

Reality Poets TV: Episode #3

Intro MUSIC: ♪ Streets don't love nobody. Gotta find a new route to make it out, man, cuz. Streets don't love nobody. Used to think it was all good, but I found out the hard way. Streets don't love nobody. Used to think the streets was all I knew, but. Streets don't love nobody. Nah. Streets don't love nobody. ♪

Vince: Welcome back to Reality Poet Television. I'm Vince, if you don't know me, you should. Pass it on to the co host over there.

Var: I am Var, the one and only. And this is our guest-

El: El.

Vince: Tell him who you is, El.

El: OPEN DOORS Reality Poet, part of OPEN DOORS. You know, I've been around here for some time, as well as in Coler. And, um, yeah, I mean, it's been a journey.

Vince: So how, how did you like [00:01:00] living in here when you did live in here? And how was it coming back knowing you lived in here at one point in time?

El: So, man, at first... I'll start from the beginning, like just the first night. First night, it was late night, coming from the amulet and, um, you know, just getting in the entrance of the building. You know, it was just dark, it was shady, I had like a gloomy feeling, like nobody was in the hallway, like besides the, you know, the security desk right there. And then I would just strolling down the hall, and like when I got to my unit, even just going through the halls and everything, it was just, it was just a gritty feeling. I'm like, I'm like, yo, this shit just felt empty, like, even getting in my unit, I'm like, damn, yo, like, like this shit different. Like, I felt, I'm like, I'm too young for this shit.

I'm like, yo, this shit different. Like, that shit was a wild night. Like, I just felt like everything was just, just chaotic, you know what I mean? To, to, [00:02:00] to like the nurses giving the medicine and this and that, like I'm just witnessing everything all at once. But from, from even past that and, and from the time even being here, it was just like, I mean, I had some good times, I had some bad times,

Vince: Yeah, definitely, and, um... That's how we first met, you know, I came in a little bit behind, right behind you. You know, and doing therapy, both of us, you know what I'm saying, and um, that's how we clicked. Right, yeah. We was outside after that.

El: Yeah, we was, we was really like, at the time, like a lot much more, you know, younger at our early stage of that during our injuries. And we was just like, you know, as we do, you know, focusing on therapy. And you know what I'm saying?

I'm like, yo, what's up? And then we was just chopping up and then we was outside. Like, yo, we gotta, we gotta get outside sometime. Like, you know, we gotta, you know, get some, some air, get some freedom. Like, you know what I mean? Like that's how, that's how we felt. Cause we was just like, yo, we just, just stuck in here.

We [00:03:00] doing, we focused, we doing therapy and all that, but it's not enough for us. We still got our youthfulness in us. And it's like, yo, like we, we got to get out. And we damn sure made sure we was able to get outside. That's a fact.

Vince: Hell yeah. I remember it. Like, you know what I'm saying? Like my first time moving in here. And it was like, it was crazy. But I can imagine how you felt, cause you went straight to the C building. And um, once I did move to the C building, I went over there and was like, what the hell is this? Like, you got four beds in one room?

El: Yeah.

Vince: Aw, man. You know, like, talking four different, total different personalities in one room.

Yeah. That shit was crazy. What's up, man?

Var: What's going on, my brother?

Vince: You over there dozing off?

Var: Nah, I'm just letting y'all tell y'all little bit of history and shit, waiting for my turn.

Alright, it's your [00:04:00] turn. I got my little history, with me and El.

Vince: Let's hear it.

Var: We got, um, mutual friends.

Michael Beardo and shit. Shout out Michael, Michael Beardo. Shout out Michael Beardo. Mike came to me one day and was like, Yo, ain't you from Fort Greene, man? I'm like, yeah. He's like, yeah, my man from Fort Greene. I'm like, yeah, aight, whatever. He's like, come here, you can go talk to El and shit.

We start talking, kind of find out we know mutual people and shit. I ain't say nothing to him, he ain't say nothing to me about nothing. He go back and talk to his brothers, and come back the next day, like, yo, I talked to my brothers and this and that. But ever since then, you know, me and El been real tight and shit.

[LAUGHTER]

Vince: I remember, I remember, um... like, speaking of, like, the system and how, how they, they, they did you, El. By getting you up outta here. It's crazy, the system is all about [00:05:00] money and making money, you know? And they ain't trying to give you nothing if they see you got something. Right. Well, at least if they think you got something. Yeah. You know, and that's, that's what it is. It's like, if they think, they think otherwise or they see otherwise,

it's like, yo, all right, this person, he could go.

Var: On another note though, tell em how you got with OPEN DOORS.

El: It's been a while. Like, Michael Berto. Shout out to Michael Berto once again. You know, we was, um, you know, on the island, you know, out on a summer day, you know, by the field. And every time, you know, we be chillin I'm like, you know, like I said, like, the mystery white lady pop up. I see Jenni pop up.

And I always been like, yo. You know, we was, you know, sit, you know, talking outside, be my phone or, you know, take care of my business or whatever. But I'd always be like, Yo, who that lady? Yo, like, you know what I'm saying? Like, you know, he told me about it. Yeah, you know, she's trying to, you know, help a lot, you know, at [00:06:00] Coler. Trying to, you know, help--

El: She got some chips.

You know, make sure everybody, you know, see what's good, you know? So she was really like trying to show support. She was intrigued to help the youth. And so I'm like, all right, that's what's up, you know.

Don't forget the baked goodies.

Yeah, I mean the, the goodies and the, and the, and the snacks and the munchies is what got, you know, a lot of, you know what I mean? Some, some, some people here. No names. However, though, you know, it's like we was, um, by the field and, you know, it was just Tom, so he would just, you know, tell us some of the things I was doing, like, you know, going to school, doing my therapy at the time, like, getting my, getting my license and stuff, and he's like, like, I was, you know, going, going in. And he's like, yo, you know, telling these type, type of things, like, yeah, like, you know, sounding very intrigued. So, he was like, Yo why don't you come through, you know, to a poetry workshop or, you know, one of the workshops with Tom.

El: And I'm like, All right, you know, I'll come through. I'll check it out. See what's up, you know what I mean? And not only [00:07:00] that, like, there was a time where even Mike was just like, yo, you know what I mean, everybody, you know, is looking good, you know what I mean? The energy is looking good in here, you know, we got the music thing, got this, they got the video stuff, like. I was like, all right, I was like, yo, the vibe is right, like, I'm I'm glad to hear that, and that's good. Because it's like, it's not like, us as youth, you know what I mean? We ain't got shit no more. We got something like, you know what I mean? Like that's, that's lit. And that's something that's fun. It's like something that we do. So I'm like, all right, yeah, let me see what's up. You know what I mean? Pulled up. Like, yo, all right, let's make it happen.

Vince: Years later, here we go. You know, you know. Done did big things and trying to inspire people. That's an opposition. Keep going, keep living. Like, I know you spoke a little bit about it, but like, how has OPEN DOORS, like, helped you be you? You know, just helped you be a better you?

El: You know, it helps me, you know, like I said, when it come to the poetry, you know, it's a whole [00:08:00] therapeutic thing, you know what I mean? For me. And I can feel like I actually helped and inspired others and influenced others, you know. So Just hearing that alone like, you know, it's just like yo, just yo put it together and it's like gonna keep on going with it. And not only that like just the familyhood of OPEN DOORS. Like, you know, it's just we actually came came a long way. And Even through the whole pandemic situation, like,

being on the outside, you know, looking in, but actually still being there with y'all is like, it's crazy. Because it's like, it's so much

and so what little can I can do and can I not do? However, though, we was able to make things happen still. So and that's what we was able to get through it. And I'm glad for that and that's that's what it's about. Like, you know, as a family, OPEN DOORS, like, and just, in general, like, you know, just, sticking through the storm.

Var: Shout out,

shout out to you for your, outside support, [00:09:00] during the COVID situation.

Vince: Man, when you do that, you sound like a frog in my ear, man.

Var: Man, shut up. I gotta clear, man. I gotta clear. But anyways, shout out to you for your participation and helping us man with the COVID situation and shit. Helping with the movement. You know, he was outside, but every time they needed you man. So your support was definitely appreciated.

El: Thank you, thank you. And, um, It's been much more now because, you know, even our mission from the beginning, you know, speaking about gun violence and, you know, our mission kind of shifted, but we still forever support and we all speak about gun violence.

But since the covid, it's just been more about like a lot of like nursing home rights. And like, just actual, like, in home living centers and living places rights for seniors, elders, and the youth, and the younger, and the young. Cause, like, we all [00:10:00] in it, and it's like, damn, like, you really don't think, like, there's young people in nursing homes, or in some of these facilities, or these places, but there really be. And, um, some of these places don't really got some of the, like, access, I would say maybe Coler has. Or any other nursing home might have. You know, and that that's kind of like a big downside because that really can lead to like a deep depression. A deep, uh, you know, space where, you know, nobody would want to be at. You know, just alone or feeling by yourself.

Var: Definitely a deep depression when you ain't got no outside support.

Vince: Definitely and um... being that, you know, us three is victims of gun violence. You know--

El: Survivors of gun violence.

Vince: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, you're right. Survivors.

I really don't like to use, you know, that term. You know, even for any and everybody, like, you know, let's always step away from that, [00:11:00] that word victim. You know, let's, let's use the word survivor. Let's, let's really take that to heart, everybody. Yeah, you're definitely right. What do you think, what do you think we can really do to help this bullshit that's going on? affecting our communities, you know what I'm saying? Like, they not really...

you know, they don't, they don't put everything on the news. That's a fact. That that really be happening, like, in our communities, you know. They, they pick and choose what they want to broadcast. What you we think we can do it to like, help stop it? I mean, it's, it's a lot to like, you know, try to say, let's get this into the mission of us, like stopping gun violence, you know. And, um, you know, the awareness is out, you know, and I see it a lot more every year, like, it gets a lot more stronger. However, the violence is still, and the gun violence is incredibly high. It really needs to be a lot more youth centers, I honestly believe. Not just [00:12:00] places like Boys and Girls Club, but actual like youth centers where it's like mentors and actual like, people that can actually guide youth. Not tell them what to do, but let's have these programs and these access for them, you know, to learn things hands on and get them, you know, prepared for not only just college, but just the future of themselves. Like even if they choose to go to college or not. You know, everybody just like to do different things that people be just hands on and they can find great hands on careers. So let's get them started to get them into activities and things they like doing like that's positive.

Like I see a lot of, you know, a lot of stuff that's, you know, a lot of influence. And it's like, people want to blame TikTok and it's a lot. It's, it's that. And it also just start for like what's going on in the community. And it's like, yo, like, like a lot of youth need to be heard.

Like, what's going on? Like, you got a problem? Like, you don't have to feel like, you're alone. And it's like, you don't have to feel like you're embarrassed. Like [00:13:00] speak to a mentor. Don't let them tell you like, yo, do this and do that, and all the negative shit.

That's gonna get you caught up, like, you don't want that kind of influence. Cause it's like, that kind of influence, it's just the same old shit. And as we getting further into the future, things ain't the same, things ain't gonna be the

same. So as we're going through this change, it's like, you ain't got no choice but to either be for the fucking better or you're just gonna fail, like. And it's like, ain't nobody gonna just say, you don't, you don't want that, like, for you. If you fail at an early age, by the time you be at an older age or elder age, you'll be really hurt, like, you'll be really hurt.

Var: That's the thing, man. This generation don't give a fuck, son. You know what I'm saying?

Especially like where we come from. You've seen it and I've seen it myself. They got two centers down there. You know what I'm saying? They got, they got three centers for them to go play ball. These little motherfuckers that go down there and play ball, do [00:14:00] this, listen to the coach, this and that, yada yada yada.

Just talk to this person and come out of there. And still go shoot some shit up. You know what I'm saying? So sometimes the help be there, it just be the motherfucking individuals or the people that they be around. That's what I'm saying. Yeah, but, yeah, yeah. And then nowadays, they listen to this fucking, this drill music and...

Vince: I was just gonna get on that thing.

That topic with y'all. You know, what, do y'all think about that? Like, people that, that's, that's really speaking up. Saying like the message that's in the music right now, you know?

Var: I don't see no messages.

El: The only message I see is the negativity inside of it. However, I do see and hear drill music beats and songs that do got some nice sounding credibility to it. And I don't like the fact that it's all this other bullshit drill or there's other rap drill on that.

That's just like yo, it's just pushing all that stuff back because of course It's just the [00:15:00] hot stuff of the town or just a hot topic at the time of the being. However it's like, this drill thing been going on since over a good 10 years now. We can say like at least like we need to go back like that far.

Vince: How far back we speaking?

El: I'm talking about like in New York though. Bobby?

Yeah.

We can go back to Bobby.

Yeah it start with Bobby. Especially since he cut the first cake.

Yeah, that's when people like, like, really realized like...

Var: Started really listening.

Vince: Yeah, started really listening because they realized what really is, is really going on. You know, who they beefing with, where they from, you know, and um, that got a lot of people indicted. Got a lot of people killed.

These niggas telling on themselves. A lot of them indicted, killed.

It's just not a good look for the city. You know what I mean, like, yeah we could turn it up, but it's just not a good look for us, you know what I mean, like.

El: Like, we gotta do better, because this shit is, is just [00:16:00] crazy.

Vince: I think once... and I'm trying to remember, like, how far drill moved to go back from Chicago. Would you say, Chief? I would say it's Chief Keef,

El: but it is some artist that supposedly said that, I mean, just around the Chief Keef. No, and

Vince: it's a lot. That the news don't show like up and coming rappers from Chicago. From Chicago, yeah. Like somebody was showing me a video from a rapper from Chicago that was,

dude was wild. I forget his name. He pulled out a crushed up Percocet on an interview and just... that's right. Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. He be, you want some? Yeah. And then he going to shoot at somebody. And he, him get killed. On video and everything you know? Off of a diss song.

You know, that's why they started beefing off of a diss song.

El: A lot a lot a lot of that, them situations be happening. Even in New York, it's been like that. You know, people doing these drill [00:17:00] raps and these diss songs. And they and they mans get caught up, they get recorded, you know, and then even recent, um, you know, uh, Foolio from Florida. I mean on his birthday. On his birthday.

Yeah

Vince: But you see how he was dissing.

Yeah, it's a lot of...

Yeah I listened to his music all the time.

He was dissing Kodak. Him and Kodak had a fallout. The kid that they... Name is 22, died on his birthday.

This is 22. And Foolio dies on the 22nd of the month, on his birthday. That's wild. But it wasn't his birthday yet, but he had the party on the 22nd. He was posting on Instagram, saying come through, come through.

That's wild.

You know, and they be giving, they be in so much beef, but giving up their location.

Yeah that's the crazy shit. You know, like, like how...

El: like, like you must not care about life. Yo, it's been so many artists that passed away this year. Yo, like anytime I'm seeing social [00:18:00] media, like all over the United States, I'm like, yo, this is crazy, yo. It is like...

Vince: Like it's crazy about like our

generation,

like our generation, even if we, we had like, Instagram and social media coming up. As soon as we would have seen one person down fall from posting their location, that would have been a rule. Never post your location. But now, it's like they don't learn.

You know, they don't learn from other people doing it and then they getting killed. We're just taunting people on Instagram. They gotta get them numbers up. Some motherfuckers just don't care, that's what

Var: it is. It's the numbers. They gotta get them numbers. Yeah, they just don't fucking care.

El: Yup.

Var: They love that

El: clout.

Var: They want them views.

El: Gotta have the clout, huh? Gotta have the clout.

Var: Nowadays everything is about going viral.

Vince: wherever you go, you know what I'm saying, people pull out their phone. That's the first thing. Matter of fact, you know, [00:19:00] being in this wheelchair and being out, there's so many people that almost ran into me, just cause they on their phone.

Var: All the time.

Vince: Yeah. And they look at you crazy.

El: Nah, sometimes, if I got to motorize, I had a horn. Yo! Shout at them, like, you know what I mean? Get their attention. Yo, man, pay attention, yo. Look, look what you doing, like, you know what I mean? Get them to focus. Like, you gotta pay attention out here, man.

Look what you doing.

Vince: Especially, like, when I was in Times Square one time. Like, you can't, you can't maneuver in Times Square like that. You got a million people. People just walking with their phones looking down. Like, oh, man. They looking at me like I'm doing something wrong.

Var: That's why you gotta tap em one time.

They'll never do that shit again. I'm not saying excuse you, nothing.

Vince: Oh man. It's just what's in that phone be more important.

It's like if they calves clipped, it's over.

I remember when it [00:20:00] used to be so hard to get a cell phone. Yeah. Damn son, I think that made me feel old. You know, when, they had the big, the big Nokia. Yeah, I remember those. I had a nice, I had a

El: nice, you know, small, small Nokia.

Vince: You had to get credit checks and all that, you know what I'm saying?

Var: Them shits wasn't even color screen.

Vince: Yeah, when you was young, you only really, if you did have a cell phone, you had to get it from your mom's or your pops.

You know what I'm saying? Because they got one.

El: I was texting though. I had to-- I didn't have like the Nokia with the green screen. I had the Nokia with the blue screen. That was the fire, like, you know what I mean? But I, I was, I was texting, but the way that the text was, it wasn't like how easy, how it was today.

Vince: We ain't have social media. We had MySpace. We had MySpace. We had MySpace.

Var: Didn't they have Twitter?

Yeah, it was um,

Is Twitter that old?

Yeah,

pretty sure they had that shit, right?

Yeah.

MySpace,

El: [00:21:00] AOL, AIM. That was like the social media like...

Vince: But it wasn't big. What platform you think like made it big? Would it be MySpace? I mean for the kids, for the youth,

I think MySpace.

It was MySpace.

Yeah, MySpace was it

Var: And once again, it goes back to fuckin what they see on, in these videos. Because once Jay Z started talking about the Motorola, uh, those, you know, all that shit, the Skyphase, whatever. Yeah. Everybody went on. Then when that phase went out, they wanted whatever came out next. You know?

El: You wanted a two way, you got a two way.

You wanted a three way, you got a three way. Yeah.

Var: Then came the Blackberries and then the Nextels and all that shit. Mm hmm. So, people ride the wave or whatever it is for their time.

El: I remember I had the first iPhone, I remember.

Vince: Yeah, it's crazy how a lot of influence come out of [00:22:00] music.

Facts.

Lot of influence.

Clothing. Definitely clothing.

I blame Lil Wayne for that, that tight clothes shit. You can't go to the store and get a decent pair of pants because of them niggas, right?

Everything is skinny. I just, trust me, I just had the same problem the other day.

Everything skinny, and then when you look for like a nice straight leg, all the, all the good designs is in skinny jeans. Yeah. .

Var: They trying to force you to that life.

Vince: What's going on y'all? Welcome back we got a guest with us, a reality poet with us. Let her introduce herself.

Shannon: My name's Shannon Nelson.

I'm an OPEN DOORS member and a reality poet. I also do the movement on Instagram.

Var: And what's the movement?

Shannon: that's about anything about politics [00:23:00] to anything with history,

to, uh, what's up and coming events and stuff. It's all about anything that's going on, pretty much.

Vince: Okay, so tell them how you got involved at OPEN DOORS.

Shannon: Well, I first met Jay, and then I, uh, met everybody else. And, I think it was Roy that came up one day and says, Hey Shannon, wanna come join one of the meetings?

I was like, sure. And that's when we, I started, but the pandemic happened and, uh, that's when I lost touch with everybody for a minute there, but then I got back in when everybody was doing the Zoom meetings.

Var: That's when you left?

Shannon: yeah, I left Coler like, uh, a couple of months before it got really bad.

I think I, I left in like June. June. But we were doing the Zoom meetings when I was here for like a few months. Then I left, and then I was doing the Zoom meetings when I was, got my apartment on the west side.

Vince: So how was that transition? [00:24:00]

Shannon: How was that transition? Well, it was, uh, you know, big, big step where, you know, you have to have a lot of responsibilities for yourself. Which I like because I like being able to choose where I want to go, how I want to go, and when I want to go. And, like, even going to, like, bed and stuff.

Like, here at Coler, you always had a schedule that you had to stay on, and there's no, like, Oh, I'll just sleep in today. Well, that doesn't happen. And if you want to just get in bed and get back up, that would never happen. You don't get to cook your own meals. Now I'm home, I get to cook my meals, and-- No, no, no, no.

Var: You ain't cooking shit. Your aide cooking.

Shannon: What? Well, obviously, I am not cooking.

Ok, ok, ok.

Var: Okay, that's great. You ain't cooking shit.

Shannon: I'm directing.

Var: Yeah.

Shannon: Supervising, I guess.

Vince: That's what you call it, supervising?

Shannon: Yeah, cause that's gonna be my shit that I gotta eat.

Hell yeah.[00:25:00]

Vince: So you be giving Reshma a hard time?

Shannon: Well, sometimes. But she tells me, she puts me in line. She puts me in my lane.

Var: Tell them where you're originally from.

Shannon: Maine. Born in Maine. As we say in Maine, we call it Gotham City.

Var: Gotham city.

And why is that?

Shannon: That's because of how it's spelled, I guess.

I don't know. That's what we always called it when I was growing up.

Vince: Alright, so, from living in a nursing home to being out on your own in your own place, what's the, the differences when you leave and dealing with nurses and then now you gotta deal with a agency.

Shannon: Oh shit, I went through hell.

You have no idea. Like, some of the agencies and some of the carers. I mean, some of these caregivers, they need to go to a, a psychologist or something before they get hired. Because you have to deal with some [00:26:00] really loony people. I mean, it's like, they're way out there sometimes. Yeah.

Var: I mean, I, I think that goes with anything, anywhere you go with being a aide or a nursing assistant or whatever. Just the, the person that you just dealing with in general.

Shannon: Mm-Hmm. . But I mean like some of 'em are just outrageous, but then you have some really good ones like Risma or Lolita.

Var: Like I said, it, it's the same here.

You got some nurses that shitty work, but you

Vince: know.

Shannon: Well, it happens lots of times with agencies, they'll drop you because they can't find anybody to work for you. Because, basically, some of those people that come to your door don't want to do the work.

Because we're quadriplegics and we're a lot of work. And I've been left high and dry where a lady that just walked right out one day and just left me there. And I had to call my friend Karen to come over, and then [00:27:00] Gabriel had to come over too.

Var: Wait, so hold up. She walked out and left you by yourself?

Shannon: Uh huh

Var: That's wicked.

Shannon: Yeah, it is. She's supposed to get, um, uh, some kind of...

Var: They, they can't be sued or nothing for that shit?

Shannon: Yeah, something like that. I know they get their license take away. Or their certificate or whatever they got. Because that's the thing, you know, it's not hard to go and get a caregiving job. Because they can just hire anybody and they don't even do some kind of check on them because of the fact that, you know, you just take a two week course and then that's it.

You know, it's like some people don't even know how to read or write or speak the language. They don't even know my language, and they're kind of, they're speaking Spanish or some other language I don't know like, huh?

And it's like, how am I supposed to direct my care when I'm disabled and I can't even move? How am I supposed to speak [00:28:00] to someone to tell 'em how to take care of me? I mean, and sometimes it's like you calling agencies and it is just total nightmares.

Vince: How many, how many agencies you went through until you got satisfied?

Shannon: Oh hell, oh my God. I think I went through maybe like seven or some shit.

Dang.

Or five? Yeah. And then I had the, the one I'm with right now, I had Sue because it wouldn't gimme 24 hours, 12 hour split shift, it's called, you know. And they wanted to just give me, um, live in.

When a person is live in, that person is able to go, get up and walk by themselves. Go to the bathroom and stuff. Whereas I couldn't do that. And somehow they had me written up that I could walk to the bathroom and stuff. And so they were denied my 12 and 12 split shift. And so I, like, not sued them, but I had to bring them to court

until I could get that. So I finally got that. Because I have to have assistance in it, [00:29:00] because we're quads, we're supposed to get turned every two or three hours, so we don't get pressure sores.

Vince: That's crazy.

Yeah, it's different from having to deal with what you got to deal with in here to think you about to go home and, and, you know, receive the care that you need, and then having to go through about seven agencies and then taking one to court just to give you what you need. Like, how would you speak on that?

Like, how would you...

Shannon: Well, the big thing was they didn't Like the idea that I smoked marijuana, and they gave me a hard time about that. First I had a license for it, and then second, it became legal, and they were denying the fact that I could have the right to smoke.

Which I mean, what I hate about the stigma is that, uh, one, it's my medicine, and two, it's legal. So why? I'm old enough to smoke it, so why am I not allowed to smoke it? And I understand like [00:30:00] the aides don't like it, the smoke and stuff like that. But I mean, if you're doing everything possible, like I would do, I mean, I would smoke in my room, shut the door with an air purifier with the windows open. You know, and try to accommodate, you know, as much as possible.

but, like a lot of the, uh, insurance companies, they don't like it. And so, they try to get rid of you because of it.

Var: I mean, what the fuck do they expect? You got, you got people that smoke. So, how the fuck they expect, like, they just think everybody just not gonna smoke or don't smoke?

Nah, fuck that.

Shannon: Yeah, I know. I mean--

Like you said, you can try to accommodate them and, and close the door and smoke in the room and all that shit. They stay in their own area, but other than that, you in my house.

Shannon: I hear you on that one.

Vince: So how you doing with that? You smoking good?

Shannon: Well, because I got cool people around me that understand, so.

[00:31:00] You lucky. Yeah, I am lucky. It's taken a while to get like where I am right now. Comfortable and Stressless. You know what I mean?

Var: At least you comfortable now.

Shannon: Mm.

Var: Yeah. You ain't gotta deal with the bullshit.

Shannon: Yeah, you have to deal with lot of bullshit when you're disabled, it seems like. That's the whole thing. It sucks.

Var: You got two good eggs, right?

Shannon: Mm hmm. Yep.

So, when are you thinking about moving out?

Vince: Right now, as we speak. But, it's not easy to get out. You know, especially when they claim you don't got the money for subsidies until November. Mm

Var: I feel like a hostage in this motherfucker.

Shannon: I was hoping that Bill would pass so that people that had, you know, a criminal past, that are in nursing homes that are disabled and stuff like that could, you know, get that wiped off, you know. So that They would be able to get [00:32:00] housing and shit.

Var: See, but that, that's the thing though, that's what fucked me up. Because, when I went for housing and applied and they did find me an apartment, my criminal background popped up, which it shouldn't have. Cause I haven't been arrested in over 7 years.

More than 10 years. Know what I'm saying? Even if you do have a criminal background, after a certain, there's a stipulation of like, 7 to 10 years that housing shouldn't even fuck with you for your criminal background.

Shannon: I mean it's just ridiculous. the system seems to just suppress and just keep people down and it's like And then they want to keep you hostage in these places so that they can just make money off your Medicaid, you know?

It's just a sick cycle that's going on.

Vince: You know, my thing is, I definitely got places hitting me back. It's just the fact of, [00:33:00] getting them this proof of, um, subsidy. Which I'm ready to just say,

it'll kick in when it kicks in. Just pay it. Yeah, the buildings I apply for, yeah, they're not cheap. Nice buildings. They're not cheap.

Shannon: Are they co ops?

Vince: some of them. And then some of them are just these new buildings where they get a tax write off if they put people with disabilities into them.

But like everything is to make money.

Shannon: Mm-Hmm. .

Vince: Because then they ask you to pay for the background check.

Shannon: Hmm.

Vince: And it ain't a guarantee if you going to get the apartment.

Var: So you in a fucking, you in a lottery pick, Hoping you get picked for a fucking apartment,

and you paying for that shit?

Vince: For the background check once they--

Get the fuck out of here.

Yeah

Shannon: Yeah, I had to pay for that too. I remember that.

Vince: Once they pull your [00:34:00] application.

Var: That's wild

Vince: So you think they pull 17 applications to make 17 people pay? 100 or something for their background check, which is not that expensive. It, it's a money making thing. You know, my thing is like, do y'all really want to get people with disabilities in these apartments?

Do y'all really? You know, then they, they send you over a list of what documents they need. Then you put the list of documents in. Then they might hit you back a week later and say, yeah, we need a, um, proof of income and a proof of your disability from a doctor, you have until tomorrow this time to get this in.

Var: You want a picture of me in a fucking wheelchair?

Vince: Now how can you get proof of that from a doctor in one day? You can't get your employer to write up a letter in one day. Yeah. That's cold bullshit know.

Shannon: they seem to get money out of us somehow.

Vince: Yeah. But that's then don't [00:35:00] want you to have shit.

Shannon: Mm-Hmm.

Vince: Especially when it come to Medicaid.

Shannon: Yeah. Oh, that's ridiculous.

Vince: Yeah. So, um, tell me like, how, how you like being a part of OPEN DOORS. How, how, how does it liven your livelihood?

Shannon: I mean, I don't have much family, so, and all my family is up in Maine still. So, I'm like single, you know, in here, in New York. So, it's nice to have like a family from here, too. You know what I mean?

That's cool. And I like working, too. It helps me get motivated. It helps me do something with my brain, not just--

Vince: Smoking it away, right?

Yeah, smoking it away. I feel you. That's definitely what we used to do. All we used to do before we were doing this.

Var: That's what I still do.

Vince: Yeah.

Shannon: I mean, yeah, we still do, but at least we're a little bit more motivated than just sitting around not, you know, [00:36:00] doing nothing.

Var: No. See, once again, you still sit around.

Oh,

Shannon: yeah.. we're all sitting around.

Yeah. I got you.

Vince: how has, not only working with OPEN DOORS made you a better person, but like, really tell me how has it helped you?

Shannon: I've come out of my shell a lot. I used to be, like, really shy and stuff. And I didn't really, know how to, uh, voice my opinions much.

I mean, I voice my opinions, but to speak out more and stuff.

Var: I know one thing was during our, uh, pandemic and at a couple of, uh, events or whatever, you was definitely, uh, front line. wherever, while we was on lockdown.

Shannon: Oh, hell yeah.

Var: So we definitely appreciate you for that.

Shannon: Yeah, hell yeah. I mean, I know what it feels, you know what I mean, to be locked up and you can't get anywhere. I mean, I was like locked up with you guys for at least like, uh, two [00:37:00] months.

Vince: Yeah I think was the first person that escaped.

Shannon: Yeah.

Vince: That broke out the front door.

Shannon: Yeah, twice. Yeah. To be locked up and to be in a room

and not have, you know, all you have is your, uh, phone or an iPad and TV. And it's like, how much TV can you watch, right? How many movies can you watch? I mean, to see the summer go by and not be able to go outside, I mean, that's just torture right there. Especially for us, because that's like our only season that we can enjoy and not be freezing our butts off.

Vince: Yeah, I was like, I really watch people lose their minds. I mean, they say, like, things you go through in life make you stronger. You know, I grew up, you know, really being locked in a room. You know, prison and all that type of shit. So that's why I was able to really mentally.

Var: I seen a nigga die just cause he was depressed.

Shannon: Mmm. [00:38:00] Yeah. Well I was losing my mind, was tweaking out. That's why I escaped. Shit. I don't know if I could deal with prison. I'd probably have to escape this or something.

Vince: You mean escaping there.

Not in America. Nah. No.

Very few done it. No Shawshank Redemption? Nah, not at all.

There ain't no going out the front door and them not stop, oh, they going stop you.

Oh, I'm sure.

With force.

Hell yeah. . But um, yeah, that's how I was able to deal with it. And that's also how it made me realize that this shit wasn't right. You know, because nobody was here criminally put here. You know, people just here for their own medical reasons. And it's like you run these like institutions, incarceration institutions.

Like it's, it's, it's crazy. You know, I still I see, um, like how they pamper it. And try to make it not look like it, but if you really pay attention, it's the same shit.

Shannon: Yeah, I mean, I mean, at least here at Coler, we [00:39:00] were able to go outside. Where, like, to other, like, ones like Isabella, where you had to sit on the floor, you couldn't even go out.

You couldn't. You had to get a pass, and you had to have someone with you, just to go outside. And it was not just like you were really in prison.

Var: I know it's definitely more freedom here than it is in a whole lot of nursing homes. Like you say, if you ain't got a visitor coming to get you, you going to go through it because you will not see outside.

Mm hmm. Mm-Hmm. . Nope. And that's across the country too.

Vince: Yeah. And um, what you u want to see for the future of OPEN DOORS?

Shannon: Well, I don't know. I like to do the idea that I want to do maybe, but we'll see.

Vince: Yeah. You gotta get your, get your beat machine out.

Shannon: Beat machine? I just need someone to help me with it. Like, uh--

Var: Wait, hold up. Fuck you mean beat machine? Shannon you making beats?

Shannon: No, no, [00:40:00] no, you know my idea.

She got this great idea that I don't want to say on camera. Because somebody is stealing it.

Var: We got a west coast chanel here? Oh, shit.

Shannon: No, no.

Vince: Nah, she does have a great idea that I think can, um, come together.

Var: Shannon always got a fucking idea.

Shannon: [LAUGHS]

Vince: How was the concert?

Shannon: It was good. I hope we can get a booth next year.

Cause there's really, there's a lot of people there. Yeah? Mhmm. In that heat? Yeah! It wasn't really bad because we were in the park and we were in the shade and it was breezy.

Vince: Yeah, so the Disability Hip Hop Jam, so you had a nice DJ from Hot 97, DJ Drewski. Um, how did you like the performances that was out there?

Shannon: They were really good. Really good. There was a young lady that was in a wheelchair. She was really good.

Var: What she was doing?

Shannon: She was doing round rap.

Vince: Oh, okay.

Shannon: Yeah. Most everybody, everybody did [00:41:00] rap. this down syndrome lady, she freestyle rapped. It was good. uh, four Wheels and

Vince: Four Wheel City. Yeah. Four Wheel City.

Shoutout to Four Wheel City.

Four Wheel City.

Shannon: Four Wheel City. Yep.

Vince: I seen another artist that was there that I always see on Instagram called Get their Hands.

Shannon: Yep. He was there too. Mm-Hmm. . They were good. You guys missed it. You would've had a great time.

Var: That's nice. Glad you had a good time there.

Shannon: Yeah, there was a lot of booths and stuff.

So, I didn't get to get around to the booths. Because I was enjoying the show.

Booze?

I was just

Vince: about to say the same shit. It sounded like you said booze.

Shannon: No, not booze. Booths.

Booths. That's my Maine accent.

Vince: I was about to say the same shit. It sounded like you said booze.

So people were just selling merchandise and stuff

out of these booths?

Shannon: We could have sold some merch there. Next time.

Vince: First, we gotta get some summertime merch.

Shannon: Mm

Vince: hmm. that's, that's definitely dope.

Appreciate you for coming out. Hopping on the podcast, [00:42:00] um.

Var: Always a pleasure for you to come and share your time with us.

Shannon: Oh yeah, my pleasure too.

Vince: Alright, we out.

Shannon: We're out, okay.