People's Collective for Justice and Liberation
Town Hall on #CombatingAbleism and Centering Disability Justice
TRANSCRIPT

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Opening slide is white with black text. At the top of the slide is a large black rectangle with white text that reads: People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. Below the rectangle is the title of the townhall: Combating Ableism and Centering Disability. Beneath the title on the left is text that reads: Co-Hosts Gregory Cendana, Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. DJ Kuttin Kandi, Asian Soidarity Collective. Beneath the title on the right is text that reads: Organizational Co-Sponsors. The logos for the organizational cosponsors are displayed. APALA, AFL-CIO, APICA, Bulosan Center, Asian Solidarity Collective, Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting, and 18 Million Rising. At the bottom of the slide are the hashtags: #CombatingAbleism, and #BuildingSolidarity. In the upper right corner of the screen is the video feed for ASL interpreter Stephanie. End description.]

KANDI: Hello everyone, welcome! Yes. And my name is DJ Kuttin Kandi and I am a Co-Founder, Core member and Organizer of Asian Solidarity Collective. Welcome to the Townhall on Combating Ableism and Centering Disability Justice by The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation with the Organizational Co-Sponsors: 18 Million Rising, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO, Asian Solidarity Collective, Asian Pacific Islander Community Actions, The Bulosan Center, and Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting.

We wanted to start off this town hall with saying that - we are now on our 7th town hall since we first began in March; and today we are moved to present this important town hall on "Combating Ableism and Centering Disability Justice."

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is titled: Co-Hosts / Co-Organizers and shows photos and contact info for the two co-hosts. Under the picture of Gregory is the text: Gregory A. Cendana, Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting (he/him/his/siya). Twitter/Instagram: @gregorycendana, @CSWSconsulting. Under the picture of Kandi is the text: DJ Kuttin Kandi, Asian Solidarity Collective (she/her/hers), Twitter: @ KuttinKandi, @AsianSolidarity / IG: @djkuttinkandi. End description.]

GREGORY: *Mabuhay*, everyone! My name is Gregory Cendana, pronouns he/him/his or siya, which is a gender neutral in Tagalog, which is one of the languages of the Philippines. And I am President and Co-Founder of Can't Stop! Won't Stop! Consulting. I am a queer Filipinx who is wearing a white shirt with black trees on it and glasses.

Kandi and I are proud to be the co-hosts and co-organizers of this townhall and co-founders for The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation. This is a reminder that you must click "closed captions "in the bottom menu to see them, and to all of the speakers to be mindful of your pace and to pause for 15-30 seconds when transitioning for the ASL interpreters. We will spotlight the ASL interpreters and if there are any issues please be sure to mention something in the chat--we have volunteers who are monitoring and who will do their best to address any questions or concerns that are raised.

This townhall is the next in The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation's #BuildingSolidarity Town Hall Series. Please use #CombatingAbleism and #BuildingSolidarity for the conversation today. We will also be live tweeting from our Twitter account @peoples_collect, streaming live on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/PeoplesCollective4JL/ and our Twitch at twitch.tv/peoplescollective4jl. We also want to remind you to hit "gallery view" at the top right to see multiple screens at the same time.

And we also have Angel Trazo, an amazing graphic facilitator who will be providing us with a creative graphics recording based on today's conversation and we will share it with everyone in the following days after the town hall.

KANDI: In this pandemic, where there has been a rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia, it is imperative that building solidarity is part of our organizing work. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and in July we celebrated Disability Pride Month. As the pandemic continues to have disproportionate impact on people of color and those with disabilities, it is critical that we have a conversation about #CombatingAbleism and centering disability justice in this moment and in our movements.

So, the People's Collective for Justice and Liberation have been intentional in coordinating this conversation with organizers and leaders who will speak from their own experiences and lay the groundwork for a path towards liberation that centers those directly impacted.

GREGORY: To get things going, we would like to start with a Land and Indigenous Acknowledgement which will be done by our very own DJ Kuttin Kandi.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is white background with black text. The title reads: Land Acknowledgement. In the lower right corner is the text: DJ Kuttin Kandi (she/her/hers). End description.]

KANDI: We want to start off acknowledging that we gather here today on these traditional lands of Indigenous peoples past and present and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations, including where I currently reside in occupied Kumeyaay territory in San Diego. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of this land that we inhabit.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is a white background with 11 photos of behind-the-scenes team. Beneath each photo is the person's name, role, and pronouns. The text beneath the photos reads: Melisa Kelley Colibrí, Accessibility Coordinator (they/them/theirs). Leang Ngov, Accessibility Coordinator (they/them/theirs). Suzanne Lightbourn, ASL Interpreter (she/her/hers). Stephanie Chao, ASL Interpreter (she/her/hers). Krystal Butler, ASL Interpreter (she/her/hers). Darryn Hollifield, Captioner (they/them/theirs). Angel Trazo, Graphic Facilitator (she/her/hers). Joyhanna Yoo Garza, Organizing Committee, Live Tweeting (she/her/hers). Shengxiao "Sole" Yu, Organizing Committee, Powerpoint Lead (she/her/hers). Karen Villa, Organizing Committee, Notetaker (siya/any pronouns). Andrew Hong, Chat monitor (he/him).

GREGORY: Thank you, Kandi. We now would also like to introduce you all to our ASL interpreters, captioner, graphics facilitator, notetaker, and other tech support including some of our members of the People's Collective for Justice and Liberation Organizing Committee. As part of our operational values, we like to lift up the entire team, the--what Kandi and I like to call the "labor of love" that goes into making these town halls happen.

For Accessibility Accommodations, our Accessibility Co-Coordinators: Melissa Kelley Colibrí and Leang Ngov. Our ASL Interpreters: Stephanie Chao, Krystal Butler, and Suzanne Lightbourn. Closed Captions: Darryn Hollifield.

And for support, I mentioned already our Graphic Facilitator is Angel Trazo. And our Chat Monitors are Andrew Hong and Ana Laura Martinez. Live Tweeting will be Joyhanna Joy Garza. And then our Notetaker will be Karen Villa. Next slide please.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is a continuation of the previous slide, showing photos of six behind-the-scenes folks with their names, roles, and pronouns. The text beneath the photos reads: Alvina Yeh, Tech Lea (she/her/hers). Thavry Khun, Organizing Committee, Operations & Admin (she/her/hers). Ana Laura Martinez, Organizing Committee, Operations & Admin (she/her/ella). Shengxiao "Sole" Yu, Organizing Committee, Town Hall (she, her, hers). Andrew Hong, Organizing Committee, Workshops (he/him). Bee Uytiepo, Organizing Committee, Workshops (she/her/siya). End description.]

GREGORY: I also wanted to lift up our Technology Lead: Alvina Yeh. And then Powerpoint will be done by Shengxiao “Sole” Yu. And members of the Organizing Committee who are part of the Organizing Committee for Town Halls: Helen Leung, Shengxiao “Sole” Yu, Andrew Hong, Bee Uytiepo. And for Operations & Administration: Ana Laura Martinez and Thavry Khun.

You’re on mute, Kandi.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is a white background with black text. Text reads: Poll 1. Where are you watching the town hall from? (Drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch or Twitter). A bulleted list of options lists: West, Midwest, Northeast, South, Alaska, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam or the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico or U.S. Virgin Islands, Outside of the U.S. End description.]

KANDI: Oh, I apologize. Before we begin the program, we want to introduce all of the speakers and panelists for the town hall in alphabetical order by last name. We will share a little bit of their bio and their picture will be shown on the screen.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is a white background with black text and five photos. The slide is titled: Speakers. The text beneath the photos of the speakers reads: Jen Deerinwater, Crushing Colonialism, Founding executive director, (no pronouns, just Jen), Twitter: @JenDeerinwater & @CRSHColonialism, Instagram: @JenDeerinwater & @crushingcolonialism. Elliott Fukui, Fireweed Collective & Mad Queer Organizing Strategies, (he/him), Instagram: @MadQueerOrganizing, @FireweedCollectiveHJ. Denarii Grace, Blues singer-songwriter, poet, screenwriter, freelance writer/essayist/editor/ghostwriter, public speaker, community educator, and activist, (she/they, mix up regularly), Twitter and Instagram: @writersdelite. Leroy Moore Jr, Krip Hop Nation, (he), Twitter: @kriphopnation, Instagram: @blackkrip. Leang Ngov, People’s Collective for Justice & Liberation, Accessibility Coordinator, (she/her/hers), Twitter: @pursuitofreroot, Instagram: @the_pursuit_of_reroot. End description.]

KANDI: Jen Deerinwater is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma--

[participant talking in background]

KANDI: ...Hello? Okay. I’m sorry. --bisexual, Two Spirit, multiply-disabled journalist, speaker, and organizer who covers the issues hir communities face with an intersectional lens. She's a contributor at Truthout and founding executive director of Crushing Colonialism. Jen is the co-editor of Sacred and Subversive and hir work is included in the anthologies Disability Visibility and Two-Spirits Belong Here.

GREGORY: Elliott Fukui is a trainer, organizer and facilitator with nearly two decades of experience in grassroots organizing. He currently works with the education team of the Fireweed Collective, working to build accessible organizing and healing spaces with and for people who are neurodivergent and/or living with disabilities. He also enjoys building safety plans and mad maps to prevent and heal from burnout.

KANDI: Denarii Grace. New York–based social justice warrior Denarii Grace is a bisexual, non-binary/agender, proudly fat, multiply disabled, poor, femme woman. She's a blues singer-songwriter, poet, freelance writer/essayist/editor, ghostwriter, screenwriter, and public speaker/educator/activist. Denarii's activism mostly focuses on bi+ (plus) identity and issues, disability, Blackness, and fat acceptance; they also talk a lot about gender, class, colorism and other issues. Her activism today is primarily through their writing, music, and poetry, but she also has abundant experience in public speaking, moderating and participating in panels and webinars, and facilitating workshops, including as a featured speaker at the 2019 AfroPunk Solution Sessions in Brooklyn, New York. She coined the term "exogender" to describe their (a)gender experience; it's a term for Black people only. They also founded Fat Acceptance Month in January 2019.

GREGORY: DJ Kuttin Kandi, a community organizer for nearly 25 years, is a people's hip-hop DJ scholar who was born and raised in Queens New York. She is a disabled Filipinx-American queer writer, poet, theater performer, educator, hip-hop feminist, and community organizer. Kandi is a cofounder and organizer with Asian Solidarity Collective and a cofounder of the People's Collective for Justice and Liberation.

Leroy Moore. Leroy F. Moore Jr., Founder of Krip-Hop Nation. Since the 1990s, has written the column "Illin-N-Chillin" for POOR Magazine. Moore is one of the founding members of National Black Disability Coalition and activist around police brutality against people with disabilities. Leroy has started and helped start organizations like Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization to Sins Invalid to Krip-Hop Nation. His cultural work includes film documentary, Where Is Hope, Police Brutality Against People with Disabilities, spoken-word CDs, poetry books and children's book, Black Disabled Art History 101 published by Xochitl Justice Press. His graphic novel, Krip-Hop Graphic Novel Issue 1: Brown Disabled Young Woman Superhero Brings Disability Justice to Hip-Hop was published by Poor Press 2019 and in 2020 Leroy also published Black Disabled Ancestors also with Poor Press. Moore has traveled internationally

networking with other disabled activists and artists. Moore has written, sang and collaborated to do music videos on Black disabled men.

Leang Ngov. Leang Ngov, Deaf Khmerican, is an accessibility coordinator for People's Collective for Justice and Liberation, community advocate, and homeschooling teacher. Her work involves educating the community on multiple identities, and storytelling to further the understanding of the language deprivation syndrome, intergenerational trauma and being a child of refugees.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes back to Poll 1 slide. End description]

KANDI: Based on the RSVPs and interest from across the country and globe, this shows how critical this conversation is, especially for the moment we are in. While we don't have enough time to do introductions of everyone who's joined, we wanted to do a quick poll to get a sense or where people are watching the town hall. Also, please feel free to drop in the chat or the comments below and if you are watching from the Facebook stream, please share your name, pronouns and where you are watching the town hall from. This leads us to the first poll with two different questions:

Poll 1: Where are you watching the town hall from? (Drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch, or Twitter). We have the West, Midwest, Northeast, South, Alaska, Hawaii, Samoa, Guam or the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico or U.S. Virgin Islands, Outside of the U.S.

We'll give it a few…

GREGORY: Alright. Next slide please.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [New slide is a white background with black text that reads: Poll 1 Part 2: What is your race? And feel free to drop in the comments if you are watching from Facebook, Twitch or Twitter. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, East Asian, Black or African American, Latinx, Latino or Hispanic, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White. End description.]

GREGORY: Please take a second to vote. [typing sounds]

Awesome. We will give it a couple more seconds. It looks like we have a good majority of folks who have done it, about 71%. I'll give it a couple more seconds. [typing sounds]

Alright. I'm going to end the poll now. Looks like we have folks from the West Coast, the Northeast, the South, and outside of the US. Um, Asian, East Asian, Latinx, Latino or Hispanic, White, Black or African American, South Asian. Different representation here. Thank you all so much for joining us. And feel free to continue to drop in the chat.

Alright. Next slide please.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is titled: Opening Speaker. Slide shows a photo of Jen Deerinwater with the text: Jen Deerinwater, Crushing Colonialism, Founding executive director, (no pronouns, just Jen), Twitter: @JenDeerinwater & @CRSHColonialism, Instagram: @JenDeerinwater & @crushingcolonialism. End description.]

GREGORY: And now we would like to introduce you to our opening speaker, Jen Deerinwater, who will begin with an opening framing before we bring in our moderator and our panelists. Please welcome Jen Deerinwater.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Krystal. End description.]

JEN: *Osiyo.* It's great to be here. Thank you for having me. So I'm just going to start with a little something that I just pulled together. I hope that I am clear and coherent. It's been a long week of watching the Democratic National Convention so I'm a little tired.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Screen share stops displaying a slide. Video feed of ASL interpreter Krystal takes up entire screen. End description.]

JEN: Deaf, disabled, and chronically ill people have always existed, but we have been erased from society through our exclusion in decision making in government, employment, education, housing, healthcare, religion, transportation, food, and every other facet of life you can imagine. This is doubly true for our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) spoonies. We suffer not only from the violence of ableism, but from racism and colonialism. The white invasion and the setter colonialism that came with it are ultimately why ableism is even on Turtle Island.

Our sisters and 2LGBTQIA family must also contend with the violence and oppression we suffer under a heteropatriarchal, cis centered world. Under capitalism our lives are deemed useless as we aren't able to, or are often excluded from, the work force. We are denied employment, or even paid less than the minimum wage, as if our time and talents aren't worth as much as the abled. While I don't want the worth of any life based

on its productivity and ability to grow needless wealth, we sure as hell deserve to be paid what able bodied, white, het, cismen receive. Frankly, we deserve more.

We are thrown in cages and institutions and our right to personal autonomy is often stolen from us. The most crucial decisions in our lives, like where we live, access to healthcare, and whether or not we are able to raise a family or get married or partnered are often outside of our hands. When we attempt to fight for our rights, to tell those in power we've had enough, we often can't even get in the room with them because it wasn't constructed with us in mind.

We are a community that doesn't need "equal rights," that are determined by the dominant narrative of the white, hetero, able bodied, capitalist and colonizing cisman. Equality is based on the ideal that we should all want to live like our oppressors regardless of the expense the world suffers.

I don't want what the white man has. I want tribal sovereignty. I want to see an end to the prison industrial complex, capitalism, white supremacy, poverty, and the torture and trauma of marginalized people. I want to see an end to the suffering that is so clearly etched across many of our faces and that we carry within our DNA just as our ancestors did due to historical and intergenerational trauma. Disability justice is the path to get us where we deserve to be.

Project LETS says that "Disability justice recognizes the intersecting legacies of white supremacy, colonial capitalism, gendered oppression and ableism in understanding how people's' bodies and minds are labelled 'deviant', 'unproductive', 'disposable' and/or 'invalid'."

Disability justice isn't merely a term or even a movement. It's our very right to survive and thrive. It's built on the blood, sweat, and tears of our many people, including powerhouses like the amazing people I'm honored to share this space with today.

Our very lives are interconnected with one another and across movements. For example, the environmental justice movement fights for our rights to clean air, water, land, and food. It fights against the many industries that often cause illness and disability. It's a movement working to ensure that not only is everyone able to evacuate and receive the resources they need in man made global climate catastrophes, but that the catastrophes don't happen in the first place.

The movement against police brutality and to defund the police is a movement for disabled lives as we know almost half the people killed in the so called US by police

have a disability. Of those people, approximately half have a mental illness. Police brutality also creates illnesses and disabilities. Far too many of us know what a police baton, zip ties, and toxic gases feel like and some have even lost their lives to the police state.

The MeToo movement fights against rape culture and violence that many of us suffer from. Anywhere from the 60th to 90th percentile of disabled women have suffered domestic violence and sexual assault yet our voices, our experiences, our needs are rarely heard or addressed, let alone solved.

Despite the importance of including disability justice in this movement work, Deaf, disabled, and chronically ill people rarely have a seat at the table where discussions are had and decisions are made.

Even within the disability community many of us are often not truly welcome. Many of our leaders don't even understand the basics of white privilege or their role in the colonization of these lands and the genocide and enslavement it has brought to Indigenous and Black people. Not only do some of them refuse to be accountable for the role they play in the violence against BIPOC and Muslim immigrants and migrants, but they have the audacity to complain that the needs of those communities are even discussed. This lack of understanding and accountability was clearly demonstrated on Tuesday in the Democratic National Party's Disability Council meeting. The #DisabilitySoWhite was screaming through my mind while I watched the meeting.

As a community, as a people suffering across the world right now under COVID-19, we must work together. We must stand together. We must value each other's lives and honor the trauma we are burdened with. We need to work together to collectively carry our trauma as we are stronger when united. For my life is tied to yours and I'll never be free if you're not free.

Events like this are an integral part of doing this collective work. We can't progress if we don't have the tough conversations and hold ourselves and others accountable. We can't progress if only a few voices are heard.

We have commonalities, but we also have differences. There is beauty and strength in our differences. We must embrace them if we are to ever reach a just world where all of our lives are valued and meaningful. A world where we are loved and embraced for all that we are.

Wado. Thank you.

KANDI: Thank you Jen for sharing and for being opening speaker and already offering a valuable framing for us as we begin the panel.

Firstly, I want to share that I am truly honored and grateful that my colleague, friend and comrade, Greg, has asked me to moderate today's conversation on Combating Ableism and Centering Disability Justice. At first, I was hesitant to take up such a role because I tend to look towards the Disability Justice organizers long before me who have paved the way as I feel I have yet so much to learn and yet so much to do. But then after reflecting, I had to check my own self and my own internalized oppressions of feeling like "I am not good enough" or that "I don't know enough" or that "I am not worthy enough." The idea of perfectionism, is a falsity stemming from a white supremacist heterpatriarchy framing that IS ableist. It is ableist because perfectionism buys into an idea of a false "norm" and a standard that does not exist and should not exist. A false norm, a false belief that creates a condition in which others are more desirable while others are not.

It is in this moment that I reminded myself of Mia Mingus's speech nearly a decade ago on "Moving Towards the Ugly" which taught me this and helped me to move towards the ugly --- the ugly, where not too long after in 2012, I had gotten sick and nearly died after my heart paused several times. I was rushed into the hospital, had heart surgery, a pacemaker implanted and experienced multiple procedures thereafter. While, previous to this time, I had learned a lot about Disability Justice and movements; as well as having multiple disabilities previous to my now current SVT heart condition - it was during this time I began to truly learn who I was in this moment, as not just a disabled person but the understanding and the reclaiming of my own politicized identity as a person with a disability.

During my hospitalization, my good long time friend Akiba Solomon, who was the Editor of Colorlines at the time, wanted to write about what I was going through while in the hospital, so she interviewed me. She showed me what she wrote with the title as "Hip Hop Activist and DJ Fights her Fiercest Battle with Heart Disease and Fat Phobia." I thought to myself, am I ready to make such a claim? To put myself out there on such a public platform? To talk about me being fat and the fat phobia and its connections with ableism, and all the ways in which being an Asian, Filipinx, womxn of color experiences all these multiple forms of oppression? I knew it mattered and so I did. I shared.

And of course, as I shared - I received as I had always received as a fat artist in the music industry - fat phobia attacks on public platforms. Judged. Ridiculed. Disposable. But it was also at this moment where I had met Denarii and Leroy Moore and many

others who took me in, in more ways they may ever know. I found love and care within and through the Disability Justice community.

Because of Leroy, I was able to really forge into Disability Justice in not just my understandings but in my values, in my practice, in my constant learnings and how I live in truth. It is right here, right now, and not just in how I raise my one child Miracle with Down Syndrome but how I raise my other child Sól. It is why here, at People's Collective for Justice and Liberation we are constantly taking time to learn about Disability Justice in our work and how we organize and build.

It is our practice to always learn but to do more than just this. But to ask, to know, to challenge. I think about this everyday as I raise Miracle where every year I have to prove on paper that Miracle has a disability, even though Miracle will always be a child with Down Syndrome. I think about this because I also think about that access intimacy that Mia Mingus talked about again, over a decade ago --- a question we must all explore about what would it would be to actually Center Disability Justice - if we ALL had this framing.

I think about these questions that Naomi Ishisaka wrote in an article earlier this month where Naomi asked, *"What if every job asked every person if they had access needs and helped to meet them? What if every school asked every student? What if it were just a normal part of our daily processes?"* This is what it would be if we all centered Disability Justice. A practice of talking, discussing, addressing all of this and more as I think about the ways in disabled peoples have always done all this. Where there are those of us who have seen the interconnections and the understandings that all forms of oppression are connected as we push back against violence, imperialism, colonization, racial capitalism, anti-Black racism and build transformative solidarity towards our collective liberation.

Today, we are going to be in discussion with organizers and leaders who will speak from their own experiences and really lay that groundwork for a path towards liberation that centers those directly impacted.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Suzanne. End description.]

KANDI: And so now we begin with each of our panelists, who will share their own thoughts about what it means to combat ableism and centering disability justice. We can start with Jen Deerinwater.

JEN: So, Native people have the highest rates per capita of disability and chronic illness in the so-called “US.” Yet, based on the poll that our event organizers conducted, I’m the only Native here in this space. I want you all to let that sink in. Native people die far too young and often from completely preventable deaths. Whether it’s our sisters and Two Spirits going around murdered and missing, our youth committing suicide, or our people due to a lack of access to quality housing, food, and healthcare, it all amounts to genocide.

As we’re seeing under the COVID-19 pandemic, Native people all, as well as Black, Brown, and East Asian people, are becoming sick and dying from neglect. This pandemic has torn through Native communities and tribal nations leaving a loss of life and culture in its wake. In July alone, my people lost 13 fluent language speakers. Thirteen people may not seem like that many, but my tribe--which is the largest federally recognized tribal nation in the country--only has 380,000 citizens. Many of us don’t speak our language due to assimilation. And when we lose our languages, we lose our culture. Our connection to our ancestors becomes smaller. And our ability to heal and repair the damage that has been done to us withers away.

In May, the Urban Indian Health Institute in Seattle Washington released a video explaining that they requested COVID-19 tests, testing supplies, and personal protective equipment from the government but were instead sent body bags and toe tags. A similar incident happened to our Native relatives in so-called "Canada" during the H1N1 epidemic.

In Washington DC where I live, 80% of the COVID-19 deaths were Black and Brown people. Many of our disabled people and elders are going without regular healthcare, home health aides, personal care attendants, and a litany of other necessary services.

Whether or not we survive this pandemic sits heavily in the hands of the white and able-bodied. We have to hope that doctors will deem our lives valuable enough to treat us when we are sick, even when we're not in the midst of a pandemic. They would rather throw us into institutions or "compassionately" kill us than give us the care, services, and accessibility accommodations that we need.

Genocide and eugenics have never ended, and COVID-19 is a very convenient way to let those of us who are deemed "undesirable" die. The US government has a trust and treaty responsibility to Native people, which includes providing healthcare through Indian Health Services. Many non-Native people don't understand what IHS is and how it functions. This isn't free healthcare. Our people paid for this through the loss of lands and life. Despite the federal government's many responsibilities to us, IHS is the worst

quality healthcare you can receive in this country. It's so grossly underfunded that tribal leaders estimated pre-COVID-19 pandemic that we needed $10 billion to get IHS just to meet the standard of basic non-Native healthcare in the United States.

In 2016, the federal Bureau of prisons was allocated in the budget several thousand dollars more per incarcerated inmate for healthcare than Native people were in the IHS system. Our life expectancy is the second lowest in the Western Hemisphere, after Haiti. In some tribal nations, our people die younger than those in Iraq, India, and Sudan. Urban Natives don't fare much better. We are only allocated a few cents per person for a year's worth of healthcare. 71% of us live in urban areas, but many of us don't have urban Native healthcare. As someone who has had countless experiences of racist and colonizing microaggressions, refusal of care, and blatant violence in the medical system by non- Native people, I'd be ecstatic if I could access care by and for Native people. Sadly, I don't see that happening anytime soon.

On many of our lands, we don't have even high-speed broadband or wireless phone service--or even landline phone service. Our roads are inadequate or barely even in existence. How can you distance work or learn, have tele-health medical appointments, or even have disability accessible transportation when many of our people don't even have clean running water? Indian country has been left behind time and time again, including by the disability community. Our disability justice needs are deeply rooted in the end of settler colonialism and the illegal and immoral occupation of our lands.

As we're in an election year, I believe it's important that we take a deep, hard look at both parties, all the candidates, and the system as a whole. It's time to stop fawning over the politicians that deign to throw a few scraps our way. I worked in politics for years, running campaigns. I was a delegate several times for the Massachusetts state Democratic party conventions. I was a party insider that planned to run for office. If it weren't for my health issues and the inherent ableism in campaigning and political life, I probably would've ran for office by now. However, my feelings toward the system have changed dramatically.

On the last campaign I worked on, the candidate, who was a self-described progressive and feminist old me that the needs of disabled people weren't his concern, nor that of his campaign. After years of enduring racism, misogyny, sexual harassment, ableism, and working for measly wages--if I was even paid at all--I had finally had enough. That was the day I doused the bridge I had built with the Democrats in gasoline and I watched it burn to the ground. [laughs] I refuse to spend my energy and time on this earth trying to appeal to my oppressor, trying to get them to see my humanity and worth. This is a system that is never seen my worth on any level nor cared to. The Declaration

of Independence refers to my people as "merciless Indian savages." I work now to overturn the system, to restore tribal sovereignty, and meet all the justice-based needs that marginalized people have on these lands.

We Indigenous people, especially those who are chronically ill, Deaf, disabled, and mad, need non-Native people to stand with us. We need you by our sides fighting for our rights because we can't do it alone. As I said earlier, our freedom, our liberation is tied to one another. So I urge you all to remember my words and to take action. Learn about the Nations whose land you live on. Become familiar with our people, movements, and the work we're doing. Don't merely include us after you've planned actions, meetings, events and the like. We need to be at the table from the minute conversations begin, as that table was built with our stolen trees, on our stolen land, and transported to you through the use of fossil fuels that were also stolen from us. Indigenous people are resilient just as our spoonies are. We've all had to learn to live in a world that wasn't designed for us. It's time we all work together to create the world that our ancestors dreamed possible for us. *Wado*. Thank you.

KANDI: Thank you, Jen. And now we will have Elliott.

ELLIOTT: [audio distorting] Hi Comrades. Can you hear me okay? Firstly, thank you so, so much for having me. It is such an honor to be here with you, and on a panel with such brilliant folks. And thank you to everyone who is here, for surviving and for doing what you had to do to get here tonight. It is deeply appreciated.

We are facing some wild times right now. The continued persistence of COVID-19 through the negligence and hostility of the Trump administration, the increase of hate violence and retaliation to the uprisings, and the swell of climate catastrophes are bringing up a lot of questions about who we are, and what kind of people we want to be in the face of fear, violence, uncertainty and overwhelming grief and rage.

Disability Justice is a practice that has challenged me to face a very painful reality, which is that each one of our individual choices have a meaningful impact on all our communities. That none of us exists in a vacuum, and that no can survive alone. From our choice to wear a mask, to our choice to litter, to our choice to remain silent in the face of injustice, or the choice to react with defensiveness or hostility when we are asked to do better by those we have harmed.

Disabled and Neurodivergent folks, particularly women, poor and working-class folks, Immigrants, Black, Indigenous, and Brown folks, Queer Trans Intersex and Non-Binary communities--we are all too familiar with this fear, violence, this uncertainty, and this overwhelming grief and rage. This has been our truth and our reality. This has been how

we survive. But this moment is about more than just survival, it is about transforming the culture that enabled us to arrive at the current context and conditions we are facing. It's about unlearning a lot of lies, feeling a lot of grief, and making new and different and better choices.

We need Abled people to show up and do better. And we need Abled people to listen to us. Right now, I am on occupied Ohlone Territory, also known as the East Bay, surrounded by smoke from the 26 fires that have forced over 1,000 people to evacuate their homes across Northern California and the Central Valley. As I write this, Disabled and Neurodivergent people are losing access to life-sustaining power through rolling blackouts at the hands of PG&E, and are frequently the last to be evacuated from dangerous zones. As I write this, more and more of my comrades are becoming houseless. And as I write this, more and more of us are losing access to health insurance, medical care, personal aids, therapists, and the health care we need to survive.

Any movement with the capacity to shift our culture from one of isolation and violence to interdependence and transformation requires a Disability Justice framework. Because we will not get free if we continue to literally leave our comrades behind. Our choices matter. Our decisions matter, and now is the time for us to decide who we are, and what kind of ancestors we want to be remembered as.

Please go to www.norcalresilience.org and www.centralvalleymutualaid.org to get plugged in and donate your time, your energy, your money, and your resources. Please donate to the Disability Justice Culture Club, who are working day and night to get masks, filters, food, and other supplies to our communities. If you are Disabled or Neurodivergent, you are not alone. Your survival and wellbeing make all our collective survival and wellbeing possible. So please: speak your truth and demand what you need. Because we cannot afford to be small right now. You deserve to have what you need to survive and thrive. So please keep fighting.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Krystal. End description.]

KANDI: Thank you so much, Elliott. And now, I'd like to introduce Denarii.

DENARII: Hello! My name is Denarii Grace. My pronouns are she and they. And I strongly prefer that people mix it up regularly, if one can remember to do so. I'm going to do a description of myself and my surroundings. I am a proudly fat brown-skinned Black nonbinary woman in my early 30s. Right now, I am wearing my glasses, a head wrap that is dark blue with white polka dots, and a purple and dark blue long-sleeved shirt.

My background is the white walls of my bedroom. And I think you can see a little bit of my dresser.

So first I want to thank Kandi and Gregory for inviting me here to this space. I am grateful that these conversations are being had privately, publicly, in spaces like this. I am forever grateful to the disability community for radicalizing my ideas about identity and what it means to be disabled. So I am forever grateful for these spaces.

I want to start off--I purposefully don't have prepared words. However, I do have a focus that I want us to think about. And I chose this topic because it is a topic that both within disability community, Disability Justice space and outside of it in other radical space, is an issue that is very, very seldom talked about. And yet, it is key and paramount to talking about it in order to work towards some sense, some semblance of liberation.

So, we talk a lot about intersectionality, a term that was coined by a cis Black woman. And in this discussion today, we've talked about intersectionality of disability with Blackness and Indigeneity. We've talked about it in the context of class. And I want to say that I'm grateful to Kandi for bringing up the topic that I am about to talk about. Because again, it's so invisiblized. In a sense it's taboo even in the most radical of social justice spaces. And that is the idea of fat antagonism--or what some people call "fatphobia"--as a form of ableism. And as I have developed my knowledge, my skills, my understanding, as both a fat person and as a multiply-disabled person, I have really come to understand--and I think even Kandi's opening story highlights--the inextricable link between fat antagonism (also known as "fatphobia") and ableism.

Because there's this other idea that is swimming around in society. And it's the idea that links the two of them. And that is healthism. Healthism is the idea of oppression, systemic oppression, interpersonal discrimination, micro-aggressions, based on a person's either real or perceived health status. And that is a thread that is constantly, constantly used, often in the form of "concern trolling" against fat people. "Concern trolling" being this phenomenon where people express their bigotry, express their bias, and express discrimination and oppression with this caveat of "well, I'm just concerned about your health."

And so I wanted to talk about healthism and the connection between fatphobia and ableism. In the way that they are connected is in the idea that our bodies are "supposed to" look or function in a certain way. So if a fat person--like myself, I have a very large belly, that "isn't supposed to be there" according to a fat antagonistic society. My cheeks are not supposed to be this round. And likewise, I'm not supposed to use a cane--which I do. I should be ashamed of my cane. I should be ashamed of my belly. And a lot of

these ideas about what our bodies “should” do, what they “should” look like, are inherently rooted in white supremacy and colonialism. Because as an unambiguous brown-skinned Black person, my skin, my skin color is a part of my body. And that is something that I should also want to remove, to a race, to be ashamed of. And for a long time, I was. And it is so endemic to how white supremacy, how ableism, how fat antagonism operate.

One book--and I am going to mention three, and I know I only have four minutes. But, one book, if you don’t read anything else, I strongly encourage you to read *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia.* It’s a book by Sabrina Strings. And it chronicles the connection between specifically anti-Black racism and fat antagonism. They use the term “fat phobia,” I do not, because of its ableist connotations. But when you look at the history of Black people, specifically on this land--not just the colonized US, but the colonized Americas in general--you will find that the dehumanization of Black people in this land is so inextricably linked with how our bodies are perceived. If you’ve never heard of Sara Baartman, which was a Black woman who was literally put on display because of the size of her breasts, and the size of her butt, and the width of her hips.

And as disabled people, we understand the history--many of us do--of putting disabled people, otherwise chronically ill disfigured people on display in human zoos. So this is an experience that both Black people and disabled people share historically. Our bodies are looked at as spectacle. When you think about the way that articles about quote unquote “obesity”--which many activists consider to be a slur, just so we’re clear. But many articles on “diversity” cut off fat people’s heads and just show their bodies, because we are a spectacle. The idea of Black folks in porn and the BBC (which stands for “big Black cock,” for those who don’t know). Again, Black people, fat folks, disabled folks as spectacle, as something to marvel at, as something to look at as grotesque. Something that is so deviating from the norm that it’s unimaginable, inconceivable.

And that disgust with our bodies as fat folks, as disabled folk--and the fear, as the book says, of what our bodies do and don’t do, and how they move in the world--informs the way that we as people are oppressed. Right, because there’s our bodies (and that’s talking about us in a dehumanizing way) and then there’s us as people, as full, whole people to be oppressed in a society that says “bodies are supposed to be this one way.” “they are supposed to be thin, you’re supposed to have a nice ratio of hips to ass,” for those who are AFAB. “You’re supposed to have an Adonis chest and pelvic area,” for those who are AMAB (assigned male at birth). “You’re not supposed to be able to pinch the flab. You aren’t supposed to need mobility aids. You should be as light as possible. Your nose should be as narrow as possible.” Mine is clearly not! [laughs] And these are

all the ways that these issues interconnect. And it's so, so deeply rooted in the very structures that allow this empire to form in the first place.

And so, to conclude--because I'm pretty sure I'm way past time at this point--I want us to really interrogate. Because we talk about white supremacy--we don't talk about enough, but we talk about it. We talk, particularly in these times, about disability, but we don't talk about it enough. But what we do not talk about is fat antagonism. What we do not talk about is size and weight discrimination. What we do not talk about is the healthism attached all of these ideas, and the ways that we cannot get free as a people--as disabled people, as Black people, as Native Indigenous people, as non-men, marginalized genders, all of that--unless we are also talking about fat antagonism, fat for a, body size discrimination, weight discrimination, accessibility for fat folks. Because that's an issue too, and this is another one of the ways that it's connected. And I'm just saying that, because I know I'm out of time. But, fitting in chairs, fitting in bathroom stalls, these are issues for fat folks as well. And so when we are talking about these issues, it is imperative that we think about: "What don't I know? Why am I just hearing about the ideas of fat antagonism in general? Of fat antagonism as it connects to white supremacy, as it connects to ableism and disability justice? What don't I know?" To really interrogate that, not only within ourselves, but in the spaces that we occupy. And to really advocate and scream at the top of our lungs (if we're able to do so) that this is something that needs to be talked about. This is something that needs to be addressed. Our lives, quite literally, are on the line. Thank you.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Stephanie. She pauses a moment, asking a team to switch her out. End description.]

KANDI: Wow, thank you so much Denarii. And now we will bring in Leroy.

LEROY: Hello, how are you doing? So, I'm just going to read. Yeah. I'm Leroy Moore in Berkeley California. I'm wearing a red shirt. I have gray hair.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Suzanne. End description.]

LEROY: I'm at my desk. You can see some of the krip hop paintings. And you can see my bike.

So I want to thank you for inviting me. DJ Kuttin Kandi, thank you. And thanks everyone else. I just want to say: can I be real? I need to be real at this point. Some won't like what I have to say, but at this time with the racist, sexist homophobic and classist

so-called "president" in the White House, plus COVID and state violence, we cannot be progressive liberal. We must be radical. And that means calling out gatekeepers who might look like us, protecting white well-funded disability movement. And we must tell the picture about Black disabled people that we created. That's who created most entertainment we know today.

A lot of times when we talk about Black and people of color with disabilities, we always and only talk about the negative. But disabled people led us to freedom--Harriet Tubman. We created entertainment like the blues.

We must realize that most of the times, when we talk about our one-sided story, we are using white studies to talk about us. When we finally talk about police brutality, we use white men's studies like the Ruderman study that says 50%. And I say "no that's wrong, it's 70%!" But we keep on bringing up that study like it represents us. It really doesn't. And I'm just telling you, people think we're done thanking white men in your head for putting black face on everything.

So we must really carefully when we talk about disabled people--disabled people of color, just Black and Brown disabled people--we must talk about from the “I” story. And we must talk about the reports or the entertainment or the books that we do. Because that’s where the real story is.

Since the 1980’s, as a Black disabled boy, I tried to bring together POC with disabilities (people of color with disabilities). In 1988, I started an organization for trans of color with disabilities at my college. In 1998 and 1999, in San Francisco I started what’s called DAMO, Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization, one of the first organizations for people of color with disabilities. Then, with Patty Berne, started Sins Invalid and now Krip-Hop Nation. So, when we finally talked about intersectionality, I was like "oh yeah, I've been doing that since the 80s." Nothing new, it's just academia has to catch up and put a term to it. You know, I've always known that my mother is a woman and she's a Black woman. I didn't have to have academia tell me that.

All these years at 52, I realized that my Black community has fell behind. So much that the Black community has become harmful and almost useless to Black disabled people--what I call "Black ableism." And at the same time, there are gatekeepers who look like us protecting white disabled organizations.

Four years ago, I turned my work from coalition work of POC to really concentrate on my Black community, so many Black disabled people can finally come home. Because we can't come home now. Because there's decades of open wounds in the Black

community around Black disabled people. When we get services, we have to go outside of our community to get services. So I think--and I know it's controversial--but before we get into intersectionality, we as Black or Brown people really need to come back to our community and do our work in our community.

Can you imagine all the positions that disability organizations have the outreach toward our community... Can you imagine that all of those people come back to communities of color, Black and Brown communities and do the work within Black and Brown disabled organizations?

A couple months ago, I was looking on YouTube and I found this interesting video that had a Black actress--a really famous Black actress. And she was talking about the lack of disability roles in Hollywood. And I was like "oh, okay this is great." And then after she talked about it, she showed three clips. And all of the three clips had white disabled actresses and actors in it. And then my heart just dropped. I was like "can you imagine if she had the platform in the Black community to come and do that for the Black disabled community?"

We must realize that in today's society, there's no foundation in our Black and Brown communities, so Black and Brown disabled people can come back home and work. We must build that! And that's why I am just only focusing on my black community, that we must build it. It's not there. It's been 30 years since the ADA, but still there's a lack of foundation in our Black and Brown communities that can hold Black disabled people. Can you imagine if the NAACP had a disability unit? Can you imagine if all of our people of color organizations had a disability component?

So that work needs to happen. And I'm so glad to be working with the National Black Disability Coalition to do that work. And it's not a foundation grant, it's the work that we've been doing on the ground. While a lot of times we get overlooked by well-funded disabled organizations. So, to say all of this is to say that we have to build that foundation so the next generation can come home to the Black, Brown community and work toward disability justice. I think before we get to disability justice--and, you know, being one of the co-founders of disability justice with Patty Berne--now I think after years of working with Patty Berne, now I think we have to build that ladder to disability justice. And that it needs to look like us!

And I will end by: I see a lot, a lot of pimping of disability justice from white disabled people, from Black and Brown disabled people that don't know about disability justice--that hasn't reached out to Patty Berne. [laughs] and they're using it in all the wrong ways. And it's so sad to see that. It's so sad to see the erasure of Patty Berne's

voice, because her voice needs to be everywhere. It's more than just myself, it's more than just Mia Mingus. It's people you don't see on the Internet. That's another thing, most of our work in disability that I see is mostly on social networking. And I think it's good in one way, but we also need to get out there in the streets. And I'm not saying big protests, I'm just saying little stuff that you do off social networking. Because most of our leaders that are doing the groundwork are not on Twitter 24/7, they're doing the groundwork.

So I leave you with that, and thank you once again.

KANDI: Thank you Leroy. Wow. And now we will bring in Leang.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Stephanie. End description.]

LEANG: [voice interpreted by ASL interpreter Stephanie] Hi everybody, I'm Leang Ngov. This is my name sign. I'm on Patwin territory. I am a Khmer Deaf woman. And I'm wearing a black button shirt with dark brown hair, my hair is down, and I've got a gray backdrop behind me.

So, before I get started, I just wanted to remind everyone that I am the one signing, I'm the one telling my story. This is my story--Leang's--and not the interpreter's, not the person is who is voicing for me, whose name is Stephanie. And that is one of my biggest pet peeves, is related to hearing people or people who don't know how to work with interpreters--those work with Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing individuals-- is assuming that the signing which interpreter is the one speaking. But these are my words, my thoughts, and my story that I'm sharing today.

Anyway, thank you again for this honor to be here to share my message with you all. And I want to start with this quote: "There's really no such thing as the voiceless. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard." And that quote is by Arundhati Roy.

We have so many amazing activists and organizations within our Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing (DDBDDHH) community, but often, they are unheard in the larger community space. We have an organization, Be Heard, they do community work focused on those of us who have been in prison or are currently in prison. And they spread awareness about police brutality within our community. We have Najma Johnson, a Black DeafBlind nonbinary person, who's done work related to violence work, intersectionality work, and disability justice work. Another person I want

to call out is Drago Rentería, a Latinx Deaf Trans, a long-time LGBTIQA+ Deaf advocate who has advocated for accessibility for many various movements and organizations. We have Roberto Cabrera, a DeafBlind Queer of color, who has also been a huge activist in terms of accessibility for all. And there are so many more folks I can name.

But the point here I am trying to make is that ableism is still one of the most acceptable form of "-isms" today. And that's why, with a lot of different organizing movements, we're often an afterthought. They think about us last.

And so I want to talk about other types of "-isms" that are based in auditory status. So, there's audism, which is discrimination based on the auditory status. [Interpreter correction: so these are all "-isms" related to ableism, excuse me.] Phonocentricism, discrimination based on the person's ability to speak or hear. Like I mentioned earlier about the interpreters, people tend to "Oh my goodness, that interpreter is amazing! They have such great things to say!" But it's actually my words, and what I'm saying, but they're not looking at me because I'm not the one quote unquote "speaking."

There's vidism, discrimination based on vision status or what people are able to see. And there's different sorts of "-isms" under the umbrella of ableism. And that is why a lot of able-bodied folks have chosen to silence disabled communities. We have never been voiceless. And so it is important that you are all here to learn and hear from us. Thank you.

KANDI: Hello, thank you Leang. And for those of you who just came in, my name is Kandi, pronouns she and her. I am in my music room and I'm wearing a pink shirt--I think it's pink. And I've got long dark brown hair, with a picture frame behind me--that is a drawing of myself, actually. Thank you.

So, we heard a lot today from our speakers who shared so much. Everything from fat antagonism, size discrimination, learning new terms like "healthism," and COVID-19. A lot of our speakers talked about moving away from this progressive liberalism and that we must be radical, and calling out gatekeepers, and lifting up Black disabled people, and having a foundation. We learned of the problems of the IHS, the trust and treaty responsibility to Native people in providing healthcare, and all the issues in the fight for tribal sovereignty, and the system--how they have never seen the worth or cared for folks with disabilities. And we are here to also have learned about the Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing community, and audism, and vidism, and more.

And we are still learning here. And I think all of our panelists today who have shared so deeply and who came so openly in sharing their vulnerability, now we are going to get into a Q&A for the panelists. So I appreciate you sharing so deeply with us.

The first question I thought about is when--even in our title, and we often hear “center those who are on the margins within the margins, center those with disabilities,” but what does that really mean? For folks that don’t really know. What does it mean to be a co-conspirator to people with disabilities? How does one show up? And it’s in ways that people might not understand. And often, folks with disabilities often having to educate that, the labor takes always remind folks of access needs. But how can one still better learn to understand what does it take to be a true co-conspirator? Anyone can popcorn it.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreter switch. Now interpreting is Krystal. End description.]

LEROY: Hello, Leroy here. I think the most important thing that a co-conspirator can do is to work on their own community. Really work on their own community. Really work on racism, ableism in their own community. Most of the time they want to get into our community because that’s where the fun is, that’s where the media are going to. But that’s not their role. Their role is to work on their community, without the media, without the camera people, without the bling bling.

KANDI: Thank you, Leroy. Anyone else would like to add to that?

DENARII: Uh, yeah. This is Denarii speaking. And you will have to excuse in my image description earlier, I did not include that my dog is here. [laughs] You will also notice that I am laying down. Because I am in pain. And for me, that’s what I think about. I knew that in this particular virtual space, that if the panel started while I was still laying here, that it wouldn’t be unusual to see a disabled person--specifically one who lives with chronic pain--laying down. But in larger society, this would be looked at as “unprofessional.” You’re in a panel, you’re supposed to sit up.

And so for me, what being a co-conspirator looks like, or should be--especially, I think, within the context of how things are right now, where we don’t really have any co-conspirators. Where most of the people doing the work are part of the community, are disabled, are Deaf, are hard of hearing, are blind, are DeafBlind, are chronically ill. When we talk about the context of where we are today, I think what a co-conspirator looks like is someone who is thinking about--actively, as Leang said, not saving us for the last little bit after they’ve already organized everything, but from jump--thinking

actively about accessibility. Accessibility for conferences, accessibility for virtual panels, accessibility for their churches, or their mosques, or their synagogues, or their temples, or other places of worship. Accessibility for the parks, for the beach.

And that demonstrates that there is this overreaching issue. Because these are issues that have to do with religion, that have to do with government--they govern the beaches and a lot of our park and things like that--has to do with individuals, people organizing things, has to do with organization. So all of these different organizations--our schools--being a co-conspirator means that whatever space you are in, as an educator on every level and in every way, as a government official or someone who is connected to government officials, that you are doing that work. And not only doing the work of actual accessibility itself--making sure that there are ramps, or lifts, or ASL interpreters, or captioning, or what have you--but also the work of destigmatization, of teaching people. So that if I am going to a conference and I'm speaking, that I can lay down on the stage. And I can do that without gasps, or disgusted looks, or judgment. Because that is the path forward to liberation.

KANDI: Mmm. Thanks for naming that, Denarii. Anyone else?

LEANG: [voice interpreted by ASL interpreter Stephanie] Yeah, I do. I want to add more to that. Post-COVID now there are just so many more virtual events and content that are out there--which is amazing. And it's really great, because I do think it's a lot more accessible to a lot more people. It's very friendly. However, a lot of them are not providing access to those who are Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, or Hard of Hearing.

And we do see hearing organizations that will be like "oh okay yeah, great, let's get an interpreter, let's find a hearing interpreter!" Or hearing interpreters will be like "yeah!" taking advantage of those work opportunities, but not having these hearing organizations actually do their work and the assessments to see if these interpreters are qualified. And then you have the hearing interpreters who take advantage of those situations. And then when the Deaf community, when our community reaches out and says "you know, this person is not qualified," or "they're not producing quality work," we often get shut down. Because we are not being "grateful" for the "access" that they are providing. Even though they don't actually know what access truly looks like for us. This is our language, our community. And so that is not something for the able-bodied person to decide whether or not this is accessible to us or not.

So I think that's something that we need to take out, we need to unpack our own biases. We need to hear these people out--hear us out. And believe that when people with a

disability--the person with a disability--is like “Hey, this is not working for us. This is not accessibility.”

KANDI: Thank you Leang. Anyone else would like to add? On: “What does it mean to be a co-conspirator?”

ELLIOTT: This is Elliott. And apologies I didn’t do my image description earlier. I am a *Nike-hafu* (so, half Japanese) trans person with short brown hair, wearing a white T-shirt, and gold earrings, and a black and gold necklace. I think, particularly as someone who has lived experience in psychiatric institutionalization, and as someone who maybe can quote unquote (and I hate this term, but) “pass,” I think there’s also a way...and folks have already touched on this, and I think being able to hear Leroy and folks speak to the relationship to capitalism. But I think...like, I’m someone who loses time, for instance. I call it “losing time.” And, we’ve built a society where it is almost impossible--and it is a part of who I am and how I process the world. It is something that is a part of how I survived as a child and a young person. And I think that that should not be belittled. And I think that we need to think about time itself, and the expectations that we have that are grounded in a sense of normalcy, versus what each of us actually need to show up and be our best selves. And that’s not ever going to look the same for any two people. Disabled or not. [audio cuts out]

KANDI: Thank you, Elliott. It’s never going to look the same for two people. And, Jen, did you want to comment on this question?

JEN: Oh, since I spoke so much earlier, I thought I would just--

DENARII: [laughs]

JEN: --take a step back from the space so others could speak. [laughs]

KANDI: Aww, thank you for that. You are all so brilliant and so fierce, and I am learning so much here. So I really appreciate it.

The next question I would really like to ask you all is: disability justice organizers have always been on the frontlines in various ways--and some of you talked a little bit about this in different areas--and they have been building with their communities to keep each other safe. But what do you think is left out of that mainstream media or dominant narrative? What you want to lift up during these unprecedented times?

DENARII: I’m sorry, could you repeat the question?

KANDI: Okay. thank you. Disability justice organizers have always been on the front lines in various ways and have always been building in their communities, and with their committees, to keep each other safe. And some folks have mentioned mutual aid and other things. But what do you feel is left out of the mainstream media or dominant narratives? What do you want to lift up in these specific unprecedented times?

DENARII: I think, for me, I'm--this is Denarii speaking. I am connected, as comrade, as personal friends, as both [laughs] to so, so, so many disabled, chronically ill, Deaf, blind folks. You know, whether I am friends with them on Facebook, or work with them, or worked with them in the past. And I've learned--as you just said, Kandi--I learned so much from so many people.

And I have one friend who has a very unique--also multiply-disabled--has a very unique experience, who I learned from a lot. And they aren't an activist or a community organizer in the traditional sense, so I don't want to put their name out there without their consent. But one of the things that I've learned from them, that kind of came up for me as you were repeating the question, is the idea that things like mutual aid, you know, that kind of organizing, aren't necessarily accessible--ironically!--for everyone.

And, for me personally, the idea of the word "mutual" implies this reciprocal relationship that people can't always provide. And it's defined in a lot of different ways and it looks like a lot of different things, but I think that for a lot of people, there's this expectation that if you are receiving something, that you have to perform in some way for it. And that is, as far as I'm concerned, very much hanging onto ideas that we get from capitalism. You know, the idea that if you crowd fund to get your bills paid, you have to perform trauma, or you have to promise to do work for someone. You know, if you're in a vulnerable state, and someone offers their housing to you, then you are expected to do XYZ. And that's not always possible for people, and it also places a burden on people that I think is not only unfair, but also is often done in an oppressive and exploitive way. And so, I think when we think about things like mutual aid, we have to be very careful about what we are talking about and how we are structuring and organizing it, so that we aren't burdening people who aren't able to participate in one way or another or only have so much to offer. You know, sort of the saying of "to whom much is given much is required," and the more privilege that you have the more that you should be giving and doing, without an expectation that people with less privilege or less material things than you should be giving the same.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreters switch. Now interpreting is Suzanne. End description.]

KANDI: Thanks for breaking that down about mutual aids. Anyone want to add to that? Like, around the question around what was not lifted? And the mutual aid is something that especially since COVID-19 has emerged, and people started a lot of mutual aids. But does anyone have additional thoughts to that? Or just in general with the question?

LEROY: Yeah, I had thoughts. Leroy Moore here. I mean, it's kind of interesting that the US has a lack of memory. It really eats me up inside, because this mutual aid had been here since God knows when. Black Panthers had it, and of course the federal government took that program away. Here in Oakland, Poor Magazine has been doing--they don't call it "mutual aid," but they've been doing it for 20 years. And I think in emergency situations like this, Hurricane Katrina, Puerto Rico, we always go for the same cycle. And it's just getting sickening, you know.

You know the line from What Just Happened? "If we learn what just happened then we will protect our [inaudible] that we create from the ground up." It wasn't the media, it wasn't the government. Some of these mutual aids have been around and will keep on being around after COVID. The question is, are we going to support it? Are we just going to go back to the programs like, "Okay, can you help out more?"

And I'm not saying that mutual aid can take over what the federal government provides, because, hell, I'm on Section 8! [laughs] I'm on SSI. And I know that. But I also know that mutual aid that Poor Magazine does and that a lot of people do needs to stay in the community.

DENARII: Yes. Absolutely.

LEROY: It doesn't need to be a corporate foundation. It doesn't need a Forbes foundation grant, it needs to stay in the community. And people need to have long-term memories! [laughs wryly] Yeah.

KANDI: Mmm, thank you. I'm sorry, go ahead Jen.

JEN: So this is Jen speaking. I just wanted to apologize, I forgot to do my image description earlier. So I'm going to do that now, and then I'm going to answer the question. So, I am a white-coded Native. "White-coded" means that I appear white to the non-Native world. I have brown hair, it's pulled back. I'm wearing black cateye glasses, dangling earrings, gold, bronze, and black beaded necklace, and a black scoop neck shirt.

So, a lot of what I was thinking about saying when Denarii brought up mutual aid, both Denarii and Leroy hit the mark on a lot of it. I think that it's great that I see these mutual aid systems in place, but a lot of it I'm like--at least from a Native perspective--that's just stuff we already do for one another! [laughs] Like, obviously things are worse now so more people are stepping up, but we've always been there helping one another out. Chopping the wood and bringing it in for the elders or the people that weren't able to do it for themselves for whatever reason. Caregiving of all the children in the community. You know, so all of that work we were already doing. I think partially as Native people we did it because it's who we are, and it's part of our culture and our communities. But I think also we've had to do it too. Even if it wasn't something that we already sort of instinctually knew and learned from the ancestors, we'd still have to do it, because the system has left us behind! And I think you can see that in every community. I see it in the queer community is a queer person. I see it amongst the disability and Deaf and ill and mad communities. Like, I see that. It's amazing to me.

Just watching my Facebook, as people are having to raise funds to pay bills, it seems like it's the same $5, $10, $20 kind of bouncing back and forth between our people! And it's sad that it has to be that way. And it makes me really angry.

DENARII: Mhmm.

JEN: But I guess it also leaves me with a little bit of hope too. I want things to be better, that's why I do this work. But, some days I don't feel any sense of hope, I just feel sorrow and rage...and like everything I'm doing is just utterly pointless and "what is the point?" But then I get to see the work of my community members and the people that I share space with, my family, my friends, and that gives me hope. And I think we have to hang on to hope and faith if we're going to be able to do this work. Yeah.

KANDI: Mmm! Thank you for that, Jen. I'm with you with the anger and the rage and the sadness and still holding onto that hope.

Well, I'm looking at the time--and I know time is a construct, but I also want to make sure we give love and care to Leang. Unless there's any other pressing thoughts. Does anyone have any pressing thoughts to share? Okay. I just wanted to make sure before we move on.

Well, I would like to bring back Leang, who I'm very proud is part of our People's Collective for Justice and Liberation, to share closing words with all of us here today. Leang?

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [ASL interpreter Suzanne's camera is turned off. The screen is black and displays white text that reads: ASL Interpreter - Suzanne. End description.]

LEANG: [voice interpreted by ASL interpreter Stephanie] Hi everybody. I'm truly humbled to be part of this dialogue today. And I feel like we've already witnessed just how ableism affects disabled folks. And, also, the disabled community is so diverse. And only a very small portion of our community is being represented here on this amazing panel. We have Jen Deerinwater, Elliott, Denarii, Leroy, DJ Kuttin Kandi--

SUZANNE: I'm sorry, can we spotlight Leang?

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Leang's video feed is displayed on the full screen. End description.]

LEANG: --and so, I just want to make a comment. Ah...sorry, excuse me.

So, just what Jen had commented earlier, I really wanted to make sure that got re-emphasized, and how society perceives equal rights and how we really need to have a paradigm shift. We are asking society to dismantle what it has always been designed for...which is for hearing, white, straight, able-bodied, wealthy people. And we need to redesign it to be inclusive for all of us. For those of us who are disabled, for those of us in the LGBTQIA community, the BIPOC community, for poor folks.

And what we are asking for is basic human rights, right? Our basic human rights, though, look different from what other people might experience--or able-bodied experience. The way we access every information, how we get to and from work, how we use transportation, what schooling looks like for us, the way we eat, use the restroom, etc.

So let's talk about how this impacts particularly the disabled BIPOC community. Like, particularly in relation to our work. You know, we do have a lot of people in our BIPOC community who are not getting access right now. And me, as a Deaf Khmerican, like, I also need to look at how I can decolonize myself as well. How can I decolonize? How can I self-actualize in my own cultural identity and mobilize with you to dismantle the system? But how can I do that if you are excluding me?

So, as we all know, white supremacy is really rooted in capitalism. And you might be asking yourself "what does capitalism have to do with disability?" Well, capitalism doesn't see the value in accommodation accessibility for disabled folks unless there's a

profit to be made from it. For example, the Deaf community. Within the Deaf community, capitalism sees profits in something like a cochlear implant. Because that is part of the stock market. And it gets marketed as a cure. And that basically makes a lot of money for those benefactors. And a majority of the benefactors of capitalism, as we know, are white. Right? And this is how the white supremacy system continues to be wealthy.

Money that we actually need to be spent on accommodations for accessibility like close captioning, ASL interpreters, there's no profit that the benefactors will see from this. So then because of that, it turns accessibility into an additional burden. And that is the mindset of our society. Right? We spend money on sound equipment, for example, the sound system for movie theaters, like construction for free ways to reduce the noise for nearby residents. That's all considered a necessity. And the way that we look at accessibility for Deaf folks--that's considered an additional burden because society is not designed for disabled folks in mind. We were not part of that original design plan. And so, when society was first founded, that was not part of the original design, so therefore we have been considered an additional burden. And that is the paradigm we need to shift.

And so, I wanted to intertwine how capitalism and white supremacy is correlated. And when we ignore disability justice, we are continuing to internalize and reinforce white supremacy.

So if we take care of the hardest aspect of accessibility, which is foundation building, that will automatically scaffold up to higher levels. And if we choose to ignore that foundation, we are only creating barriers. And there are many barriers that are being put up. Those for the LGBTQIA community, the BIPOC community. It causes classism, ableism. When you look at xenophobia, and genderism, and so forth. So that foundation needs to have a strong structure so that we can make sure and ensuring that we are not creating these future barriers. And by not providing accessibility in our movements, you're basically causing cracks in our foundation. And once you've got those cracks in the foundation, it's going to cause us all to crumble down. So if we are to mobilize the movement and prioritize accessibility for all, we will become stronger and we can shift the world!

So if we take a look at history, we have the civil rights movement, we have the 504 protests during the late 70s, we had ADA in the 90s. And can we say, "oh yeah, the work is done"? No! No, we know it's going to take years. We've had these movements for decades, but the work is still going on. The world has evolved. Technology has advanced. So much of that information in our history is outdated. And we know that the

institutional system that was set centuries ago is old, which means there is more work to do.

We can't be liberated...and like Leroy said, we can't be radical unless we acknowledge that there are multiple layered issues. We need to be committed to be receptive to any issues that are outside of our own lived experience. And we need to continue to have the desire to grow and change.
[smiles, looking at computer screen]

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Screen share changes to video feed of ASL interpreter Stephanie. End description.]

KANDI: Wow, thank you so much Leang. Truly, truly inspired by everyone here today that really brought a lot of insight and guidance in our organizing work and wants to come and beyond.

Now we will get into learning some of the ways we can get involved. Much has been recommended by our presenters today.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Screen share displays a slide, video feed of ASL interpreter Stephanie is reduced to the upper right corner of the screen. Displayed slide is titled: Closing Speaker. Slide displays a photo of Leang Ngov with the text: Leang Ngov, People's Collective for Justice & Liberation, Accessibility Coordinator, (she/her/hers), Twitter: @pursuitofreroot, Instagram: @the_pursuit_of_reroot. The slide changes after a moment. New slide is white background with black text and it is titled: Action Items. A bulleted list reads: Do an accessibility audit at your organization; hire disabled people to do it. Invest in Black and Native peoples directly. Build a safety plan. End description.]

KANDI: For our action items recommended by our presenters is (1) do an accessibility audit at your organization; hire disabled people to do it. Invest in Black and Native peoples directly. And, build a safety plan.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with black text, it is titled: Upcoming Events. Below the title is the text: September 10: #BuildingSolidarity Racism is a Virus, Too: Youth Organizing to Build Cross-Racial Solidarity and Redefine Safety During a Global Pandemic. September 26: #BuildingSolidarity Election 2020. End description.]

GREGORY: Okay, awesome. Thank you Kandi. And thank you again for moderating the panel. And to all of the speakers: thank you for sharing your experiences, bringing your full selves into the space, and helping us unpack how we combat ableism and center disability justice.

I wanted to share a little bit about some of our upcoming events. Look out for more information on September 10. We will be doing a building solidarity town hall with youth organizers who are going to talk about building cross racial solidarity, redefining safety during a global pandemic. And then on September 26 we will do a building solidarity town hall on the election! Since a lot of folks are talking about that. Next slide please.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with a poster. It is titled: Visit our website. The poster is a large black rectangle with a URL in large all caps: PEOPLESCOLLECTIVE4JL.ORG. The upper right of the poster is the People's Collective logo. The left side of the poster is a greyscale screenshot of the Zoom meeting for the first town hall. Below the URL is the text: organize, agitate, politicize and build solidarity in the era of covid-19. End description.]

GREGORY: We want to encourage folks to visit our newly updated website. And the website is www.peoplescollective4JL.org. So please, please, please, please take a chance to look at that.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with black text and it is titled: Resources. A bulleted list reads:
10 Principles of Disability Justice:
https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice.
Disability COVID19 Resources:
https://www.aclu.org/fact-sheet/covid-19-disability-resources.
Disability Visibility Project: https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/.
18 Million Rising: www.18millionrising.org (healing justice series!).
Follow Black and Native journalists, culture creators, thinkers, and changemakers on Twitter: Denarii Grace, Jen Deerinwater, Vilissa Thompson, Bree Newsome, @DaShaunLH, Adrienne Keene, @dearnonnatives, @kimtallbear, Wagatwe Wanjuki, @AngryBlackN8V, @tayhowsway, @johhniejae, @catch22fiction, @IWriteAllDay_, @itswalela, @4WheelWorkOut, @Imani_Barbarin. End description.]

GREGORY: Great. In terms of resources, Kandi, would you like to talk about the resources?

KANDI: Sure. So, we always like to share resources here that many of our presenters have shared in the past as well as our current presenters. We'd like to lift up again the 10 Principles of Disability Justice which Leroy shared with us a few months back. Here's also a list of disability COVID-19 resources, including Disability Visibility Project by a very good friend of ours, Alice Wong. And then 18 Million Rising who has a healing justice series, so make sure you visit their website at www.18millionrising.org. And then we also would love for you to visit and follow our Black and Native journalists, culture creators, thinkers, and changemakers on Twitter. All of them are listed here: Denarii Grace, Jen Deerinwater, Vilissa Thomphson, Bree Newsome.

Earlier today throughout the whole duration, people shared some of their @ social media handles, so hopefully you can follow some of our guests here today as well. Including these additional recommendations.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with black text and it is titled: Resources. A bulleted list reads:
Sins Invalid: https://www.sinsinvalid.org.
Disability Justice Culture Club: https://www.facebook.com/disabilityjusticeculturecclub.
Mirror Memoirs: www.mirrormemoirs.com.
Peacock Rebellion: https://www.peacockrebellion.org.
Fat Rose: https://fatrose.org.
Fat Lib Ink: https://fatlibink.org/.
Crip Camp: https://cripcamp.com.
Black deaf center: https://www.blackdeafcenter.com/?fbclid=IwARitwFOZBITeb3ZBKIIL-2nHLxU42O0SEgTcVF5_zyAsfXWjAGtK9Lv_CQ.
Deaf Queer: https://www.deafqueer.org.
HEARD: https://behearddc.org.
Finish Eat? https://www.facebook.com/FINISHEAT.
Council de Manos: www.councildemanos.org.
End description.]

And here are some additional resources that you can check out, including: the Disability Justice Culture Club and Sins Invalid website, as well Mirror Memoirs, www.peacockebellion.org, www.mirrormemoirs.com, www.fatrose.org, www.fatlibink.com, www.cripcamp.com, and www.blackdeafcenter.com as well as www.deafqueer.org, www.beheardDC.org. And you can also visit Finish Eat? under the Facebook URL and www.councildemanos.org.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes, new slide is a white background with black text and it is titled: Evaluation. Below the title, the text reads: Please complete it here: bit.ly/CombatingAbleismSurvey. End description.]

GREGORY: Awesome. Thank you, Kandi, for those resources. Now, I want to direct your attention to the evaluation form. We will also drop in the chat as well. Please complete it. It's bit.ly/CombatingAbleismSurvey. And it is case-sensitive. So please make sure to complete the form. It will also pop up at the end of this webinar, and a link will also come as a follow-up if you registered to watch this as well. We do read all of the feedback and it helps inform our ongoing planning of town halls and all of the different programming that we host as the People's Collective. Again, we will make sure to drop that into the chat, the link to the evaluation form. And please take the time to do it.

And then, next slide please.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is a white background with black text and an image. The slide is titled: Illustration (Work-in-Progress) and the text reads: With love, @angeltrazo. The image is a work in progress for the graphic facilitation of this webinar. On a light blue background, there are partially completed illustrations of the speakers' heads, with their names and contact info underneath them. At the top of the image is the title of the event. Beside the heads is text depicting key quotes. End description.]

GREGORY: So, as mentioned, Angel tries so is our graphic facilitator. This is a work in progress, so please don't take a screenshot. We will share a final version on our social media. But this is the initial take at the graphic recording. And we will finalize and share that with folks. And thank you so much Angel for your continued craft and what you are able to bring to the People's Collective space.

And then, next slide please.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Slide changes. New slide is white background with black text and it is titled: Contact. Below the title, the text reads: Gregory Cendana: IG/Twitter: @gregorycendana, @cswsconsulting. Kuttin Kandi: IG @DJKuttinKandi | Twitter: @KuttinKandi, @AsianSolidarityCollective. Learn about and meet members of The People's Collective for Justice and Liberation Organizing Committee and Advisory Council: https://peoplescollective4jl.about. End description.]

GREGORY: And so, Kandi and I's information on Instagram and Twitter, please feel free to connect with us here.

We also wanted to flag for our website again. Last week, we formally announced members of our Organizing Committee and Advisory Council and along with the Bulosan Center, which houses the Asian American Studies department at the University of California Davis, we founded or started the University for Justice and Liberation. And list our Advisory Committee for that as well. There are many folks that are part of and are connected to the People's Collective and we are grateful for the folks who are sharing space with us, continue to guide our work, and lead the different programming and pieces forward. So please check it out at www.peoplescollective4JL.org/about.

And just wanted to say one more time: thank you everyone who joined us on Zoom or on any of our multiple platforms, or who are even going to watch this recording after the fact. Another reminder to please fill out the evaluation and that we do read all of the feedback. We are glad that you spent time with us to talk about how we are combating ableism and centering disability justice. And a reminder that together, we can really push for our dreams of liberation to fruition while we fight racism, while we fight to protect our democracy, and build transformative cross racial solidarity with other communities of color and other marginalized peoples. Kandi, I'm going to pass it to you for any last words were closing statements that you may have.

CONTENT DESCRIPTION: [Screenshare stops displaying a slide. Video feed of ASL interpreter Stephanie takes up the entire screen. End description.]

KANDI: Just deeply honored to share space with all of you as you shared your stories, experiences, and brilliancy. I'm definitely honored to have moderated the conversation as well. And continuing to learn, and build, and grow, and combat ableism and centering disability justice.

Again, thank you to all of our sponsors and organizations, our panelists, all the attendees, ASL interpreters, our captioners, and our whole organizing committee as well. So we will see you all in the next month and we look forward to continuing to learn and build. See you all next time!

[End of event recording.]