accountability makes a big difference. That's one of the things that churches like the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians have going for them. Even if their theology can be corrupt sometimes, at least they have someone who can take the pastor down.

Caris:

Right. There's a mechanism.

Kieryn:

Right. Yeah, it's not the pastor of this one church is the end all be all of the entire everything.

Caris:

And so, at the same time that I was doing all this, I also started following different Black progressive Twitter people like Christina Cleveland. She was actually the first one and I remember, she's actually the one that changed my mind on women pastors, too. She had done a guest talk at Greg Boyd's church in Minnesota. And I remember I was out jogging, like I remember the exact spot on the road, where I was listening to her talk, and I realize, she's giving a sermon, and she's the woman. And this is a really good sermon.

And then, I was just like, "Oh, my gosh, obviously, she should be able to do this everywhere. What in the world? This is the dumbest thing that women can't preach." And so, I started following her, like Austin Channing Brown, and Drew Hart, and Micky Scott Bey Jones. So, I was following them along with all these other progressive people.

And what I noticed, and it was super strange, is that I agreed and respected them on what they said about faith and social justice. But they all also just kept saying that racism was real and was a thing. And I was just like, "I don't get it. They're all saying it, they won't stop saying it, but they're wrong." But I was finally was like, "Okay, well, I respect them enough as people. What if they're right?" And so, then, I was like, "Well, I'm willing to investigate this." But obviously, they're not right. And then, you read one book, and you're like, "Holy shit, they're right" Oh, my gosh.

Eve:

And we get raised in the circles where we're insulated from, if you're White in ways that like, you're not only taught that it doesn't exist, but you are, the way you are taught to see the world creates massive blind spots. So, it becomes very difficult to see it until someone basically turns the lights on and starts showing you the room.

Caris:

Right. And I think one of the reasons that I very, very quickly, like I think I only read half of the New Jim Crow and was like, "Oh, yeah, it was because of my experiences growing up." So, up until I was 10, I actually lived in the inner city. And we were the only White family on the block. And it was the 1980s and basically the ghetto, but I was having all of these experiences that were just general like Black culture experiences, and obviously, it didn't shape me because I was outside of it, but I had-

Eve:

Can I ask a quick question?

Caris:

Yeah.

Eve:

So, I have come to understand that using the term ghetto is a stigmatized way of looking at those impoverished communities in the inner city. Is that something that you, were you taught growing up that you grew up in the ghetto? And so, a way of being like we got better than that?

Caris:

Right, yes. Yeah, I wouldn't call it that now. But that's what it felt like growing up in it. And that's the perception that I had. And that was put on me.

Eve:

Was the stigma of-

Caris:

Right. Yeah.

Eve:

... we don't belong here. We're better than this.

Caris:

Right. Yeah. And so, we lived a block away from the high school. The marching band would come by all the time, and we would ride our bikes down and watch them practice. And I grew up thinking, like, oh, that's just what schools do. And then, when Lemonade came out, and there was this whole thing about how marching bands are really important to Black culture, I was just like, "Oh, that's cool." It didn't have the same meaning for me growing up, but I saw that. And I went to a private school for a couple of years, and so I had Black friends, and I would spend the night at their house. And we had neighbors.

I know, I'm sure I said like, just really ignorant on things when I was kid. I remember asking them about their hair and their mom, putting stuff in it and braiding it, and like, "Why do you have to put cream in your hair?" But it was fascinating to me because it was a different culture. To me, it wasn't bad because it was different. It was just cool because it was different.

Eve:

Right. Well, kids aren't taught to hate like that.

Caris:

Right. And at the same time-

Eve:

The way that lens of looking at people as another becomes-

Caris:

Right. Well.

Eve:

Wouldn't get thought to how to do that.

Caris:

And so, at the same time, my mom was telling me that. She was like, "We're two different cultures. And we are separate, and we shouldn't mix and blah, blah, blah," in that environment. And so, I just grew up just with very, just all these different experiences of race and class, and this idea that we were better than them, but we were there and we were poor poor. So, we weren't better than them. There was like a drug bust across the street from our house. And the cops used our house to perform it and to spy on them. And now, I'm looking back and I'm like, "Wow."

Kieryn:

Oh, my God.

Caris:

I know it did. But it taught me something about how I was trained to view authority and all of this. So, I had just a lot of experiences, but most of them because I was a kid, like just fun and interesting. And these are the kids that I've played hide and seek with and motorbikes with and stuff. As an adult when I was reading all this stuff about race, I was really able to grasp it like a really deeply personal level that there's nothing inherently bad about Blackness because I knew Black people growing up and I knew that they weren't all criminal or lazy, or all of the stuff that I had been thought.

Eve:

So, the stereotypes were already complicated for you.

Caris:

Right. And so, then to hear these Black Christians that I respected saying that race is real, and reading a book on it, I was able to be like, Oh, wow, there really was this entire system at work. I went to church a few times with my neighbor's, like their Black church. And so, I know, obviously, these were good people and just trapped. And now, I've done a lot more research on my city where I grew up and just realizing the ginormous systemic issues that were there to create this really, really rundown abandoned town because they couldn't.

And so, when I was 10 that we moved from there, we literally White-flighted from there because my brother got beat up. And it was tied to mysterious death of a Black kid and White police and just this whole thing. And so, we moved from there to a White suburb, five, 10 miles down the road. And it was White, White, White, and very wealthy.

And then, that was the first time I realized like, Oh, I'm poor. I didn't realize I was poor because everyone was poor where I lived. And now people have two, three-story houses and swimming pools, and I'm just, wow. I'm in Goodwill clothes before Goodwill was cool.

Eve:

Actually, I'm just going to pause on that for a second. I think there's a massive, massive contingent of homeschoolers who are really, really good at thrift shopping because we grew up poor and now it's like hipster to go to thrift shops. But we'd grew up doing that because we had to.

Kieryn:

We did it first. We did it before it was cool.

Caris:

Yes, I know. A necessity.

Eve:

If it wasn't hand-me-downs from the missionary cast-off box at church, it was, yeah.

Caris:

So, that really shaped me, and that, I didn't realize shaped me until I was 30 and doing all this because you're surrounded by people that look like you. And it almost confirmed all the stuff that my mom had been saying about our cultures are different. And I know we were poor enough to be on food stamps and stuff, but we never were because that was just the shame of everything. And so, to be put, even though we were still poor, we were put into this environment where everyone around me was wealthier.

And I could see the aspiration of like, oh, this is what we could become, like my dad just, need to get a raise, or my mom, she ended up going back to school and getting her nursing degree. And it just made sense that like, oh, the White middle-class is what I'm supposed to aspire to. And it felt normal because this is what everybody was doing, that it just didn't occur to me. This is what society says is normal.

And so, it never occurred to me that it was White or classless and all this other stuff. It was just, oh, now I've moved from a life that we shouldn't have been in to a life that we are in and we just have to work our way up the ladder a little bit more.

Eve:

And it was never discussed that Whiteness was what made that accessible for you.

Caris:

Right. And so, when I turned 30 and started writing and reading all of this stuff, I realized that I was, this 30 something-year-old who grew up with these racial and class experiences, but mostly in the church, like that was my culture. I wasn't allowed to listen to secular music at all. I couldn't read secular books. Our movies were super limited, fairly typical, like fundamental conservative upbringing, culturally. And I took in so much Christian culture.

I still have all my posters and my T-shirts and everything from going to the concerts and all of the stuff, like that was my identity, partly because I was smart in knowing the Bible and got trophies, and this was the way because I was so shy and traumatized and had all this emotional abuse and all this other stuff like church and youth group was the one cultural place where I was known and celebrated.

And so, it was just a really deeper part of my identity that I think a lot of the people that I went to school with was. And so, I'm looking back at my life and realizing that this is how I grew up and yet in the north, in Michigan, and yet somehow I've turned out to be not only racist but also viewed, like I love history. So, I always read a lot about like the Civil War and stuff and knew the south has this tragic history and that Lee was this-

Eve:

The Christian hero.

Caris:

... this poor guy.

Eve:

Who just loved his homeland.

Kieryn:

Right, like that's all.

Caris:

I read everything like kid-wise but like the Founding Fathers. I grew up very American.

Eve:

Those books are super Whitewashed history like revisionist history.

Caris:

Yeah. I'm looking like, how did I turn out to have all these opinions and beliefs and that they affected how I voted. And that was what I realized, too, like all of this was intentional to turn me into a specific person.

Eve:

What was that specific person?

Caris:

A Republican voting, a proud member of the vast right-wing conspiracy, who ties to the church and gets us where we are today. But realizing that is really destructive to so many people groups, destructive to anybody who's not middle-class and White. And so, the past few years have really been examining how that happened and undoing all of that and myself and the biases that I have. And also, how do I not pass that on to my kids.

Eve:

So, you were there for The Unite The Right rally in Charlottesville. Why don't you talk about your experiences there? And then, I'd love to have you close out with giving our listeners a one on one of where to start if they want to do the same work that you've been doing with excavating their own systemic White supremacy and ingrained racism.

Caris:

One of the things I've realized over the last couple of years is I'm not an activist. I definitely am more of a writer and researcher. But all of this Whiteness is done in the name of White womanhood, like White supremacy, like its premise is to uphold this fragile White womanhood.

Eve:

It's a mythology. It's a very southern mythology of the virginity complex of White women are these [crosstalk 00:30:31] to be protected.

Caris:

Yes, it's crap. But it's also like, okay, not in my name. I can't let you do this for me and not say something. So, yeah, so we had lived in Charlottesville for a year and a half when August 11th and 12th stuff happened. And so, out of that, I was like, "Well." I'm not an activist. There's times when White people really need to put their bodies on the line. And so, I went down with some friends. So, I wasn't alone.

And the experience that was there Friday night and Saturday and the experience of hearing the chants of the guys with the torches, and seeing the flags rattling, like when somebody famous would come into the park on Saturday. I know when David Duke came, and they all cheered and waved their flags and just seeing the White pride and just the fact that they're all walking around with their machine guns or whatever they had. And just the intimidation.

It was just a really visceral experience of racism that I never will have, and it wasn't even directed at me, which is why... Because I knew White women are the safest people that aren't going to get in trouble. That was really, just put everything I'd been reading and learning and took all of this theoretical, and just made it really real that like there literally are people walking around wanting to intimidate people, wanting to kill people, and are willing to cheer for White supremacy.

It wasn't shocking. It was just really like, and you just feel it in your gut that there is a lot of hate here. And what I realized at that moment in that weekend, even on a more ingrained level, was that the evangelical church did nothing to prepare me for this. I had no answer for responding to White supremacy or White hate because I was never trained that it existed.

Eve:

Because the evangelical church protects it and reinforces it.

Kieryn:

Right. You are only trained to uplift it.

Caris:

The heart of the evangelical church is Whiteness, whether they want to admit it or not, it is. I was already in the process of going back to school. But that I think really solidified for me that I want to examine how my evangelical culture formed me in the way of Whiteness, and just the tools that it uses and how it does it mostly unconsciously that you don't even know it. But it's there, and it's intentional.

So, yeah, I'm at UVA. And my degree is in American Studies. But the official title of my major is American Studies Evangelicals and the Cultural Power of Whiteness. So, I am determined to dig all that shit up and blow it up.

Kieryn:

Yeah, wow.

Eve:

Good.

Kieryn:

Yes, thank you.

Eve:

We need more of this. We need more White women doing this work to understand what the fuck we've done to ourselves and to others.

Caris:

And there's always, like one of the things I'm realizing is, as soon as you start digging, things are way worse than you could have ever imagined. And there's always more, and I was just with the stuff this weekend. I realized I'm not following that many Native American people. And so, this morning, I was following more, and there's always, I mean, my personal, because of my personal experience and how I've grown up is really focused on anti-Blackness and White supremacy, but White supremacy touches every minority group and the person.

Kieryn:

Everything.

Caris:

You can never stop unlearning what you've learned and relearning things.

Eve:

So, for our listeners, how would you recommend that they start in this process? Because this is important work that we all need to be doing to excavate our own racism and try to disarm it.

Caris:

My personal thing is reading and following people just because, like learning the knowledge is my personality style. But I know Austin Channing Brown's new book, I'm Still Here, is really good. Even The New Jim Crow or Morgan Jerkins had a book of essays that came out last year, and it was amazing. I can't think of the name of it, but that was really good.

Eve:

Have you heard of Layla Saad's White Supremacy and Me workbook?

Caris:

I have heard of it. And there's a group that was doing it on Facebook this year. And I thought about joining. But with school, I just don't know if I can. But I think that looks really good.

Eve:

I've heard really good things about it.

Caris:

They're usually, like I literally will follow somebody on Twitter. And if you look, there's constant threads of these, so the other people you should be following. It's not terribly difficult.

Eve:

Basically, just trying to listen outside of your normal circles and listen outside of your comfort zone.

Caris:

Right. You can Google like the PDF that Kimberle Crenshaw wrote about intersectionality.

Eve:

She's got a new book coming out this year.

Caris:

I had heard something like that from somebody, which is really cool.

Eve:

Yeah. And it's about intersectionality. I'm really excited.

Caris:

Somebody has the PDF of Unpacking the Knapsack and The White Fragility book. There's the White rage book, I think. I'm reading one right now called the Mothers of Massive Resist... Or, yeah, I think it's the Mothers of Massive Resistance. And it's all about the little insidious ways that White women upheld segregation in the '30s and '40s. And it's so in the tiny details of, that it's not like the laws. It's people obeying the laws and upholding them. It's just unbelievable.

Kieryn:

It's systemic everywhere. It's ridiculous.

Eve:

It's really important to understand those things and to learn how to see it. It's just learning how to pay attention to the things that you've been trained to ignore your entire life. It's one of those things that's hard on the ego because it makes you realize that you have been, you've been really self-absorbed, and are bad at paying attention to things that are outside of what immediately affects you. And that's humbling, but it's really important to get past that ego fragility to do the work. Yeah.

Caris:

Yeah, there also is something that I found too to like, it's a relief to be like, I don't know this and it's okay. And I can just go learn it. I don't have to be the expert. It feels really nice to not feel like I have to one-up Black people with how much I know or whatever. Because I'm never going to know as much as them or have the experiences that they do. I can see how it can be hard. And sometimes it is, but also, there is like this, just the sense of relief. And just like, I'm just here to learn and to work on myself and not have to worry about leading other people or that thing.

Eve:

Yeah, it's not your job, not your place. Well, thank you for joining us. Kieryn, do you have any other questions you want to ask Caris or anything else you want to add?

Kieryn:

What got you past the resistance of working on yourself and realizing, Oh, I'm part of this? How did you overcome that to continue to learn things? Because I feel like that's something a lot of people, that

stops a lot of people is like, feeling really guilty about upholding the system they had no idea. And then, they're like, "I'm just done. I can't deal with having that." And so, they just stop. What got you past that?

Caris:

Yeah. So, there's two things. One was, it was actually really quickly into reading the New Jim Crow. I think I was maybe a quarter of the way through it. And it was awful. It's just so bad. It's so depressing. It's so awful. And I remember reading it, and I wanted to stop and throw the book across the room and just be like, "I'm not doing this." But she was talking about stuff in the past. And I was like, "This already happened. This is already going on." There's nothing I can do about it." But I can learn.

And so, it was just this happened, I need to learn about it. And so, I was able to shut off my emotions that way. I plowed through the book. I really should go back and read it slower. But I was like, "I'm just going to finish this because this was real. And I need to know about it." And that was a way to shut that off.

And then, the other thing I realized along the way, my great-grandpa was in the KKK in the 20s in Indiana. I remember my grandma saying stuff. My parents have obviously said terrible things about race and stuff. And at some point, I finally realized this is the legacy I was given. But it does not have to be the legacy that I maintain or pass on. And so, I have the opportunity to change and I can either choose to do so or not.

Eve:

Yeah, I think that's a lot of our motivation for doing this podcast and for doing the change in the work on ourselves that we've been doing has been just like, the cycle stops here. We cannot let this keep going. It has dominated so many generations.

Caris:

The more I study and the more I learn, and especially now that I'm taking all of these, really in-depth race classes with really well-educated Black professors and all of this stuff. I'm realizing I'm never going to know it all. It's just impossible. I'm never going to have the experiences they do. And so, my goal isn't to be an expert on race or to know all of the things. It's to just keep learning and knowing as much as I can. There's no end goal of mastering it. It's just, okay, it's a new day, and I can learn one more thing.

Eve:

Yeah. Once you realize that, being a student is a lifelong commitment and being humble is a lifelong commitment. It just comes together. Thank you for doing that work. And thank you for sharing it with people on Twitter. You've put together some really good Twitter threads. And we'll try to link to those in the podcast notes when we put this up. And is there anything else you want to plug for people to find you or support your work?

Caris:

I don't think so. I have a website but I don't use it very often right now. I put stuff up on media every once in a while. But no, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, just me.

Kieryn:

What's your handle on the Twitters?

This transcript was exported on Mar 20, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Caris:

It's just carisadel, C-A-R-I-S-A-D-E-L.

Eve:

Thank you so much for joining us today.

Kieryn:

Yeah. Thanks for talking.

Caris:

Yep, yeah. Thanks. This was fun. I'm glad [crosstalk 00:41:50].

Eve:

Thank you for joining us today. The music you hear in this episode is Janet by The Heavens from their album Love Songs.

Kieryn:

If you want to support the podcast through a Patreon, ask us a question or follow us on Twitter. You can check out our website at kitchentablecult.com.

Eve:

And big thanks to Aaron Bechtel as always, for producing these episodes.

Kieryn:

We love you, Aaron.

Eve:

We love you, Aaron. Bye.

Kieryn:

Bye.