

(Katya): Good evening everybody and welcome to this special Accessibility Committee and T.S. Banks with the Loud N Unchained Theater Company. I am Katya, the Accessibility Officer for MATC and I am a middle aged white nonbinary individual and have brown hair -- I am wearing purple glasses and a sparkly green top. And this is sponsored by the Accessibility Committee and editor of *Theater/Practice*. And I am privileged to introduce T.S. Banks and Madison's Loud N Unchained and he is a nonbinary teaching artist and this is 'QT Mad-Krip Storytelling, Community Care and Abolition.' This can all be found at LNU.com and follow him on Instagram or at call me L on X.

Audio

There will be audible sounds demonstrating the audibled hallucinations of

T.S. Banks **(Immediately following will be a Poem)**

"Sometimes I feel sick"

Sometimes when I feel sick –

I disappear into another world

2. Lose my grip
3. Binge
4. insulin shots, 6 times a day
5. morbid obesity,
6. The schizophrenia
7. mania –
8. the depression,
9. the sex,
 that I wish would last longer
 than the second
 person to tell me
 I was

beautiful and meant it

When I feel myself,

10. fly the cusp of what is real
 always a contrast

two spirits
health and sickness,

11. juxtaposed

Beside myself inside my head,
 everything feels
 intense
 I can't name it

12. The babble.
 Them noises,
 pinned my ear to the wall
leave me rigid.
 a closed mouth

a tear
a smile

Introduction

Hi my name is T. S Banks. (Visual Description of T.) I am wearing____ I am also sitting in this lovely powerchair that is Black and Red.

I want to give a special thank you
I want to give a thank you to the Mid American Theater Conference.
As well as a special
shout out to the Accessibility Committee which
designed this portion of the conference
and has invited me to share my experiences in theater
as a Black Queer, Trans and disabled person.

Today I wanna talk to you about the process of me founding
LNU, Loud N Unchained Theatre Co and how we came to be.

*Care note, this talk will focus heavily on psyche survivorship some mentions of harms within medical and spiritual spaces.

So the poem that you just heard speaks a lot as to what I was going through and the urgency that I had to create a space and container that not only supported and celebrated but also got curious about the experiences of Black disabled folks specifically mad-Krip folks.

Before we dive into my talk, I wanna give some language to the terms I will be using throughout this presentation.

I will be talking a lot about disability and ableism. Ableism is violence, systems, thought, societal norms that harm, exclude, or neglect disabled and neurodivergent folx.

For me, I'm gonna be telling my story as a psych survivor entering into theater to be able to capture and tell my own story.

So a psych survivor is someone that has or is currently surviving the psychiatric industrial complex. And the psychiatric industrial complex is a system or systems of um institutional harm that includes but not limited to psychiatrist, therapist, psychiatric institutions and court systems that seek to control, harm medicate, over medicate institutionalize or incarcerate disabled folks dealing with psychiatric disabilities.

Now I really hate the word psychiatric so in order to avoid using the term mental illness
So I use neurodivergent, nuero-expansive or my favorite term , mad.
Mad is a reclamation of the term madness um

The term mental illness or mentally ill is a largely based on western philosophies that invokes and produces more stigma within and outside disabled communities. I really like to use the term mad because not only does it articulate the frustration that I have in this world today especially for the care well really the non-care, neglect and harm that Black disabled folks go through, But I also want to divest from western terminology that others the different ways that our body spirit minds work.

Body minds is a term that acknowledges the nuance and totality of our bodyminds are connected and inseparable from one another, I also like to use the term bodyspiritminds as a way to push up against western philosophies that seek to separate the whole of human experiences. And specifically when it come to understanding and expanding our care for mad individuals.

And lastly Krip, Spelled with a K although most non-black disabled people spell it with a C. Krip is a reclamation of the term crippled it was defined and made popular by Krip Elder Leroy More and Black Disabled man who found Krip Hop a home to several Disabled Hip hop Artist internationally.

So now that we have those terms out of the way lets get into my mad-krip journey into reclaiming theater for myself and articulating its accessibility and the accessibility of theater on my own terms.

Here's the story of LNU.

The first sounds you heard and the poem directly following were apart of one of my first productions. Which came to be name Loud N Unchained. The sounds you you heard were to mic the auditory hallucinations that I experience. The poem following illuminating the difficulties I experience with mania and madness and moving through all of those chemical and sensational shifts.

Anyways before I get further into LNU let me define LNU as it today. LNU is is a collective of Black & Queer, Trans, Non-Binary, Mad, c/Krip & Disabled Artists. We are poets, teaching artists, abolitionists, healers & playwrights. We are Bold & Unapologetic and dedicated to Gender Justice, Queer Justice, and Disability Justice. We believe in showing up as our full selves and creating from our experiences.

LNU started out as a need for my self several years ago. I was in and out of several psychiatric institutions and enduring extended institutionalizations, which I refer to as psychiatric incarceration. I was also going through heavy persecution, exclusion and emotional and physical abuse from folx withing my church community, and interpersonally at home with at the time unsupportive parents and homophobic and especially transphobic spiritual community.

It is important to tell that background of my story because it lays the foundation and urgency to why I so desperately needed to create my own community.

Because of these compounding isms of intersecting oppressions of anti-blackness, ableism, Saneism, homophobia and transphobia, LNU has a very niche focus.

LNU is a traveling, mostly virtual theater company at the moment. And because I am surviving the pandemic along with other folks who are immune compromised, we stay in this format because in working with larger theater venues, and taking gigs under other ensembles, my rider is almost never respected in terms of accessibility and that included masking for staff, tech, actors, and production team. And since 2020 LNU remains to be virtual, or conduct hybrid or in-person spaces that I can not only insist on masking but also provide mask for guest, performers and staff at specific venues.

Personally I have been involved with theater ever since I was young my most memorable roles as a young person was playing mama from Raisin in the Sun written by Lorraine Hansberry while I was in high school.

So to back track but to also move forward in this story, like I said, I was always a theater kid and my earliest plays were church plays and recitations on major religious holidays. They always included music and dance and poetry.

In my second semester of college I realized I wasn't feeling well, soon after I dropped out and moved back home in between mad hospitalizations. I was heavily medicated, psychiatrically incarcerated and receiving vile treatment within my religious community. To cope, while in these institutions and outside I turned to my notebook and voice recorder, or video camera on my phone and started documenting my experiences. All of this became the basics for LNU.

So for the namesake of my theater company Loud N unchained theater co I was actually based off the title of my 2nd stage play but we'll get there.

Again I created LNU because I need an accessible tangible way to connect with other Black Mad folks. So I thought if I could explain my experiences on stage it would not only bring awareness to the harshness and violence of psychiatric institutions but I could be open about the difficult mad things I was experiencing. Because on one hand I had a very uneducated community that thought the way to care for mad folks, was either overmedication, or jail. And my church community though my madness was attributed to my queer gender and sexuality and ostracized and shunned me, and I thought this opportunity to tell my story would create some type of empathy, and maybe find other folks like me.

So the first play I wrote was called "Push to Live" it was a one person play written and directed by me and one of my classmates played the role. It was a loose story based around my life of being hospitalized for madness and coming out.

Here – an excerpt of pushed to live (sometimes its like I'm un-neat)

How is it today for me? ...Well Its like the other days, like, I don't know, (laughs nervously) like on the other days When I can like...I can like see it. I can like...I can read it and understand. I can look at the TV and know that this show is about Bill Cosby and his kids but when Im un-neat... like Im unfolded Its like I cant connect the dots. Its- Everything is so messy(frustration in voice) my voices are so messy. All the time. They confuse me (long pause) they just make me angry (light laugh) because (pause) uhm – Its like today. Im trying to be here, like Im trying to tell you whats going on butthey wont let me. (Rain talking about her effort to be here) I just – I don't want – see that's they thing. I don't want people to see the struggle but I want them to know. I gotta work like 10x harder just to get this thing done.

I ended up going to the hospital to a week before it was supposed to debut for my colleges theater festival. However due to ableism, an Saneism, the school denied its showing. The festival organizers and the actor sat down with me to tell me that they didn't think it was "healthy for me" to show this 10-minute play. They also claimed that the play didn't have a enough levity in it and was very dark and didn't fit the ambiance of their festival, this after month of rehearsing, directing, and set design. So they cut the play. This is what happens when we don't trust mad krip disabled folx to tell their own stories.

Anyways after that, I dropped out feeling very defeated and starting to experience an increase in sever symptoms including auditory and visual hallucinations.

A poem – Sometimes it feels like everything is falling apart

Sometimes it feel like everything is falling apart
My limbs and joints departing from themselves, clothed in black skin
The gape between bone ans skin
Loose saggy skin reach foreground
My hand, and feet, and elbows, all left with a tingling sensation
My heart stumbles and pounds with every waking step
Not sure, not sure, I've found home yet.

And after a year in a half of being incredibly ill, I started to feel a little bit better and re-entered school.

And I re-entered that same theater festival with the help of the new artist director of my program. She felt the story need to be told and I did too but I had a longer story to tell, one that mirrored y current life and made it more autobiographical. At this point I had been hospitalized over 8 times and my and I think there is more of a story to tell. Plus I had been recording myself. I felt confused and alone My church that indoctrinated me told me that my spirit was not clean

and that the reason I was suffering was because of my lifestyle choices., I wanted to know how I was when I was having these otherworldly experiences.

So the artistic director asked me if she could hear them, read them, she took my notebook, doodles, and drawings I was doing while in the hospital wards, she started listening to my videophone recordings, and eventually she said we need to beef up this story. Let's interview you and use that as dialog. Unless it was poetry I was writing, I wanted the rest of the dialog and action of the play to be as authentic to my story as possible. So we decided to use poetic transcriptions of the recordings.

So this became an awareness piece, where I could tell my story in hopes of finding other Black mad disabled folks like myself that wanted to talk about their experiences because when you are going through such public episodes of madness and the interaction that you have not only interpersonally but with systems of care, it is really isolating, a unique experience and also hard to talk about stigma wise.

So more about the production of Loud N Unchained the first 2 act play.
This one person play turned into a 7 person play and became an 1 hour long.

I wanted to immerse the audience in a sensory experience of my auditory hallucinations, so one of the actors asked me what did they sound like and re-recorded multiple distorted voices playing on top of each other, similar to what you heard at the beginning of this talk.

I was also heavily involved in building the light design, I wanted the lighting to reflect the visual hallucination but also add to the texture of the dialog.
The dialog of the play reflected how I talked in different stages of my episode including long monologues of pressured speech.

I was heavily influenced by my religious upbringing and church plays I also was in love with the Hercules movie and cartoon which featured a chorus of Goddesses. I translated that into making a chorale of actors that sang and dance, and because the visual representation of my voices. So not only did the play expand in length but it now had more elements of music, dance, and poetry and Loud N Unchained became a choreo-play after the writing form created my Ntozake Shange, in her production of For Colored Girls who have considered suicide when the Rainbow wasn't enough.

Because of the depth of the play I wanted there to be licensed mental health workers and care workers in case intense feelings came up for audience and crew member during and after the play. After LNU Debuted we had a talk back directly following, it felt like we were there all night, the hoping theater tried to usher us out but we were in deep community, crying, laughing, audience members sharing their own stories of Madness. We had our own collective circle of healing that night. Many community members asked for more experiences like this to tell and listen to other mad stories. We had orgs tabling outside the auditorium on resources for trusted

queer and Black led therapy and wellness agencies, all of whom I had used to build community and support. This is Community Care, this is collective Care, this is what happens when we make and protect space for disabled folxs to share their sacred stories. This was church. The healing I so desperately needed. Solidarity, Righteous Rage, Feeling Seen. And in that moment LNU the Theater Company was born.

The culture, mission and values of LNU is Black.

The birth of LNU came in the midst of a time fleeing an organization that did not want to make space for me as I became more physically disabled. I really cannot separate my politics, my identities are all political, I cannot separate the two. I cannot separate my Blackness and I cannot separate my disabilities. I cannot separate them. And my work has to follow that.

So I decided I to quit my job and found LNU. Surprisingly my first talk was to talk about leaving places behind that would not serve my accessibility or recognize as whole and using poetry and theater as a way to support myself as a Black Madcrip person.

In founding LNU I wanted to make sure that I was always centering Black psyche survivors and our stories, getting real specific about the voices I would amplify, inviting and showcasing Queer Black folx and make sure that it was always centering black psych survivors and our stories and getting even more specific with only pain inviting and showcasing queer Black , genderqueer, disabled artist.

Our story has a lot to do with the divesting from systems of medical harm within the medical industrial complex, and psychiatric industrial complex and well as the abolition of the prison industrial complex.

So my body of work and LNU's body of work has always been political, and it stays that way. Most of our stories talk about and weave in the ways in which we are resisting and divesting from current systems, punitive systems that seek to incarcerate, overmedicate and kill Black mad folx. Our work explores how to build consensual systems of care that don't create more harm when providing care to one another, building systems of collective care, talk about recognizing every person is a whole and sum of many parts. Telling stories about resistance. And that is how LNU Lives today.

Today LNU not only houses original play productions but is now a publishing House, LNU Publishing House has printed chapbooks and memoirs of Black Disabled Queer and Trans folx. I teach poetry writing, playwriting, and non-fiction writing through LNU programming. I always felt with my privilege of being able to attend this school UW Madison and access to sharpening my poetry and playwriting skills that it was my duty to give my schooling back to the community, everything I learn I give back.

That is how LNU defines accessibility and collective care within Theater. In modeling that access, LNU considers where do we tell our stories, from free public institutions like the libraries, all the way to community centers, to public parks, in park shelters. And also with the panini or

pandemic happening, what steps are we taking to keep entertainers, production staff, and audience members safe.

The LNU Black Theater Festival (2021) that I created was held in the height of the pandemic and it was a virtual showing though we filmed in person. Blending many different theatrical forms including drag, Spokenword poetry, traditional stage plays, and comedy, just to name a few, only highlighting Black performers and writers. I really hope I can amass the funding to do this production again safely while were still in an pandemic.

To me making theater accessible is also reimagining what theater can be outside the walls of huge auditoriums with enormous budgets for elaborate set design and light and sound design. Redefining what a play looks like and making smaller shorter act plays a way to engage the audience without the over commitment of longer pieces that can be overwhelming sensory wise. Reimagining how we provide care to production crew and talent that supports them as working families and parents, disabled parents. Outside of just making sure the stage and auditorium has an elevator, what ways audiences with different sensory accommodations expertise productions. Care notes and content warnings. CART Services, ASL interpretation. Sound and Visual descriptions. Having snacks for the crew, making sure there accessible transportation or rehearsal venues and performance venues are on accessible public transit routes. Checking in, like how are you getting home. Looking out for the welfare of production crew, choosing to only rehearse certain intense parts for blocking and not over taxing the nervous system of your cast.

Making Theater accessible for Black Queer and Trans and disabled creatives and community is thinking about the preparation of performance. Free writing, playwriting and productions skills workshops like lighting and sound, and set design. Because we are excluded from majority of these skills based trades within theater which makes us dependent on white led organizations to dictate, when, where , and how we tell out stories, and LNU says hell no, we tell, create and dictate how and when we share our stories.

I could give a talk on the mechanic of how we filmed the theater festival during the height of the pandemic, in. a studio and managed to keep everyone safe. And yes It did include making and providing masks. I could talk about how we had spaced stuff out, the timing of arrivals, only allowing a creating amount of people back stage, the sanitizing of dressing rooms, having people wait outside between scenes being filmed. I could go into that, but you all know how to do that, like today you knew that as a disabled presenter was coming and you all decided to honor our collective safety by masking. So you all already know how to keep folx safe. The question I have is that, if you're doing community theater, how are you investing in that community to keep it safe. How are you making sure that you're budgeting in proper PPE for your production, and sanitation stations.

Do you believe in protecting the voices of the most impacted, and keeping the patron of the arts safe. One of those things would be covid precautions, But we all know how to do that. It's a choice on whether you chose to implement that safety or not. Sometimes in rescheduling in

person showing and relocating to outside venues when covid infections and other respiratory illness infection rates are high.

I decided long ago LNU would focus on tangible ways in which Black Queer trans disabled madkrip folx are able to tell, record, write, their own store and in the mediums that we want to.

It was an honor for me to be able to be here. My Name is T. S. Banks, you can follow me at @LnuTheaterCo and check out our website that has books, LNU Merch and more at LnuTheaterCo.Com.

And ill leave this with you. Audre Lorde said “Your silence will not protect you!” and with that Always Live your life Loud N Unchained!

Question and Answer segment:

(Katya): Thank you so much for that and that is so generous for sharing the work that you do and the history that has lead a painful history that has lead to this moment of creation. We have actually a good bit of time to talk. So we have a half an hour. Does anybody have any questions? Be brave.

(Audience Member 1): When you say QT disabled..?

(TS): Queer and trans. What are the things that are built is this culturally specific and specific to a microculture but the people most excluded from the dominant theatrical model within the commercial theater. And not everyone here is working with that specific group. But I think it is really important to think about how a model of cultural specificity can be brought to any community. And the ideals that we are taught in universality and what is often found to be universal is truth and truth comes in specificity and locality.

Thinking about how some of these ideas in terms of community building as well as practical elements for accessibility can be brought into other work. That is a good observation. Yes.

Was there also a question?

(Audience Member 1): How about does anybody -- sorry. Speaking out loud.

(TS): I love that.

(Audience Member 1): So, do you have perhaps any concrete thoughts or suggestions in terms of how the specific questions of your work could possibly -- for those that are well meaning about doing more accessibility broadly defined but not sure how to start? Could take some lessons and bring it home without necessarily jumping way into the deep end of a specific culture that also some of us are not a part of. So yeah, so thank you for the specific. Maybe we can reach to the general a little bit.

(TS): So your question if I am hearing it correctly, it would be how -- thank you captioner. And simplify, do you have any starting advice?

Okay yes. I would say that um, I guess there are two things. I think LNU was also very identity specific just because it just isn't a lot of us. And that is out per se. And in many different forms and you can be out of a lot of things and you can be out about your support of Palestinian, and so cease fire. And so I think there are many -- so, I think that you can be identity specific in those ways or you could be issue specific and I think something that LNU also deals a lot with is like cross movement, theory, thought, practice and organizing. And so, that includes reproductive justice and that includes the liberation for migrants, that includes abolition of prison and jails but it includes the abolition of like landlords, that they raise prices that you can't. And I don't know if I -- don't even have all the language when you first started LNU and I had a lot of terminology that doctors told me about myself and I had to shape and even tonight I had a whole new skip that has been terminology has been indoctrinated because it is something. And I think that you know you need a specific about what do you care about, child, you can have a tax night.

Whenever it is, I think you have to think that in your caring about it and you are caring about the people that will show up and you do like those damn cats, what will you do to foster a community of that is saying and professing that love.

I think of LNU in that way and I am not only professing my love for Black folks but that is something that everyone could do whether that is platonically or romantically or movement wise, I think we can all be specific of the things that we love. And um, build community around that.

Is that a good example?

(Audience Member 1): Excellent.

(Audience Member 2): Thank you so much, first. And I was just curious as your work evolved from solo work to including more community, were there unexpected surprises that you found that your community brought to the work?

(TS): Yes, I think that that one is that making sure that I mostly out of University's and things like that means that access to my community is that they check me. They can check me. They can be like this little not relevant to me, or this is relevant to me but it does not feel good in this way. Along with language and a lots of language that I used, I developed over time because my community members that came to my productions was like I like it but this started something that is not safe. So that was surprising for me and I think also with expanding to not focus on myself and others, for one that will give me a chance to breathe.

And also two, it will give me joy to know that when we are together for a common thing which is to share our stories and hold spaces for each other. And so really beautiful magical things can happen. And so connections you never thought would be there. So figuring out care in different types of ways happens and I think that is a surprising things for me. I did not expect to have write plays and the actors in those plays are all over the world and they are not my best friend.

I did not expect that and I did not expect that there were other youth teachers spoken word to and come to LNU and now they are like out and proud and teaching other youth. Those are surprising things that I may have wanted to but I never knew if I stepped out or rolled out child really. That other people would be brave enough to could that too but when you model a sense -- I think we model how to be brave, other people, they are brave too.

Yeah. Thank you for the question. That was beautiful

(Audience Member 3): This is a personal question and opt out if you don't feel comfortable but sitting here and listening, do you have a self-care practice? You never stop.

(TS): I am apart of band congregation of the map -- I was actually kind of knocked out before I got here. Finished that vision of the script. And took me a 30-minute cat nap which is not long enough but enough for me to kind of stay awake to get on transit and slept there and woke up and I have things like that and also, I love Zelda. I don't know if anybody else loves Zelda and the Storytelling and so I did finish April of last year, and two nights ago I met my second divine

beast. But that is my -- it is the one in the desert.

Yeah. So this is how I take care of myself. Some ways. Yeah. Thank you for that question.

(Audience Member 4): Do you have any thoughts on creating community in spaces like academic programs, where rather than bringing people into this very specific group and having initial connections to both community also that this is a sort of random allocation of people. And those of us that are often in leadership positions, teachers and directors and educators, how to help facilitate building community without having this -- in this situation where some of those initial starts to facilitate connection aren't there?

(TS): Yes, I think if I am hearing correctly and my world view is everything and so very Black and in a Baptist church and a part of this those two worlds will always be food and it is always going to be music of some sort. And it is going to be intergenerational and I was really, really scared about being out. And as loud as I am, child, I am a walking trans flag with my clothes and I like to wear pink or blue a lot. And just to say "Hey."

But, anyway, I was really scared to go back into the schools of my loud Mad-Krip self, because the world is really scary right now. And but little, we did not really have and what I first had this, and Facebook, you know, kind of built more into now and there is more social media platforms but I feel like leaning into those things that are easy is what helps foster community. Something that I bring in sometimes. And if I have space backstage and there is a TV, I will bring my own. I will always have snacks, I have stickers and pens. Um, I will have flags around, so people know that it is okay even if they don't and I will have my contact up and I don't have it but I got my lovely cards up here and buttons.

LNU is a mouth, and it has got a pink tongue that looks like Kiss and there are bullocks and I got some pens down here and they are free. Please take them but I think it is about leaving those little hints that you are safe that will draw community to you.

(Audience Member 5): Thank you so much for being here, T.S. Banks, and so we will talk about how we can really make a dynamic too because so much of how you were presenting really left that off the page and I hope we can find a visual representation that does that.

So we will talk about that and my question is so we have been thinking -- I think we collectively and higher education, and theater thinking about how we can change the content. And I am so struck by Walter M who says it is not enough to change the content and you need to change the terms of conversation, and what are those new terms and rituals that will allow you to tell your stories?

(TS): I think because at my core I am a spokesperson. I have always worked with writing prompts and those things. I think that what I do a lot with my cast and crew is sort of things in a hat, a bucket or whatever is around. And I will write down and I will have a prop they can respond to and we can take it out of that and read it to each other but so do you need me to repeat that?

(Audience Member 5): No, we are still looking at the framework and how do we shift the frame?

(TS): You mean off the way I just gave a talk right now?

(Audience Member 5): Yeah it could be that or ways that you work this creating yourself or creating within your ensemble.

(TS): The smallest kids that I work with in playwriting and poetry are five years old and the oldest I work with is my Mom, who is turning 75 this year. And I keep those different age groups and my grand baby is 3 and my daughter is 24, and I also pull things from things that interest them the most. And I am curious to the sounds that my three-year-old grand baby is repeating and echoing and mimicking and how I can use that in my production. Because it is fun when I bring it to the older kids or bring it to my adult groups, they are able to -- what is it? They lean into play. That is what we do.

We lean into play. I think play is what opens up those ways in which we can tell our stories. It also, when we know, as actors, and being able to shed or put on new roles, it is fun to be able to bring comedy into that. I think something else that we do a lot of but I think we do a lot of like improv. And a lot of my talk tonight -- well not a lot but my transitions were all, you know improve.

Being able to read and fill the audience, I think and leading into that sense of play, I think not only brings levity but allows us to play with having to tell our stories.

Does that help?

(Audience Member 5): Yes.

(TS): Okay. In the back?

(Audience Member 6): No sorry I am not raising my hand.

(TS): No worries.

(Audience Member 7): Thank you so much for giving this talk. And I really appreciate it and I am interested in kind of continuing with the session on care, you mentioned that like getting this care that people are safe in the space and having people with resource on hand and I am interested in how you guys have been working to do that in a digital space and like a copresence and what kind of ways could you construct that care as people who may or may not be interested in doing the digital work?

(TS): So I have a Loud N Unchained care group and it is on Sunday and we read to each other and maybe some political works and we check in with each other and we do the go Rose, Bud Thorn. But I also like on my pages, if you follow me, at LNU theater Dot Com, you will see some videos of me giving language like I did at the beginning of today.

Because even though I do have access to these PWI's and stuff, I very much live in a historically Black neighborhood in Madison and most of us don't have access to University though it is less than ten minutes away. And the way I care for my audience, they are invited into those spaces and I do cross racial groups and I am specific when it is a closed group, and in a way that is caring and I also teach in a way, and also have other folks lead parts of our sessions. So that if they want to create their own container and safeway, that they can.

But I think you know, yeah, I think that is how we do it. Like the political education piece is really important. Because I feel that when we have more knowledge, free knowledge and free land, and free Palestine. I think when we free that type of knowledge, people are able to development what feels good for them even if myspace isn't that -- does that answer your question?

(Audience Member 7): Yes.

(TS): Okay. You know, child, I am long-winded and I like to be in front of cameras.

(Audience Member 7): I got another one for you and so, from your telling of your story, it is clear that some of the predominantly historically White structured academic ivory tower spaces have been generously, shall we say, less than ideal. And I was wondering if you can reflect on what an ideal academic space that would -- I mean at some point -- before we get to that step, that what would make the institution safer? And more welcoming?

(TS): Um, I don't think that we can ever make the institution safer. I mean, this is the institution, this land, this building right next to us is red. And that is where my scholarship program was held. And it was mostly Black and Brown folks and definitely we were not safe.

I think that just is -- I think my interest is in how do we make more brave spaces and now do we create the environment where people can mess up, and we hold in love and we correct them in a way that makes them want to learn more and stay in community. Right?

But also, in a way that if other people are harmed, that they don't feel like you just brushed over it for the sake of unity and I also think that making higher education spaces, the University, I think honestly, I have access to the University and some Black and Brown folks and Indigenous folks do and I think the skills that we learn is the platform. Like we need to be empowered and given the tools so we can make safer, braver spaces.

And I think it really is just going to be like before we burn down all the books, and history because, unfortunately, the University's have access to that documentation, that the sacred and the community does not always have access to it, we have to figure out a way to transfer those resources. But like I said, I think it is about -- I think it is about those pathways and accessibility committee reaching out to me, and honesty, I love my people so much and it is so Madison-based and so very specific. And so very Black. And I think the people that however that connection was made bringing folks in to tell their stories is one thing, but also, I also feel a little cringed about it sometimes. Because I am like, but what is the University -- what will that

give back to the people?

So, any ways. So one way that I am doing this is it is recorded tonight and my people are definitely going to have access to this recording and I am always going to give freeplay writing and stuff like that, so I think it is up to us who really believe in community to just say, "F the institution and go get the money however it is." But once you get those tools and skills; however you can dedicate yourself to staying alive, okay, you no, taking care of yourself and also, give back what you can.

(Audience Member 8): I was curious, and even just today was the first day of the conference and there are a lot of conversations around access, and so many of us are really interested in concrete ways that we can approach in place or methods or practices that are just there for our students. No matter where they are coming from, whatever they need. And I am curious because I love the story you talked about that top back would never end. And how it became this moment. And I wonder if there is anything in your processes or when you work with nice groups, where you might come to a point where there are needs to be healing and do you have a process about that? Like you deal with some pretty difficult issues and it could be triggering for people when you don't know what will trigger people.

Is that something that you will say, here is what we are going to do?

(TS): Um yeah back then, that was 2014 when the first LNU aired and LNU spiritual which was a letter to the church aired 2015 and all of those major productions that hit hard like that, or when I am doing poetic transcriptions of folks, those performances are always going to be followed by a talkback and when they come in, they are going to see a flag of some sort and they are going to see -- basically offer the Black church, there will be a usher, and usher will ask you what need and what seating is going to be better for you and they will let you know in there is a sensory room and when I first started LNU my interpretation of Black -- now, I have broadened that too, I asked my Black friends that are body workers, that are sound healers. That use symmetrics and I have them sprinkled throughout the under, and so they are engaged and in something come up and they come back to me. And I have had a lot of them just notice and escort or come sit by someone and either just ask can I offer a hand, do you need a tissue? Something like that and here is my number and you can talk.

That has always been built in from the beginning and I have workshops beforehand when I go into deep work like that. And that will give the community a chance to also explore work like that. And in those workshops we will do breadth work and we will be doing other grounding work.

In hopes that they will be able to bring those tools to their families and communities as well. So I guess that is kind of how it is built in.

(Audience Member 8): That is awesome. That is helpful.

(Katya): We have got time for maybe one more question.

Closing questions? Would you like to offer any closing thoughts?

(TS): Yes, thank you. Yes. I just wanted to say I usually do a poem here but, child, I am tired. So I always say that I hope that you take care of yourselves. I hope that you take in or don't take anything at all that will bring you a sense of calm or bring you a sense of peace or, child, being able to laugh. Maybe movies is your jam but maybe you have is five moments for yourself and that your story, no matter race, religion, what you think about, gender, sexuality is important to be told and documented.

I don't care if you say it out loud or if you put it on a video, I care that you took the time to let someone know or leave a step in a print that you were here and that is how I feel. With that I hope you live your life Loud N Unchained.

[APPLAUSE]