

**Scene on Radio: Capitalism**  
**Episode 13: Bonus: Live at Motorco**  
**Transcript**

**Background music in bar, Paul Simon, “50 Ways to Leave your Lover”:** I’d like to help you in your struggle to be free...

**John Biewen:** Hey, Durham!

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** What's going on, y'all?

**John Biewen:** Chenjerai. Ellen, are we ready to do this?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Let's go.

**John Biewen:** Let's do it. And, you know, we tend to like a cold open.

**On tape, street sound, Gabrieleal Glueck:** I'm Gabi, by the way.

**Emmy:** Bobby?

**Gabriela:** Gabi.

**Emmy:** Nice to meet you.

**John Biewen:** This is Gabriela Glueck, a producer working for Scene on Radio earlier in 2024. She was approaching folks at the farmers market – right over there.

**Emmy:** Hi, I'm Emmy. I go to school here in Durham, but I'm from Oregon.

**Ellen McGirt:** So eventually Gabby came around to this question. How would you describe our current economic system and how would you change it if you could? Here's Emmy.

**Emmy, at Farmers Market:** My gut response is that the majority of the wealth shouldn't be hoarded by a few individuals, so I'd really want to redistribute wealth so more people could live more freely.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And when I listen to that, the part of that answer that really sticks with me is her choice of words so people could live more freely. You guys talked about that in the capitalism season. What does freedom mean in a conversation about the economy?

**Ellen McGirt:** That's exactly it. Does it mean that markets are free and unrestrained, so corporations and the people who own them can do whatever they want to do? Or does it mean an economy in which *people* are free, all of us, and reasonably secure, so we can live decent lives and be who we want to be?

**John Biewen:** And if those two kinds of freedom are in tension, what's the priority? Which is more important? And I think it's pretty clear which has been the priority for people in power in this country. Here's a word from an esteemed economic historian that you may be familiar with.

**Song: Leonard Cohen, "Everybody Knows":**

Everybody knows that the days are loaded  
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed  
Everybody knows the war is over  
Everybody knows the good guys lost  
Everybody knows the fight was fixed  
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich  
That's how it goes.

**John Biewen:** Everybody sing?

**Leonard Cohen, in song:** Everybody knows.

**John Biewen:** Okay, so, the great Leonard Cohen, of course. And it sounds weird right now to talk about everybody knowing anything. Um, we can't agree on the most basic facts about the world. Does 2 plus 2 equal 4, or 37? Depends on your politics and

where you get your news. Right? But when it comes to the U.S. economy, it seems Leonard was right.

**Ellen McGirt:** In a survey in 2020 by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center, 7 in 10 Americans, including a majority of Republicans, said the economy unfairly favors the powerful interests. And in 2023, only 38% of Americans said that our current form of capitalism is working for the average American.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And a lot of pundits think this is how Trump did it, right? This goes right to the heart of the election, that he somehow managed to position himself as more of a change agent, and more of a champion of regular folks against elites, than the Democrats did.

**Ellen McGirt:** In another poll this past May, almost 70% said America's political and economic system needs major changes or to be torn down entirely. Now, why would people feel this way?

**John Biewen:** Could it be the staggering concentration of wealth in the hands of the 1%, after forty-plus years of systematic upward redistribution through globalization, neoliberal policies, and financialization? Or the growing consensus that endless economic growth on a finite planet is driving us off an ecological cliff?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And yet, in the presidential election we just had, some people would say the choice was very stark in some ways. But I mean, if we're being honest, dramatic change in our economic reality wasn't really an option that anybody was putting on the table.

**John Biewen:** Let's go back to Gabi and Emmy at the Durham Farmers Market. And remember, this was before the election.

**Gabriela Glueck:** When you think about capitalism in our current system, do you see change coming, good or bad and why?

**Emmy:** I haven't seen any actual motion for change. There's definitely like people and individuals wanting change, but I haven't seen much movement at higher levels.

**John Biewen:** So, in a country with two major political parties, both firmly on board with capitalism as we know it, how do we feel about that? That's what we're here to talk about, more or less. And after so many folks have listened as we went on this trip into capitalism in Scene on Radio Season Seven – it's not required that you listen to that to be here – but it's great to be together, in this strange and alarming historical moment, with a bunch of people, in person, here at Motorco Music Hall in beautiful Durham, North Carolina!

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Whoo!

**Ellen McGirt:** Yes, it absolutely is. And I say that as the newcomer to the Scene on Radio Family. This entire experience has been remarkable for me. So, thank you so much for that. And thank you for showing up and coming out in these dark days.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Absolutely, yeah. And we're not just talking about the weather, man. This is these are challenging times. And I just it's so exciting to be here with y'all. I'm glad we have a chance to be here in person, to think through and talk through some of this stuff. And I hope we get to do it a lot more.

**John Biewen:** I'm John Biewen, I'm producer and host of Scene on Radio and director of storytelling at the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University.

**Ellen McGirt:** And I'm Ellen McGirt. I'm a business journalist now, editor in chief of Design Observer magazine, and I was John's co-host for Scene on Radio Season Seven, capitalism.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And I'm Chenjerai Kumanyika, assistant professor of journalism at New York University, podcast maker, and co-host of Scene on Radio Seasons Two and Four.

**John Biewen:** Those seasons, two and four, were about white supremacy, and American democracy and why we don't have more of it, both really precursors to the capitalism season. And all those things are intertwined in so many ways. This seemed like a perfect moment to bring Chenjerai back into the conversation. So excited to have you back, Chenj.

**Ellen McGirt:** There's no wrong moment to bring Chenj back into the conversation.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** We got the band back together again, you know what I'm saying?

Music

**John Biewen:** From the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University, this live event is a follow-up to our recent series Scene on Radio Season Seven, Capitalism.

**Ellen McGirt:** In which we told the story of capitalism, how it emerged in the world, and how powerful people shaped it over time. Here's a taste.

**Montage on tape, excerpts of *Capitalism*:**

**Music**

**John Biewen:** But I'm sitting here in a little outdoor cafe, looking up at the monument to Christopher Columbus, a prominent landmark here in Barcelona. Basically weaponry.

**Historian Jessica Moody:** weaponry, alcohol, and metals, that were taken and then traded for ... people. African people on the west coast of Africa.

**Historian Charisse Burden-Stelly:** Slavery has been a feature of many societies, but slavery as an economic system and as the foundation of a particular mode of production, um, is something that's unique to, let us say, the 15th century, 16th century onward.

**Economist Jayati Ghosh:** The rapid expansion and the ability to invest so much came from all of that external surplus colonial loot, very broadly defined.

**Historian Brad DeLong:** And you also, I think, really do need the modern corporation. You know, big corporations are good at taking some idea and putting it to work, not in one factory, but in a hundred factories all over the world.

**News Co-Author, Iowa:** Well, hundreds of employees walked out of the Electrolux plant in Webster City for the very last time today.



**News Co-Anchor:** They did. The company decided to close the facility after opening a new factory in Mexico.

**Laid-off worker, Electrolux:** I'm a tough guy, but I shed some tears. Everybody did.

**Laid-off worker #2:** We're all losing our jobs.

**Author Marjorie Kelly:** People know that billionaires have all the wealth. And, you know, there's a lot of talk about how much wealth is going to billionaires. But what we don't talk enough about is where does that wealth come from? From people and planet and society. It's being extracted from us.

**John Biewen:** Those are just a few of the many voices we heard in the season: workers and businesspeople, historians, economic thinkers, in the U.S., Europe, and Africa.

**Ellen McGirt:** We also explored the question of what to do, given capitalism's failings in the eyes of so many of us. What would a better capitalism look like? Or an economy that's not capitalist?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** So tonight we pick up where you all left off in Capitalism, and talk more about how change in our economic reality could really possibly come about – and how some people are already making it happen.

**John Biewen:** Wonderful turnout here at Motorco. Thanks so much again for everyone who came, and we're going to get you all involved, as I mentioned, and – including, in fact, right now. Um, so step up to the mic and tell us one thing you would like to change, or like to see change, in our so-called economy or in our economic lives in this society – whether it's a policy change, a law, a shift in values or culture. Big ideas or small, more specific ones, national or international. Bring it on. Who's got something?

**Audience Member 1:** I've got it, John. And I would go back to the 1950s, and the tax rate for the wealthy was 90%, and that has dropped so dramatically. I would just move that right back up to where it was before.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Whoo!

**Audience Member 2:** I would make it so all working people of the world could decide what we do with the wealth that we generate. I don't think it's enough to just tax. I think we should actually, the people that actually do the work and who are impacted by the problems would be the ones to make the decisions about the world and our resources.

(Audience applause)

**John Biewen:** That's crazy talk.

**Audience Member 2:** It's necessary!

**Audience Member3:** It's as if we are alive, if we were alive during the time of chattel slavery. It's asking, what would we change about this relationship? Treat the slaves a little bit better? Or would we call ourselves abolitionists, (and) say that this relationship, in which a small group of people are living off of the majority of humanity, is unacceptable, and it needs to go. And I have more than enough confidence in ordinary people, working class people, to run and organize this society to meet all of our needs.

**Audience Member 4:** I would socialize all housing and have rent caps.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Let's talk about it!

**Audience Member 4:** Because there's no lever currently that actually controls housing. And housing can continue to go up and up and up as long as property owners charge whatever amount they're going to charge. So there's no lever right now that controls that, beyond production. And that's not working.

**Audience Member 5:** So we need to call the people who were forcibly removed from their homes, enslaved Africans – without rice, cotton and sugar, further down south, there is no America. And you haven't done the job to thank us enough. You did not do your job to elect our first female black president.

**Audience Member 6:** Universal health care and universal basic income.

**Audience Member 7:** So I've been in law and in government for over 20 years. Local government. And I just realized that the Constitution is a love letter from the rich people – right? – who founded the country, to their progeny and the rich people today. So, for me, I would terminate the Constitution.

**Ellen McGirt:** Oh, watch out.

**Audience Member 7:** And I would say that we need a constitution that is focused on the health of the planet first and human well-being second. Because without the planet, we all die.

**John Biewen:** So, terminating it in a little different way than the president-elect would would do so. Got it. Thank you.

**Audience Member 8:** Let's use our school's American history classes and economic classes to teach students to change the system instead of maintaining the status quo. And we can start by putting Scene on Radio in all the classrooms.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Hey, say it loud.

**Audience Member 8:** But yeah, let's empower our children to make the difference and the change.

**Audience Member 9:** I'd just like to make a simple change. Take money out of politics.

**Audience Member 10:** I think just the basic need is free child care, and then maternity leave should absolutely be paid, and much longer than we give mothers or femme people.

**Ellen McGirt:** I love this town. Yeah. I do.

**Audience Member 11:** I would love to see a value shift around care work and having less focus on productivity and that sort of thing, and recognize that we cannot have a system of productivity here without all of us being taken care of and taking care of other people.

**Audience Member 12:** Simple: limit CEO salaries.

**Audience Member 13:** So, in a word, sustainability. Where we're in a mode of production, where we're living far beyond our needs and we're producing things that people want, rich people more than the people need. And it's not necessary. We don't have to do this, and we're doing it, and it's bad.

**Audience Member 14:** This is a beautiful crowd. I did not expect to see so many people here tonight. It's really awesome. Durham is really amazing. I came here 15 years ago, and I think there are some organizations in Durham that are doing really amazing things, like the Scrap exchange and TROSA and Habitat for Humanity and many others, that I think the local economy, we have an opportunity in Durham to really show people new ways and we can change things locally in Durham, especially with this crowd. Look at everyone here tonight and I think if we start there, we can be examples for other cities in North Carolina and the U.S. I think spending more of our money locally will make a big impact.

**Audience Member 15:** I like to call our attention to the need to dismantle the military industrial complex, which is an enormous factor in driving our economy and bringing inequality and great wealth to certain sectors, particularly the tech sector, while bringing death and destruction to targeted populations around the world.

**Audience Member 16:** I would love to see a cultural shift where we stop worshipping billionaires because they didn't. They did not get there by hard work.

**John Biewen:** Wow y'all. Thank you, love you. Everybody would have probably wanted a turn, but I love the response. Thank you. And, you know, speaking of, the gentleman mentioned organizations and institutions in Durham that are doing amazing stuff and have for have been for a long time. Uh, Camryn and Courtney, you're here, aren't you? And we talked about this a little bit on the show, but, you know, capitalism didn't – it's not like a vote was held and it was decided that we would now have capitalism. It wasn't even announced, right? It just, people started doing it and it sort of won the contest against feudalism at some point, or superseded it. And to the extent that capitalism is going to go away, it's going to be like that, right? It's just going to start to happen. And in fact, it has started to happen. And we have examples right here. So, especially after this election, I think a lot of people are going to be thinking about how to just move forward and not wait for big picture changes, certainly not from the federal government anytime soon. So, let's meet some folks who've been at it for a while, out here creating what you could call alternative economies. From Communities in Partnership. Camryn and Courtney Smith. And to begin, while y'all are walking up here, to begin to introduce these amazing people -- to begin to introduce them and their work, here's a little scene from just a couple of weeks ago. East Durham, corner of Main and Driver Street. And I'm pointing in the right direction ... ish? Ah, there. Thank you. (Laughing) At Communities in Partnership headquarters.

**Audio montage, scene:**

**Background music, Kanye West:** Na, na, na, na, wait til I get my money right

**Courtney Smith:** So today we have our monthly co-op here at Communities in Partnership . It's a program that started, oh my goodness, not quite ten years ago. But we're going to hit up on ten years ago. We saw a need in the community for folks to be able to get fresh food more often, in their homes, folks who are on fixed incomes or folks who, um, with the rising cost of living in Durham and the Triangle area being able to not afford as much fresh fruits and veggies.

I am Courtney Smith. I am the Culinary Femme Collective director. I work for an organization, Communities in Partnership , CIP, and my initiative is housed under that organization. And I'm a chef and I've lived in Durham for definitely over 20 some years at this point. So, Durham is home.

So we've got some eggs right here. Usually eggs are a staple in the boxes. Some nice big old sweet potatoes. We've got some yellow onions, some cabbage, and a bag of apples. And that's what we got going on in produce right now. They're packing a few more things over there. Oh, we got like chicken thighs over here. It looks like we've got some ground pork. We didn't get turkeys at all, did we, D'Miko? Yeah, we weren't able to get turkeys.

**Sound: Outdoors, cars pulling in**



**Kendrick, CIP volunteer:** All right, so we get two boxes, okay? Sounds good.

Thank you so much.

**Courtney Smith:** Kendrick, you just hold up a finger and tell me how many boxes you need. I'll tell them so anybody can just come.

They don't have to sign up or anything and just come and grab some fresh food. As we were building the co-op, there was a really strong desire for us to partner with local black and brown farmers to provide some of this produce and when we can, some of the meat just to help build that, that community solidarity piece.

(To food recipient): Have a good one!

So the need has exponentially grown. It's getting harder for people to feed themselves. And in a country where we have so much wealth and food, there's got to be – not “got to be.” There *are* ways for us to feed people. And I don't – I think we leave it up to charity. It should be all of our responsibility. And if capitalism is going to work, it's also part of capitalism's responsibility – it it's going to work.

**Music fading out:** Usher: “Yeah”

**John Biewen:** So, like the man said, yeah.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Yeah!

**John Biewen** (laughing): By the way, so I show up there, when they were packing the boxes and stuff, and there's a, you know, there's a stereo playing music. And I walk in and it's Kanye, "wait till I get my money right." And I thought, there's something, I don't know, something poetic about that. (Laughter) And this was just, to put this in context, this is a monthly distribution of food, about 125 boxes of food distributed to folks. It's donation-funded, volunteer-driven, right? And Communities in Partnership pays farmers for the food. And so, and I'm telling you, like, there was easily \$100 worth of food, probably more than that, that each person is getting. So it's a serious operation. But this is just the tip of the iceberg of what CIP does. And so we want to talk some more about that. Camryn Smith, co-founder and executive director of Communities in Partnership; Courtney Smith – yes, they are mother and daughter. Courtney is director of the Culinary Femme Collective, which we'll hear more about, and owner and operator of her own food business, Piri, and also part of CIP, as we heard. So, I think an important thing to say is that CIP is much more than a kind of standard issue charitable organization. Right? Camryn, let's maybe start with you. And could you tell us about Communities in Partnership and maybe a little bit of its origin story? Yeah.

**Camryn Smith:** Yeah. Thanks so much, John. Thanks for having us here tonight. Um, as John said, I'm one of the co-founders, along with some of my co-founders Founders here – Ernest Smith, Aliyah Abdur-Rahman. We have the badass woman team here

tonight. Thank you guys for showing up and supporting your sisters. (Applause.) Thank you. Yeah. Appreciate it. Um, and we're a majority black, a majority woman led community development organization. And we focus on creating liberative economic development frameworks at the intersections of social determinants of health. And so, um, we do not view ourselves as a charitable organization. We use the, the economic framework of what we call the nonprofit industrial complex, to basically use that fund to create liberative economic systems that we own collectively and also push wealth so that individual, um, black and brown business owners who have a collective identity and how they share the wealth that they create with the community and do not use their funds or their wealth in terms of gaining oppression, over and within plantation capitalism and the structure that's been created. And so, you know, we view that charity, for charity to exist, there has to be a lot of pain. There has to be extraction. There has to be someone going without. There has to be a lack of dignity. People have to die. And we know that we have to – since the largest breadth of our work is our food systems work, one of the questions or one of the statements that's commonly stated, the difference between the charity based food systems work is, we not only want to feed people, we want to ask and answer why they're hungry in the first place and then solve that. (Applause.)

And so that's the mission that we have. And so, Communities in Partnership was started in East Durham by folks that lived there in the community, back before anybody would even throw a rock over in our neighborhood. All of us were there. And there was an unfortunate shooting that took place in our neighborhood. And we came together as

residents and just talked it over and decided we actually had the tools to our own liberation, and what are we going to do about it? So we started with having a monthly, um, a monthly potluck dinner together that grew into multiple feel good events, like a block party we had every year. We had trunk or treats, we had spring events. We had an orchard tree planting. All of this was funded by the community. We were not a 501C3. We were not a truly, we didn't even have a bank account. And so we all funded it. Everybody brought what they had. Some of us brought, you know, a couple of dollars. Some of us brought our food stamps, some of us used whatever we could to actually fund the events that took place.

And then, probably around 2014, 2015, we started noticing there was an open house in our neighborhood on Driver Street for a house that had been renovated. And my husband and I and Aliyah and some of the other folks decided, we're going to go check it out. So we went and checked it out. We saw the mayor was there, we saw the city manager was there. We saw the county manager was there. We saw county commissioners and city manager and city, um, city council members there. And we're like, why is everybody here in our little old neighborhood interested in this house? And the house was for sale for 175,000, and before all was said and done the house was sold for \$225,000, and we knew we were in trouble at that point. And so we decided that we were going to have to become a 501C3. And with the help of Dr. Kay Jowers, sitting down there, and Dr. Danielle Spurlock at UNC and Dr. Kofi Boone at North Carolina State University, we actually become a 501C3 in 2016. They decided that I was going to be the executive director, and I said, okay (laughter). And we needed a community

attorney and so they said, Ernest, you're going to law school, so he went to law school. (Laughter.) And so the rest is history for all of us. What we've done, Aliyah has become our learning and development genius as we have launched a black think tank that actually helps us ideate and tell our stories, because we believe that, we also have our own data, we have our own stories and our own best practices that we can share. We believe that people that have been directly impacted actually are the ones that have the most to give, and they're the experts in their own liberation. We also have purchased multifamily housing within our community. We've started, as you heard, the food co-op. We have, food co-op has morphed into the East Durham Market, which is a storefront market in our neighborhood that's also open. Um, we have the Culinary Femme Collective that we're very proud of. We have community health organizers in our neighborhood. We have vaccination clinics and vaccination equity going on in our neighborhood. We have exercise classes. We have African drumming classes in our neighborhood, we are very much so centered in what centers the wealth, holistic well-being of black people and also other folks of color who have been extracted from and intentionally oppressed. And so we believe that we are whole human beings and that everyone deserves dignity and they deserve every basic human right. (Applause.)

**Ellen McGirt:** I am so moved and really struck by the deep thinking and intentionality behind all of this, even as it had unfolded in this sort of serendipitous, wonderful community way. Um, and it strikes me also that you're trying to redesign something very big in a kind of, in a very powerful way. So here's the philosopher queen question of the

night is, what is wrong? Asking and answering the question why people are hungry and why people are in this condition, what's wrong with the dominant capitalist society, in your view, and how does it fail communities, especially yours? And, um, how are you trying to respond and repair this damage?

**Camryn Smith:** Yeah. So, quite frankly, we also have been working with a lot of academicians in our community, one of which is Dr. Henry McCoy at North Carolina Central University. And I don't know if many of you have seen his report that came out probably around four or five years ago, and he was actually studying the overall cumulative wealth within Black Durham as the trajectory – he started his work pre-pandemic, and at that point in time, like a year or two before the pandemic, Black Durham had the overall cumulative wealth as Black Durham did during Jim Crow. Well, he re-upped the data two to three years after the pandemic, and we had freefall all the way to Black Durham having the same overall cumulative wealth that Black Durham had at the emancipation of slavery. The reason why is because we own nothing. And also, one of his things that his data has highlighted is that in traditionally blue cities, the actual racialized wealth disparity is greatest, is worse than it is in red cities. And part of that is because the answer in neoliberal places for Black and Brown liberation is charity, is social services. It is not strategies that are built upon collective wealth and health and well-being for everyone.

**Courtney Smith:** So, just to give a quick example, Noah, who was on the first season of Scene on Radio, um, a good dear friend of mine, he's a white Jewish man. We got to, we both grew up here in Durham, both bonded over our experiences of – him growing up and when he was younger in Black spaces and me growing up in more white spaces in Durham. And him on this journey of being anti-racist and learning things, um, he has friends who, you know, well-meaning white people who saw the economic boom of gentrification and wanted to get in on it. It was interesting. His response to me coming back, him telling his friends about the destruction to Black communities that they're doing, and I thought their response to that was interesting. Instead of being like, hmm, let me think about this. let me process this, how am I harming? The response was to close ranks and to shut down because you were attacking them. Instead of saying, look, what you're doing has some negative effects as well, how can we come together and figure out some positive? And I will say that in liberal cities, I do find that to be the case. I think it is the charity mindset, of let's help these poor black people, let's help these poor Brown people. We never give them anything to own in liberal cities. Not that I'm Republican or pro-Republican--

**Camryn Smith:** Neither one of us are. Neither one of us are.

**Courtney Smith:** I'm not on that side. But I will say that that idea of you have to work hard for what you get sometimes allows for folks to actually let you own some things, and that's something that we need to deal with. If we're going to talk about how do we

come together as a country? Because I view it as, um, in many ways it's whiteness that this, this commitment to whiteness, which is in a lot of ways has caused so much destruction. Right? Um, is there is a commitment that people are not looking at within themselves? And how do we start answering those questions so that we can move forward for the benefit of everyone? (Applause.)

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** All right. And as somebody who somebody who lives in the liberal city of New York, I would like to align myself with these comments.

**John Biewen:** Courtney, so there are some phrases that that were used here, about – and you talked about ownership, right? Owning stuff. And along those lines, um, CIP does work with food sovereignty, with workforce development and, and under those kind of umbrellas, Courtney, could you talk about Culinary Femme Collective and what you all do?

**Courtney Smith:** Sure. So, I got roped into CIP because I am professionally a chef. I love food, I love food deeply. It runs in my blood in so many ways. And I got roped in because I started my business actually wanting to be an ethical business. So when I started Piri, with my sister, we wanted to, after working in the restaurant industry for so many years and we saw how extractive it was, and we saw the beginnings of what we're now experiencing, the breakdown of the food system. We were on the front lines of like, we could see it was going to get really bad. People just didn't recognize it yet. And so



seeing in Durham we had this narrative of, like, this great foodie town, I saw what was missing from that narrative, and it was people who looked like me, but also people who look like me who wanted to ask the questions of why do we have folks who are, so many folks who are either undocumented or maybe they've been incarcerated, and we build these restaurants here, build their wealth out of paying those people very little. Even with the strides that have been made for living wages in Durham, we have not kept up with the rise of inflation or any sort of fair labor practices. And the dominant narrative was we're doing these farm-to-table things, we're really helping the community. I didn't see the – it felt like trickle down economics, but in the form of like, see, we're going back to community. We're trying to be more community minded. But we were, folks were taking these highly extractive capitalist principles and applying them and doing feel-good capitalism, but it wasn't changing the problems.

So that's why I wanted to start my business. I've been in business for – whew, it will be eight years this November. And it has been a hard challenge when you take the stance of I want to pay my employees a living wage, not just a living wage, a thriving wage. I want to think about the planet and what are the impacts of this extractive food system that I'm participating in? How do we start changing the course for that and start talking about local food movements? But in a way that's substantive, because I found when talking to farmers, when I would buy food from them, from a lot of folks who are in business. They were trying to squeeze every little penny they could from these small farmers who don't make a lot of money. Their profit margins are slim to none. And I don't want to be responsible for someone else's poverty if I can be, if I have a choice.

Right? I understand, I live in a system where I participate in that whether I want to or not, but if I have a choice, can I, what can I do to start changing that? So that's how we got started. We were doing that for a few years, and then with some other small femme-owned businesses who also had the same kind of visions and ideas of how do we lift up our community, how do we change the narrative in the food system? It isn't just about extraction. This will, the food will kill us if we keep on only extracting. Like, this system is not sustainable. There's got to be business owners out here that are trying to push for the right thing. And that's how the Culinary Femme Collective got started. It was really grassroots, like everything else within CIP. And so as we started banding together, moving cooperatively as a co-operative, as businesses we were working out of a commissary kitchen together. We built relationships. Folks were saying, y'all are doing cooperative economics. You should think about like actually doing this in an organized way. And so in the summer of 2019, we officially started the Culinary Femme Collective. It was three businesses. And the goal is to put people, planet and profit and to look at what ways our food system in particular is harming us, and how we devalue food workers. An article – and I'm not trying to like rag on anybody, but an article a few years ago came out in one of the local newspapers talking about these beautiful undocumented women who were the backbone of these wonderful restaurants we love going to downtown. That pissed me off so much because I know those women are vulnerable. I know they're not being paid nearly what they should be. And I know, it's not that the owners of these businesses specifically mean to harm these women. They don't. But the system is what the system is, and unless you're actively pushing against it

– these vulnerable women are holding up your business. And at the end of the day, an ICE raid comes through and they built up your business and they're back at square one or worse. I don't want that system to keep happening.

This Culinary Femme Collective started out of that. We have been organizing and moving together to build collective power. We have a lot of goals that we want to push to help make things more equitable for businesses. Because I do live in America, we live in America. We know business is going to be a part of the conversation. I'm not anti-business. I think businesses in communities, thinking about hearing the way that my mom and my grandmother and my great grandmother would describe businesses in their communities as the cornerstone of so many social goods that happened in the community. I just want to, how do we get so far away? How do we get back to it? So in a nutshell, the Culinary Femme Collective, we worked to start working collectively for legal advice, accounting advice. Eventually, down the road, we're trying to figure out how we're going to have childcare for folks who are part of the collective. If your goal is to have a non-extractive food business and you come from a marginalized identity, that makes it even harder for you to start those food businesses. What are the barriers that keep you from being successful? That really shouldn't be barriers in a world that, if we were more just would just be something we would all be helping to take care of, to uplift the whole community. So that's the goal with the Culinary Femme Collective. And I'll stop right there. (Applause.)

**John Biewen:** By the way, and Courtney alluded to this a little bit by mentioning her friend Noah, but there is a, way in deep in the back catalogue of Scene on Radio, in what gets called Season One, there's a piece that Courtney made that was part of – an audio piece – that was part of a little series we did called Durham Storymakers ...

**Courtney Smith:** Storymakers, Durham.

**John Biewen:** Storymakers, Durham. thank you. Anyway, check it out. Go find that. She's a natural. She could be doing this tomorrow, as far as I'm concerned. Um, let's, let me just get you talking just a little bit about some of the other projects and programs that CIP does, sort of under, maybe under sort of affordable housing work and then also transformative justice and abolition.

**Camryn Smith:** Yeah. Our affordable housing work, as I mentioned, we have six units of multifamily housing that we maintain. We've renovated, we bought them from slumlords and have renovated them to a point where we would not ourselves mind living there, or any of our family members or people that we love. Um, all of the rent is well below market rate. Um, our average unit, one bedroom, I think, in East Durham, now you can get them for like 900 to \$1200 for a one bedroom, um, and in similarly situated situation, our units are as low as \$425 up to, I think the maximum is \$550 to \$575. And so those are our units. Um, part of the part of the struggle in a capitalist society is, Aliyah kind of is the figurehead behind, who kind of spearheaded us getting into real

estate. And she came up with kind of a framework to try to figure out how we could afford to do this, trying to use an economic platform, an economic, you know, justification. Well, as prices have started rising, and we were asked by funders to look at funding us, can you give me kind of an economic plan? And I finally just gave up. I said, I have no economic plan but to provide as much housing as I can for people so they are not pushed out into the street because you guys have made this whole system untenable. And so I have no other choice but to eat, to buy the housing, ridiculously as it costs, and to be able to house people. I don't know. You give me a solution. When people are on average in East Durham making 25 to \$30,000 AMI (Area Median Income) in terms of the whole entire household, how they can afford anything above 500 to \$550? And even though I'm buying the unit for 2 and 300,000, I'm going to have to eat it. And what I expect for you to do is to help me eat that. That's what I expect for you to do. That's all I can do. We're at a point in Durham where we need to have not just affordable housing, specifically more large-scale affordable housing for people, 60, 50, 40, 30% of the AMI. I have made this statement publicly for the last 4 to 5 years. We need to have dignified housing with social supports with actually zero rent. We are, we have made a whole population of people mentally ill and unable to work, because this system of capitalism has chewed people up and spit them out, and they literally can barely get up in the morning and walk to get a cup of milk. And but we expect them to put on their bootstraps when we've taken the boots, we've cut the boots up. We've asked them to walk 10, 15, 50,000 miles and their feet are bludgeoned. They're, they're missing toes. And we blame them and we pathologize them for their lack and their

ability to flow with everybody else. And it needs to stop. We need to understand that there comes a point in this nation where we have to start giving with nothing in return, except for the peace at night that you get to sleep in your bed without somebody standing over you with a gun to your head. That's what you get back. What you get back is you have a populace of people that have less mental health issues, are using less chemical addiction to basically heal, to make them go through the day without killing themselves. You have less of all the pathologies that we see because people do not have what they need. And it is a human condition. It is not a condition based upon race, ethnicity or anything else. It is a human condition. So we need to have some tough conversations about who we are as America, because we've never been that way. Never what we think we are and who we actually live out and how we, our history is played out. We have never been that way. This whole system is created off of stolen land, stolen labor and stolen people. (Applause.) We steal the labor from people over and over again and we justify it to this – it is so deeply entrenched into the mentality, to the point where people think you are incompetent as a business owner if you do not steal the labor from people. You get accused of all sorts of terrible – socialists. I got tired of being called a socialist, a communist, all this other stuff, because I believe that we need to pay people based upon the AMI within the city and context in which they live. Why do you work? I love to work. I love my job. But I tell you this, I can't do it unless I can keep a roof over my head. I can't do it unless I can feed my family healthy food. I can't do it unless it provides me some form of health care, which, by the way, should not be connected to your job. It is a human right for you to have health care. So

all of these things we have set up in this system for somehow thinking that people have to earn their way to have decent health care, to have decent food, and to have, or we pathologize them and demonize them. It needs to stop, because we've created the system that's basically pigeonholed huge percentages of this population, and we are the ones that have done it. (Applause.)

**Courtney Smith:** I just want to say that I've grown up with this woman. I'm so used to this. (Laughter.) I'm so sorry. I know y'all aren't, but I'm used to...

**Camryn Smith:** And I failed to mention the transformative justice piece, which kind of dovetails into that which – Muffin Hudson's here tonight, who's a part of our team, who's over, who's the founder of the North Carolina Community Bail Fund, along with my husband, Ernest Smith, who's a civil rights attorney that's on our team that leads the transformative justice work that we do, that when people get into these situations, we offer free legal advice and also free legal representation in which we can, with Ernest, and Carolina is somewhere here tonight. I saw her walk in. They both actually represent people in the capacity in which they can to help people, in terms of eviction diversion, we've had expungement clinics, um, Ernest is currently working on post-conviction relief. People are languishing in prison when they should actually be released to come back into the community and be home with their families. All of these things, we've set the system up where attorneys charge a minimum of 6, \$700 an hour. Some might work for 250, but I don't know of anybody that can afford that, to be honest with you, to pay

that and actually live sustainably. And so what we did was to create a whole system within our organization that we actually fund that works for the community, because our community, specifically in East Durham, has been negatively impacted by the prison industrial complex. And so we recognize that. So again, yet another example of using the nonprofit industrial complex and the funding that we get to actually bring liberative economic systems and services to our community and our people. (Applause.)

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Wow. I, uh, man, listen, Camryn was just preaching a word right there. I want to let that wash over us. I want to thank you for that. It's so, you know, at this moment where so many people are shocked, uncertain, scared, and confused, I really appreciate you showing us the work that's ongoing and the fact that we are so far from starting from scratch. And that there is, you know, we can have that moment of feeling how we feel about the election, about what's going on, but that we then have to have that next moment of saying, let's throw in and pour into the work right in front of us, around and right around us. So, thank you. I really appreciate that. Um, and I guess I, what I want to turn to is, you spoke a little bit about how your work is funded, and I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about that.

**Camryn Smith:** Yeah. So a lot of our work is funded by individuals in this community. Um, but it's largely because I, um, folks that know me know that as much as I want to grow, the ability for us to do the work that we do, all money is not good money. So I'll say no in a heartbeat. And so because we are, so I am very clear that the dignity and



the respect that I have for myself and my people will not be compromised. And I'm not coming to you begging, and I'm not coming to you as your mammy or anything else, but I'm coming to you as someone who wants to, um, collaborate together to bring about the liberation that you say you want for all people. So if that's what you want to do, then we can actually work together, because it is so important also for the people who've been extracting to seek their own liberation, because this system has dehumanized them, too. And so to recognize that, and if you are on that path – I have some of my white sisters over here who are hardworking and doing this work with us, seeking the liberation for a system that has claimed to represent them, working really hard to kind of dismantle and decolonize that lens and actually transfer wealth over to, um, to organizations. And specifically, I will say this, that huge amounts of philanthropy go to majority organizations that do not represent people who look like me in terms of – and what I mean by that, represent, I'm talking about the power within the organization. Yeah, they're doing work on our behalf, but how that, the power flows within that organization. Was it founded by people who've been directly impacted? Is it governed by people who've been directly impacted? Was it created by people who were directly impacted, who lead the mission, the vision, the plans? And so what I am very clear is, we are not to be colonized. I'm tired of colonization. My people and my community know exactly what we need. We can solve everything we have, the problems that we have, if you give us back what is owed to us in the first place. (Applause.) I'm clear on that. And so I'm saying turn over, now's the time. Trust black women. Literally, trust black women. Literally trust Indigenous women, trust women of color who are hard on the ground

doing the work, because we do 98% of the lion's share of the on the ground work, but we receive less than 3% of all philanthropic funding. Could you imagine what this nation would look like with us doing what we're doing now?

**John Biewen:** So you've. The last question, and I think some of what you just said is, is a partial answer, but you talk about communities in partnership as being a *community rooted* organization. Tell us what that means.

**Camryn Smith:** So, a community rooted organization is different from a community based. We saw a lot of times when we were actually developing who we were, our work was being co-opted by community based organizations, which from our definition is organizations that oftentimes have well-meaning people coming into communities like ours looking and seeing the problems as they see fit and determining what the solutions to those problems are. Community rooted organizations are founded by people that are directly impacted living within those communities, within those contexts, who have decided they want to make a change and are creating solutions for themselves, with themselves, being accountable to their communities, to members, to their neighbors, to bring about the organizing and the transformation that's needed. So it's very different. It's more of a rooted organizing piece versus a top-down approach of people who don't live in the community, aren't connected, coming in, raising funds, telling people on the ground, in the community, what to do. We are the ones that are leading the change in community rooted organizations. So that's the difference.

**Courtney Smith:** And I think at times, as someone who has witnessed both on the outside and the inside, being in a community rooted organization, it gets really deep and messy in ways that those of us who are not used to being in community really run away from. But I think I know the reason why, that we've been so powerful with the little we've got and been able to make the changes we have, is because we are really accountable to community. And that oftentimes you get called out on stuff that you might not like in the moment, but it is a part of being with community to be able to be called out in love and to be able to ask yourself those hard questions. Because as people like, I grew up with some privilege here in Durham, so when we moved to East Durham, it was definitely a different scene for me. But being able to get past my biases and my blocks of how things should go and really look at people and see that they, I am them and they are me, and I do not, I don't exist without them. Really shifting that mindset has really helped us push the work, and I think that's, America was started on doing the exact opposite of that. And so I think, I believe – unpopular opinion for some people – we are witnessing the end of an empire, that has had a long time. The question is what will we put in place, and I hope that enough of us will value community and others to start doing that work so that whatever comes after this will be something bigger and better and brighter, and we can finally start actually being maybe more of who we say we are instead of outright lying to everybody about it. (Applause.)

**John Biewen:** Thank you so much. Camryn Smith, Courtney Smith, Communities in Partnership. Thank you so much for coming tonight. Thanks for being here. Thank you.

(Applause, shouts.)

**John Biewen:]** Podcast listeners can't hear it, see it, but that was the standing ovation.

**Ellen McGirt:** That sure was.

Music

**John Biewen:** Don't go away. There's more to come.

[BREAK]

**John Biewen:** So, the three of us are going to talk here for a bit. Chenjerai, Ellen, reactions to what we've heard tonight, and then for that matter, where are we?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Whew.

**John Biewen:** December, 2024, where the hell are we with regard to any kind of hope, or opening to move toward a more democratic economy and a more democratic society? What are you all thinking, feeling?

**Ellen McGirt:** Well, I, uh, while you (the audience) were giving us your talking points and thinking points, Chenjerai did the noble work of writing every single thing down that you said. And I will tell you, in the same way that you want to align with those comments, I want to associate myself with every single one of the things that you said, because it is a bold blueprint to rethink things. And when I am, today, feeling connected and hopeful, and I probably won't tomorrow because of the extraordinary news of the day, which is always horrifying. Of course I'm talking about, you know, the news of a, of a largely anonymous large healthcare CEO being assassinated and people generally having an opinion that this is an opportunity to talk about the harms that this organization has, has caused families around the country. And of course, just the news of the day that comes out from, every day there's a new and terrifying person who's being tapped to pull like levers and wires and just change the way the government functions without a blueprint, plan, vision or a conscience. That's how I'm viewing it. So, I am feeling this strange and unexpected feeling of, hope is weighing in a little bit more today. And I have all of you and of course my brothers up here to thank for that.

(Applause.)

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Absolutely. Yeah. Thinking about the answers that you all gave and thinking about what we just heard from Courtney and Camryn, I'm just thinking about the power that's in this room right now. You know, in this season of Capitalism, we talked about the various stages, or John and Ellen talked about the various unfoldings of capitalism, the various stages, one of which is this big ugly word that people call neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has many different features, including, you know, trying to stop regulation and essentially offload risk onto the most vulnerable people. But there's another part of neoliberalism, too, which is, you know, captured when you heard Margaret Thatcher say there is no society. We've been organized into essentially being individuals, right? I mean, one of the things that happened during the pandemic is that, you know, what my friend Naomi Klein calls the Screen New Deal, has put us even more as individuals behind our screens. And so when you're facing the kind of thing that we're facing now, you can forget the power that's in this room. So many movements started with less people than in this room, with less understanding than what we have. And it's just, what I'm feeling at this moment, hearing everything that has already come in here is how much, how much better I feel, right? Not better in a way that means we're not facing and not digesting the challenges ahead of us, but the sense that we can stand together against it, right? That we can be with each other. It's just a different feeling than sitting home by yourself, doomscrolling. And it's a feeling that we have to find a way to produce many, many times over, right? To make this the norm. It's hard. It's not easy. Again, our workplaces and the entire economy has organized us so

that we have to push against maybe our jobs and all kinds of other things to come together. But that's really what I'm feeling right now. (Applause.)

**John Biewen:** I would second that. I mean, the turnout and the thoughtfulness of you all when we passed the mic around at the beginning, that was pretty wonderful. And, um, as we talked, you know, we talked about in the series, and we heard from people who believe that there's a big change, a kind of epochal, you know, sort of like the shift from the medieval to the modern era, that is underway. That can seem pretty impossible to believe a lot of days, right, when it almost seems actually like we're going 180 degrees backwards. But yes, I agree with you all that that being here this evening makes me feel like, ah, maybe there's something to that. (Laughs.) But yeah, Marjorie Kelly, who's a voice in the Capitalism series, a really interesting and brilliant economic thinker and writer, who wrote books like *Wealth Supremacy*, she says the sort of, for lack of a better term, anti-capitalist or, you know, a kind of "let's move beyond, let's do something better than capitalism as we know it," is a movement that doesn't know it's a movement yet. And I wonder, right? How do, how do we move in the direction of that movement knowing it's a movement?

**Ellen McGirt:** So, it's not going to be a merch strategy, right? (Laughter.) It's not going to fit the blueprint. But what I was really struck by, as I to your, to use your imagery, to let that conversation that we just had wash over me, was that there are characteristics of people who are going to be building things, that are going to be community rooted

and ethical, as you say, and useful and honest and evolutionary – and I really do mean that not like in the tech sector that we're going to be, you know, prototyping and evolving things. It's like really thinking through what people need and that the way to get smart about this is to get very smart about what we're looking for in the people and the movements and the ideas around us that have those characteristics. So it's not just the same old okey doke. I'm not taking money from just anybody. We're not experimenting in ways just so that you can have your idea be front and center, but that really centers some things that are very basic about what the planet needs and what people need. Some of it which is universal and some of which is specific to place. And I think the, so what I've come to understand, as we've been in the middle of this conversation for so long, and I'm so grateful for the reporting that you did before I even joined the project. I mean, you know, John, you've created a body of work that's almost like, it's almost impossible to believe how valuable it's going to be as a tool for people going forward – is that when we begin, you know, the kinds of economic progress that we're looking for is going to ring a bell. The smarter that we get, and we're going to hear it and we're going to hear it, and we're going to invest in it, and we're going to join it, and we're going to amplify the stories, and we're going to support the best we can. And that at some point, and this is me being unusually hopeful again for a business journalist, the, the music of what's possible will become apparent. (Applause.)

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Absolutely. The music of what's possible will become apparent. See, when you when you get to be an old man like that, you got to just discipline



yourself to just not step on what other people say all the time. You know, so that you can hear that music. You know, one other thing I want to talk about is labor. Labor struggle. You know, one of the things that really drew me to what I would call critical political economy, and the writing of Karl Marx and all the other critical political economists, Silvia Federici, all the people who looked at this, was that it gave me a better understanding and explanation of how the world was working. It said history is not driven forward by great men. History is driven forward by the struggle of people. Right? Even before capitalism, right, of people who are fighting to live lives where they're thriving and to, and it recognized that it's a struggle, right. Because I don't know what it is like in your workplaces, but I've worked in a lot of workplaces where like people start talking about working conditions, pay equity, lack of leave, lack of clear schedules, and they get responded to with like a pizza party or something, you know what I'm saying? And these are, these are efforts to sort of mystify the power struggle at work. People don't – we like dialogue, right? No one wants to feel like we got to force people to do stuff. But that's how history has happened. I think none of us are in this room together because wealthy, powerful people decided through some dialogue to allow us to do this. People came together and forced the powerful to do things they didn't want to do. Women came together and forced men to do things they did not want to do. And this is part of what we have to grapple with, right? And so I want to, you know, we're in Durham, and I got to just shout out Durham because in January and February of this year, teachers and staff put on multiple actions – sick-out rallies, a day of protests, walkouts. They didn't ask permission. And I think that we have to reclaim those

traditions of coercive power. The last piece I want to say is that one of the things that Courtney and Camryn was so inspiring was the way that that kind of power was working together with business, with, you know, real economic empowerment and also with forms of mutual aid. Right? We don't call it charity in our work. Right? We call it mutual aid. And even in the series, we talked about the Battle of Seattle. One of the things that that I loved in the Battle of Seattle is like, you had the labor organizations out there struggling. You had people out, hundreds of thousands of people out there marching, and they were also doing mutual aid to support each other. And all those, all those things are going to become necessary. So I just wanted to say that. Yeah.

**John Biewen:** For people who want change, an economy that's built to provide a decent life for all people and other living things, um, what are the best things that we can do right now? That's a, that's a big fat question, maybe unfair, but I'm going to ask it anyway to the two of you.

**Ellen McGirt, to Chenjerai:** I'm going to set you up. (Laughs.) So, um, I think one of the biggest things that we can all do, wherever we sit individually, is not fall for, not fall for the bullshit, just not fall for it. I mean, we were able to generate a really interesting list just hanging out together in this beautiful place at this wonderful time, all of which has some steps you can take. You can ask different things of each other. You can ask different things of elected officials. You can post about it. You can share about it. There are all things that, this is a blueprint. This is a wish list even as individuals. And what

often comes back is, because capitalism wants what it wants, it's going to give you a thing that sounds like that but actually isn't. And one of the examples that I've been thinking a lot about and was talking about with you today was the the okey doke that is the access, the access doctrine. Which is the idea that marginalized, underprivileged, underrepresented people can be brought into the mainstream of society if we give them the right technology and tools. And that has never been true and it has never worked. It is the same, it is the same sort of mindset, it's like we can cure malaria with bed nets and we can cure water insecurity with some celebrity-driven wells and then just, and then just leave. And how that's coming up for me in my work and my reporting these days is that, I was the, that all the things that we've been doing with these, with the reskilling and upskilling and, you know, no-collar jobs and into tech, and it's going to be life transforming, all of which are very noble, well designed, interesting, really interesting people believe these things. All of these, let's teach them to code. Let's teach everybody to code. All of that work is about to be erased with the advent of AI, because what capitalism wants is cheap or free labor. And what capitalism doesn't want are things like schools, social safety nets, health and reproductive care because it's inefficient and it's expensive and it slows down the work of, you know, unlimited upside. So the, all of the things that, you know, speaking as individuals, and I'm going to throw to you to pull it all together, is that as we become the people who listen for the music and listen for the nonsense, and get smart about all these things and become willing to say things that are going to be hard at some time. It's like, you know, let's talk about socialism. You're going to get yelled at. Let's talk about abortion. Some people are going to yell at you.

But like the things that you care about, you develop the muscle to talk to them and, and stay in relationship with the people, or at least stay safe. And when we become those people, we find those people. And when we find those people ... over to you. (Laughter, applause.)

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Well, when we find those people, one thing we do is we got to make sure, for example, in this room, this is organizing 101. For those of you who are willing to share with us your information, I'm sorry to put this work on John. John, I'll help. I hate to say it. Maybe we'll let some AI help. (Laughter.) No, I'm just kidding. But we need to keep, we need to keep track and organize this formation together in case we need to reassemble. And we can really use the power in this room. But there's something else I want to say. Um, and I want to, I want to go to my wife for inspiration. I think my wife is still in the room, with my daughter? Are you still here? She, they had to dip. Yeah. See, this is exactly my point. So, this is my point. One thing that I think has to happen is that we have a lot of struggles ahead of us, um, in the labor area, um, in the, supporting things like Communities in Partnership, and sanctuary is going to become huge, right? Um, and reproductive rights, we got our work cut out for us. We're not starting from scratch in those areas. But one of the things that sort of material feminist scholars identified a long time ago is that we have to reproduce ourselves. We have to eat. Childcare has to go on, right, for the struggle to go on. And when you have the kind of patriarchal, capitalist society right now where we have, you're on your own to figure those things out. That actually hurts your movements. You can't stay in the street when

you need to be in the street. You can't stay at the co-op. So we have to figure out how to socialize reproductive care. This is a feminist insight, and I think that for me, this is one of the most important things that we need to center. You know, a lot of movement iconography likes to show people out in the streets, you know, with their fists up in that moment. And that's great. We need that, right? Stay in the streets, stay at the encampment. You know what I mean? Free Palestine, all that. You know what I mean? But, you know, even at the encampments, I saw people starting to, I started bringing my daughter to the encampment. That was the, that was going to be, you know, the childcare for that day. You know what I mean? Because I would look at my wife and be like, hey, I need to go to this encampment, we got, you know – and she'd be like, she would give me that look. And I was like, all right, come, come to the encampment.

So I want to, I want to give you a story from Argentina. You know, there's, in 2018, as people were fighting the austerity measures there, right? A woman whose name was Corina de Bonis was kidnapped and tortured because she resisted the closure of schools. And basically, when they kidnapped her, what the police there did was ,they did something horrible. And I want to give a trigger warning. They carved into her body the words “no more pots.” And this was because women had come out into the streets with their pots and started cooking communally in the streets, both to feed people right in the moment of struggle, to have a sustained struggle, and to protest the austerity. And so that pot, that communal pot, that way that we care for each other, that we figure out how to get the reproductive work done, that we support each other. That was the threatening thing that made them do this. So what I want to say is we need, we

need more pots. Y'all feel me? Can I hear y'all say more pots? (Audience, together: More pots!) All right, all right, I'm gonna stop there. I mean, but please, let's stay in contact, and that's what I really want to focus on. (Applause.)

**John Biewen:** Meet y'all here again next week? (Laughter.) Thanks, everybody.

Thanks so much.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Let's stay in touch, y'all.

Music

**John Biewen:** Speaking of keeping in touch: If you were at our live event – or if you were not! No matter where you are, if you'd like to stay in contact and hear from me and Scene on Radio periodically ... please email us to get on our list – at [sceneonradio@gmail.com](mailto:sceneonradio@gmail.com). And put in the subject line, “newsletter.” That's sceneonradio@gmail.com.

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