



**ONE BOOK, ONE RICHMOND
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**WHEN THEY
CALL YOU A
TERRORIST**

**BY PATRISSE KHAN-
CULLORS AND ASHA
BANDELE**

**CHAPTER BY CHAPTER
DISCUSSION GUIDE**

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ABOUT THE GUIDE

In this guide you can find prompting questions along with pulled passages from each chapter of Patrisse Khan-Cullors' memoir, *When They Call You a Terrorist*. These passages are meant to be analyzed along with reading each chapter in its entirety, and the questions provided are here to provide entryways to group discussion and reflection. Throughout the book you can trace themes of mass incarceration, access to mental health support, police presence in neighborhoods and schools, terrorism, access to medical resources, personal responsibility versus collective responsibility, intersectionality, intentional family, transformative justice, activism--historic and contemporary, childhood, love, hope, and honesty. These threads are carried throughout the telling of Khan-Cullors personal history and narrative of growth, and come together to tell a broader story for how Black Lives Matter has come to be an international civil rights movement and rallying cry for racial justice.

INTRODUCTION: WE ARE STARDUST

**Why does Cullors map her ancestry in the introduction?
What effect does this have on framing the novel?**

"What could they be but stardust, these people who refused to die, who refused to accept the idea that their lives did not matter, that their children's lives did not matter?" (Khan-Cullors, 5)

What is the significance of Khan-Cullors identifying her ancestors as "stardust?" What might she be saying about the resiliency and longevity of the movement for black power and lives?

**" I WRITE TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH OUR ANCESTORS AND TO
SPREAD TRUTH TO PEOPLE." -SONIA SANCHEZ**

INTRODUCTION: WE ARE STARDUST

"The members of our movement are called terrorists. We--me, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi--the three women who founded Black Lives Matter, are called terrorists. We, the people. We are not terrorists. I am not a terrorist. I am Patrisse Marie Khan-Cullors Brignac. I am a survivor. I am stardust." (Khan-Cullors, 8)

What effect does it have when Khan-Cullors states her full name in this passage? What does she see as the irony of being labelled a terrorist? Are you surprised that protesters have been labelled terrorists?

Tags: terrorism, ancestry, personal responsibility, collective responsibility

" I WRITE TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH OUR ANCESTORS AND TO SPREAD TRUTH TO PEOPLE." -SONIA SANCHEZ

CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY, INTERRUPTED

Long selection, pages 11-17, on a childhood of racial profiling

How does Khan-Cullors describe her neighborhood? What role do police officers play in shaping her environment? Does this impact Khan-Cullors' relationship with her brothers?

Tags: childhood, racial profiling, safety, security, community policing

"WE KNEW WE COULDN'T MAKE IT ILLEGAL TO BE...BLACK, BUT BY GETTING THE PUBLIC TO ASSOCIATE THE...BLACKS WITH HEROIN...AND THEN CRIMINALIZING (THEM) HEAVILY, WE COULD DISRUPT (THEIR) COMMUNITIES...DID WE KNOW WE WERE LYING? OF COURSE WE DID." -JOHN EHRLICHMAN, RICHARD M. NIXON'S NATIONAL DOMESTIC POLICY CHIEF, ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION ON BLACK PEOPLE"

CHAPTER 2: TWELVE

"My mother takes me to Millikan in that car, which initially I deal with because, a car! But after the first day, I realize quickly I have to make a change. Day two and I say, Drop me off here, Mommy, meaning a few blocks away from the school. The car we are in does not look like any of the other cars that pull up to Millikan, all gleaming and new in the morning sun. Kids pour out of those vehicles, Mercedes and Lexuses, and run from waving parents onto the campus's greener-than-green lawn, as all at once I become familiar with a sudden and new feeling taking root in my spirit: a shame that goes deep, that is encompassing and defining. I realize we are poor....Later, as an adult, a friend will say to me, Of course you felt that. Oppression is embarrassing, she will say quietly. But in middle school, segregated as it is, between Black and white kids, wealthy and poor kids, I don't quite know what to do with this feeling or the terrible question that encircles my 12-year-old soul: Am I supposed to be embarrassed about the people who nurtured me, who gave me to the world and who the world gave to me?" (Khan-Cullors, 23-24)

Why did Khan-Cullors feel embarrassed in the beginning of this passage? Why is it important to include her childhood perspective here? How did her ideas about poverty shift and evolve as she grew older?

"ONE OF THE WORST THINGS ABOUT RACISM IS WHAT IT DOES TO YOUNG PEOPLE." -ALVIN AILEY

CHAPTER 2: TWELVE

"I learned I didn't matter from the very same place that lifted me up, the place I'd found my center and voice: school...But having attended schools with both Black and white girls, one thing I learned quickly is that while we can behave in the same or very similar ways, we are almost never punished similarly. In fact, in white schools, I witnessed an extraordinary amount of drug use compared to what my friends in my neighborhood schools experienced. And yet my friends were the ones policed. My neighborhood friends went to schools where no mass or even singular shootings occurred, but where police in full Kevlar patrolled the hallways, often with drug-sniffing dogs, the very same kind that they turned on children in the South who demanded an end to segregation." (Khan-Cullors, 26-27)

How did a heavy police presence in school make Khan-Cullors feel as a child? What are your experiences or impressions of militarized or policed school environments?

Tags: school to prison pipeline, mass incarceration, poverty, transportation, childhood

"ONE OF THE WORST THINGS ABOUT RACISM IS WHAT IT DOES TO YOUNG PEOPLE." -ALVIN AILEY

CHAPTER 3: BLOODLINES

"But what is consistent in this moment--and all the moments that will follow that I am in 12-step rooms--is that I will learn there is something radical and beautiful and deeply transformational in bearing witness to public accountability, accountability before a community gathered for the sake of wholeness....My mother is secretive. Ours is a home where grown folks' business is grown folks' business. Gabriel is public. Even in the moments of shame. He always returns in truth and honesty. He talks to the audience, but I know he is really talking to me, talking to his family." (Khan-Cullors, 38)

How does Khan-Cullors feel about Gabriel's transparency, in contrast with her mother's privacy? How might the notion of accountability impact her work as an activist?

"SHE DID NOT TELL THEM TO CLEAN UP THEIR LIVES OR GO AND SIN NO MORE. SHE DID NOT TELL THEM THEY WERE THE BLESSED OF THE EARTH, ITS INHERITING MEEK OR ITS GLORYBOUND PURE. SHE TOLD THEM THAT THE ONLY GRACE THEY COULD HAVE WAS THE GRACE THEY COULD IMAGINE. " -TONI MORRISON

CHAPTER 3: BLOODLINES

"But while I remember how overwhelmed I was by men talking about things they'd done that had hurt their families while they were struggling with addiction--their absences from family life was a repeated theme--and I remember my father talking about hiding, how he never wanted his family to see him high, what I recall most thinking about was that the honesty was live-giving. As I attended these meetings over the years and after I spent time working as an adult counselor myself, I wondered: Why are only individuals held accountable? Where were the supports these men needed? Men talking about broken dreams and no jobs and feeling hated by the world and being beat up by police." (Khan-Cullors, 41)

How does Khan-Cullors process through hearing people in her father's program talk about individual shame and guilt? How does it change the narrative to hold an oppressive system accountable? Is it possible to heal within a system that does not have structural supports for reentry?

Tags: Accountability, collective responsibility, privacy, transparency

"SHE DID NOT TELL THEM TO CLEAN UP THEIR LIVES OR GO AND SIN NO MORE. SHE DID NOT TELL THEM THEY WERE THE BLESSED OF THE EARTH, ITS INHERITING MEEK OR ITS GLORYBOUND PURE. SHE TOLD THEM THAT THE ONLY GRACE THEY COULD HAVE WAS THE GRACE THEY COULD IMAGINE. " -TONI MORRISON

CHAPTER 4: MAGNITUDE AND BOND

"for us, for Black people, the mass incarceration of first our fathers and later our mothers made our lives entirely unsafe. There were almost no adults who were there, present to love and nurture and defend and protect us. There was almost no one to say our dreams and our lives and our hopes mattered. And so we did it ourselves, the best way we knew how...The groups of kids they first called gangs were really young people who were friends, they were my friends, and they took a defensive posture against what looked and felt like an actual advancing army that came in on foot and came in police cars for which the country had appropriated ever more dollars to patrol us with. And worse than the cars, most frightening of all, were the helicopters overhead. At all hours of day and night they hovered above us, shone lights into the midnight, circling and surveilling, vultures looking for the best next prey...And the gang statutes were written so broadly that even members of Congress, under their definition, could have been arrested. The ACLU would document that, Gang injunctions make otherwise legal, everyday activities--such as riding the bus with a friend or picking a spouse up from work late at night--illegal for the people they target...As soon as you said drugs, as soon as you said gangs, you didn't have to talk about what it meant to throw a bunch of adolescents together in a community with no resources, no outlets, no art classes, no mentorship, no love but from their families who were being harmed, cut daily, themselves." (Khan-Cullors, 55-58)

Compare this passage to the passages highlighting police presence in schools -- what connections do you see? What alternatives does Khan-Cullors give to this kind of policing? What alternatives can you think of?"

**"WE ARE EACH OTHER'S HARVEST;
WE ARE EACH OTHER'S BUSINESS;
WE ARE EACH OTHER'S MAGNITUDE AND BOND"
-GWENDOLYN BROOKS**

CHAPTER 4: MAGNITUDE AND BOND

"I am 16. My brother is in prison. My new father is in prison. There are no support services for teens with family in prison. There are no school counselors to speak to who can help me understand all that I am feeling. But there are friends and I pull them close and I pull them tight." (Khan-Cullors, 62)

How does Khan-Cullors explain the ways in which whole families are affected by incarceration? In the passage, and in today's system, where does support currently exist, and where is it lacking? How might a lack of support affect a greater community?

Tags: mass incarceration, access, chosen family, racial profiling, police presence

**"WE ARE EACH OTHER'S HARVEST;
WE ARE EACH OTHER'S BUSINESS;
WE ARE EACH OTHER'S MAGNITUDE AND BOND"
-GWENDOLYN BROOKS**

CHAPTER 5: WITNESS

"And a thought occurs to me after my mother is reinstated. When was she ever given such grace? Was she ever given such grace? Had she ever lived and been free in even the smallest corner of the world where she was not judged and shamed? Was this the place that could offer her or any one of us this?...I want a place of worship that feels honest...I want mentorship and guidance, not this judgment and punishment I had known all my life. It feels particularly aimed at women and our bodies, our sexuality....I know I am supposed to be on a spiritual path, but the path that Jehovah's Witness has me on does not feel liberating or purposeful--beyond the purpose of shaming and scaring us. It doesn't provide me the feeling of connection and spirit I feel reading Audre Lorde, whose books I carry with me everywhere. Where I can find no center for myself in the Bible, what with its anti-woman origin story, I can when I read the essays in Audre's Sister Outsider. I am changing, my whole life is changing, and for all the parts that feel terrifying and hard, there are other parts many of them, that feel incredibly exciting and bursting with possibility. The possibility of becoming my truest self." (Khan-Cullors, 71-72)

In what ways does Khan-Cullors feel disconnected from her mother and her family? What significance does Audre Lorde hold for her? Can you think of any other non-traditionally spiritual texts or figures?

Tags: spirituality, gender, queerness

"THE PARADOX OF EDUCATION IS PRECISELY THIS--THAT AS ONE BEGINS TO BECOME CONSCIOUS ONE BEGINS TO EXAMINE THE SOCIETY IN WHICH HE IS BEING EDUCATED. "

-JAMES A BALDWIN

CHAPTER 6: OUT IN THE WORLD

"Naomi is enrolled in another school, in another town. She is separated from her friends, loses her coach, and is exiled from the community that had loved and supported her since she was ten years old. And we who love Naomi, we who love her and are Queer, whether we are out or not, will learn in the harshest of ways that this is what it means to be young and Queer: You can do nothing wrong whatsoever, you can just be alive and yourself, and that is enough to have the whole of your life smashed to the ground and swept away. And all you can do is watch." (Khan-Cullors, 77)

In what ways do Khan-Cullors' and Naomi's identities as queer women fit into and/or collide with their identities as black women? As poor women?

What causes Naomi, and her queer community at large, to experience fear about their identity? Have you ever experienced fear about your identity? How does the fear described in this passage compare or contrast with the other instances of fear in the novel?"

"I REMEMBER HOW BEING YOUNG AND BLACK AND GAY AND LONELY FELT. A LOT OF IT WAS FINE, FEELING I HAD THE TRUTH AND THE LIGHT AND THE KEY, BUT A LOT OF IT WAS PURELY HELL."-AUDRE LORDE

CHAPTER 6: OUT IN THE WORLD

"Months before we had been evicted from the condo my mother had rented. She'd moved us into a new neighborhood in order to give us a better life and out of nowhere the owners wanted it back so they could sell it, which meant we had to just get the fuck out. We had 30 days' notice. A mother and three children tossed out like the trash. We were not trash. We were human beings...All of us need more than we are given or could possibly access. Hell, our parents need more than they are given or could access." (Khan-Cullors, 80-81)

Note the moments where access is talked about in the novel-- in reference to housing security, job security, resource centers, etc. Is access at the root of many of the systemic, debilitating issues talked about in the novel? How can obstacles of access be overcome? What are methods to creating access through lobbying and activism?

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CHAPTER 6: OUT IN THE WORLD

"[Donna Hill] tells us we can live with her while we get ourselves stabilized. I'm sure she thought it would take months, but I live there almost two years, and Carla almost three. We both work: me at Rite Aid, later as a dance teacher. But Donna neither charges us rent nor demands money for the food we eat that she buys. We act thoughtlessly, having friends over for small parties. We are kids and behave as such. Donna never yells at us, but she writes super-long letters about what our transgressions have been, what it means to live in community and be considerate....She is the first adult who doesn't think who we are, how we live and love, needs anything but support, some architecture. She understands our, Carla's and mine, emerging idea of building intentional family, a concept that I suppose will later become the basis of our theory of change." (Khan-Cullors, 83)

What's the impact of Donna treating Carla and Khan-Cullors with compassion and leniency? What structure and methods of communication does she provide? Why is this important?

Tags: chosen family, accountability, queerness, poverty, access, housing security

"I REMEMBER HOW BEING YOUNG AND BLACK AND GAY AND LONELY FELT. A LOT OF IT WAS FINE, FEELING I HAD THE TRUTH AND THE LIGHT AND THE KEY, BUT A LOT OF IT WAS PURELY HELL."-AUDRE LORDE

CHAPTER 7: ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND

"I try continually to talk to my father about structured realities, policies and decisions as being even more decisive in the outcomes of his life than any choice he personally made. I talk about the politics of personal responsibility, how it's mostly a lie meant to keep us from challenging real-world legislative decisions that chart people's paths, that undo people's lives.

It was easy to understand that when race was a blatant factor, a friend says to me in a political discussion one afternoon, Jim Crow left no questions or confusion. But now that race isn't written into the law, she says, look for the codes. Look for the coded language everywhere, she says. They rewrote the laws, but they didn't rewrite white supremacy. They kept that shit intact, she says." (Khan-Cullors, 93)

What are some of the white supremacist policies that have affected Khan-Cullors' family and communities? Can you trace them to Jim Crow policies? What does Khan-Cullors mean when she says "structured realities" have kept Gabriel from choosing his own path?

"WE COLLECTED ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND, AND YESTERDAY, NATIVIDAD WRAPPED THEM IN A SHAWL THAT SHE HAD KNITTED YEARS AGO. IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING SHE OWNED. 'A THING LIKE THAT SHOULD SERVE THE LIVING,' BANKOLE SAID WHEN SHE OFFERED IT.

'YOU ARE LIVING,' NATIVIDAD SAID."

-OCTAVIA BUTLER, PARABLE OF THE SOWER

CHAPTER 7: ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND

"We talk about how Black people's relationships are too often defined by harm. We wonder what it means to have so much of our own relationships formed by absence. What goes unsaid, what goes unknown, even as we try to be entirely open before each other? We acknowledge that he has spent more time behind bars and away from me than he has spent time with me." (Khan-Cullors, 97)

Khan-Cullors writes repeatedly in the memoir about Gabriel's ability to be open, honest, and tell his story. Why does this type of testimony become a necessity in their father-daughter relationship? How has forced absence affected the ways they communicate and how they come to really know each other?

"WE COLLECTED ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND, AND YESTERDAY, NATIVIDAD WRAPPED THEM IN A SHAWL THAT SHE HAD KNITTED YEARS AGO. IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING SHE OWNED. 'A THING LIKE THAT SHOULD SERVE THE LIVING,' BANKOLE SAID WHEN SHE OFFERED IT.

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CHAPTER 7: ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND

"It would be easy to speculate about the impact of years of cocaine use on my father's heart, but I suspect that it will tell us less than if we could measure the cumulative effects of hatred, racism, and indignity. What is the impact of years of strip searches, of being bent over, the years before that when you were a child and knew that no dream you had for yourself was taken seriously by anyone, that you were not someone who would be fully invested in by a nation that treated you as expendable?...What is the impact of not being valued? How do you measure the loss of what a human being does not receive?" (Khan-Cullors, 107-108)

Have you often encountered conversations about the mental, physical, and emotional effects of trauma? Why is trauma stigmatized? Have you heard it talked about as a health issue? As individual or systemic?

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-OCTAVIA BUTLER, PARABLE OF THE SOWER

CHAPTER 7: ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND

"My father was part of a generation of Black men who spent a lifetime watching hope and dreams shoved just out of their reach until it seemed normal, the way it just was. I lost my father at a time when 2.2 million people had gone missing on our watch, buried in prisons that were buried in small towns, but somehow and unbelievably this man kept coming back." (Khan-Cullors, 108)

What's the effect of having a personal story told alongside a set of statistics? Does Khan-Cullors way of storytelling change your perception of mass incarceration? What draws your attention most in this statement--the statistic of 2.2 million people incarcerated, or Gabriel's resiliency? How do those two components work together?

Tags: resiliency, trauma, mass incarceration, drug use, personal responsibility, white supremacy, law

"WE COLLECTED ALL THE BONES WE COULD FIND, AND YESTERDAY, NATIVIDAD WRAPPED THEM IN A SHAWL THAT SHE HAD KNITTED YEARS AGO. IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING SHE OWNED. 'A THING LIKE THAT SHOULD SERVE THE LIVING,' BANKOLE SAID WHEN SHE OFFERED IT.

'YOU ARE LIVING,' NATIVIDAD SAID."

-OCTAVIA BUTLER, PARABLE OF THE SOWER

CHAPTER 8: ZERO DARK THIRTY: THE REMIX

"Even later, after he was home and we got him into County USC, medical staff treated him, a poor Black man from a poor Black family, a man with a conviction, not as a person whose critical condition could put him at the top of their list. They were perfunctory, in part because of their overwhelm, I'm sure. They did not remember his name or ours. There was no time for bedside pleasantries and reassurances. Get him in, get him stabilized and get him the fuck out. Somebody else needs this bed. For my brother, hospitals signaled harm if not outright hatred: Monte knew they didn't care for him and were not even particularly invested in seeing him well, only contained, controlled." (Khan-Cullors, 114)

What types of skills and resources were lacking at this hospital? Why was Monte dehumanized in this environment?

**"COME CELEBRATE WITH ME THAT EVERY DAY SOMETHING
HAS TRIED TO KILL ME AND HAS FAILED. "**

- LUCILLE CLIFTON

CHAPTER 8: ZERO DARK THIRTY: THE REMIX

"What kind of society uses medicine as a weapon, keeps it from people needing to heal, all the while continuing to develop the drug America's prisons use to execute people?" (Khan-Cullors, 118)

How does Monte's story show a connection between failings in the health system and failings in the prison system?

Also read: Monte's trial scene, pages 119-125

Tags: mental illness, healthcare, mass incarceration

**"COME CELEBRATE WITH ME THAT EVERY DAY SOMETHING
HAS TRIED TO KILL ME AND HAS FAILED."
- LUCILLE CLIFTON**

CHAPTER 9: NO ORDINARY LOVE

*"We want to build a world in which undeveloped and unrefined emotional instincts--like possessiveness and jealousy--are minimized as much as humanly possible so that all eyes, hearts and spirits are not distracted from the goal. And the goal is freedom. The goal is to live beyond fear. The goal is to end the occupation of our bodies and souls by the agents of a larger American culture that demonstrates daily how we don't matter."
(Khan-Cullors, 148)*

How does Khan-Cullors demonstrate that she is living and leading by example? How do these goals present themselves in the Black Lives Matter movement?

**"LOVE TAKES OFF THE MASKS WE FEAR WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT AND KNOW WE CANNOT LIVE WITHIN."
-JAMES A. BALDWIN**

CHAPTER 9: NO ORDINARY LOVE

"In Ifa, we also recognize and believe that our Ancestors are always with us and must be honored and acknowledged. They are part of what both grounds and guides us, and to understand them, we undertake a process of Divination, readings that help us understand that our purpose and destiny are based on the wisdom of the Orishas and the Ancestors." (Khan-Cullors, 151

This memoir tells the stories of Khan-Cullors' friends, siblings, parents, and ancestors. How is this type of storytelling a way to honor your past while incorporating the present and dreaming the future? Does this process of storytelling seem spiritual in some way?

Tags: spirituality

"LOVE TAKES OFF THE MASKS WE FEAR WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT AND KNOW WE CANNOT LIVE WITHIN."

-JAMES A. BALDWIN

CHAPTER 10: DIGNITY AND POWER. Now.

"...torture is always intentional. It is always premeditated. It is planned out and its purpose is to deliberately and systematically dismantle a person's identity and humanity. It is designed to destroy a sense of community and eliminate leaders and create a climate of fear. This is the definition used by the Center of Victims of Torture...the report, which includes prisoners' testimony and that of jailhouse chaplains who could not be silent, reveals that under the watch of Sheriff Lee Baca, torture in the LA County Jail was, for at least two decades, pervasive, gruesome, systematic and routine....Fingers, hands, collarbones, jaws and ribs were broken. Eyes were popped out of sockets. Arms and shoulders were regularly dislocated...Monte's testimony is not in those pages, those stories of survivors. But my brother is a survivor. My whole family is. I begin to flashback and suddenly it is 1999 and I am watching my mother desperately trying to find my brother. My mother is calling and calling. No one is helping her. I am a kid. I want someone to help my mother. I want someone to help my brother. I want someone to help me. But no one does. No one." (Khan-Cullors, 157-160)

**"EVERY DEFEAT, EVERY HEARTBREAK, EVERY LOSS,
CONTAINS ITS OWN SEED, ITS OWN LESSON ON HOW TO
IMPROVE." -MALCOLM X**

CHAPTER 10: DIGNITY AND POWER. NOW.

How did Monte respond to hearing that other prisoners experienced similar torture while in the LA County Jail? Why was this report powerful and validating to Khan-Cullors and her family? How do you respond to this depiction of institutional terrorism?

Tags: Deviant Power, transformative justice, torture, trauma

**"EVERY DEFEAT, EVERY HEARTBREAK, EVERY LOSS,
CONTAINS ITS OWN SEED, ITS OWN LESSON ON HOW TO
IMPROVE." -MALCOLM X**

CHAPTER 11: BLACK LIVES MATTER

"But our job, in any case, was to interrupt that trouble and we were determined to do it in a way that elevated the humanity of the students. For a year our small team sat in a circle with the young men. We talked about racism and homophobia. We talked about classism and sexism. We pulled apart concepts of addiction, and not so much addiction as in drugs but as in all of the behaviors that can compel a person to behave in ways that are detrimental. Our vision was to interrupt the process that had led the young men to see themselves outside of their own dreams." (Khan-Cullors, 170)

How can you see Khan-Cullors' own experience with the school to prison pipeline reflected in her activist work? What lessons did she learn?

"THIS WAS A TEENAGER JUST TRYING TO GET HOME."

-SYBRINA FULTON

CHAPTER 11: BLACK LIVES MATTER

"I feel like I have to be the particular kind of strong Black people are always asked to be. The impossible strong. The strong where there's no space to think about your own vulnerability. The space to cry." (Khan-Cullors, 178)

What is Khan-Cullors saying here about the responsibility of being a representative and a leader? Is this expectation of strength and composure made even more challenging by emotional and personal activist work?

Tags: transformative justice, school to prison pipeline, self-care, activist culture, intersectionality

**"THIS WAS A TEENAGER JUST TRYING TO GET HOME."
-SYBRINA FULTON**

CHAPTER 12: RAID

"When I am asked to speak at universities, in communities, I share these statistics. I tell them that even as we are labeled criminal, we are actually the victims of crime. And I tell them there are no stats to track collateral deaths, the ones that unfold over months and years spent in mourning and grief: the depression that becomes addiction to food that becomes diabetes that becomes a stroke. Slow deaths. Undocumented deaths. Deaths with a common root: the hatred that tells a person daily that their life and the life of those they love ain't worth shit, a truth made ever more real when the people who harm you are never held accountable." (Khan-Cullors, 187)

How can trauma affect individuals, whole families, and communities? What are ways to hold actors of systemic racism accountable?

Tags: trauma, health, poverty

"MOST MIDDLE-CLASS WHITES HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE SUBJECTED TO POLICE WHO ARE ROUTINELY SUSPICIOUS, RUDE, BELLIGERENT, AND BRUTAL."

-DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK

CHAPTER 13: A CALL, A RESPONSE

"Years later a friend, a veteran organizer, will ask me about security for the march, how we ensured our protection. She will weep when she hears my answer: we didn't think about that. That is how they will disrupt the narrative, the work, she says. That is what J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI planned when he created the Counterintelligence Program. That one generation would be dead, jailed or too traumatized to be able to pass on what is needed to make us safe." (Khan-Cullors, 199)

How does this passage show the connections between the Black Lives Matter movement and civil rights activism of the past? Why is it important to take control of your own story and the narrative of your movement? In what ways is this memoir contributing to the work of documentation and storytelling?

**"FREEDOM, BY DEFINITION, IS PEOPLE REALIZING THAT
THEY ARE THEIR OWN LEADERS." - DIANE NASH**

CHAPTER 13: A CALL, A RESPONSE

"We agree that there is something that happens inside of a person, a people, a community when you think you will not live, that the people around you will not live. We talk about how you develop an attitude, one that dismisses hope, that discards dreams." (Khan-Cullors, 199)

What are the dangers of apathy? How can activist movements ignite new hope?

**"FREEDOM, BY DEFINITION, IS PEOPLE REALIZING THAT
THEY ARE THEIR OWN LEADERS." - DIANE NASH**

CHAPTER 13: A CALL, A RESPONSE

"We are firm in our conviction that our lives matter by virtue of our birth, and by virtue of the service we have offered to people, systems, and structures that did not love, respect, or honor us. And while we are cultivating this idea in our respective meetings and our respective teams, we, Alicia, Opal and I, do not want to control it. We want it to spread like wildfire." (Khan-Cullors, 204)

Why don't Khan-Cullors and the other co-founders of Black Lives Matter want to exert control over the black liberation movement? What influences from the memoir indicate that the Black Lives Matter founding network would prefer community and chapter-based organization?

**"FREEDOM, BY DEFINITION, IS PEOPLE REALIZING THAT
THEY ARE THEIR OWN LEADERS." - DIANE NASH**

CHAPTER 13: A CALL, A RESPONSE

"We know that if we can get the nation to see, say and understand that Black Lives Matter, then every life would stand a chance. Black people are the only humans in this nation ever legally designated, after all, as not human. Which is not to erase any group's harm or ongoing pain, in particular the genocide carried out against First Nation peoples. But it is to say that there is something quite basic that has to be addressed in the culture, in the hearts and minds of people who have benefited from, and were raised up on, the nation that Black people are not fully human." (Khan-Cullors, 205)

What needs to be relearned throughout society for the Black Lives Matter movement to be successful? What are tools and frameworks for this kind of racial re-education?

Tags: longevity, history, activist culture, movement organization, white supremacy, resiliency

**"FREEDOM, BY DEFINITION, IS PEOPLE REALIZING THAT
THEY ARE THEIR OWN LEADERS." - DIANE NASH**

CHAPTER 14: #SAYHERNAME

*"We refuse to allow anyone or anything to make us less than wholly human. And in the fullness of our humanity, we need this, too, along with protests, and the deep discussions and policy pushes and theory, a place to rest to renew. A place to restore."
(Khan-Cullors, 222)*

Why did Black Lives Matter host a healing justice space during the protests in Ferguson? What is the impact of incorporating self-care into protest movements?

Tags: activist culture, self-care, protest

**"WE HAVE CHOSEN EACH OTHER
AND THE EDGE OF EACH OTHER'S BATTLES
THE WAR IS THE SAME
IF WE LOSE SOMEDAY
WOMEN'S BLOOD WILL CONGEAL
UPON A DEAD PLANET
IF WE WIN
THERE IS NO TELLING "
-AUDRE LORDE**

CHAPTER 15: BLACK FUTURES

"Everything is fine: the heartbeat, the growth. I'm doing this. I'm having a baby. I'm having this baby. This baby whom I am already in love with. Not long after, I have a conversation with Future--we are speaking daily at this point, but this discussion is especially significant.

Will you be present at the birth? I ask.

Of course, they say.

I tell them that I am scared about being alone and pregnant and in the middle of a movement that is fighting for the lives of Black children.

Future talks about family, about what it means to have that taken, as theirs was taken from them during the time in foster care.

We agree that this is not the way either of us imagined we would start a journey of parenting.

We also agree that we love one another and this magical life incredibly growing inside of me. We--we--love that baby so deeply. Already." (Khan-Cullors, 236-237).

What are some of the stresses of this pregnancy? How does Khan-Cullors acknowledge and confront her fears about the safety of her child? What structures and support does she seek? How do these choices connect to her idea of chosen family?

Tags: chosen family, intentional family, LGBTQ relationships, childhood

"I DIDN'T FALL IN LOVE. I ROSE IN IT."

-TONI MORRISON

CHAPTER 16: WHEN THEY CALL YOU A TERRORIST

"I know that it was organizers who pulled us out of chattel slavery and Jim Crow, and it is organizers who are pulling us out of their twenty-first-century progeny, including racist and deadly policing practices. And I know that if we do what we are called to do, curate events and conversations that lead to actions that lead to decisions about how we should and would live, we will win." (Khan-Cullors, 249)

Does Khan-Cullors tell a fuller mission of Black Lives Matter than what is commonly portrayed in mainstream media? Why is it important to see Black Lives Matter as a continuation of civil rights movements of the past?

**"IF YOU HEAR THE DOGS, KEEP GOING.
IF YOU SEE THE TORCHES IN THE WOODS, KEEP GOING.
IF THERE'S SHOUTING AFTER YOU, KEEP GOING.
DON'T EVER STOP. KEEP GOING.
IF YOU WANT A TASTE OF FREEDOM, KEEP GOING."
-HARRIET TUBMAN**

CHAPTER 16: WHEN THEY CALL YOU A TERRORIST

"Recognizing that we are working with--and many of us are, ourselves--some of the most traumatized people in the United States, the BLM network has health and wellness directors dedicated to ending toxicity in our own organizations. We have a responsibility to do better by people than simply telling them at the point of burnout to go rest and renew and then come back to the same toxicity that depleted them." (Khan-Cullors, 251)

What has Khan-Cullors learned about healthy communities through her activist work? How are the structures of BLM reflective of the community needs identified in earlier chapters?

**"IF YOU SEE THE TORCHES IN THE WOODS, KEEP GOING.
IF THERE'S SHOUTING AFTER YOU, KEEP GOING.
DON'T EVER STOP. KEEP GOING.
IF YOU WANT A TASTE OF FREEDOM, KEEP GOING."**

-HARRIET TUBMAN

CHAPTER 16: WHEN THEY CALL YOU A TERRORIST

*"And if ever someone calls my child a terrorist, if they call any of the children in my life terrorists, I will hold my child, any child close to me and I will explain that terrorism is being stalked and surveilled simply because you are alive. And terrorism is being put in solitary confinement and starved and beaten. And terrorism is not being able to feed your children despite working three jobs. And terrorism is not having a decent school or place to play. I will tell them that what freedom looks like, what democracy looks like, is the push for and realization of justice, dignity and peace."
(Khan-Cullors, 253)*

How has Khan-Cullors' definition of terrorism evolved over the course of the memoir? In what moments does she define terrorism? Has it shaped your perception of what terrorism can be?

Tags: civil rights history, protest history, activist culture, self-care, terrorism, movement longevity

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IF THERE'S SHOUTING AFTER YOU, KEEP GOING.
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