

The Henceforward Episode 19

Policing Black Lives Interview with Robyn Maynard

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Eve: Aang aang. This is Eve Tuck and this is The Henceforward, a podcast about connections between Indigenous and Black life on Turtle Island. Here we come to the table to discuss settler colonialism and anti-blackness, but more to imagine shared futures and the practices of theory and care that it will take to get there, to get elsewhere.

Danielle: Today, we are with Robyn Maynard, author of the newly released book, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*. Welcome.

Robyn: Thank you for having me on the show.

Danielle: It's a pleasure to have you.

Sefanit: It was really important to us to start by just thanking you for the work that you do in this book, the work you do to uncover and narrate little known and sometimes, entirely unknown stories of Blackness here in Canada. In your introduction, you explained that your book examines state sanctioned violence enacted on Black peoples and you mean that quite broadly, beyond just the institution of policing. And each chapter interrogates different structures or institutions that historically and continuously enact violence on Black people, from the child welfare system, to immigration policy, to the education systems, to prisons and, of course, much more.

The breadth and the care that you move through these conversations was both beautiful and also heart-wrenching to read. So thank you for your work.

Robyn: Thank you.

Danielle: Thank you very much. To begin, first of all, can you please explain to us what prompted you to write this book? And what do you set out it to be? I mean what do you want us to do with it?

Robyn: Okay. Well, I think what I was really setting out to do with the book was really -- almost, it was like a very personal project because myself, I really come from a background of activism within the Black community, within community organizing within struggles against racial profiling, against police violence, against police impunity. And it was almost really meant as I started to educate myself around this longstanding history of anti-blackness that was helping me, really, to address this better within my own organizing. I was realizing actually how little information, as Black people in Canada, we actually had in terms of access to the conditions that have actually shaped and constructed and combined our lives here.

So I think especially in this moment where we're really coming into an increased visibility surrounding, for example, the international media attention to the killings of Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, I think we're really in this moment of renewed urgency in terms of really looking at not only are we facing a crisis of Black populations now but actually realizing that this crisis has longstanding roots.

But what I realized is that in Canada, we did not necessarily -- we've really been systematically denied access to understanding the longstanding history of anti-blackness in Canada. For example, in elementary school and in high school, I feel like we all become very well-versed in the horrible institution of slavery in the United States and the role that Canada played in the Underground Railroad as a sort of alternative history, right? And we look at anti-black racism in particular as something that has evolved from a very American perspective.

And I mean our news cycles recreate that constantly. The deaths of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, for example, are just like regularly exposed to but we were not having the same kind of attention to the police killings of Black people in Canada. And Black people, according to one study are actually ten times more likely to be killed by the police than white civilians.

So what I was realizing was that because we've really been denied this history and understanding this historical context of what we're looking at, it was a lot easier for the conditions that we're facing -- and really harming and enacting violence against our lives -- to be made invisible. So what I was trying to do was trace the contemporary crisis that's facing Black populations in terms of policing, in terms of incarceration, in terms of really disproportionate separation from our families, from our children in the child welfare system, in terms of the school to prison pipeline and looking at, really, the long institutional history that has gotten us there that very much began with the 200 years of chattel slavery as it was practiced in Canada.

I think it was really necessary for me to look at how actually the pathologization of Black people, the criminalization of Black people, the surveillance over our movements, the control and separation of our families that was actually undertaken in the practice of slavery has very much carried forward into the present day. So I was almost really trying to resurrect how the past has shaped the present so that we would actually be, for myself -- and I really wanted to then make this more publicly available so we'd better be able to contest what's happening today and to intervene in what's happening today. So it's very much an outgrowth of the kind of activism that I've always been involved. It was really just to help create what I felt was a missing framework in some ways.

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Though I want to be clear. I think it's also important to note that I say missing because this has actually been erased, right? I spoke about this yesterday at the book launch, but very much so, I mean the work of Black slavery scholars like Charmaine Nelson, like Harvey Amani Whitfield, and so carefully going into the archives of pulling out long and detailed and brilliant histories, for example, of slavery in Canada, right? The work of Barrington Walker has so, in such a nuanced way, looked at the history of legal racism against Black people in Ontario, for example, in the 20th century.

So these are actually histories that have been erased, that we've been denied to, even though people that are still living today have actually put so much work into resurrecting this. So it's not as if, for example, the history of slavery is untold in Canada. It's that it's not being told to us and we are being denied access to that knowledge. And being denied access to that knowledge is actually really inhibiting our ability to understand our own conditions. So to me, it's like a very political act to be resurrecting these histories.

Sefanit: Totally. Yeah. Thank you. Your book also does a lot to consider this shared in different ways that state sanctioned violence impacts Indigenous and Black peoples and Indigenous and Black life. So can you speak to some of those relationships that you consider in the book?

Robyn: Definitely. I mean I think, really, in any sort of investigation into state violence in a settler society, in a settler state like Canada, if you look at really the foundational nature of the Canadian state as violent and as violent in a racist way in terms of, really, anti-blackness, for example, even when slavery was abolished, you can really see anti-blackness being structured into the very essence of policing of the segregated schooling system that was instituted throughout so much of the country in terms of the fact that children of so-called negroid blood were considered non-adoptable by child welfare agencies.

So anti-blackness was really foundational to the development of many state institutions. But we're really completing an incomplete picture if we don't look at how those same institutions have always been a part of continuing genocide and forced assimilation of Indigenous populations, right? So you can't really look at a history of the anti-blackness in the child welfare agencies without also saying child welfare agencies have always been a part of destroying Indigenous autonomous ways of life, right?

And if you want to look at the example of anti-blackness being foundational to schools without looking at the history of residential schools, for example, that have always been, again, a part of a project of genocide, then we're really missing an essential feature of how state violence -- and really just the creation of state institutions has actually carried forward.

So for me, it was very important, looking at, actually, the relationships of those two forms of violence that have really been explicitly targeted against our communities -- not always in the same way. Segregated schooling was not the same thing as residential schools. There are some good comparisons to be made possibly between, for example, like the Nova Scotia Home for Color Children, which really was a segregated child welfare agency in Nova Scotia and the treatment of Indigenous, like the Sixties Scoop and the separating of Indigenous families. But they're not identical, right?

So I think it's very important to look at the very different process of what it means to be trying to eradicate a population in order to take the land and really being in attack of people's fundamental ways of life and relationships to land. Whereas Black peoples, we don't have that same relationship to land because we've been forcibly displaced, whether that's as enslaved populations into Canada or so many of Black Canadians are actually from the Caribbean who, again, have also been forcibly displaced from the continent of Africa. So we have these long histories of displacement and landlessness.

But at the same time, the Canadian project that really saw Black people as property has really carried forward this notion of Black criminality and dehumanizing Black populations into the present day. So that leads us to like there are many similarities again, even in the present, right? If you look at prisons, for example, those are both places that, today, hold longstanding legacies of anti-blackness and continue to recreate those, right?

But can you look at the fact that Black populations are three times more likely – or, sorry, are incarcerated at a rate of three times higher than our percentage in the population? Of course, prisons also are filled with massive populations of Indigenous peoples, right? And if you look at the kind of violence that, for example, Black women have experienced in prison, in terms of, according to one report, sexual assault, being forced to do really difficult labor when pregnant, there's also similarly the high rate of – what is it -- solitary confinement being enacted, really disproportionately, again, against both Indigenous and Black populations. So there are sort of different logics that are underlying the punishments of our different communities. Those punishments are often, but not always, quite similar and have many overlaps.

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Danielle: Can you elaborate on the ways of violence is done towards Black people is deliberate, Black Canadians?

Robyn: I mean I think even just going back to that point of erasure. I think that it's impossible not to see the erasure of our histories under Canada's history of anti-blackness as not very, very, very, very much so deliberate. There are choices that are consistently made over and over, for example, in the creation of curriculums to

continue to negate the experiences and the state's responsibility in the experiences of Black folks in Canada.

I think, also, there's also this sort of innocence. I feel like the United Nation's report that came out very recently is often positive. Like Katherine McKittrick talks about Blackness being a surprise. I think that, often, anti-blackness is very much seen as if it's surprising, right, like as if we've somehow only heard about this for the first time, like the carding crisis is supposedly revealing something very new.

But if you actually look back, I mean, to Frances Henry's investigation into racial profiling and police stops that was released in 1994, it's saying almost the exact same thing that we're seeing in reports today. Then we have the Ontario report into systemic racism that came out in 1995 talking about the over-incarceration of Black populations and discrimination, really, all the way through the criminal justice system.

So when we act as if, all of a sudden, the conditions facing Black communities today are surprising, again, that's really a negation of history. And it's very deliberate to seem surprised and to fabricate this curated innocence. We know that these have really been state sanctioned forms of violence that have been enacted on Black communities.

I mean it was also an erasure of Black activism, right? If you look to even the 1970s and the 1980s, Black activists in the Black Action Defense Committee, for example, in Toronto have been naming police violence against Black communities, against Black men and Black women for decades. So when we talk about, "Oh, Black Lives Matter have suddenly brought this into the forefront," I mean I really want to give credit to the amazing and thoughtful and caring work of the Black Lives Matter movement to draw attention to these issues today, but it's really inaccurate to say that they are the first young Black activists to bring this to the forefront, right?

So we've been addressing deliberate state violence, police violence against our communities that has been unchecked and subject to really no meaningful intervention by the state not only dating back to the '80s, but really dating back 400 years, right?

Sefanit: Yes. Thank you. In chapter four of your book, you focused on law enforcement against Black women. And chapter five is a discussion of misogyny war and the Canadian state. I found this particularly impactful, the way that you carved out space for Black women, their names and how state sanctioned violence targets them specifically.

In Toronto this October, we also know that there is the Walking With Our Sisters installation happening, which is a commemorative art installation of thousands of moccasin vamps honoring missing and murdered Indigenous women across Turtle Island. In many ways, this installation displays a grave injustice of violence that

happens against Indigenous women, children and two-spirit peoples at the hands of the state. So I was wondering if you could discuss this a bit more about the importance of naming the violence towards Black Indigenous women, queer folk, trans people, two-spirit peoples in Canada specifically?

Robyn: Sure. This felt very important for me to do in the context of this book. I feel like there's so much. Especially when you talk about policing and state violence in particular, it's so much imagined to be something often. The popular imaginary even within Black communities, sometimes, that only impacts Black men is seen as a kind of gendered violence that really is disproportionately affecting Black men.

But I think that we can only really continue perpetuating that belief if we're actually completely ignoring the longstanding forms of oppression of Black women and gender nonconforming people that actually, again, dates back to the history of slavery when, of course, Black and slave women were also experiencing sexual violence and many other forms of violence and are certainly have never been exempt from state violence, right? And I think this also really allows us to not see the many different forms of state violence that actually Black women and gender oppressed people are exposed to, right?

I think that if we only look at the prototypical kind of state violence as like the police officer on the street, we're not looking at all the forms in terms of like social services, the surveillance and the power that, for example, social workers have for Black women's lives, we're really missing an important feature of like, "What is racial profiling actually? And how much power does the state actually have not only to stop us in the street but to actually come into our homes to monitor what we have in our pantries, to take away children because there's rice and beans," right?

So I think that we're really missing a certain kind of racial violence that's very much being targeted against Black women. So not only is it ethically necessary, but it's just something that we actually need to be accurate if we want to talk about anti-black racism, really. And I think that what my work was trying to do here was very consciously look at, actually, the work of Black feminists in Canada that have been so carefully and so attentively naming the names and telling the stories of Black women through this beautiful Black feminist historiography that's always been really in response to this eraser of our experiences.

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I was so inspired by the book, *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up*. It was put together by Afua Cooper, Sylvia Hamilton, Dionne Brand, Linda Carty and others. And it's just this beautiful book that's really resuscitating not only the oppression that Black women are facing at the hands of the state but the ways that they responded to that. It's such a very difficult work to do that, again, because we know that the archives have so much repressed the experiences of Black woman.

So I was very much inspired by that, inspired by the work of Makeda Silvera in her work *Silenced* that really, again, took the great care to talk to Black domestic workers and what these women had actually experienced and the kind of oppression they had faced and the way that they also managed to still circumvent the exploitation that they're facing, the sexual violence that they're facing in white homes.

And also just the oral histories that have been collected, for example, by Dionne Brand. So I feel like we have a lot of -- we often learn in university, for example, our Black feminism comes from the United States. And that work is also so important and so formative to me. But if we look really at the longstanding Black work of Black feminists in Canada, I think, really, I was trying to carry forward that tradition of naming the names and telling the stories of what Black women were being exposed to today.

So what I was trying to do when I was talking about the case of the killing of Chevranna Abdi or just horrific violence and sometimes sexual violence experienced by Stacy Bonds, Jacqueline Nassiah, et cetera, I was really just trying to make sure that these kinds of gendered violence didn't -- just to make it impossible that we would not see them and that we would not look at even though there's been so little study into the experiences of Black women that we don't have these larger empirical bodies of knowledge to draw on that that doesn't mean that we're going to just continue this erasure just because our experiences are being ignored. So I really wanted to just really be attentive to the value of our lives and to really making that value impossible to overlook.

I was talking actually with Andrea Ritchie, who's the author of *Invisible No More*. She was talking about this book and she said something that I really appreciated where she was like, "Oh, you actually -- this book is called *Policing Black Lives*. So people who aren't necessarily feminist at all will be expecting to read this book about policing and I just assume that it will be about males." And she was like, "Oh, you snuck in this feminist angle."

And I think that I love that way of thinking about it because I think that, yes, the title says *Policing Black Lives*; one could imply that this is only a book about the more traditional way that we think about policing. But I think what I'm trying to do is actually force the readers to engage with an expansive version of policing and an expansive version of state violence that does not allow us to ignore how intrusive and how violent it is, for example, for child welfare agents to actually be able to come into our homes and take away our children just because of an anonymous phone call or because of, again, like I said, rice and beans in the pantry, right?

I think that we need to work and really expand the way that we talk about surveillance, the way that we talk about profiling and the way that we actually conceive of violence and harm.

Sefanit: Yeah. That was one of the things I immediately appreciated about the book in the sense of being like, “Okay. There's two chapters that are speaking to this.” And it was wonderful to see because I think you're doing exactly that. You're making it impossible to overlook this. You're saying, “This is integral part of this conversation of policing Black lives.”

And I know one things you spoke to at the launch also is the way that surveillance operates at the private level, rather than we just -- we imagine racial violence in very public spaces but thinking about it specifically for Black women at the private level, which I also think was an amazing discussion that you brought forward.

Robyn: Thank you. Yeah. I feel like that was really inspired by the works of Simone Brown, who was, again, drawing off the work of Patricia Hill Collins, who have really argued that some of the most foundational and historical lineage of racial profiling can really stand back to the constant scrutiny that actually Black women working as domestics enslaved people are facing, right? Because it's often seen as a more benign form of slavery because you're in the house, but it doesn't talk about then your vulnerability to violence that goes completely unseen and the fact that your movements are constantly being monitored.

And that's something that goes forward, I mean, if you look at the way that Caribbean domestic workers were also, again, being so closely monitored by the white women that were actually in charge of them and could have them deported really for standing up for themselves or for anything, right? So I think that we need to really look at this kind of racialized scrutiny in a different way. And there are many different lineages that also could include very much the private spaces and the so-called private realm. Because Black women have never actually -- especially poor Black women don't actually have access to what's considered privacy because our homes can be entered without warrants for so many different reasons, right?

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Danielle: Thank you very much. As Black women, there are nuanced microaggression that we experience. So in what way does Canada notion of safe haven that you mentioned earlier as well contribute to the injustice towards Black people?

Robyn: Sure. I mean in the book, I really tried to point out how Canada's creation of itself as a safe haven is something that has always been -- it's very curated because it's something that has always really purposely excluded the ongoing injustices that have been actually perpetuated, whether formally or informally, against Black populations.

So I think even if you look back to the era of the Underground Railroad, which is often there that we really celebrate Black enslaved Americans were fleeing racial violence supposedly to find liberation here, we don't look at what are the conditions actually that Black people found when they arrived. So you have this moment that,

historically, is represented as Canada's beginning of this longstanding safe haven. But we don't look to the fact that schools in Canada, Western Ontario were actually legally segregated at that time.

And what does that segregation mean? About the humanity that was not attributed to Black people. If you look at the informal sundown laws that meant that Black people were not actually able to be in certain towns after dark, Dionne Brand's work actually really resurrects women talking about how they have to be walking miles and miles home afterwards because they were not actually allowed to live in the places that they worked, right?

So I think that we don't talk about the fact that while constituting itself as a refuge, Canada has also often maybe more quietly replicated very similar forms of dehumanization and of injustice and really devaluation of Black people's lives. And I think the fact that -- I think there's so many different moments that we can look to, really, across Canadian history that speak to that, even if you want to look really bringing us to the present day, again, when Canada is really looking at itself as a safe haven compared to, for example, Donald Trump. But if we still have Black people that are being placed in immigration detention for a decade at a time, if we have Black people that are being killed by the police that are also dying in immigration jails, then what kind of safe haven is this really, right?

I think that what we have is that Canada has always had more of a commitment to an outward benevolence and representation of tolerance. That itself is very Canadian, but if that's really been created in order to hide the ongoing realities that we're actually facing today and the ongoing as well genocide and ongoing land theft being directed at Indigenous peoples, then I think that we really just need to understand it as a different kind and a different iteration of white supremacy rather than being somehow less implicated in these policies. It's really just a different kind of development of that white supremacy, which is one that actually hides reality as opposed to just virulently defending a white social order, right? But there are just many different ways of controlling populations that you do not do equal or even human.

Danielle: Yes. Thank you. In your book, you often talk about the notion of invisibility and the fact that we have been erased from Canadian history, from Black locations and Black location has been destroyed. So why is invisibility of Black Canadian important to the state?

Robyn: I think that the invisibility of Black life in Canada is something that has helped preserve what we were just speaking about, which is, again, this image of tolerance. Because I feel like once you have the visibility of Black folks in Canada and you have the visibility of the history of slavery, then it totally disturbs and disrupts and really overthrows the entire narrative, really the entire Canadian timeline of the Underground Railroad to the present, right?

If you actually start it from slavery, if you go back to the 30 years before the Underground Railroad to legalize slavery in Canada, you have a very different trajectory. So I think it's really only possible for the Canadian projection of being the longstanding multicultural nation because that projection is only really possible if you actually deny both Black history and Black realities.

Danielle: Yeah. Thank you.

Sefanit: In many ways, your book is a discussion of violence and a constant persistent devaluing of Black life. You've been hosting those conversations. You are not dismissing Black refusal, resistance and creativity.

Robyn: Hell no.

Sefanit: No? I know that. In an attempt to shift away from violence, I want to ask about your imaginings of Black life beyond anti-blackness and settler colonialism and what that might consist of. I know this is a big question, but I don't know if it's helpful for you to think about it in the different specific systems you named in the book. So thinking through like what does imagining of Black lives could look like in the education system or what have you, but I thought it would be nice to explore imaginings.

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Robyn: Yeah, definitely. I think that we have to maintain just our ability to have – like really maintain our ability to continue to imagine our lives outside of the conditions that we face. It's what has really gotten Black folks through these last four centuries, really, since that has really helped those of us who have survived enslavement and the generational violence that have been inflicted on us since then.

I think it's really this imagination and this belief that other kinds of worlds are possible and will always be possible as well. That really is what keeps us going, right? So I think that's a really important question. For me, that's also why it was important to pull out all these resistant histories, even those that were not considered straightforward activism, right?

I think that one way that I really like to think about what that would look like has really been inspired by the works of Angela Davis, for example, when we think about what does it mean to struggle for abolition today, right? Because if we're looking at the fact that even though slavery, as a formal system of Black subjugation, has been abolished, but if the state really has, in so many ways, reinstated Black subjugation, what does it mean then to talk about abolition today when we're talking about the abolition of systemic violences, right?

I think if you look at, for example, the institution of policing, which has, in Canada, always been something that has been both explicitly targeting Indigenous

populations like in terms of the role of RCMP in calling Indigenous rebellion and also very much targeting Black populations for arrests and incarceration, so what would it look like to actually imagine a world in which we do not actually have? Not only that which police are wearing somehow body cameras and this changes the institution entirely because, again, this institution has been so historically foundationally racist.

But I think we really just need to look at maybe abolition actually means that we look at what it would mean to abolish this form of social and racial control in our society and what would it look like to actually invest differently and in different kinds of justice that are actually transformative rather than punitive and violent for our communities.

And I do think that when we talk about abolition and really the abolition of all of the afterlives of slavery in a country like Canada that's a settler colony, it's necessarily, again, really bringing us to what -- the Indigenous land struggles of today as well because I think that we can't really talk about the abolition of anti-black violence in a place in which we are still on the lands of people that are continually also being displaced and having their lands under attack. So I think we really necessarily, again, need to look at supporting as well the decolonization struggles of Indigenous communities, really, across these lands today. And I think that those two are really fundamentally actually tied together if we want to talk about what racial justice could look like.

So I think, yeah, there are so many different ways that I think we need to -- I think that the crisis has so much foundational. Just so much of our society is structured that I do think that truly radical transformative change would be necessary if we want to talk about any actualizing Black freedom in any sort of real way. But I think that, again, it's really keeping that imagination that reminds us that many things that have been considered unimaginable have also been done. Sometimes, you don't necessarily see the end of that struggle within your own lifetime, but still seeing ourselves as part of a longer emancipatory project that we're carrying on from our ancestors who freed themselves from slavery.

Danielle: We were talking earlier. You mentioned about the United Nation. And the United Nations Human Rights Council says Canada should apologize and pay for reparations of slavery and other forms of anti-black racism. We know that in the past, there was the same declaration done for Indigenous people. What do you think about that? What does the anti-racism reforms represent at the national level, the provincial? And especially because now, we have -- at the provincial and the municipal level, we have reforms and strategies or campaigns that are being placed. So what do you think about that? Do you think that it's a short term reform strategy?

Robyn: I think that historically, we actually have a lot to learn from the ways that you were mentioning exactly, the ways that more recently, many violence against Indigenous communities have been recognized by the state. I think that much of symbolism is

important in some ways. And recognition of past harm is, of course, important and even just necessary for any of our dignities as a people to actually have a real history versus one that's been manufactured.

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But I do think that we need to be very careful of allowing sort of symbolism and recognition of past injustices stand in for an actual committed change to actually addressing systemic issues in the present. For example, Justin Trudeau talks about himself as a friend to Indigenous populations and communities in a post-Truth and Reconciliation era. But I mean you actually still have the federal government refusing to pay equal funding into Indigenous child welfare agencies.

So in an era of supposed recognition, if you don't actually have that followed up with a firm actual commitment to not only recognizing the past but to actively undoing the harms in the present, then I think that, again, it's really just this tokenistic way of almost just trying to contain dissent, right? So I think that if we think about what that means for at the federal level, for there to be some acknowledgement, for example, of the historic injustices committed against Black peoples, now, certainly, I think that, again, any kind of increased visibility is not harmful for us.

And I think it is important for what our ancestors have been subjected to to be recognized. But I do think that we should be wary of believing that that necessarily means that we're going to see a transformation, for example, in these institutions that have been – they are still doing so much harm against us, right? What does it mean to institute an anti-black policing policy if police are so out to kill our communities with impunity, right? So if our rights are recognized but it doesn't actually include the right to be alive or to be free from or safe from violence, then I think that's where we realize that we're not necessarily moving forward in a way that the government is leading us to believe.

I think Canada, in particular, has a long history of apology and of recognizing past harms, again, because of this commitment to the outward appearance of benevolence. So I think that it's always, especially in the Canadian context, very important that we do not let that distract us from the real work that needs to be done.

Danielle: Exactly. I just think that the notion of reparation is so broad. Also, people think that a reparation is only an apology. But in my opinion, it involves action as well that needs to be taken in order to correct mistakes of the past, present and future.

Robyn: Absolutely. And that involves not only paying some kind of token gesture to different individuals and then considering it done, right? That actually means totally reinvesting the ways that even our society is funded, the ways that Black communities have been systematically impoverished. You can't really have a one-

off payment that can somehow just redress all of those wrongs, right, especially in the context where they're continually reproduced every day.

Danielle: Yeah. Thank you.

Robyn: Thank you.

Sefanit: If we may, we wanted to share the questions that you offer in your conclusion, which is entitled *From "Woke" to Free: Imagining Black Futures*. In it, you asked, "What would it look like to imagine a future of Black freedom, of lives unencumbered by the everyday and spectacular moments of suffering caused by the racially structured institutions that govern society? What would it mean to chip away at or abolish entirely this systemic forms of violence that are inactive regularly onto Black people's lives?"

So extending this further in the spirit of *The Henceforward*, we wanted to think about these futures together and the relationship with Indigenous futures. We wonder if you could speak to maybe some sides of collaboration that you might see between Indigenous peoples and Black peoples, collaboration that you would like to see or believe are necessary, perhaps. Then also, how can we consider one another in our pursuits for abolition, for decolonization and for, ultimately, liberation?

Robyn: Sure, that's a big question. That's a really important question.

Sefanit: Yeah, it's huge. I think that's like -- we're all trying to figure that out. It's not something that I -- yeah.

Robyn: Yeah, I know. But it is really important because again, it's like we need to be geared always towards our futures, right? Because again, that's how we've always survived and how we continue to survive.

I think that when I think about even just some examples of recent activism, what I found very inspiring was, for example, the envoy of Black Lives Matter that went to Standing Rock. I think that there are very real and substantial ways where, with our bodies, we can actually be there for each other and for each other's movements in a way that is very concrete, right? That actually means if one of us is under attack, then we treat it as an attack on all of us. Then we really act together in this way that, again, can be very tangible, right?

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Sefanit: Yeah. We show up for one another.

Robyn: Exactly. I think there are really small scale ways of doing that as well. I mean I've been part of a group called the Black Indigenous Harm Reduction Alliance, which

is Black women and two-spirit and Indigenous folks that together, we've created these prison workshops that we're gearing towards Black and Indigenous women inside prison to really look at the kinds of different disempowerments that our communities have faced, that lead us to be in similar places like prisons. And really, again, having these conversations between and within our communities of what does it mean for us to talk about empowerment and survival, even really on a small scale way like how do we take care ourselves and how do we take care of each other.

I think, again, we often look at like spectacular moments of solidarity, which are very important to me. But I think there's also this day-to-day collaboration and love and building kin relationships that, again, are also very important, I think, not only to movement work but to our lives.

Yeah. There's one piece that I'm looking into that happened more historically, for example, where the Algonquins in Quebec actually adopted the Haitians, the Haitian communities, right, in terms of really -- I think that that's a very inspiring example of what does it look like for stolen people on stolen lands to create these different kinds of community that go outside of settler logics of being permanent resident immigrants. I think there's so many different ways of looking at how our communities have found different ways of interacting to go beyond the way that the state has determined whatever relationships can be.

Sefanit: Awesome. Well, thank you. Those are all the questions that we had on our end. This book is incredibly timely, I think. I think you spoke to this yesterday and also earlier in this conversation about -- this is not necessarily new. The work that's being done right now is not new, but there's resurgence and this renewed sense of urgency of liberation in doing this activist and political work. So it's beautiful to have this book here with us as a point of moving forward, of using it to trace back our history, as a way of grounding the way that we work and think and proceed. So thank you.

Robyn: Thank you so much for having me and for the great work that you're doing both in your lives and on this podcast.

Sefanit: Thank you.

Danielle: Thank you so much.

Eve: The Henceforward, Indigenous and Black life on Turtle Island.

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