

Hello OFRGC community,

Below is a transcript of a conversation I had with activist T. in September of 2023. I recognize that this is becoming available to read several years later. At the time I had reached out to T. asking to chat about demystifying areas of the non-profit sector and activist work. I made the choice to edit only for reading clarity as this was a recorded conversation but aimed to retain much of the feeling/emphasis that T. imbued into the statements. I am grateful for the conversation we had, and I hope that you all enjoy engaging in this chat.

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Stephany:

Okay. Um, so, hello. I first kind of wanna start, want to start with, um, how do you, as both teacher and activist within your kind of sphere of like the world, how do you trouble areas of your field?

T:

How do I approach troubling areas in my field?

Stephany:

Yes.

T:

I think most problems I try to establish, like, (1) who is this affecting and how are they communicating it's affecting in that way, right? I have a long background doing activism work and doing community work. And one thing I've learned in all that time is I really don't know everything. Things change constantly. And so the best person to ask when trying to find out something that is troubling people is to ask those who are being affected by that, and to listen openly. Sometimes people communicate those things in a variety of ways through anger, through grief, through letters. There's a billion ways that people communicate that. And I think one of the biggest parts of like trying to navigate the kind of work that I do, is one, understanding people come to you in a bajillion different ways. And that what you need to always take away from those conversations is what is hurting them? And how can I, with the tools and privilege and power that I have, help facilitate getting them the thing that they need.

Stephany:

So kind of approaching it less of what is, what am I getting from helping in this situation, but more so how can I be a sounding board for ideas in this space?

T:

Yeah. That's, I think for me, like the biggest piece is that I'm a tool, and in the most loving way you can put that, if somebody, particularly, within the nonprofit sector, if they come to me, they obviously need something, right? They, they need

something that I can provide. One, it's to try to lower as many barriers as possible, when accessing things that people need, especially if I am like, the "gatekeeper" of that thing. There's a lot of things, I work a lot with like the house-less community. I work a lot with like, sort of marginalized groups and there's things like, some people don't have a house, so they don't have an address. Is there a way for us to lower that barrier? Some people don't have a phone number, some people don't have access to internet. What can we do to eliminate the barriers to get people the things that they need, as much as we can, right? Because I'm still beholden to things, like grants that require recordings, and beholden to like, limitations of things legally, right? Half of the dance of being in a nonprofit, at least trying to be in an ethical nonprofit is how can we find those loopholes? How can we make these things work for the people that we're trying to serve, without anything being illegal, but also getting people the things that they need.

Stephany:

No, a hundred percent. Um, in that case, I also wanna ask about, um, how long you've worked in the nonprofit sector and what that has looked like for you over that period of time.

T:

I have been working in nonprofits since, I wanna say about 2016. So passage of time, what is that? Like six-seven years? Something along those lines. I've been doing, nonprofit work for that long and I've been doing activist work for, let's see, how old am I now? Probably about 18 years, give or take.

Stephany:

Lifelong kind of commitment there.

T:

I've been doing it since I was about 18. I'm a marginalized person. I'm a black trans person. Activism kind of just inherently comes with whether you're fighting for your right to exist and or fighting for your right to have rights. Um, right at the get go, immediately fighting for, for those things. And so it's less of like this was a fun thing to do, and more of like, I need to facilitate my ability to live and breathe and do things.

Stephany:

Yeah. Kind of coming to this space because you were experiencing those barriers yourself, and we're noticing those around you as well, of like, how can I be helpful? Going back to the idea of like a loving tool necessarily. Like how can I be a better cog in the machine that is nonprofit?

T:

Yeah. I started out doing activism, I did a lot of work around trans bathroom rights. I've done a lot of legislative work, and DEI work particularly around like,

government buildings and stuff, particularly in the state of California and in the state of Washington. As I've gained more and more power, it's so easy to like just kind of sit on your laurels. Because the work gets harder and with more power comes more responsibility and more things are your fault. One of the biggest pieces is learning. I have to sit and live with that, because the more power you gain, people, think the more power you gain, the easier it gets, like no, it gets so much harder. But it also allows you to be able to do things that you would never have been able to do before. My activism work when I was 18 versus what it is now at 36, is vastly different. I'm able to like, get people resources in a reasonable amount of time. People who work in government listen to what I have to say and it's because I have access to that power, and built a long reputation over those years of doing good work and or trying to meet everybody where there at.

Stephany:

Um, would you mind talking me through what your average day at work looks like? And maybe the, maybe not the title, but kind of like in the hierarchy of your organization. Where are you at?

T:

I'm definitively in management and leadership at my work. Um, a lot of things don't happen without my permission or like my blessing. So the majority of the first half of my day is usually going through emails. A surprising amount. It's very different from when I was younger when I first started doing nonprofit work. And it was, I did direct service, direct service, very much just like calling people and talking to clients. As I've gotten sort of into a managerial role a lot of it is like checking emails, looking at grants and then thinking about things in an operational budget, and then meeting with people who do direct service or run programming and being like, where are we at? Like, where are we at with like our participants? Where are you at with things that you need to be successful? How are we doing on meeting the criteria of our grants so that we can get more money to be able to support more people? Cause a big thing within our organization is that we want everything to be free. But nothing in life is free. We want it to be free for our participants. We wanna also make sure that our employees are have a livable wage as much as one can. And those things require money. And as a nonprofit, the biggest way to get that is to get grants and sponsors, and long-term donors. So a lot of my, my job, is basically just making sure that we're able to continue doing those things. I work with a lot of younger people and younger people have very radical ideas. Things that like, I'm like, I don't know if we can do that. It feels illegal, that feel like, makes me uncomfortable, but trying to like find those compromises and or sit in my own discomfort, right? The ideas I had when I was younger definitely made a lot of my elders uncomfortable. I think that just comes with working with younger people and especially the, the climate that we're in right now. Right, being a teenager during the pandemic, I can't imagine what that does to you and how that radicalizes you and what the things you've gone through. I don't have any experience in that, so I try to listen, you know, particularly to some of our younger program people and direct service people

around, ideas and things that they wanna do. My job is to basically, see 'how can I make that happen and then not be illegal and not break our bank'. And that's just like my role. I'm finding that as I get older, my role is in logistical work. I am clerical worker. That's what I'm to do here in the latter half of my days, my days of standing in the street, you know, and, fighting cops and arguing with protesters from another side. Those days are behind me. There are younger people with better ideas of how those things are supposed to be done. And my job is, as it was for my elders when I started doing the work, is to figure out how I can support that, keep people out of jail, keep people safe. And as much as we can keep it legal, right? Because when you push against things, sometimes they're illegal and you try to keep as many people safe as you can. You know, it's that constant budding of heads. So if, you know, people who want to try to work within the system versus people who want to completely dismantle it. I think there's a space for everybody doing that type of work when we do like activism work or even nonprofit work, right? A lot of people want to dismantle that. And I want to too, but you know, we are nonprofit work and we have people that we're trying to support, and there's that constant conversation around like charity, like, is is charity inherently bad? I think charity for the sake of adoration is bad, but I think a thing a lot of people forget when we talk about those things in particularly people are in a lot more radical space, is that a lot of those resources are meant for people's survival. The greatest form of resistance you can have as a marginalized person is getting up and waking up tomorrow. You know, ensuring that low income mothers are able to get like diapers for their kids or free school lunches and being able to get clothes and teachers being able to get supplies, all those things in certain lights can be viewed as charity, but they're also foundational. Now, taking those things away doesn't stop the system for lack of a better word, fucking them. Right? All you're doing is hurting those marginalized people for the sake of, I don't have a better word, "being right". Or being like, ah, this is what we should be doing, you know? The hard thing I had to learn between doing only activism work and then doing like nonprofit work, is that it's so easy when you have nothing, you know, you have nothing to lose and you aren't responsible for other people and the things that you do aren't gonna take resources away from people. We have a program that people come in every week and they're able to get like shampoo, baby diapers, formula, things that are not food. They're able to come and get those every week. And we've had people campaign be like, oh, this is just charity. This is just supporting this space. And it's like, yeah, it is charity, but there's people in this community who need those things. We have a large house-less population here in Washington state. There's people who need socks, there's people who need shampoo and soap and all those other things. And you have to think about how can we minimize the amount of harm we're doing to the people we're trying to protect.

Stephany:

Exactly. Thank you. Um, I'm gonna kind of phrase this. In your current position in, in your nonprofit organization, are there things that you wish you had known before stepping into a leadership role that you're now kind of coming to face with

like, oh, I wish my, like, nonprofit elders and activist elders had talked about this or shared more openly, like these were the things they were dealing with?

T:

I wish someone had warned me about how much I was gonna be dealing with money. As somebody who comes from like low income housing comes with like a low income family, um, most of my life I have just lived in student debt. We're a smaller nonprofit, like to give a a sake of the scope, bringing in less than a million a year, usually less than 750,000 a year. We're serving, you know, any number of people. And just to like be dealing with that kind of money and also not being prepared for how quickly that money disappears. You'll spend an entire six months like raising a bunch of money and you think you got a nice goose egg and then you blink it and you like, you gotta keep doing it to keep basic things going. You know, being able to have people get paid, make sure that we're being ethical in how we take care of our employees, keeping the lights on, paying for taxes for the building. Like there's all these sort of behind the scenes stuff that I was not ready for. Getting in a position of power might mean like, oh, I'm gonna be able to make all these radical changes. I'm gonna be able to this, and so much of it isn't that so much of it is supporting other people and not being necessarily implement like your ideas but supporting those of everybody. Because I also work in like a collective where though I am in charge, I do communicate everything to my employees. Like, 'Hey, here's what we're doing, here's why it's being done. Does anyone have any, you know, does anyone not like, agree with that vision?' Trying to find compromises in that. And so I think the biggest part that's always hard for me is like, I work with a lot of people who don't know how much money we deal in and don't take into account that like, we have to pay for these things. We can't just do X, Y, and Z. And so I wish elders going into the work would've told me like, how heavy that is. If I don't raise X, , and Z money, people lose their jobs. If I'm not smart with the decisions we make collectively, you know, people lose their health insurance. I was not prepared for that. I have gotten more acclimated to it as I've been long in this position of leadership, but I wish someone would've prepared me for like, the money part and how heavy and how much money you're moving around are, you're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars moving around in any given time and was thoroughly unprepared for that. I have a background in like program development and community building and was not ready for the financial and logistical piece that kind of is tied to that.

Stephany:

Yeah. It's kind of, uh, the hidden curriculum of like nonprofit work of like, no one tells you you need to take like maybe a finance class, but like, it would've helped

T:

And I had to take a finance class. I had to take a finance class cause there's a lot of things that I just didn't understand. I've always been grateful of and particularly that where I live in the United States and the space that I live in I am given space

to say I don't know how to do this. Being able to get access to resources particularly within my community, to gain some financial literacy. Because like I said, I come from low income, low income family. We don't really talk about that stuff. And this is my first job with a 401K, right? These things are all new and different and I don't completely understand, understand what an RFA is, you know, and learning about those things.

Stephany:

You're saying words and I'm sitting here like those are letters.

T:

It's all a learning, you know, curve of trying to like things that you need to understand so that other people can not have to understand it.

Stephany:

No. That, that's, that's a good way of putting it, of having to know what you need to know in order for someone else not to have to even worry about it, for it to not even be a worry that they can have the, the radical thoughts. They can be the idea generators for the org.

T:

Because it's definitely something I would've wanted when I first started doing non-profit work, there was nobody, not necessarily non-profit, but like activism work, getting people to help you that were in positions of power, was such a hurdle or it required so much backend work on my behalf to like, make those things happen. I think of the role of elders, right? As, as we get older is, especially as we gain access to privilege and power and all these other things, is to try to open and leave those doors open for the younger generation. I have people who are fresh out of college down here who start working at our organization. They have so many wild ideas, I have to be like I hear you. Gimme an afternoon to like, process what you've told me and then let's sit down and try to find out how we can make this happen and, or let's, let's have a conversation about it. I don't want to shoot it down. But I'm, gonna ask some questions, clarifying questions, and please walk me through it. And sometimes, you know, sometimes they're like, ah, okay, I see what you mean. But most of the time it's not the case, most of the time, you know, people of a younger generation have a better insight into what a community needs than I do and getting older I don't wanna always go out. I play a lot of d play a lot of TTRPGs in my free time. I've earned the right to kind of slow down a little bit and just kind of support that work as it comes out.

Stephany:

Um, but you don't have to to have an answer to this in case you don't. Um, but what do you think are some misconceptions that people have when they wanna work with nonprofit organizations?

T:

I dunno if it's a misconception, but if anyone who reads this, like, there's no money to be made in non-profit I'm telling you that right now. It is, it is hard. It is hard work that oftentimes people will not appreciate and you will not be paid what you were promised you were going to be paid. Getting into like social service or social work. You will not be getting paid what college promised you. Also like a lot of the job is very hard emotionally, especially if it's something you care about. Right? I think that what you'll find is a lot of young people who come into like nonprofit work, especially for things they care about, a big part of like your work, especially if you do direct services that you have to learn to like do a bit of a disconnect, right?

T:

And it is trying to do that balance of like, I always wanna be empathetic for the people that we serve, but for my own mental health, right? If you have a caseload of 30, but just say like, you we work with youth that are going through the juvenile justice system. You're serving 30 kids and you talk to those kids throughout the month, all 30 kids throughout the month, and they have so much stuff that they're carrying and so much stuff that they're talking about, right? That emotionally you burn yourself out of doing this work if you try to, it's written on our walls, it's written on our norms. No fixing. We are not here to, to fix, to fix the individual problems. We're here to help try to address the systemic ones. We're here to help them survive. We're here to help them do those things because we cannot take on the burden of every, every kid or participant that comes to the door. We can help them get tools to be able to help themselves, but we personally cannot fix all of it and cannot fix their problems. Right. And that's a really hard thing to do, especially if it's something that you deeply care about. If you are, you know, if you're an African American and you're working directly with like, you know, prisoners or you know, low income mothers and most of those African Americans, right? There's this sense of kinship. You know, you want to help all these people, 'cause they're your community. The unfortunate piece is there has to be the disconnect because you will burn yourself out. I know plenty of people who get into this work, they do it for about two or three years and then it's just too much. It's just too much. You have to find a nice balance between caring and then like knowing yourself to put up the boundary of being like, I need to step back from this. Um, I, uh, do you know who Ms. Major Griffin-Grac is?

Stephany:

Um, not off the top my head (note to reader I have done my due diligence and have since learned)

T:

I can also just tell you. So she is one of the last surviving black trans people from, Stonewall. She also was in Attica. She's a living trans, legend. She's been doing activism where she particularly has a lot of stuff surrounding incarceration around

trans people. And a lot of violence that's surrounded around that. Particularly trans people being put in what's referred to as the shoe that's being put in isolation. Trans people end up in the prison system, and end up being in isolation for up to two weeks or more. And that's technically considered torture to be put in isolation for that long. Anyway, aside from her amazing work, I met her, I met her like really early in my life, nonprofit work, journey in Portland, Oregon. And I asked her, how do you, how does somebody like you do this work? 'cause I was getting to that point where I was caring about every participant I was doing stuff when it was so hard, you know, would cry myself to sleep, was just wanting to try to save everybody, right? And feeling deeply bad. I was like, how does someone like you do this because she's done this work for 30, 40 years? How does someone do that work for so long? She says, well, work will always be there. You have to prioritize taking care of yourself and being able to step back and step away from it. You single-handedly cannot save everybody is impossible. You will drown yourself in the work and you will burn yourself out and you will never be able to engage with the work again. You have to remember that we're doing this work collectively. That you are not the only person doing this work. There are hundreds of thousands of people who have the same mindset you do who want to help people. And we're finding new and creative ways to do that. And when you get to the point where you feel like you're breaking, you need to stop you, you need to stop, you need to be able to take a step back and allow yourself to breathe because you are also, you know, uh, very particularly like me, we're marginalized people, right? These systems that we're trying to undo also still affect us. And even though we do gain access to privilege and all those other things, you know, we see like, it doesn't matter how much money or power you get, you know, at least with like African Americans, they'll still call you the N word, right? You are just still as likely to be arrested on a pullover or God forbid killed. Um, and that you're still working on those things. So you have to allow yourself moments to breathe. You have to allow yourself to step back and trust the work collectively, 'cause like white supremacy and capitalism prioritizes individualism. That we are constantly supposed to be improving. And, and I, I don't know if you know, but like, that's not sustainable, right? We see that. We see that right now. Like capitalism, it's not sustainable. And the thing that we wanna move towards is towards stability, we want everybody there, like liberation is all of us getting there. The way we do that is by trusting collectively that everybody is doing is doing that work. Um, and so like the advice I'd give for people who do get into those work is like, you won't be able to fix everything. You will not be able to save everyone, but you'll be able to help, right? Because it's a collective effort. Don't get into it for the personal accolades. Get into it because you believe in the work and you won't see the fruit of your labor for the work that you do. The fruits that you're seeing now are those of the generation before you, all the work you're doing now. No one will know it. No one will know it while you're living through it. You'll see the fruits long after you're gone. I think if you can, if you're okay with that then please do the work. If you don't wanna do it forever, it's okay to also walk away from a thing. A lot of people get stuck in that of like, I have to do nonprofit work forever, otherwise I'm a bad person. It's like, no, we all put in our



time. You know, some people do it for 20 years, some people do it for 3. And I think both of those are valid. We, we do it as long as we can. And if something else calls to us, we feel like we found a different work that, you know, feeds us, please go to that don't feel bad for that. Please go to that work. You know, 'cause we all deserve happiness. You know, we all deserve to like, feel like we're, we're getting something out of our lives. And so know when you leave, somebody else will step in. Somebody else will do that work.

Stephany:

Yeah. It's definitely the idea of, um, at least within community spaces, the idea of elders that you're passing the torch onto someone else, you're passing that cup onto someone else. Um, and it's okay for other people to step in as well. Um, even if you are just kind of no longer active, but still communicating the ideas of the nonprofit work and activism work to others, you're still spreading the message even if you're not doing the labor currently.

T:

And, and we're in a unique position. 'cause I think a lot of people forget, we lost a whole generation of elders, the eighties and the nineties with the AIDS epidemic. There's a whole generation of people who didn't grow up with elders, I'm part of that generation didn't grow up with elders, didn't grow up with anybody, to ask about all these things. And so I think particularly my generation, that's older millennials and younger gen-xers. We're in the unique position to model what that looks like. Because for me, I don't know what being like a black elder, a black trans elder in like senior care looks like. I don't know what, like a lot of those things look like 'cause I have nobody to model that up there. I don't have anyone to talk to about that. Older millennials are gonna be the older millennials in spaces. There's a lot of people who are gonna be the first to experience that. And there's, there's a constant sense of loss, for me over like never having, you know, what a lot of younger people have now. Being able to even to openly be like, yeah, I'm trans or I'm gay. Such a privilege, such a thing that I envy. I'm so glad you know that like, that they're in that space now. And the only thing I hope to do is support that and help that grow. Um, and, you know, not, not necessarily martyr myself, but like share what I, what I've learned through trial and error and hope they do better or they'll tell me how they do better. It was like, like we talked about earlier, I don't know everything I didn't grow up in being a young person in like a community, I was a closeted person in the early 2000s. I don't know what it's like to have like that open community. And so I can rely on people who live in those, those communities in that way to like be able to know like what I can give access to. What do they need?

Stephany:

I'm gonna kind of switch over a little bit to TTRP spaces. Um, just 'cause I know you have a very, um, the way my partner describes it is like, you are like the, if it was a bridge, you're the keystone piece of a network. How, like, even if you're not in direct conversation with someone, people know your name, they know like the

work you do. Um, and so I'm curious how the community organizing within TTRPG spaces, um, has kind of influenced your work in the nonprofit sector or vice versa. How do you see community organizing in that space?

T:

I think one of the biggest things that TTPRGs has taught me for my nonprofit work is the importance of play. The importance of play and within that, like how that is such a great tool for community building. We talk so much about community organizing. We only get together when somebody dies or somebody's born or somebody's having a wedding, those kind of things. And like teaching people, the 1990s moving into 2000s into now the existence of third spaces, completely deleted. You know, and a lot of young people and, and even like older people, people my age, right? I'm in my thirties trying to hang out with somebody that's not like explicitly a coffee date. Absolutely impossible. And within that it's, and it's really hard to like make friends and have connections and do these thing, you know, be have space to be emotionally and or socially vulnerable with people. A big thing I've taken away from like, 'cause the pandemic, there's a short period where I lost my job. I was looking for community. I had mostly engaged only in like physical spaces and made my way into the digital space. The thing that saved me from the pandemic was like building digital community through like TTRPGs and the way that was facilitated was through play. And so like a lot of things that I do now when trying to like get people back out in public and teaching people, you know, who don't have access to how do we, how do we get back to like that space? It doesn't necessarily have to be TTRPGs, but we need to facilitate spaces for play, spaces for creativity. So it's doing things like, you know, having a wine and sip or, you know, having water balloon fights or having cookouts like investing in those things that aren't necessarily goal oriented around like the oppressive work or like that social work and are built only towards the goal of like building community. On the flip of that, I've been doing community organizing and I do facilitation work and stuff in DEI, which is all very valuable for like building like online communities. Sam is a part of like that network and a part of that community. It's putting people first, right? Like when we play games, it's the understanding that we are playing a game, right? Um, and, and thinking about how can we tie this in? Like what is like it's a BIPOC person. What does play look like? When we take away, when we try to strip away the white supremacy, when we try to tear away a lot of the problematic pieces, what that looks like is it's less of a war game, right? Because like, that's just cosplaying colonization, right? It then becomes collective storytelling. That's, and that's age old, right? Like people have been doing that for ages, collectively telling stories together, with the idea that we're not necessarily trying to teach a lesson, but we're trying to gain something from it, right? When we tell these stories and we do these themes and we walk through these things with the mechanics of dice and sitting around with people who have made up wild variety of like things from their imagination, having that safety to be able to explore things within yourself and also being able to share that with other people and that causes people to gain bonds, right? As a BIPOC person, the safety, the rarity of the safety of being able

to be vulnerable, I think can never be overstated how, how much of a gift that is. I'm glad to be able to facilitate that, right? It's also a space to teach. I have a lot of younger people of like teaching: how do we talk to one another of these really hard conversations? How do we get clear good communication, not immediately being reactive when someone tells you that you've caused harm to them, right? How do we and it's a great space to be able to practice that, right? Because you can take that in real life you know, and put that into practice. Like, 'Hey, something you've done has caused me a lot of pain and I just want to communicate that'. Can we find like a compromise in that? And it teaches you when someone, you know, 'cause you are on the other end of that, 'oh, oh no, I've caused harm'. Not, I can't immediately center myself. Right? It's the idea we teach in like DEI is like when <laugh> if you go to the park, right? If some, goes to the park and they stab you. They <laugh> they, can't turn to you and be like, oh, I'm so sorry. You can't take care of the person who caused you harm. If you are the person who's been harmed, you are the priority. And so like, it, it's keeping that in mind, you know, at all times when we are in these spaces and we've slowly been integrating, having white people in that space, which has been like such a hit and miss thing. 'cause it, you know, it's them also having to do a bunch of unlearning. You know, like what does it mean to be in a primarily BIPOC space, 'cause you know, a lot of the stories we tell in that space are not centered around violence or colonization. They're usually like centered around man versus, you know, well man versus wild or centered around like self-exploration or the own hurdles that we have within ourselves and how we overcome those and sometimes that takes on the physical manifestation of like a giant dragon that like comes from like that thing, you know, or whatever it is. But like, it's never explicitly causing harm for the sake of gain or the sake of progression. Right. I think those are so important and then also that it facilitates people to be able just to be able to build community with 'em because there's plenty of things we do in that space that are not games.

Stephany:

Yeah.

T:

You know, it teaches people how to like be able to talk to one another, right? Like there's nothing more intimate than like you playing a blurbo and me playing a blurbo and you putting a bit of yourself in there, right? And allowing a little bit of vulnerability in there and sharing that with a table full of people who now know a little bit more about you that we wouldn't have been able to pick up the conversations of coffee. That doesn't turn into trauma bonding. I think it's a big thing, right? In queer communities, trauma bonding. Uh, and it teaches people how to be able to do, how to be able to connect with somebody not through the lens of trauma bonding. Like, we've both been hurt that's why we're friends. That can't be the space. I enjoy your company, that's why we're friends. We provide something to one another that isn't based in our collective shared trauma. It makes it so important. We watch movies, people do community support things. There's several people who've needed access to, you know, mental health things. And

we've done community fundraising for those things. And, uh, people take the stuff that they learn in that space and that spreads. You know, I've had people, guests that like play in bigger, bigger TTRPG spaces come and be like, oh my goodness, I've never felt the safe. I've never felt like, I did not know I could get access to all these things or that these things could like lead to like better a better game and feeling like I'm getting something right when I come to the table and they take that and they go out in the world, um, and they, they use those things and then somebody says, where'd you learn this? And then they say my name. And then that's just kind of how I've like gained any sort of notoriety in the space. It's just like teaching people how to like effectively communicate <laugh> one another and how to begin doing that work.

Stephany:

I have one last question, uh, just very quick and maybe not simple, since you love TTRPGs and you love learning. Um, but are there any books or TTRPG like games let's plays that you'd recommend to the readership?

T:

Um, yeah. If people like hearing my voice or like the things that I say I played one called Unprepared Casters. Think Unprepared Casters is really great. Um, I highly recommend them. Um, if you're looking to try to navigate racism, particularly in a game Call of Cthulhu has one called, um, I wanna say it's called Knights in Harlem. Hey, it's like, let me find it so that I wanna make sure I give you the right name. Harlem Unbound, it's made by a black man and it takes place during the Harlem Renaissance uses the Call of Cthulhu system and explicitly addresses like how to tackle doing racism in a game. If you want an indigenous resource, Coyote and Crow is a very good resource for like, how to do that. I speak very highly of the setting and a lot of that stuff. I don't particularly care for the system they've built. I have things about specialty dice being in systems, that's besides the point, but as a resource for like how to represent, you know, marginalized groups. It's an amazing resource. Then also just wanna encourage people to play non DnD games. There's a huge wide market out there of games to try out that aren't like explicitly built around causing violence to one another. TTRPGs do not only have to be stories built around combat and violence that can be everything from this one called Dish Pit Witches, where you play a bunch of gay witches running a restaurant to things like Wanderhome where you are, you know, walking, talking animals.

Stephany:

I have that one right here. I've been dying to play it, it's so cute and it's so adorable. It makes my heart so warm.

T:

I kickstarted it, it is so good. J Dragon's also an amazing resource in the community, but like, we are in, for lack of a better right now, a TTRPG

renaissance, there is more black and brown and people making games that explore like that collective storytelling and stuff that we've kind of been talking about here. Um, and within them also teach you tons of things that aren't just around that safety tools session zeros, X card boundaries, how to tackle, you know, hard social issues based on people's real world lived experience that they put into games. If you're not gonna play them, support those things, read them, and then do what Dungeons and Dragons has taught you to do and steal everything. Take all those things from <laugh>, take all those things from other games and put them in your game. You know, cobble together the homebrew.

Stephany:

Frankenstein. Yeah.

T:

Frankenstein your own stuff together. Um, and, and make your space safe for the people that are there and diversify your tables. Get black and brown people. First of all, get black and brown friends. If you are a white person, uh, <laugh> not for the sake of tokenization, but like for the sake of like having different lived experiences in your life, invite them to a table. Don't invite them to the table for the sake of diversity. Invite them because you have made a genuine friend and you want to invite them to like, engage and play with you.

Stephany:

Thank you T.