

Hip Hop Bruha with Dr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer

Saturday, July 6, 2019

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:00:00] Welcome to Hip Hop Bruha and online think platform and podcasts that seeks to provide a critical analysis on everything from hip-hop pop culture to All Things political through an intersection. Feminism lens and I'm your bruja host DJ Kuttin Kandi, DJ turntablist extraordinaire hip-hop feminist poet, community organizer published author editor lecturer public speaker global hip-hop cultural Ambassador and known to be a people's hip-hop scholar, but enough about me

On today's episode will be having a very very good friend of mine on the show who I love dearly. Dr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer who is a founding staff member at the hip-hop archive and research institute at the Hutchins Center Harvard. She has served as a program officer for the hip-hop archive when it was in Residence at Stanford University and she has served as the first queer black woman chair for the first Department of black studies founded 50 years ago at San Francisco State. Dr. Fischer is distinguished for her research and Publications examining applications of international black popular culture and music in curriculum redesigned as well as political education and Civic engagement Fisher continues to consult with special collections at the hip-hop archive and Research Institute. Most recently as a Nasir Jones fellow in Residence. She also recently received the National Council of negro women's educator of the year award for Innovation and commitment to holistic student success lifelong learning and Career Mentoring. My friend teaches courses that range from topics including hip-hop comics anime film, archiving and technology at San Francisco State University where she is an associate professor. She lives in the Bay Area with her son Zola and their two cats Max and Lizzie. They like to hike bike and go to concerts together her pronoun are she her hers and they them. Keep rising is what she says freedom is an everyday activity, take care of ourselves, remember our mission our collective freedom and fundamental rights. She relies on women center theory and practice action to exist and survive every day global feminisms and intersectional ideations are critical to the world that she needs for us right now and those coming after us. She's inspired by the courage of those fighting these attacks, organizing speaking out and bucking the systems of oppression.

I'd really like to do a warm welcome of such a dear friend of mine. I'm so excited. And so honored to have her here with us today as we discuss hip-hop politics pop culture and feminism, let's give a warm welcome to my friend as she introduces herself in her own way. And as you all get to know why I love this person so much.

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:04:48] Hi. My name is Dawn-Elissa Fischer. I'm an associate professor at San Francisco State and I was a founding staff member of the hip-hop archive and research institute at Harvard University founded by dr. Marcellina Morgan one of my mentors and the Inspirations to pursue multiple ways of studying hip-hop globally for the past couple decades

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:05:14] yes Dawn is amazing amazing things you've been part of so I know that we can get in so many areas within hip-hop and be involved in so many things but what do you think has been your most interesting and essential focus in in your work within hip-hop and beyond.

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:05:34] Long-term interest has been hip-hop worldwide hip-hop's application to help people connect with complex political ideas so and to apply those concepts to for social change in our. Own lives locally in our neighborhoods and our communities and you know as far-reaching as we can be connected connected on our block connected across oceans so that we know we're not alone. As we work on this process to get free and get healthy what I called our fundamental right as human beings.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:06:24] Yes. Yes. So what is it about hip-hop that inspires you what is it? That draws you in one thing that I love about hip hop, is that it?

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:06:36] It connects to multiple Musical and cultural forms. So I get to enjoy a lot of jazz or Funk or even classical and gospel through hip-hop. And so it allows me to to I guess thought surf in and multiple formats and that. That inspires me. It feeds me creatively and I enjoy connecting with others on because there's so many diverse possibilities with hip-hop.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:07:11] So what else are you passionate about? What brings you to this work? How was your work connected to what you do?

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:07:19] I'm passionate about student success. I'm passionate about education and Equity. I'm critical of educational processes and I really want to. I have dedicated much of my life to pushing the system to serve the stakeholders putting Learners first and that seems simple but you know, it's not in practice. So that's another passion of mine and I'm also passionate about family because spiritually I think family. For me personally family had like for example being a parent and being a daughter. It pushes me to be my best self and and and I think that and that pushes me in every other aspect of my life. So I'm very grateful for the opportunity to be in to be part of the family being chosen. Are you know, you know as we say in anthropology fictive kin or biological kin, but you know family and that

inclusive sense. So those that's a bit about me and I live in the Bay Area and I like to travel a lot when I can't.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:08:42] You've definitely mentioned a lot right there particularly talking about family your mother. You was a daughter you as a mother what drives you what pushes you what brings you again in your words your best self now, I'm curious about how you dive into this work and I'm sure our audience would love to know more. Well, also how hip-hop came into your life. I think that's an important question for all of us, you know, and I ask and meet people. You know, how did hip-hop come into your life or how did you come into hip-hop? Right, so I think with that question along with with something you stated around how you rely on "women center theory" practice action to exist and survive everyday global feminisms and intersectional ideations are critical to the world that you need for us right now. And those coming after us is something you stated. So what drove you to that and what who about you and all of who you are shape of. Your life shape the core of your life as well as your work. How did you come to that? And how did you come to hip-hop?

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:10:04] Thank you for that question. I don't think I've answered that in a while. So I'm really excited to tell the story my mother. It seems that families a thing today, but my mother my mother and all of her comrades, my mother's mother was very much into music. I remember her. I remember being surprised that she claimed to have a crush on cool in the gang. I don't know which member may be cool. But music was very central in everyday life growing up in my family. I'm the youngest child of four to my parents and my mother my parents were. Are you know they've committed themselves to revolutionary action over their long Lifetime and so I could tell some great stories about my dad, but I'd like to focus on my mother because she I was attached to her for my development years and so as she was doing her political work from a very young age I was along for the ride by necessity, you know because of issues like we don't you know child care and so forth. So and there's such a there's a bit of a gap between me and my older brother. So whereas my brothers may have been in school or with my father I was with my mother and so my earliest memories are when we had moved from Ohio to the Ozarks. That's a southern region of Missouri. Very close to the border of Arkansas. And I think my mother having lived, you know in Southern Louisiana like New Orleans in Portland, Oregon and Harlem New York. She had this one of course in Ohio, Columbus, Ohio, she had this but particularly her like time in like say New Orleans, Portland. Portland during the time, you know in the city when the movement for about black studies was happening and much much more, you know in the 60s and then in Harlem, she taught elementary school and was part of a lot of creative art black creative arts movements, but also political movements and so I think when my parents

relocated to Southern, Missouri the shock of how much... I mean these are things that people know now I suppose because or their learning slowly because of media popular culture the person who claims to be president right now and so forth because our current political climate but in like 1980, there seem to be public ignorance about white supremacy terrorist groups and that intersection with policing politicians and almost every other institution that people have to engage in civic society education medicine, so, my mom hit the ground working with a number of different organizations. And then also just solo but connected, you know intellectually with comrades that range from like Yuri Kochiyama to. Many other people whose names I'll try to remember if I can but so even when she was working alone, she was corresponding with people all over the world by letter and and they would encourage each of these women this network of went mostly women, but not exclusively but mostly women they would encourage each other. To press forward in their local areas for whatever their political agenda was. So kind of the context of my mom hit the ground in the Ozarks like this is this is this should be this is a national emergency going on people outside of this area need to know what's happening down here because whereas the segregated South where she came from had progressed to an extent, you know when we get to 1980, the Ozarks was very much behind and and I don't want to stigmatize Ozarks because I have to say that in recent times I have seen. people that I grew up with in the Ozarks right now, you know 2019 even five years ago, you know 2014 doing a lot of radical work that I don't even see and so where I currently live in Silicon Valley. Like I saw people who maybe had family members that were actively part of the clan working hard against white supremacy against the Trump more so than I did in my neighborhood in San Mateo, California, or when I was doing the fellowship at Harvard, in Cambridge and Somerville so I don't want to stigmatize the Ozarks and that I really I want to honor that I've seen people really turn around an egregious oppressive situation and come out hard politically, but let's go back to 1980. In 1980 that was not the status quo and so that's that's how I cut my political teeth. I was alongside my mother and one of my earliest memories is my mother organize a try and sitting out the side of City Hall trying to with I think I have to double check. I think it was a National Organization of Women possibly some in double NAACP members and maybe the League of Women Voters trying to register women to vote all women just registering women to vote. Where's my mother was very active with you know, black and Asian political movements this particular earliest memory is actually just regardless of your identity registering women to vote and seeing these politicians come out of the Court like the courthouse or City Hall whatever building it was downtown and I'm a small child very young. This is like I was between three and five years old these memories and people would spit at the women they would come up and tell them that they were doing horrible things. And I mean, we're not even

talking like, you know, some of it like Reproductive Rights, which was also something that was, you know, people organized for later, but I'm doctors talking about basic just registering to vote and seeing the. the adults like looking up at these adults. Be so nasty to all of these volunteers really had an effect on me. And I remember I decided that I had to do. And so I had some like markers or something or crayons and and I started coloring on rocks like women vote women vote now and you know started like, you know, just kind of arranging them and I think I should have looked this up at this newspaper reporter took a picture of it because you know, here's this little black child this little black girl, you know. Short tiny, you know just like I got to do something because these people are nasty and some of these people ascended to national office. So I'll leave names out for now, but these are people who have later like after 2000 had affect on all of us. We're all dealing with. These type of attitudes these type of egregious disgusting attitudes of pressing human beings in a global way had an effect on International policy and what we now call Homeland Security. I saw these people but like when I was as early as five years old do horrible things to people just try to do something basic in the 80s. We're talking voting

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:18:40] and with that we'll be right back after we hear these tunes as we continue our conversation with my friend Sr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer stay tuned.

And we're back at Hip-hop bruha. We were just listening to High Rises by Chika. I am such a big fan of Chika. I've been following her for a minute. She hails from Montgomery, Alabama. Although I do believe she lives in New York City. Now that song that just released. I mean it is on point the music video. You gotta watch it. It just touches my heart. And actually there's a few things I want to drop on her. She's on the rise. She's been rising like for a minute I seen her. Her on a video response that she had done on J.Cole song on 1985 about like a year ago. I mean, I've been following her ever since then but in an interview that she had done with Above Average Hip Hop.com. She had stated about family, "My family also keeps me motivated. I have parents and a sibling with special needs that I want to be able to take care of when things get really hard I think about that. They have tried their best to support me. So I'll bust my ass to support them." Her music in general is all about like, like just things to discuss what's going on in the black community creating awareness and she states "I want to be remembered not for who I am, but for what I bring to the game and changing how people think I just want the respect that my fellow Lyricist has get and the opportunity to judge people in some way." So I wanted to drop this knowledge about you because if you haven't been following her you definitely definitely need to. Now that brings us to the perfect transition as Chika talks about family because we're still talking to our guest. Dr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer who dropped some gems on, what

drives her to this work. And she really touches upon so many things and issues that was going on in her own communities in the Ozarks. And then she also talks about her family and she connects that here as we get back into the discussion.

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:22:09] My mother my parents loved like albums. records and music that's they're like, they made our house a sanctuary people who were coming from other countries that couldn't you know, sometimes churches would sponsor people to safe to come from say Vietnam and then but then there would be you know, if people people would you know be in these dangerous situations once they got there if they didn't follow suit with the church rules or whatever and so my parents made sure that you know the house that we lived in was welcome for everybody. You could be queer. You could be I mean obviously, you know any racial and ethnic identity and did a matter of your documentation status like my parents were very. They almost acted like a social evening that the way like social services are supposed to act and that was one of the things that my mom did she made sure that people could get connected with the services that they needed to succeed and so records and music was part of home and so, you know keep it people were there, you know people would be cooking. We didn't have a lot of money. So it was often beans and rice, but you know, I just remember like always beans and rice and maybe chili if it was a special occasion. And you know, I mean, I mean on a real special occasion, we'd have like gumbo or something but that was like, you know, I mean that was like a holiday, but I just remember like beans and rice because that was affordable I suppose and and but music, you know and people and then records my parents had so many records. It was like a record store. So many books like every wall was lined with books and then or records and so once a week, at least we would get to go to if we were good because we have those four kids. I can't imagine this having one child. What's my mom would take us to this used record store? And this is again southern Missouri and is called Spin Again Records and like my brothers and I would get to choose depending on the budget. We would get to choose like an album to take home and you know, just kind of my brother. My brother is actually doing this right now with my kid he's but he takes all are my nieces and nephews to like a comic book store like once a week and they get to choose a comic and then they share and read and talk. And so we my brothers we did they when later when they got. Paper routes and stuff they would do Comics but it started out with records. And so I remember being probably about five years old and we it's like I finally had gotten to the age where I got the select my own records because I was like, how come I don't get to select records my brother keeping. My brothers are much older than me. So so. You know, my mom was like okay, here's two quarters go find some records and so for 25 cents each. I

found to my first two albums that like I bought I mean there was a family archive, right? But my first two albums were Marlo Thomas free to be you and me. So I faked it. I didn't know I was like choosing this like feminist icon. I was just like this car to there's people drawing that I noticed they were like different colored children drawn on the cover in a cartoon way and I was like, oh this is attractive. It was pink. I think it had like little kids on their spelling out free to be you and me and. Sounds like I'll choose this one and the other one was Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. I just thought that the font on the record you remember how they wrote out the words. It's like is it rainbow coded mean? I really haven't seen it in a while. I mean clearly I have it but you know, but. The isn't in like rainbow colors or something. I may be like making this part of like but the way The Grandmaster Flash and the furious five in that picture of them on the front kind of in there like poses and again, I didn't I was you know, probably clue. I mean, I knew the music I knew the names of the artists the Jazz the soul the funk I knew. The Gap Band, I knew I need award you nose ring my bell like I knew I would never ask me like, what does that mean and everyone pausing it being like it means to have a good time. It's like okay. So I Knew music but like this was my music. I was choosing and my brothers were, you know, of course they were listening to what you know early what was hip-hop when we learn to be hip hop and you know breaking and doing things and so forth. But this was my choice and I got the album and I got home and I remember listening to you know, not just "the message" but Scorpio. God I thought Scorpio was such a cool song. Oh, yeah, just like I was like I can be in this forever and that's that's how it started. So they were talking about things that I had seen. You know, even though they were in New York. In my imagination or New York which you know, I've been to with my mom but doing protest and so forth. But even though they were New York what they were saying translated to what we were going through in a way in the Ozarks, even though we were in this rural area this world deeply impoverished area, you know what was going on in these boroughs in New York reminded me of problems that we were struggling with at home. And so I just continued to collect this music and consume it and you know Spin Again Records became a part of my like life, you know, and I would not only use it to find music because they didn't always have the records that were coming out, but like just two more examples, I remember after seeing Beat Street, I was obsessed with Santa's Rap and The Treacherous Three and Kool Moe Dee and I was so like obsessive with it. Like my mom. I like bugged my mom. I'm so glad I'm telling the stories. My son is just bugging me about certain sneakers and I was just like, oh my gosh, don't tell, don't tell. I don't want to hear another word about these sneakers. So I'm glad I got to remember this this now I also am the sun to get the next part but like one of those parts, The Treacherous Three. So there you know with Beat Street there were different versions of the album of the soundtrack to the movie. And so we kept getting

the wrong one and then finally so I so this is like the first time like I was like Mama, we have to go beyond spin again. We gotta go so she was like checking in with her friends in st. Louis Kansas City New York to get in like I guess mailing in she finally found an album that had Santa's wrap on it but it had the cuss words beeped out and I was pissed I was allowed to cuss anything but I was just like that's not the authentic form of the way the song was presented. And so finally like my mom was like stressing to find me like other kids were like trying to get Cabbage Patch dolls mouth. Like I want the pure form of the Treacherous Three with Kool Moe Dee's verse untouched. And so that's kind of how I was as a kid. And so, you know, finally they got this album and then later. You know, I was really like just this is a story of sampling the theme song to Taxi those TV show had a form of Bob James is song Angela on it.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:30:10] Yes, yes, yes

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:30:12] and like that was another one of those like. My mom kind of like giving in to my office a wife. No, I must find the correct. Like I must find the exact edit of Angela the song so that I can loop it on my tape recorder. And rap over it. So and so I mean I love when I got so frustrated. I just started taping from the TV, but I was mad at the sound quality. So that's kind of when I've been up too far, but that's kind of those early hip-hop moments that I would have another thing. This isn't I think this is important because it's not talked about I mentioned that one of the wrappers that that now are these people are like now called like SoundCloud rappers or the you call them the, you know King of the Underground. Being older I'm like, okay, this king of the underground is 27 years old. All right, it's been pioneered the underground. Okay. Let me tell me what about this perspective like it wouldn't be Underground Kingz. Okay. So this is like this artist from Memphis named Xavier Wolf, right, but that's considered underground not on a label people interview this artist now and he'll talk about you know, The impact of Memphis rap on certain genres of rap and hip-hop and you know now like people from the guardian or the UK or like try to do a documentary on on what I experienced growing up. So, you know, this was these experiences in what we often call the American Outback write like this rural situation. We are narratives are stories were cut out from the national Narrative of hip-hop and representation and slowly kind of like stories of white supremacy in America. Slowly these other stories of like how you know, the impact of suave house or something, you know, or the impact of this particular of how like editing in horror music into certain types of bass you know that's starting to come into the narrative, but I want to note that a lot of rural these rural people stories about being connected to this National and international Narrative of hip-hop has largely been undocumented until fairly recently. However, I would say the exception is the hip-hop archive and that one thing I

really appreciate about Marceylina Morgan is, she allowed me to move Beyond this New York centered Narrative of hip-hop and delve into the West right because there's so much out here in the west and delve into the South and then delve into the little-known aspects of what was going on in the midwest when in fact, you know, st. Louis, St. Louis, you know, of course Detroit and Chicago and and the little tiny rural areas in between actually had a lot more to do. With hip-hop then maybe people formerly I have recognized and it makes sense. When you think about core like the Congress of racial equality and snake and you know, labor movements women's movements, like of course people were connecting and I started out talking about women of women connecting to organizing to register others you women to vote, right? So these women were connecting but their kids may have been breaking and your kids would share we would share tapes. And we would share it we would share and so that's how this hand-to-hand sharing happened in these like otherwise cut off areas. Like they wouldn't even play they just like MTV didn't play black people. They didn't play the radio stations where I was at they would not play black music and. And so we had no way of getting access to music unless and so this is how it happened like say let's say someone spent the summers in New York because they their parents work together whatever they had to spend Summers with their parents in New York or La they would come back with the music from the radio if rap music was being played on the radio because it wasn't even really played on the radio in New York and La early early on right but or they would give come back with these these these recordings and share it and we would we my brothers and I would study it and and Incorporated it and then. We started having our own like I like on College radio there in the middle of the night that we would have hip hop and so forth. So that's how I got into hip-hop. And so I mean really it was very I grew it was it's always been a part of my life soundtrack, even you know today and I am deeply connected to what I call Classics, pioneering works, classics, golden era it whatever but also I guess I have I have my kids in my life to thank and and also the college students that have engaged over the years to think but but really actually even like my own my own my own my son to to opening my mind to getting me out of like this purest or condescending idea of what's being produced now to really listen to be and when I really listened because I had to like with apps like musically and so forth early on you know, when kids I'd be like I was the only way I was one of the only parents I was like "no take that down that person's cursing" and they're like no, they're not I'm like guess they are you just don't know the dialect because this I'm from the south that person is cursing, this is the f word to be where no take it down find a clean version edited do whatever you need to do, but you're not going to be third or fourth grade wrapping that song even if other people don't hear it like I hear it. So that verse is not okay. This is what they're saying about women know so and so so that raised, you know

the same way my mom did that with me with like empty like we weren't allowed to watch MTV until like It has set a certain standard and her standard was like until I see Rick James burning paper. No, and she never thought that would happen. But he they did play a Rick James and Smokey Robinson solute. So we're louder than watching TV. But soon as I was saying with my son and be like, okay, you know you need to know how to be critical and so I'd like to say that like by listening to my son was like as soon as I started liking it he abandons it. So but listening to like like Raider Klan, you know, like so like Denzel Curry like when he was rapping ultimate, you know, that was that went viral and. I started listening to some of the other things he was saying and he was speaking, you know, he was talking about the movement for black lives. He was talking about incarceration and death and even self care and health along a whole bunch of other stuff, but I started hearing, you know, these people at the time were teenagers who are now in their 20s really reflecting to the national movement moment and movement. You know, that is we called the Movement for Black Lives. We can call it our current Freedom Movement and that really opened me up it lowered my bias against like what I previously might have been like this is strip club music what is and and there's and there's you know, that was also bias, you know, so either I'm losing my mind or I'm really I'm really happy to see I'm really grateful for the opportunity to hear people articulate their political work in new forms, so that lets me. So then I come across a, Lizzo or a Tierra Whack or Meagan Thee Stallion or City Girls. And you know, is it, you know, is it my nostalgia it like the way I experience hearing like Jean Grae, MC Lyte, you know where you know for the first time, you know, maybe you know that that I have you know, that's my adolescent moment. Right? That's my my pretty you know, those are that's my history and something that will always be music that moves me, but I find myself being touched by hearing the Beats produced the visuals and also that I don't hear the visuals but but hearing some of the lyrics you know that are that are really powerful and breaking silence and that's very important to I think that these these artists have at least I'm I think I'm seeing their work resonating with our current women's movement now.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:39:17] And there you have it, the one and only Dawn educating us and letting us know that we have to listen to our young people and not get so wrapped up in the hip-hop purism and the conversation of authenticity. I'm gonna drop this track and we'll be right back to hip-hop bruha.

And that was Sho Madjozi who is a internationally known hip hop artist who just won BET's best new international act. She's a South African hip-hop artist poet singer. You name it that song Idhom that I just played is off of her critically acclaimed debut album Limpopo Champions League. It's also on her music video, which was done eia selfie from her hometown featuring the kids from her hometown from Shirley Village in Limpopo. So if you don't know this

artist, I hope you get to know her because her work is phenomenal and we need to be supporting more of internationally hip-hop artists particularly women from around the world. Now, let's get back into this conversation with Dawn as she talks about why she does women-centered work.

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:41:22] Women-centered theory practice and action is central to my everyday existence. It's that you know coming, you know, it's it's traumatic surviving. I mean, we're I'm. I told you I told you a story about what I saw and experienced. You know what a very very early age in the Ozarks and. you know, so just knowing at that moment I had to do something I had to you know, pick up a rock and color on it. I had to communicate well that developed later into you know, more sophisticated forms of direct action and organization involvement and movement building and you know some of the campaign's that I worked with we're in is early as like high school and you know organizing groups of teens to go to the capital to confront the black caucus in Missouri the state of Missouri about issues of that were going on like lynching and so forth that were it was not being addressed and some of the on publications that I would see reporting going on with what was going on in my local area where hip-hop publications even it would be a tiny little part of like a little part of the Source or something like that, you know in a very like in a corner in the bottom like a footnote, but at least it was being talked about in a national forum there. So, you know then later Davey D's newsletter, you know, things like that it just I found that hip-hop Publications like. Helped us get the word out about what was going on in the streets. And so and then it also the art of hip-hop book art and culture of hip-hop helped people connect across organizations or crews or, you know, just it helped us to connect with each other so that we could build coalitions to fight for you know against really horrible things that were happening to us as Youth and then in college. You know, I we organized with student organizations and Community Based organizations in the st. Louis and East st. Louis metropolitan area to you know, against many different issues, you know. We were protesting shell oil's presence in Nigeria. We were protesting police brutality voter disenfranchisement. Say the same things, you know, this is before Ferguson was in the National imaginary like that. We were fighting in that area and we were also fighting to get more, you know, black faculty hired having certain types of subjects available to us as students and resources and Community engagement then shortly after starting, working with what became the national hip-hop political Convention as a co-founder of that and doing Coalition building wherever I was so locally internationally and always having an eye towards wherever I conceptualized home and making sure that the people on my block we're okay to the best of my ability. The reason why I say at this point in time in my life, like if I cannot connect with global feminisms, women and understanding that it may show up, you know this women-

centered work may show up in in a queer form of activism or maybe called Pinayism. It may be called womanism and maybe call it may have a modifier in front of it like black feminism or Japanese feminism or something like that, you know may have another Nate African feminism it may have another name attached to it. But what we call this feminist this world making this world building in feminist work. It just it feels so urgent right now and that, you know, there's days, you know, like when Missouri is a couple weeks ago. They were closing down front close down the last Planned Parenthood and I'm thinking damn this was what we were fighting against in the 80s and the 90s. You know and now they're doing it and now it's happening again. I'm just I just I feel like it's just urgent moment where I got to connect with my comrade. I mean, I'm at an age with my with letters behind my name where I know lawyers working for the EU lawyers working in. Different nation states across the world are and activists and artists and I'm grateful that we have the privilege and the digital technology to connect with each other and to let each other know what's going on on our blocks so that we can help each other with what's happening in our homes in our blocks in our areas in our countries and then unlink across the world. And I guess I imagine this as you know, this is. This is just so important for our safety. It's such a critical moment. And guess for me. It is centered it comes to me from my mother passed down from her mother and her and my great-grandmother and it also from my father from his mother and her you know in her her maternally and it also affects all the people who choose to identify as male or non non binary. In my life, it affects them too, if women and girls if them if we're not taking care of if we continue this violence, it's doing violence to all parts of our humanity. And so my son feels that pain. I know it. I see it when women are hurt and disrespected and it pains me to see it pains me to see it with his peers at such a young age and it pains me to see it In him and so, you know, I guess in my younger days. I was just like reacting I guess like oh my gosh, there's this crisis right now in front of us. Let me let me pick up a rock. Let me do you know, maybe I'm a drawn it made him throw it. But but at this point where. just take it just to take a simple point of like with like why it's so messed up nationally that that Title IX laws at University campuses. Like we're just like people were fighting for years people knew what was happening to women girls and boys this like a salt sexual assault the stuff that we see in the news the stuff that's been going on and is still going on and we really don't have effective policies or ways of dealing with and I feel an urgency to to name it every day. The way I would have liked spiritual meditation everyday or make sure I eat every day or or you know, we used to call this like in certain like hip up like we would do like Freestyle sessions like, you know your push ups and crunches your mental push ups and crunches. So like I feel like we have to name that. If people don't want to coalesce around the word feminist find choose your word, but we need to we need to be focusing on the crisis the this this crisis that's not new but it's still

it's not improving and when I at this point in in my in my life see people continuing continuing silencing against sexual assault continuing to support policy that disconnects women and girls from their choice their basic health care rights and and see people mob up on people in ways that and just really killing parts of their souls and and physical aspects of their self. I just I'm feeling. That this is this is this is an urgent matter of everyday existence. It is for me and I hope that. I hope that we could wake up

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [00:49:41] and you just heard it from dr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer on global feminism on women's centered work and the urgency to do this work. It doesn't matter what we named Matt what we call it at the end of the day. We need to wake up. Alright, we're going to take another break and we're going to listen to this tune and then we'll return with our conversation with dr. Dawn-Elissa Fischer.

And we're back and you were just listening to a track that dropped. I believe a year ago or maybe even longer by a Detroit hip-hop. MC called Ellie Sandiego. She actually has a new track which I want to drop a little bit later in the show probably towards the end, but I definitely wanted to drop that joint for you. So if you haven't heard of Ellie Sandiego y'all need to start tuning into her music. She's a dope artist superconscious brings it every time hopefully one day we'll have her here on the show. Now, I want to get back into the conversation with Dawn and kind of like tying everything that she's talked about because I really want to circle back to a lot of what you said because you just dropped so many gems for us. you've shared so much of your life story, which I really encompasses. Is everything that hip-hop is about as well as what movement work is all about, you know, Don and I feel that it totally makes sense that hip-hop was not necessarily a backdrop or music for say it was thisw hole part of your movement work the whole time being that your parents. It was such an essential part of your household family music all of that being part of your earliest memories in the Ozarks, right? And then at the same time your mom as you say hitting the ground is working and working with people all over the world particularly our network of women and what you say and then. Miss all of that dealing with what was happening in your own communities in terms of white supremacy terrorist groups and all of these things and then at the same time what was happening politically nationally in the 80s, right? And then at the same time you having this. Life and home with records and music were such the importance of that and as well as your mom and your family preparing and cooking and welcome everybody into your home. I mean that was was definitely the way you raised family, you know, any mean to me in the way you you bring in your for your parents brought in this like we're dealing with these entities all around us. And we're talking about survival. But we're also finding ways that has us live, you know, and you live through the home cooking the welcoming of people into your homes and then

music as a way. That's not only healing but just reminding you that. Of life right thinking makes perfectly sense that when you say that hip hop kind of I guess it exemplified what it looks like to coalition build and your mother was completely doing that and she was writing letters. To people all over the world and not to mention Yuri Kochiyama and other women right and I think you having hip hop and then that also exemplifying what that also looks like in practice. I mean, your mother was showing this to you all along right and then a pop showing this to you all along. I mean, you just shared a story that is a book for us to learn from, you know, a whole lot to learn from and I think thank you for sharing that with us that. Completely beautiful. I mean. You know some of your work in it and it makes sense because your work today. I mean and you shared some of it you from being involved in founding the national one of the co-founders of the national political hip-hop convention to the work that you do in some of the fellowships and you being part of a lot of the founding work the founding work in so many of the, the spaces that you've been involved with like in Harvard University with the hip-hop archive, right and then you pushing and pushing through in academia and institutional spaces and then you also brought up a lot on just your journey from where you've learned because it's so easy for us as older folks in the movement or older folks in hip-hop right for us to be completely ages where we disregard and dismiss what young people say? So yes at some point. I want to Circle back at that and it may not be in this conversation because it's totally a whole other topic around this hip-hop purism and Hip-Hop authenticity as well as elitism conversation go. I was at some point I want to Circle back to that and hopefully we can do that in might be another show. So I kind of want to bring up some of the work that you do now and because you've talked about it being a women-centered. You work as a professor your work currently in some of the areas that you dived into such as the Nasir Jones fellow ship and residents what that was like and how you brought in everything that you are into spaces like that how you came to be a professor at institutional spaces. How you in the way that you do it? How do you make room for? Folks in those faces and and make the changes being that ethnic studies continuously is a fight to keep or a constant fight as we also fight for Planned Parenthood on the other ends of different states that are struggling with these issues across the country how we're fighting for our says women queer trans women of color non-binary. How do we do this all over the world? I mean, it just seems like there's so much uncertainty and then all of this is happening all at the same time. And then here you are. How are you navigating all of this that's going on globally as well as locally as well as in your own communities in your family's in the work that you do. All of this work that you do, how are you doing that in the spaces and in the communities that you're in? What's the work that you're doing? How are you managing in the spaces that you're in more

specifically speaking - what does that look like in the University settings on the work that you're doing there on the ground?

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [00:58:10] There's the on the ground worked Everyday People work and I think the Everyday People matter for the University. I'm I'm not people make universities may say that they have like whole foundations and systems set up for civic and Community engagement and so forth and I you know, I don't want to knock that.

But because well no I just said but so, all right. I'm critical. That doesn't mean get rid of it because we need whatever, you know, it's like it's kind of like beans and rice. It's like okay, you know some vegetables with rust organic vegetables would have been nice but you know, like if all we got is beans and rice or beans and rice. Okay, so these there's there's universities of all sorts private-public. parochial that have these engagement. Centers and some academic departments have these engagement centers and the movement for ethnic studies is the founding philosophy was to be Community Based. So, how are we doing 50 years later 50 plus years. They are we doing with this project understanding that this movement started, you know before 50 years ago, but. So I keep saying that I'm let me know. Let me know to get it so so because of how I grew up that you know, that people were welcome.

Regardless of your sexual orientation regardless regardless of your quote-unquote national origin regardless of your spiritual practice real, you know our religion, you know, people were welcome, you know, as long as they were there for the you know for the cause, you know, and not hurting people so that you know that that was this it sounds like a Utopia. It sounds like I mean sometimes I'm so critical. I think it's just like. I think this is just impossible. It's impossible to happen again, but I can't but then I have to I have to keep pushing because. our future depends on it are the people coming after us, you know. My my life work. My mission is that people can have better experiences than I did Growing Up and that the people I know my comrades had better Growing Up So Okay. So this idea of like everyday people the unit that what they call it the town-gown divide or whatever. I think the universe I've many time. I've been working with the university. I. I have fought to make sure that Community stakeholders are welcome and have a place and I continually fight to make sure that people are fairly compensated because it's an opportunity cost for someone to take time from their job and to travel to come up on a campus and give the real-life education that our students who are also everyday people and how their families are everyday people. They need to have those connections and so it's very. It's often very difficult to do that for bureaucratic or reasons on University campuses. Also ideological reasons. Some people spend so much time in books as I did. I mean I live in books on my life, but but that are I don't know. They just get disconnected and I don't know. I mean, I don't know that I need to describe how that happens.

But what I want to focus on is expanding to the point possible if it's possible because many University professors have quit in protest. What's happening on universities and come up with alternative solutions to connecting people to educational experiences, but I feel like I'm speaking too ambiguously. So I guess I should get to an example. So let's talk about ethnic studies ethnic studies. You know, it sounded proper say in California like the the degree-granting programs and departments at universities, you know was founded from after these long student movements and commute with Community comrades and Strikes and the founding philosophy was that you know, it was community-based people were welcomed and it was a partnership in learning and we could delve into the archives and hear from people that were there on the ground founding it and talk about what their experience was like then. I can talk about what's happening now and it's there's a double movement or I don't even know if I can say double but there's there's malt there's a multiple such there's there's a. I personally am critical of where we are at with ethnic studies as someone who participates and that I don't it's not meeting my personal standards, which may be unreasonable. Perhaps it's not meeting my personal standards in regard to. What the reason why I joined this agenda. I joined a black studies agenda for example, not exclusive like studies, but just let's talk about black studies since that's where my professor professorial line is. Currently I joined this black studies agenda. You know before I joined the universe a proper University before I even became a college student, but I joined this movement for black studies because of what I read about because of what I saw and heard from Founders including my parents right the that this was. Metaphorically like my household growing up, right? Everyone is welcome. We come in we learn from each other. Like whether you're you're working on like women's Reproductive Rights whether you're working on anti homophobic legislation, whether you're working, you know, we would talk we would all chat in a room with like a drummer from Senegal and someone who had just got to you know here from Cambodia and we would talk about. How we are like systems of how we survive systems of Oppression how we align and how we could help each other even if we had different agendas because our ultimate agenda was to be simple as they get free and that that does happen in certain University cases, and I would say an example that I'm proud and honored to. To do this with his like for example teaching hip-hop with Davey D for about 10 years now Davey, Professor cook has you know his professional life as he is. He he's he works in radio. He works in community reporting. He was also for he's been he's a professor not only in classes with me but on its own and and then when we have that platform we in a situation that lacks funding and it should it should have the funding. It's unacceptable that it doesn't especially if you know, the university says it wants to have this community outreach. We need to make sure that we're compensating people even even if even if the whole system of public education is suffering, we

have to recognize the humanity of the people were asking to come in and share with our students and their humanity and the opportunity cost and even just the Trent basic Transportation cost. So, you know to to help people connect or the time, you know, someone zooming in as you have so graciously and so that's it. So, you know the the example of this hip-hop class, for example, I'm going back to hip-hop this hip-hop Clacks and I've seen this with other hip-hop classes to across the world allows to have allows local and community members. I'm going to say some place Global imagined community of hip-hop to of of all walks of life to come in and connect and feed the mines to to nurture the learning of college students and these students share that information and their peer networks and also follow using digital Communications, you know in social media and so forth. They then can follow these people who there who they're introduced to in class. And so that's an example of what's working. I think it could run. A bit better. It does run well and you know, it's I'm talking about a public education experience I've seen it work perfectly at private institutions where there's funding and so forth. But even then, you know, there's a hierarchy sometimes there can be a hierarchical idea like, oh, well, we need to put all our money in neuroscience and not hip-hop Community member coming into the hip-hop class or something or being the professor the hip-hop class, but that also takes a lot of to get that kind of participation and to have I think we need to move further. So maybe I'm impatient or unreasonable. I don't think I am but I mean I'm happy to be open to critique. I think that you know, we need to have like visiting professorships. You know funding set aside for visiting professorships if somebody wants to do that cause not everybody wants to do that. But to have people, you know coming in and and engaging in a way like you can't be you you you're such a mate your great teacher, you know when I've taught you and we teach your work in our class. You know, it touches our students it changes their lives and you know, since I know that you're a master of what you do, it's rather than me trance start attempting to translate it. Like I like if possible I'd like you or someone you designate to be able to be in there on a sustained way. So. That's so that's what I'd like to see and I think that we've been working in this I guess I'm talking about an intersection of hip-hop and ethnic studies at this point and I'm speaking about ethnic studies because the founding philosophies are the community is the. So we were talking about like my PhD in anthropology, right? Which also kind of Echoes that as well, but let's say my PhD was in I don't know English literature, maybe the founding philosophy is of English literature is not the community the classroom. I still think the community should be in the classroom, but and the classroom is the community but. You know, that's not my discipline necessarily. I'm not the expert of that so I can't really speak.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [01:09:29] No, but you know what? I think you I think you bring up something so essential sorry to interrupt you, but I think I agree with what everything you're saying. I mean the founding philosophy. I really I really don't think that when you say that am I being unreasonable and. I don't absolutely not and I think even if let's say if even if it wasn't from the founding philosophy to me. Education or anything in general expands over time because experience teaches us what we need to do better and what has worked from the past that hasn't worked or what haven't we Revisited that needs to be Revisited and explored and expand on and I think even if it wasn't part of the founding philosophy, thank goodness. It was but even if it wasn't like I think it teaches us and shows us that. There always is another way to get to the what we envision that it can be actually possible and for me whether it's a hip-hop course or a cooking course, you know what I mean, I think education period. Is in the community and I think these and this is not to say that we can't work in institutional spaces. But I question the institutional spaces in the very fact how Community centered are you and doesn't mean that we need to be in the community period no matter what course because why can't an English literature cores be in the community. I think there's some amazing. Literature folks that may not be on campus has their people. I mean I just last year. Spent time in a reclaiming our stories writing cohort here in southeast San Diego and it was the most I mean, that was a classroom. I mean there was professors from San Diego City College guiding Us in the writing process, but. We were all exchanging one another as a group with other people from the community in southeast San Diego who have gone through a lot of things and in our lives and we're sharing our story and reading it to one another and we're giving each other feedback. And if that wasn't literature and learning, I don't know what it is. So to me, it's like reimagining the biggest possibilities where education can be amongst the people and it doesn't have to be an Ivory Towers. I mean that to me is the alternative that to me is the vision that we need to look at in education. So I think you're absolutely right. I'm at 100% ingredients with you and it's not. And will and it's not too much for us for and yes, I get people got to strategize but I think we need to start from like what's big and Visionary and take. In the strategizing part the one step we can get to get there. But why not ask from the big jump of what that vision is so we can eventually get to there and strategize in such a way right that we don't ask for small pieces that we actually envision the larger piece, right? So I think you're absolutely right. I'm with you. I'm with Dawn yes. Yes. Yes exactly what you just said.

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [01:13:08] Exactly what you just said. What was the name of the program is southeast San Diego the recreating our stories.

It's a reclaiming our stories. It's through pillars of the community that provide these co-writing chords like every year and you there's no amount of times

you you can do it. Like I actually when I did my first session there. You know, it inspired me to finally write my memoir, so I'm going to stick to it and then they were like well, why don't you come back the next writing cohort and you come several times and next thing, you know, your book is finished. I literally finished almost one pretty much a chapter. In one of my books and from being part of that writing cohort and then we had a final performance day a well a reading day where we read our stories to our the community and it was powerful very powerful.

See that's the standard. That's the standard and that's. Where I'm at right now, so I guess I'm considered mid-career professional and I guess I'm middle-aged. But I hope I'm a middle-aged in my life span. So like I hope I got another 42 years at me. I'm increasingly impatient in that in all fields. So if I'm going to be honest, right I was trying to be respectful like well, I'm not adding a literature specialist. So but yes I so we're going to talk about what I really believe about education. I believe that it's time. It's been time to formalize focus fund experiences like what you just mentioned. That's when I look back to like Pat Parker and June Jordan people who inspire me, you know from the past, you know, and. And you know, they're not here with me in physical form, but I often try to reconnect with them through their Works particularly as I navigate the Bay Area I think back to like, okay, how did they deal with it? You know as they dealt with some of the stuff I'm so we're still dealing with so Eggies and that way I'm getting I get impatient and I'm like it's time that's where we need to move to we don't want to talk about it. I mean I will if we have to go through policy through academics in it because like. If we have to go through this cumbersome bureaucratic process start, I mean I'm going to go way left field here, but The Hitchhiker's Guide to the universe, for example, like whether you're talking about the book or the movie the one that most def wasn't right or nothing day was in for example, like they have the Vogons. I feel like that at the unit. I'm feeling like I'm stuck in some sort of like situation with Logan's and that. I'm trying to get I mean not just me but there's you know, a cohort of people that believe like me off on campus University campuses. There's people like Sarah Rahman that have resigned in protest and a lot of my friends whose names aren't known and I'm not going to mention them right now because I don't know I don't have their permission but people who have walked away from tenured position. To you know, work in school districts or Community spaces because and people are like, what are you doing? They'll question these peoples sanity and these are women actually but but it doesn't I mean doesn't have to be I'm not just women who I know but like they question their sanity like like why are you moving from a tenured position your you know, you have this like this Employment contract and someone who really inspires me who's working in the DC area. You know, she bravely walked away into the realm of unknown and uncertainty with

employment because. the bottom line is her work was Radical education. and. She was working in education like at the University level. She was working in teacher preparation and that's not what she got in this for you know, we go into debt getting phds like that right? She chose this path to get to a product and it wasn't happening at this in this in these Universe it was. And so we have to be free to walk away. You know and I use this as for myself as being a survivor of domestic violence, that's the metaphor. That's something that helps me get the courage to get up and make change in that the same way. You know, not only for my own healthy Health, but for those around me I cannot. I cannot be in an unhealthy or violent situation. I can remain in something like that because not only for my own health and safety and survival, but also to those around me they need to know what health looks like. They need to know what education is supposed to be and so if something is not working and we've tried and put in years and we've gone through the systems and strategies and bureaucratic forms, and it's we're still stuck in line. Like Ben. I think that for me and for some other people it's important to be able to walk away. Get out of line and start a new line. I mean, I don't want to start a new life but you know to start new forms. And so while I guess started talking about this because there is this fight for ethnic studies. I need ethnic studies to be better. Yeah, because you know, I stepped down. I mean I stepped down from being the first openly I queer black woman chair of the first Department of black studies, you know formally like we know that there's been movement certain black studies curriculum before San Francisco State, but you know, I that system was not. Like there was just there's not an ideological alignment and there wasn't a practical alignment and I don't see eye person. Now, I'm happy to disagree people made to book it will obviously disagree but it's not do it's not it's not meeting that standard of what I know. The reason why I got into this and what I saw that Democratic space where black studies was happening in my parents household. It might have been with someone who just got here from Cambodia or Laos or you know, it might have been someone who was kicked out of their home because they were in they were they self identified as gay. It might have been somebody who you know just lots of people and and that was that was black studies. That was okay. We're going to we're going to cook some beans and rice. We're gonna have some. I mean, obviously we need to grow from that memory from the 80s. But you know there were to put on some records and we're going to we're going to move forward and and so what that looked like in my household is like my mom would look for opportunities for people. So for example, there was a young young man who was an openly gay but. Later became openly gay and she found him a scholarship to go study the dance theater of Harlem ballet for the summer. And so she drove him to New York and I was along for the ride and you know, and and and we stayed with a family member in New Jersey drove across the bridge every day, which I

hated and to to get to to get him to this. This experience that changed his life and while he was in his program of doing the dance Theatre of Harlem, you know, my mom was organizing that was back when Yuri was in New York and she would organize a people like Yuri and others on The Daily and and so a lot of movement work was happening. But the reason why I went back to that model is you know, People like this reclaiming our stories program, like what I don't you know, like what that that summer back I think was 1984 at the dance theater of Harlem. We have these models of how we can meet these founding philosophies. And I think it's time to push further. To make sure that that's happening at University campuses and within a specifically in disciplines that say this is our founding philosophy, right? But even those that maybe it's not part of their founding philosophy to work to be creative to find a way to collectively create these educational opportunities and and mutually beneficial Mutual Collaborative Learning. Collectives and that's where that's where I want to see education be and I'm willing I'm giving I'm giving myself like one to five years to can to try this and I'm willing to walk away inspired by my feminist comrades to to you and I were just at in core where we heard, you know, we heard from like remember when Ericka Huggins was talking about giving ourselves permission to walk away. Yes from that which not working like that that that's where that's that's that's where I'm at personally and I know that other people are there to I also don't think it's unreasonable. Well, I hope it's not unreasonable. I'm inspired when someone that I respect so much like Ericka Huggins like yourself just stand up in courage to speak to re-centering realigning with values and no that doesn't mean going back romantic. Like I don't have this romantic idea that everything was perfect 50 years ago or anything like that or even 30 years ago or 20 years ago or maybe even two years ago, but I need us to push forward. I need us to push forward and do better is time for I'm willing to step down and to have if that would make space for people to come in and and teach multiple things now we talked about hip hop, but also candy at the beginning of our conversation when you were teaching me. We're talking about podcasting that's a class that I had our University the University where I currently work that would be you would be perfect for a literature course or or writing course or podcasting broadcast broadcast electronic creative. You know, I notice is what our students need because for the past part least 20 years. I've been on the ground as a first responder in education. You know, I see I see what students want to do and and and I and I work to connect them with what they want to do. But we really need these Community Partnerships one because one faculty member or even a collective of a few faculty. We can't do it by ourselves and that's not necessarily our expertise all the time. So I really have put out a call in the Bay Area as I mean, I'm moving towards the necessarily rebuilding my own health. And so as I transition to take some time off so that I can come back and go back outside so I can get back out on the basketball

court, you know, like I need to heal and so I can get back out there and play ball right on the court. Using a metaphor meaning in education. I had put out a call to just different employee networks in the tech sector and these maybe they're not just Engineers maybe like Communications marketing writing artist designers in finance. I've been I've been trying to connect with. My local community members in a broad sense in the greater Bay Area to mindfully connect with students at the public universities in the area to help me work with students so that they can imagine and vision and see what the possibilities are for themselves and get themselves there. I will help as long as. Participating in the university and this way I've course I'm there to help and I also recognize that there may be better ways to get to that agenda which is the reason why I got you know, my life's work like the reason why I to better serve the the vision of Education as part of a radical process to help us get free to help us wake up to help us to stay awake to help us, too. Help others and help ourselves. Like it may not for me. It may not continue to be in the University. But I still am presently I'm I put out a call for help and and I'm and I'm willing to to put in that time to try to change the structures to open Pathways and at the same time it's you know recognizing it also needed. Continue to nurture on the Block but let me bring it one last thing we talked about the Nasir Jones fellowship and the hip-hop archive. I so I think what marcellina Morgan and all of her collaborators over the decades, but I really want to take a moment to honor Marcelina Morgan. in all those who worked with her to build. What we call the hip-hop archive and Research Institute. That's a standard. That's a model. It started out. She started that work at a public university in California and you know worked very hard to create a standard where community members artists as part of community members. I mean just like that that that that. Democratic convening space is possible. There's opportunities and those and so that there are models that exist and I'm grateful for. marcellina Morgan for working for many decades to set standards raise standards and challenge us to continue raising those standards. But that that is another feminist agenda and that has had an effect in artist faces University spaces and and I want to honor that because by doing what she did and she did it. I said it she said in a different University spaces, but doing what she sitting up what she did. At Harvard at a time when? You know hip-hop is stigmatized people were claimed playing hip-hop or everything. I claim it for like it was considered like a public health risk. So and so, you know administrators are not always open to this sort of like radical openness, but the fight to establish something that has sustained for so many years has helped people set up similar. Institute's other university spaces that have those Community connections that can follow that model of what you were talking about. Like what you experience in southeast San Diego and so, you know that that's so I talked about what's not working. In certain University spaces and how I'm getting increasingly impatient and that okay. It's like okay,

so we had a certain model for 10 years the 10 years that I've been participate or 11 years with a public university the CSU the California State University system 23 campuses in San Francisco State and in ground zero for the birth of the Department's of what we call ethnic studies. I talked about you know, there there are there obviously opportunities that we see like happening and example would be the hip-hop like what they do and I do it the Hip Hop class and I'd like to see us push even further to you know, having something that's like to move it to institutionalizing and I mean I see slicing I like that word but you know supporting and sustaining programs like what you mentioned with reclaiming our stories and so. I just feel that you know, well there if I want to be I want to Express gratitude for what currently exists and I'd like to raise the bar and Hip-Hop Spirit as if this were a battle and be a dance beats or lyrics. You know when some person comes or when a group or whatever Collective comes with one, you know one set of a standard. Let's battle and raise that standard I challenge maybe the word battle isn't correct anymore. Maybe should say I challenge us to raise the standard because it's been 10 years or at least over 10 years of one particular model and we can do better and I want to see us do better and if if there is if we cannot get there. Then we need to be creative and in that hip hop spirit and create what we what we what we need so and there are examples that of success around the world and even those can improve and that's the spirit. That's the spirit of hip-hop education. That's the spirit of of of getting free and. That's why that's why I'm here. If I'm not working to push the standards then I think it's time for me to do something else then so yes,

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [01:32:32] I mean you bring up so much. I mean you brought up a whole lot but I think in terms of how you use book in the last few words in terms of the hip-hop Spirit, they hip hop away and I think that's. That's exactly what it is. It's this understanding that whatever is we tap into and embody and part of and contribute to or participating in a hip-hop Spirit it it's it has strategy and theory and all of that but part of the practice of hip-hop is also not being so super formalized because it was never meant to be part of the bourgeoisie. You know, it was never meant to have these bureaucratic processes and part of bureaucratic processes is the bourgeoisie way and as we should know the origins of hip-hop, it didn't quite start that way. It didn't have the Bourgeois Z involved and it's formalized in a different way the aesthetic the the lived way of hip-hop in the his hip-hop Spirit way. Coming from the origins of course and as you know. Of Black Culture African roots and West Caribbean Roots, right and all the contributors from people globally as we talk about global feminism and Global hip-hop that hasn't as you state had there's not much documented on it and is coming from people on the ground coming people from their communities has our own practice of what formality looks like, right and sometimes that formality isn't as structured in

these structural movement. It's an entities but it has its own specific way of being a spirit and so spiritual and so. Undefined undefined sometimes right having an in and in so having its own definition in its own way, but also being undefined not knowing seeping in through tensions and ambiguity as well as just a free flowing because that's what your puppies and as you also state it being about pushing ourselves because it's about the battle in the cipher and how we feed off of one another and how we learn from one another and that's education and that's how it's supposed to look like the least to me. So I'm with you again and I'm definitely down to. To be whatever you create and and to learn from you and be part of your Cipher and your circle and your space into learning from what does exist right the models that we can look to and learning from Marcylena is you know, Marcy her per model in her work and and archives and. And then, you know continue on to see how we can get certain things in our communities the resources, they need to expand or to just amplify the work that people are doing because education it's time I agree with you completely and then you sharing your vision of what education look like is is beautiful and it gives me hope but I would I'd like to know more about is your work in solidarity building and you kind of talked a lot about that in terms of how you do that through education finding, you know, the folks that you work with and and then even as we drove into the work originally with hip-hop crew on so I'm so glad that you're here with us because originally when we had started hip-hop bruha it was you know, You know in his infant stages of what can we do with this and I'm excited that we're going into this podcasting vision and new journey as a way to still continue the work and still amplify voices. So I'm really excited about that and you being here and I think part of hip-hop crew house work is also talking about that Collective Liberation and solidarity work. It's just one way of doing so. I'd like to hear more ideas on what that solidarity looks like. And then and that stemming from what you learn from like your mom building with Yuri Kochiyama to you know, what does that look like today? How do we move forward with that as well as partially in this era and this time in this generation as we close off our session, I'd love to hear off more about that.

Dr. Dawn-Elissa-Fischer: [01:37:10] Thank you. I have to add that Kandi. You're in thank you for mentioning what you meant about the cipher and this, you know structure and the spirit and the science of it and that you inspired us like it's been like we may not you you inspire. The marshalling the Morgans and the Don Alyssa fissures and the daisies, you know, you inspire us so we'd say we're in this we've been in this Cipher. That's the cool part about like hip-hop. Right? Like we may not even like before we met each other right like you inspired me like, you know, it's like moments where it's like what am I doing on this?

You know people or people would tell me like you can't go to Japan by yourself as a black woman and study hip-hop or whatever. You can't do something right and I'll be like, well, there's all these there's all these first. So in your first and you get building and you kept writing and you push you push you push the standard, so you're one of those you are you are leader to and so that's that Cipher and that's that. So so I just wanted to give you your props in that in that Cipher in that standard. Let's talk about hip-hop bruja, because I'm so proud to be your. I love I love Hip Hop bruha. It took it back it took it back. I mean it. It's pushing forward and it's on that like future seeking edge of what I see and what excites me about all the diversity of hip-hop globally, right but it also was it also helps in a is a positive flashback to what I saw coming up with my mom and her comrades and I think it's important to say, you know, like well my mom being here because I was not the only person my mother was corresponding with I just can't remember everybody's name is right now, but the people whose names I can remember are people who Miss Kochiyama to introduce my mother to and some of the two of those people were one was my you mean Akazawa who is a writer a journalist and and a political thought leader in my opinion and someone who works with cultural workers in Japan. And so she and my mother correspondent and worked for many years and Rika Yoshida the photographer and activist, you know, so, you know, there's and then I've later met people who are mentored by those people like Motoko she know and she knew he had a cowboy hats like I'm gonna forget someone's name. So I'm scared too scared to mention names right now. So but I guess hip-hop bruha is that Spirit of reconnecting and you know, the generation of my mom and and here he and Mayumi there very advanced and then my comrades are you know in there like 40s and 50s 60s and I mean 30s I guess and I really want to continue and to include and we're including one thing. I like about Brujas. It includes, you know people in their 20s and you know, so we're you know that hip-hop bruha cipher model is its. It reaches back and it's feature forward and and it and it it's this it's a it's an exciting collaboration opportunity. So I just wanted to I wanted to sing the praise. I'm so excited about hip-hop bruja because. it's a needed this example. I mean it's example of that every day. Feminist work to save lives and but you know, he Barbara aren't just even just the organizers having conversations. I told you the story about taking my blood pressure on the election day in 2016, and it's saved my life like in that was just us talking about, you know, organizational structure and you know and checking in and so that that hip-hop practice that goes for me metaphorically it goes back to that nurturing. It was while we were checking in via text. It was like beans and rice and Records. Hmm and thank you because I want to be here for my son and for myself and for other so like that's that that's that beautiful thing. I saw with my mom's cohort comrade cohort and and. It gives me hope that that's still happening. It was so beautiful to connect with you, Aisha Fukushima.

Ericka Huggins Rocky Rivera Geo just up at in court. I mean and you know and that we have we have the collective that to continue through bruja A hip-hop group. I think Hip-hop Bruha is I mean. I mean, I'm very excited about it as a model. Sometimes I forget to as I did at that session it could I forget to talk about you know, there's absolutely african-centered black focused issues that I work with on a daily basis that are important and. And necessary there. It's essential to be focused. I think Stuart Hall called this like strategic essentialism meaning like sometimes we got to focus deeply on our particular identities. I mean understand we have multiple identities. We have to focus deeply on certain issues to get at. A solution so I'll give an example in that. I have a 13 year old son and we are struggling through educate the Educational Systems available to him and and and and I'm out here. You know understanding California's history with incarceration and you know wanting to protect not only my son but other people's kids as well, but you know, so it's very personal and it's very its political it's professional so that would be an example of where I'm specifically looking at like a particular identity and doing some specific work around blackmail adolescence, right and what I appreciate about hip hop in general. I mean when it's done in that spirit that I in that in that founding philosophy, shall we say and he thought brutal has an example of this what I appreciate about my hip hop Networks. And these in the end the Coalition work, is that when you get together. And break bread or beans and rice it records when you get together with with. I love it. I love the beans rice and Records. So can you inspired that it's I wish I wish maybe there's a photo of it or something because I got out of it. You have to your book or things right records so, you know, we didn't have much and but we shared what we had. So if so these the moment the brewhouse like about feels like beans rice and records and so I want to think I want to get to a point of like. Talking when you sit down in that. Be it interpersonal. Even if it has to be, you know, using digital technology given barriers and financial constraints and so forth. Like we're we are blessed to have this technology right now as part of our tools of War are just suggestions. They were tourists are tools of Peace and Freedom. So prior to the technique this current technology moment if I can go back and share about sitting with people beans rice and record its right. That's the sitting talking. Unguarded with one another sharing authentically about problems that we face and solutions that we need and having the freedom to be vulnerable with one another knowing there's compassion and without fear of judgment and but honest and honest critical feedback, those are moments where I see. People growing and those are moments that really inspire me to keep going and that I've had conversations with people who you know, they're not the same identity as me or like maybe we're both female right or we may we may both identify as female. But we might we might not both identify as queer or we might and we may not we may not have the same national origin or even speak the same first language

and we're maybe even struggled to speak a Common Language and we but were we get to talking about issues and I may start with something like hip-hop or music or culture or film and but then when it gets into these. This is this a I've had this experience where we can ask questions about one of the challenging questions to one another and learn through those through that through that critical engagement to that inquiry through that questioning through that discussion and and grow and both people could say I'm have a particular moment in mind that I'm thinking of right now, but like where I had a conversation it was one-on-one with another with a woman. From Japan who was visiting while I was out of the hip-hop archive and 2016 and we just were literally sitting on the floor of a hotel lobby while like bougie people looked at us like what's wrong with them and just ask each other questions and without judgment and and learned from it and then reflecting on that moment later it inspired ideas in me. To that that helped me with my agenda of political awareness and education. So so I think that that's why coalitions matter and that when we can share with people who we share some we share we have common need for Solutions. Around a problem or systems of Oppression and when we can share on on these in these interpersonal interpersonal as well as like organizational strategies when we can talk honestly and and learn from one another that's why coalition's are so important and that's why having these. I feel like I'm administrator when I say diverse Partnerships we have like when we're not afraid of difference. Like I said, there's times when we needed like be focusing on a particular we where we may need that strategic essentialism as part of our. Our our tool to get over something and I mentioned like, you know me struggling with you know me working with my son in like focusing on like black male adolescent education. Like that's an example of something that's specific to particular a particular identity. But Kandi, you know what this happened last night. Actually, I was sharing with the group of women late at night last night and. All the different identities different identities children different identities and I shared what was happening with my son and all of these people who I would assume that. I had nothing in common with outside of maybe the shared reason why we were at this meeting began to share stories with me. Personal stories and then they started to share Professional Resources with me. And so that will not only help me. In my personal situation, but it will also help me help others because I now have more to my library and I thought I had like the biggest library in regards to like helping adolescents a general but they just add it to the library. And then they learn something from me because they're all looking at me like, oh she got it all together. Everything's perfect. And you know this one woman. I was like near tears when I came into the meeting but left all happy but at towards the end this woman. She was tearing up as she reflected on dealing with her oldest daughter and and and trying to deal with her daughter cutting as deep as she her daughter navigated social problems

and so forth and you know, and we all cheered up with her and then that became became an opportunity for someone from Australia to share a resource, right? So here we are just sharing like. And that's a cut that's why we have a coalition like we all go back. We left we all had to get back to our lives our work our families and our politics. But we got together in that we came together and we shared and we rep we're representing different countries. Let me not formally but you know what? I mean we come from these different walks of life and we just happen to share we came together for one reason. We shared on another another point and everybody walked away with something even though on surface-level someone if someone were to see us out at the supermarket or whatever or walking down the street, they would think we have nothing in common. And so if we don't open ourselves up to have those moments then. We're losing out. And so that I talked about it in a very like personal kind of way just now, but how that look what that what that has looked like for me over. My life span is when my mother was fighting for civil rights issues in the Ozarks, and I don't know if you're like in the 90s it was the 90s. No, it was early 2000s you remember like when Cincinnati there were these put these police killings and in Cincinnati? But that's what that could be. Like any moment. There was there was a particular moment. So that was that was like maybe I don't know 2002 or something like that. And I remember I happen to be in Japan doing the work that I was doing with b-boy Park that was part ends up being part of my dissertation work and my mom was like, okay, you got to go visit, you know my comrade and I checked in with my mom's comrade in my mom's comrade was talking to me about. My mom she'd help my mom. She translated and my mom wrote an article about what was happening on the ground with movements against police. We I think back then they said police brutality police terrorism is what it is is but and but my mom read this article and her friend translated it and it was published in this weekly political magazine in Japan is so. Sharing those stories across oceans it lets people know like what's going on with you? Okay, here's what's going on with us and then we can we connect and we can help each other and we could be these International observers with when we when we Face the challenges like election fraud and but even just T than that like sexual assault and domestic violence or you know abuse of children. I mean those are big because these are Big social problems that have you know that I see and I see that when we we we have to have these multiple movement strategies and that, you know, we may work on, you know within the identities that we readily I identify with but then we when we when we expand to include others and to work alongside one another and it's not all it's not easy all the time. It's where humans there's personality there's cultural difference. There's language barriers. There's there's there's physical barriers of getting together. But when we when we can we can we can have allies and build these relationships across what we what we've been taught is different what we perceive to be

different. We can band together across difference. I see it the learning opportunity being that much greater and then the product the resolution. In my experience has been that much greater. There's a saying it's cliché the fish don't see the water around them. Right? So sometimes you get up out of your neighborhood and go into some other neighborhood to and it could be like within the same city or could be or counter or rural area or it could be internationally, right? And you usually make see something that is part of. Your imagination your visioning process to get to the goals. You want to achieve as part of your personal Peace and Freedom agenda. And so so that's why it's important for us to to be to might be mindful and do the work and and and have the courage and to be uncomfortable or challenged. That and space is like hip-hop. Bruha is a space where we can do that. You've meticulously gotten organized structure that makes it eat it's accessible. And that's important you created this this is accessible. Right? So for people that are maybe thinking I just can't I can't, you know, you know, I teach students that have never really left the Bay Area sometime. I'm like, wait what like not even and they're like, oh that one time when you sent me to Nevada for on that bus trip. I'm like wait, that's the only time like so you've just been going between like this deep eat like East Bay place where you lived in San Francisco saying that's it. Like maybe you've been down to La once maybe you've been to like you took a school trip to like the University of Nevada Reno or something because we have a relationship. They're like and I'm like nah. Nah, you got to you got to get out even if if all the financial resources in the world won't let you take movement then take to the internet and have conversations and so it can be hard for people. They can't imagine sometimes like moving outside. Their physical boundaries whatever so that's why something like hip-hop like not something because that's why the structure the accessible organization of hip-hop bruha allows for people to enter the cipher. And benefit and that's why I treasured hip-hop Brewhouse so much and it hip-hop crew housing in my mind that in that Spirit of what I saw happening with people that I was inspired by growing up now, they'll be quick to say you know it once I went to I think I told you the story before about one of my mom's friends was like she was looking at this brochure for b-boy Park and she was like, why aren't you studying blues or reggae? It's like jazz. Why? It's about Blues Blues is where the Freedom Movement is at and I was like well for your own generation, yeah, but for me and my blues is hip-hop.

DJ Kuttin Kandi: [01:57:10] There you go. Our Blues are hip-hop our stories hip-hop, right? Well, thank you Don for being on our show for visiting with us today. We appreciate all the wisdom you shared with us bringing in. The beans rice and Records sharing story about your mom's your family. How you all break bread how you came into coalition-building how you come in bring in your women-centered practice the global feminism. What you believe is the

roots of ethnic studies being in community one another talking about hip-hop ciphers and reclaiming our stories and circling it back to centering our young people and doing this movement work. I mean it was a beautiful to talking with you. You always have a way of grounding us. So you are very very much appreciated at some point. We're definitely going to have you back in our show hopefully as a guest host as well as we invite more people into the conversation. Well there you have it everybody another episode of hip-hop bruha.

I'm your host DJ Kuttin, and we'll see you next time. Peace.