# Afropunk Video Transcript

[Text on screen]

In the late seventies, a young white poet, wrote a song entitled, "Rock n Roll Nigger". She felt she could liken her personal trials as a feminist musician in a cock rock culture to the African American struggle for equality. The lyrics go on to say "outside of society that is where I want to be". This is dedicated to every black kid who has ever been called a nigger.... ....and every white kid who thinks they know what that means.

(Man) When I was a kid, I was convinced that white people were cool. Being black was like… damn.  I remember being all upset like, "I wanna be white. I wish I was white."

[Rock music]

(Man) I grew up in like... a pretty, a pretty nice neighborhood.

(Man) I grew up in a small town. I grew up kind of wealthy so-

(Man) ...train tracks.

(Woman) When I grew up, in my classes I was always always always the only black person.

(Man) From probably kindergarten 'til third grade, the school that I was going to, I was the only black kid in the entire school.

(Woman) I was the only black person for like, miles. Miles.

(Man) I think that my parents were experimenting with finding the whitest places in America.

(Man) [laughs]

(Man) My neighbors just listened to, like, Iron Maiden  and ACDC and I just dug it. I was actually a b-boy at the time and um, the first punk stuff that I heard was like, Suicidal Tendencies and I saw they were wearing like, big bandanas and that was kind of how I dressed. I was like, Oh these are just homies, you know, just doing a different style so I just. I just naturally adapted to it.

(Man) About when hip-hop was born, look at them. What's the difference between them and all these like punk rock kids? They were wearing the spikes and chains and like and it was all punk to me!

(Man) I would say that really being black and being a punk rocker are pretty similar.

[buzzing sound]

[Tamar-kali] My name is Tamar-kali. I was pretty much born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. My experience was a very unique one in New York City cuz like all these people of color were in the hardcore scene here, you know what I mean? I, like a lot of black kids that were into punk, whatever hardcore, we had all bases covered, you know, cuz you're growing up in the hood. I knew all the joints. I could spit lyrics to Eric B, Rakim, Doug E. Fresh and the Get Fresh Crew, whatever, and I was also listening to The Untouchables, Fishbone, blah, blah, blah.

Being caught in a system that you can't identify with, that you don't support, and like just being contrary, that's the true energy of what punk is. Like, I think one of the most punk angst people I could think of in history in a lot of ways is Nina Simone, you know what I mean? Like, sometimes, people think it's like a certain they can put in a box. It is a feeling and so many people can encompass it, you know? It doesn't have to be some stereotypical… Sid Vicious is like the poster person for a punk. So I definitely think that it's a state of mind and just a way of life.

[Rock music]

(Man) I guess I'll start off by saying how I got into the punk rock.

(Man) I got into the scene…

(Man) I got into punk rock…

(Man) Just got into music from my brother.

(Man) …from my neighbor really.

(Man) Uh, I don't know how I got into the scene.

(Man) I was a little kid. I started getting into it.

(Man) Being a teenager, when I got into that, it's… you’re already feeling alienated or whatever, but being black? You’re gonna feel… I felt that way too, you know? I didn't really feel like I fit in anywhere.

(Man) I finally found like a sector in the world and from, you know, a small view that could accept me and like hang out and like let me weird and not judge me for it.

(Man) It just felt right to do. Way back in a day, I always felt like I didn't want to be like other niggers.

(Woman) I think we're all looking for a place where we could feel comfortable and feel good and like we kind of like want to fit in to something.

(Man) That thing that it was and I walked in a hallway in my high school and like carrying my book bag, looking at all these people in the high school, looking around me and being like I feel like I know something that they don't or I know that I’m just not one of them, you know what I mean?

Where do I belong?

I discovered punk rock and it was cool and it felt like it satiated a good portion of that, but the portion of it that was not fulfilled, so to speak, I feel like was because I was black and I was in this all-white environment.

(Man) Well, punk rock has been an extension of what's been a mostly white experience.

(Man) Most people that are into it are suburban, you know, younger white kids.

(Man) You know I had a lot of black friends, but there's always prejudice because it was like, you know, you got a Mohawk, you listen to rock and roll, um, you know, you must be trying to be like… I don't know… whatever they see on the MTV. You know, when they think punk rock, they think Green Day and all this, you know, California, like everybody's white, being

Skateboarding, but, you know, to me it was a whole lifestyle.

(Matt) I’m Matt Davis. I live in Iowa City, Iowa. So I spent most of my life, you know, worried to death by the fact that if I didn't go straight to college and come straight out and get a decent job, then I would, you know, be living on the street and that would be the worst of all possible fates. I just need so little financially, but there's so much more that life offers and so much more that I want to get from it.

I'm in like five bands right now and I am writing a lot. I don't know any better way to express any emotion. Black people plus punk-rock equals me.

[Heavy rock music]

(Man) The lifestyle is pretty much trying to make reality of your angst against society.

(Man) But it's definitely, it's about struggle, be it personal, social, whatever.

(Man) I think the punk rock lifestyle might mean something just about not settling, you know, ever.

(Woman) I don’t have time for anybody that’s like punching the clock 9 to 5, that's their whole life. Don't you have a passion? Isn't there something that you would just die for or star for? Music is it for me. You know, it’s a disease and there ain’t no cure.

I tried to get away and it went… [Inaudible] here I am and I’m like [scream].

(Man) I had a job. I worked on Wall Street. I thought I wanted to be a banker, but then I realized I didn't want to be a banker and then I just quit the job. I had a great job. My parents like, what are you doing, you got a good job, benefits, benefits, you know? I mean, you know, pension, you know, but, uh, like I quit and I bought a drum kit and I moved to the

Village and I've been down beating the skins ever since.

(Man) I'm that kind of kid, never go beyond the ordinary, the what's normal, you know what I mean?

(Woman) Maybe today like my hair's blue, maybe tomorrow I might shave it all off, and that's just how I felt that day and that's me and that's fine and I don't care if people think it's ugly and that makes people so uncomfortable.

(Man) It's like I did certain things to myself because I don't want to get up and be able to go get that corporate job tomorrow. I don't necessarily want it.

(Man) The mass majority are always into what's being played on the radio and what's being, you know, promoted and what type of clothing is the most popular clothing, you know?

(Man) I'd say that's like the main reason. People just aren't aware of like other options in the world, you know, which is pretty sad actually, you know?

(Woman) Underground music doesn't come to you, you know?

(Man) We don’t want to live that mainstream life and just follow the fucking chicken, you know? We don't want to do that, you know? If you want to live, there is a cost. There's a cost to it. Chances are you might never be rich. [Laugh]

(Man) I've never felt bad about being like poor and broke because I am punk. I've never been… I never felt bad about being sort of alienated because I am punk. I never felt bad about like not being able to find a job or like having to scrounge for food or like, you know, anything because I consider myself to be punk and it's just like that's okay in punk rock.

[Rock music]

[Moe] I'm Moe. I'm in a band called Cipher. We play like hardcore type of stuff. The reason why I do this, as an individual, is the same reason why I do almost everything I do. It has the same… I guess it has the same origin or at least the same direction and that's for the liberation of my people.

[Hard rock music]

My lyrics usually deal with the same things. I'm very directed at with single purpose and the band reflects that.

[Hard rock music]

It’s definitely a little weird, you know, that that's what our band is about and that there's white white guys in the band, you know, but I mean we don't play the average hardcore music and we don't have such hardcore lyrics either, but I think that's the appeal of us because we're who we are, you know?

Truth is truth and if you’re willing to accept it you’re willing to accept it. If you choose not to, then you choose not to.

[Yelling and hard rock music]

(Woman) I was there to listen to the music and get in the pit.

(Man) There's an energy from it, you know, which you don't get from any other music.

(Woman) And the first time I got in that pit, it was hell.

[Rock music]

(Man) Like the energy is just so overwhelming, it just takes over you. Like I remember I used to go to shows like, I'm not gonna dance, I refuse to dance, these people are crazy.

(Woman) Getting bashed in the head.

(Man) We have to show up on the floor punching and fucking like totally like like….!

(Woman) …being tossed over to some other dude.

(Man) Next thing you know, I’m like doing all the stuff like that, you know? You can't even control yourself. You're jumping off the table going, hey, wow, look at me, you know?

That funny stuff, it’s amazing, you know?

(Woman) I got so many bruises.

(Man) It felt natural to go out and for me to go out and freestyle because it was the way I let out all my aggression.

(Man) But there is such an art to it. I mean, come on, to be able to swim in a crowd of people and not get hurt and such a furious… is an art.

(Man) If somebody falls down in the pit, there's a whole bunch of people trying to keep them from getting trampled.

(Man) I never seen anything like that before in my life. People hitting each other, but shaking each other's hands, like right after. It always baffled me and I just fell in love with it.

(Woman) It may be maybe it's some pain [ \_\_ ] but I absolutely loved it.

(Man) The more I got into it, like I like the message like talking about like [ \_\_ ] corporations and big business and the cops, I was all, "Hell yeah, that's how I've always felt."

(Man) Hardcore totally changed my life playing got me into so many different politics and just like, I feel like I'm really doing like a lot of positive things with the world and myself now because of hardcore and because of the scenes of the friends I made.

(Man) Let's face it, punk rock is political music, for the most part. 

(Woman) It was really really angry music which appealed to me and people were saying a lot of things.

(Man) Well like, I'm vegan and like I'm an anarchist. I believe, I believe in peace.

(Man) Us punks are just more socially aware and seem to care more about what's going on the world and what's, you know, what's around them.

(Mariko Jones) My name is Mariko Jones and I've been using at the Glass House for two years, it's a venue in Pomona, California and started- I mean I've always hung around there. Okay. First I'm making flyers behind [inaudible] beach library, it's a venue out in Orange County and from that, from that I was on the newspaper at the high school and I did that, I was the music editor and I started listing all the shows there was that was going on over there and so I did that and then um the idea from making that, those list of shows turned into the in-flight and um I only listed my favorite venues, which is one two three four five venues, my favorite bands are the band's like thought people should check out and like it's grown into a listing of every show that's happening Southern California via electronic, hip-hop, punk, hardcore, ska, um jazz, everything, and we also list art showings, restaurants, it's just kind of like the punk yellow pages.

I felt that I should start this list but also give back in the community what they gave to me learning, I mean how to do things on your own basically and that you don't need to have a large amount of money and I think punk has proven itself. I mean everyone's work together I've been doing this for... since 97 and I, you know, I haven't been in debt or anything on it. Kids have been helping me printing it and distributing it and whatnot just keeping it going. I think that's too, you know, a part, you know, one of the things about the punk scene that I've enjoy is that the kids look out for each other and that they help each other out.

I'm really stoked because, again, you know, the whole it's not really the whole black thing but the whole woman thing, that being this woman DJing and when kids see or find out that I'm DJing, a lot of girls come up and they're like really shocked and they're really stoked and they watch, you know. It makes me, makes me happy I'm all about spreading the word

(Man) DIY is the basis of everything, I mean people should get that tattooed on their heads. You know more people did it themselves, like, especially the black community, everybody comes to the black community with stores you know and sets up. There's very few black owned stores and black neighborhoods. If we were more DIY conscious it'd be... incredible.

(Man) The amount of stuff that I need to feel like I'm doing well, you know, or feel comfortable is astonishingly low.

I don't, I don't live in a very classy house, it's you know just kind of a traditional Punk house.

It's like, we just got today this huge list of, you know, things we have to do to fix it up and there's too many people living here and this that and the other.

(Man reading paper) Kitchen east wall, where's the east wall?

(Man) I don't know.

(Man reading paper) So, east wall's in disrepair.

(Man) Yeah it is.

(Man) Kinda, I like it.

(Man) We should tear it all off.

(Mean reading paper) Kitchen light fixture cover is definitely missing. That is not a lie.

(Man) We could make one out of saran wrap.

(Man) I only pay 100 bucks a month for rent, our utilities never really come to that much so probably like, I probably need like 200 to 250 bucks a month. I figured out that I can pay my rent if I sell blood twice a month, which I've done before, for rent. I've got an immense amount of records and I know the guy who works at the record store, he's a friend of mine so nights that he works in the boss isn't in I take care of bills. 

I don't know it's it's kind of nice being inventive I mean I know how to do, I've done computer tech stuff I've been a waiter and whatnot before, those are all fine things but I've just got so much other stuff I'd like to do in the kind of traditional I resent having to do anything for anybody else punk rock shtick flows rely in my blood so, five, fifteen bucks in my pocket on any given day I'm feeling pretty good.

[Music]

(Man) Once I started, you know, dressing differently and stuff that's when the problems started.

(Man) They thought it was a "phase" you know.

(Man) For a while my mother wouldn't go like shopping with me.

(Man)  she wouldn't allow me to be part of this, part of such a negative culture.

(Man) She kicked me out of the house because I was kind of embarrassing her, I guess she would say.

(Woman) My mom was crying once about a year ago and she's just like, "I'm sorry I did this to you," and I was like, "Sorry for what?" she's like, "I'm sorry you had to born be black."

(Man) I don't know, like, I think typical quote unquote like punk rock kidswith the big hair, you know the big bright Mohawks and like the leather jackets and things, I think she was kind of turned off by that like it's just so like anti culture that she couldn't deal with it. And she didn't want her son being part of that I guess.

(Man)  We were suburban black family and I dyed my hair green and I just, it's not too cool, like you know suburban black family, you know what I'm saying? 

(Man) What are your parents gonna think? "Oh, my son's a fag. Oh my god my son's going crazy."

(Woman) My mom thought I was crazy, like my mom, like when I was at school my mom and my sister would like go through my closet and throw away stuff that I wore.

(Man) I really don't associated anybody my family whatsoever anymore, so. They, my parents don't think too highly of me.

(Woman) The reason why I think punk rock appealed to me moreover was because of the aesthetic, that's the thing that got my attention first and that now as an older woman, I consider myself somewhat culturally aware, I'm aware of the direct influence of African peoples as well as the indigenous people of America on the Punk prototype image. But, you know, in hindsight I realized how it drew me in because growing up I had you know access to these images of, you know, folks in the bush, tribal peoples what-have-you and I remember them being really striking and moving me just because I really saw just the stark beauty in it all and so when I first started seeing images of Punk like this really bright colored here and safety-pin piercings and things like that, it was pretty much on that same level just like a contemporary Eurocentric version of what people in the bush were doing. All these things that you know existed before and now because I know exactly who I'm being and I'm like I have no fear around it, I'm very clear, my choice to look the way I do is just based on me relating to traditionally African aesthetic but it was through Punk initially that I had that, those senses reawakened.

(Man) You know, when I went downtown I saw a bunch of dynamics. Of course there was the overall downtown thing but within that there was all these subdivisions of genre, you know even within punk-rock there was like the drug punks, and the peace Punks, the political punks, and squatting punks, some of them were all down in the same set some weren't, then there was the poser punks, then you had skinheads, you had the Krishna skins, then you and the straightedge skins, you had the sharp skins, you had the Nazi skins. I mean this shit was like, wow, this shit was nuts.

(Man) I started getting like, whoa, you know like, where do I fit in now?

(Man) Like I felt like that I totally didn't fit in with the white Punk kids, you know what I'm saying, like I had to go out of my way to prove that I was wrong to them.

(Man) I have to go like nine times harder than the average person or let's say a white person.

(Man) I would put up a mohawk, you know, ripped my t-shirt and put all these safety pins on and cut myself a razor and you know all the junk.

(Man) One of the first times I actually grew dreads was because I felt that I wanted to have the flowing hair of Caucasian.

(Man) I really wanted to have spiky hair and actually I think at the end of high school I straightened my hair to have spiky hair I really wanted to have punk rock hair.

(Man) I actually did straighten my hair for a while.

(Man) I was always straightening my stuff.

(Woman) I actually stopped straightening my hair for this whole summer and I felt really, like, I was being stared I felt really conspicuous and like people were really judging me.

(Man) When I first started going to shows and like I was the only african-american kid there, it was kind of weird. It was kind of like, I felt out a place and like, I didn't really know, like, who to talk to and like, where to stand, if I should be here.

(Woman) I would feel like everyone turns around, look at the black girl coming in.

(Woman) You know, I'm usually always the only black person.

(Man) usually I'm the only fucking black kid at shows.

(Man) It's usually I'm the only black person.

(Woman) Yeah I was like the only black person there.

(Man) I'm the only one that I know.

(Man) There's 300 white kids and two black kids.

(Man) Like damn.

(Man) Yeah.

(Woman) Being the only different one was was really rough, you know.

(Man) We just kind of pretty much by ourself. Not really any black Punk's around here. So all my friends are white pretty much.

(Man) I'd like to find some more like black rock-and-rollers, black punks.

(Woman) When I would see, you know, another African American punk rocker, it was cool, you

know,I mean I wanted to say hi. A lot of times I did I was like, "Hey, what's going on?"

(Woman) Like I always speak every black person at any punk show. I just have to know what they're about, you know.

(Woman) Yeah I go out of my way to make friends with people of color.

(Man) The thing that's really cool about lots of lots of other black folks that are involved in the scene is like, you know, you pretty much can just speak directly to them.

(Man) If, you know, if, if you're here and I'm here and we're both black, that could be the end of our like similarities, that could be like all we have in common but not like [inaudible] we have more in common than that, you know.

(Woman) Okay it's, here's this punk show there's like a hundred kids here, four of them are black. This is kind of strange like how do I, how do I like go up to them and talk to them because sometimes when you'll get this straight like just this, like I'm here and I'm black but I'm not here to be black, I'm here to like listen to punk rock and blah blah blah blah blah. And just me being the person I am, I'm just like, "Oh hey what's up black?" You know and sometimes you just totally get the ill face for that.

(Woman) There's this sort of like, either there's a couple of reactions. There's like a pure excitement like, oh my god oh my god, or there's like sort of like this weird like shame, almost like yo I'm the only black person yeah how come you're here? You know.

(Man) Like somehow I was like, taking away from their uniqueness look at the last time they came to the club they're the only black kid.

(Man) Like hey man. This my club! Go to club down the street!

(Man) If another black person showed up, I'd be mad. Like, hey I'm supposed to be only black person here. Step off. Go find your own scene.

(Woman) If I do see like a black guy at a show that I would want to talk to, a lot of times I'm like, well I don't really want to talk to him because he'll think that I'm talking to because I'm black and I don't want to be like, well, you're black and I'm black, we should talk, just because we're both at the show. So usually I don't even like, even if I do want to talk to someone I don't just because I feel like an ass.

(Man) I don't want to be on the level of also like, you're black I'm black let's talk, but in this scene itself that's necessary because that is a problem. There's a, there's a very... there's a wall that's been created and am not sure if it's by us or by them.

(Woman) I think the scene is embraced, has embraced me being different or [inaudible] different but just my individuality and whatnot, they've been they've totally been down. The whole color line thing, you don't, you know it doesn't even faze me at all I mean, you don't, I don't think about, I don't think they think about it either. Because I usually joke around my friends I'm like, "When you hang out with me, do you think I'm a black person? Blah blah blah." And they're like, "no we just, you know, you're like you're Mariko. You don't even act like a black person, you don't act like an Asian person, you don't act like a white person, you're just Mariko. 

I mean I've met other black people too, it doesn't fade you. They're just that amazing, they're amazing that's that's just the bottom line, just what they do, you know?I think there's some people, you just, it's just so over, you know, like they're just I guess that wonderful.

I feel like I stand out I was always the girl, the black girl with glasses or the sister with specs. So being black isn't even a concern. I don't really see a problem, um I can't think of any incident where I've heard anyone you know call me a [ \_\_ ] or wouldn't let me into a show. I've never seen that before and so I feel like the ones who are always complaining are the ones who aren't doing anything.

(Woman) A lot of like white people, you black people, put black people in different categories like you know a safe black person like a black person that you can confide in.

(Man) You know they think cuz you're, like into the punk like thing you know, that like somehow it magically makes you like a safe black.

(Woman) A lot of people mistake me for that safe black person.

(Man) See benas later than I always heard white people come out their face and they never knew I was listening.

(Man) People don't think twice about the [ \_\_ ] they save you because they're always around a bunch of white kids.

(Woman)  I moved into this punk-rock house when I got here and I was like sitting in the living room combing my hair and my roommate came out I started just laughing, she just like never seen a black woman's hair out before and it was just like this joke to her.

(Man) [inaudible] rooming house stuff, she was, she was just saying that she didn't like the way that all black guys looked at her or something and it made her nervous or something, and she was like those people or whatever, and I was like, "I'm one of those people too."

(Woman) I have had friends who really really really thought that everybody except for me they were [ \_\_ ].

(Woman) White kids come to me and tell me shit like, "because I'm an anarchist my politics are able to transcend race and gender."

(Woman) It's really discouraging and it's really frustrating when you know that people are not trying to have a dialogue with you. People want to like tokenize you, people want a multi-cultural vision of punk rock and they're you know like they want to have all the show pigs out and be like look at all the Negroes but at the same time they don't want to deal with you as a person to experience this race.

(Man) It's almost kind of like we know you're black but don't tell us.

(Man) Well they consider it's an, "Yeah, we're all the same."

(Woman) There's no black, there's no white man we're only human.

(Woman) Like no, just like you know it's cool man, you know I listen to the same things you do blah blah blah blah.

(Man) We can see you're black but you don't have to keep rubbing it on our faces.

(Man) I'm not like you and that to me is an insult to say I am, we're all the same, you know, its like I'm very different, you know.

(Woman) Yeah we're only human that's you not acknowledging your [ \_\_ ] white privilege.

(Man) You can put on a [ \_\_ ] suit and tie any time you feel like. You're in college now.

(Man) I think that if someone was to try to talk about like issues such as like reparations for like slavery, people would be kind of like taken aback by that.

(Man) A black band you know touting Black Power lyrics to a white audience is something that doesn't necessarily make sense for the white audience.

(Man) The song we traditionally and our sets with is called Protoculture. It's a retelling of

of the abuses of the middle passage, it's also a critique of your eurocentric culture.

The lyrics to the song, the beginning of the song is, "What [inaudible]. The bitterness alien I'm fed. Deuteronomy chapter five verse ten: I bestow mercy down to the thousandth generation on the children that love me and keep my Commandments. They rounded us up. They ordered us dead. One hundred thousand men. Women and children shackled like chattel, beat til we bled and they all said, round them all up, round kill them dead. Cut off his hair, cut off his head, burn the remnants of what was left, lied to their children why we all raped them. Whore all their women, all their men, pillage the beauty and steal the brilliance that beats in the heart of every human. Do away with the firmament of the heavens.

A lot of kids, they memorized all the lyrics. Kids do that, you know, a lot of kids do that and that's and that's good, you know, but even after that there still is still the next step, you know, processing information what does mean to you.

(Woman) I'm novia.

I know Marvis it through ubiquity so I'm just interested to know if they do hear the lyrics and do know what the lyrics are [inaudible] what do they think

about them?

(Man) I can't really understand their lyrics when they're singing but, you know, when you find out what they are just, they support really good causes.

(Man) It's simply met [inaudible] it's like summing up like their beliefs and how they feel about like human nature and how people treat each other, stuff like that.

(Man) I know that it's partially about racism and also, I really just get the basic idea of it about slavery in this country and how it got [inaudible] and I wish I had really a better understanding the situation.

(Man) I appreciate the fact that and hope for reality that people come away with something they pick up the CD and through listening to us it progresses their politics that's fine, if they don't exactly get it that's fine, they don't like it that's fine,but overall I think I think people leave with something.

White kids in the hardcore scene are white, hardcore isn't going to isn't going to magically wash away their whiteness. But my music, honestly, is not for white people at all. When I'm writing and I direct the audience and I say we, I'm not saying we us hardcore kids, I'm saying we us oppressed people, my people, people who can understand, who have a history of oppression.

I think the whole purpose of art is to provoke some sort of introspective thought and I think on stage we do that.

This is like raw sort of emotion from a place I think these kids haven't, you know, experienced anything from.

I hope, hopefully its more than them just reciting these words, hopefully they get something from it.

(Woman) Like I usually have the most problems when I choose to date like white punk boys.

(Man) It's just like a novelty, just like you know, it's not me it's just like oh you know this black punk rocker.

(Man) You know it's really cool, it's like you know, "You're black and your punk." It's just like, I feel like, you know, finally I have like all the bases covered.

(Man) I always wonder you know how real it can be is it, you know I, it's sad, it's too bad, you know?

(Woman) I meet guys at shows so I usually date white guys.

(Man) I've never dated a black female.

(Man) Like my last like seven girlfriends have been white, am I like. What does that mean? Is there, does that say something about me or does that say something about like where I'm at in my head?

(Man) Do you want to be exotified? You know if it's working to your advantage, sometimes yeah you'd probably use that. You know. 

(Woman) So call me back please and let me know what your plans are for this weekend, all right take care, buh bye. Dating hasn't been a problem racially. Black guys are lacking in my scene, I haven't been able to find one. I'm not like only dating white people, I date whatever, but I have this ideal person and, and I can't meet them. But I've met so many rad black guys but

I just have not been attracted to though, because there's always one or two things I'm just like, ugh, you know, no. I feel that if they're not in my scene they wouldn't understand. I'm not all FUBU down or you know wearing some hoochie outfit, I actually, you know, respect myself and you know I like myself for who I am, I'm not wearing braids or anything I don't haven't, you know, I'm not talking or acting whatever, you know you're supposed to be black and so I have this complex where I'm like, I can't date anyone black because, because they have, they look at me as if I'm some white kid then. Because of the way I act and because my background, I have you know two parents who are still married that live in a [ \_\_ ] nice area, you know and, and

I can actually truthfully say this now. My mom was like, "You know, if..." She's like, "You can date a black guy but I really don't think you should, because, you know, they're, they do drugs, and you know, they're, there, they won't be able to pay rent and they won't be able to take care of you and whatnot, you know they're really bad," and so I grew up with that but I mean I never let that set in and whatnot.

And it sucks because I think I know, I know my background, I know my heritage and whatnot but they think that I don't I'm not you know like the black person. Like I'm not that mentality. I, you know, love myself, you know, like I'm not gonna be like yeah I'll go like in the bathroom with you guys or something, you know I have respect for myself.

That's why I've just never really like tried or ventured with dating black men. I just, I just haven't met that guy I guess.

(People saying x 12) White people. 

(Man) We will talk about how white people are so this that and the other to black people, but we don't talk about how black people do more dirt to black people. We can't complain about other people's [ \_\_ ] unless we fix our own [ \_\_ ].

(Man) Black people, a lot of black people in my opinion have a tunnel vision of what black should be and black people can't like stray outside of that, it's wrong you can't do that. It's taboo.

(Man) Brothers always used to kind of joke about white cats having money and not taking care that clothes and black folks that have no money and you know fighting behind the scuffle in sneakers and carrying toothbrushes in our back pocket, so. You know here I go coming from that cleaning my Puma's you know just if I stump it on the [ \_\_ ] curve to having clothes I just look like I don't give a fuck.

(Man) So they didn't like that, they didn't understand was skater diamond or like dragons you know powell-peralta and all that stuff that I was flossing, you know I got stuffed in the garbage can because there was always calling me out man.

(Man) Oh, God look at this. Oh no he's a devil son! Oh god he's a devil worshipper. Look at this [ \_\_ ] got skulls on his [ \_\_ ] son.

(Man) It's kind of aggravating, you know, if I'm like walk to like the store across the street I have to put on like, normal clothes or something try to look as normal as possible so nobody like bother me.

(Man) Getting chased around, you know, getting [ \_\_ ] beat up and shit, put in hospital you know stuff like that.

(Man) I got hit in like the back of the head by like a coke bottle or beer bottle or something just threw it, and like I guess knocked me out [ \_\_ ] out.

(Woman) Growing up, people used to be dissing me in the street a lot. I had this world war two antique U.S. army coat and um you know my combats or whatever so I would get like a lot of people harassing me calling me bull dagger dyke bitch.

You know, just I felt a lot of, just like really violent hateful energy towards me.

"[ \_\_ ] is that [ \_\_ ] you're wearing", you know. "Oh you have that [ \_\_ ] in you lip like a white [ \_\_ ]?" You know and then I remember like coming into my identity as a young African American woman, like feeling my culture and recognizing how I grew up kind of like hating myself to a certain degree and coming out of that and when I embraced my culture, that's when I really started getting called white, you know like, in my mind me my whole crew we want some hardcore black nationalist type shit. But to the average person, we was just doing some white [ \_\_ ].

When I'm wearing a mohawk, I really feel it, there's cultural validity in it for me. It's not just a trend or style. I have Mohawk blood as well as Cherokee blood and West African blood, you know being a descendant of enslaved people from West Africa, and I remember one time I had a bantu tonight at Mohawk and I was like oh how interesting you know I just manifested the fusion that existed me genetically in my hairstyle, so it's on that level it's not it's not a trivial thing.

(Man) I think that blacks have always felt that they that rock and roll was white.

(Man) I felt like for those of us who knew it was a redundant term, black rock. 

(Man) We literally invented rock.

(Woman) You remember Chuck Berry or Little Richard?

(Man) Chuck Berry, like little Richard.

(Man) Chuck Berry, you know, Little Richard.

(Man) Or Chuck Berry, you know, Little Richard.

(Woman) What kind of music did they play?

(Man) Punk rock is nothing but a hybrid of rock'n'roll which we of course created.

(Man) Punk is black music.

(Man) Punk rock is black music.

(Man) Artistically, back folks always do wild shit, have always done wild shit, and I'll always do wild shit. 

(Man) The culture is like a gift from black people in this country man, everything.

(Man) Nothing was easy to welcome someone into the home. Then we just forgot who we are.

(Man) But don't come into my house, man, try to take it over, you know what I'm saying? And then give me no props, you know what I'm saying?

(Man) It's one thing to read about see bbop and things being appropriated in our past, it's a whole different nasty disgusting feeling tp be living through that shit. 

(Woman) It's scary. Right, you know. They're influenced by us. High five! I ain't never seen a white motherfucker do a high five until, you know, after watching a few basketball games or whatever you see the brothers do and next thing you know, they do.

(Man) Nobody's told white people in a long time that rock'n'roll is not white music.

(Man) When hardcore first started, you know, when it was punk rock or whatever I'm sure that it didn't have, you know, the black experience in mind. But now, if you want to talk about hardcore, the black experience like he said it's a key element that goes unspoken.

(Man) We're definitely important to it cuz I've think a lot of us um started some of the ground breaking stuff like, you got Bad Brains, you know.

(Man) Bad Brains was probably the best punk band to ever exist.

(Man) Their music is to me as far as they can get.

(Man) [inaudible] Some punk rock.

(Man) I was just like, damn. Okay. That blew me away right there.

(Man) It totally blew my mind.

(Man) I remember seeing the Bad Brains and going, "Woah..."

(Man) I was astounded. And I had heard them but to see them live like that, that shit fucked me up, you know?

It was the angriest most violent talk shit I ever heard and it was great.

(Man) Having the Bad Brains, that's like the baddest fucking group, ever. That shitjust made me feel like, "Yo I'm supposed to be here too."

(Man) Any black motherfucker with a distorted guitar made me feel good, cuz I was into that shit and it made me recognize that I was not alone.

(Man) How long ago I have been missing this [inaudible] some brother's come up and it's, "Aw man, you just playing that white boy shit." I'm like, "Man [inaudible] this Bad Brains motherfucker."

[Bad Brains song]

(Man) After high school, I went to Howard and it initially absolutely was a reactionary move. I wanted to leave Long Island where the white people were and go to Howard where the black people were. Throughout my journey at Howard, I discovered an organization known as Ubiquity, which is, it's the oldest Afro-central organization on Howard. I became president of the organization. I'm an alumni now but it's, it's a lifelong commitment. I still try to contribute when I have some free time, take a drive back to DC and attend a program. I really feel blessed about those type of experiences. 

Coupled with the fact that I do the hard core thing, you know. But I think, what distinguished me and what distinguishes me from a lot of the white kids in that scene is I don't identify primarily as hardcore. I'm African, that's that's how I identify myself has because at the end of the day those are the people that are going to have my back and when when revolution comes those, are the people who are going to be fighting for. It's not going to be a hardcore contingent unfortunately.

(Man) And I have to say on the flipside, if it wasn't for my my friendship with, you know, these guys who are like my closest friends, I think that I would have a different, maybe even a less developed, understanding of, you know, of like white America, white people and things of that nature.

(Man) Man it was good to see you, I mean I haven't talked to you in a while.  

(Man) I know.

(Man) My cell phone, like

(Man) It's outtie, right?

(Man) I lost it last week.

(Man) So what are you gonna do? You gonna get a-

(Man) I already got-

(Man) You gonna get a local number?

(Man) I already ordered, I like 202 number.

(Man) That really kind of hardly makes any sense.

(Man) It does not make any sense.

(Man) Yeah well man, like you're not down there anymore. You got a job up here so you're really not going down there too much, so why would you keep 202?

(Man) I'll break it down like this: All the white people that call me are in this room.

(Man) Yeah, yeah.

(Man) You know, and they can pay. [laughs]

(Man) They can pay to talk to a black man [laughs].

(Man) Reparations.

[laughter]

(Man) Reparation value plan, from Sprint Wireless. Making white people pay. It's like, "Oh you're white? Press one. Beep. [Inaudible] just pay 30 cents." Ah that's a good idea.

(Man) Okay no. So what's going? Are we ready?

(Man) Yeah.

(Man) Cool.

Okay yes let's do that.

(Man) Let's just get it over with.

(Man) Let's go.

(Man) I could have been like, "Oh I have a bunch of like, cool black friends and like dashikis and anks around, so like, you know peace guys, you know what I'm saying, like but, you know having close white friends but also espousing the beliefs I have and being open and very, like, true to both of those things that are part of my life. I think it makes my life more challenging.

[Shouting in song]

But it also makes me like a more developed human being.

(Man) Should we hear it? 

(Man) Yo let's hear that sound. 

(Man) Yeaaaah.

(Man) Let's hear it.

[Listens to recording of sound]

[Laughter]

(Man) Yuckkkkk. Yuck. Yuuuuuck.

(Man) Alright we're done. Just do it.

(Man) Yo we sound like a 12 year old boy. One twelve year old boy.

[laughter]

(Man) Being, you know, president of like Afrocentric organization, and being in a hardcore band, you know, which is a unique experience. I recognize that probably, you know, nobody's experienced that and that's, that's a blessing and I think that makes me a kind of unique human being who has a unique idea.

(Man) Yo wait, [name]? We make it a pact to all jam tomorrow?

[inaudible conversation]

(Man) Unique ideas is what we need to, you know, sort of, have some sort of social progress.

So, I have to say on both sides it's been, you know, positive and like a growing experience in terms of understanding this thing called race, you know, so.

(Man) The scene, punk scene, is all, its all, come a very long way I think and I think that it will go a lot further.

(Man) I think that people are not gonna really take a take a chance to make the scene more inclusive unless there's a movement within the people of color in pop rock to really make a change.

(Man) You know if you're black punk, you don't want to hide. Try and be visible. Promote the hit out of your band, talk about the things that you go through that maybe all the white punks don't go to through. You know, try and form punk bands with other black musicians.

(Woman) When I moved to Claremont um, like I got a lot of like, shit talking from the Pomona kids, they were like, "Why do you talk like a valley girl then?" you know, and, and, "Why aren't you going yo yo yo and why aren't you this and that?" While you're moving to

Claremont, that's where all the rich kids live, you know, you're gonna be like white and playing soccer and I was like, what?

I'm sure like these black kids that I went to school with fucking think I, you know, I'm such a joke that I sold out or something. I didn't sell that at all and and I know that. The kids in Claremont have embraced me- like there's Jewish kids, white kids, you know kids who were

Mexican, black kids, Asian kids, there was just this mixture and you know that's when I felt the most comfortable. It had nothing to do with the quote-unquote whitewashing, you know. I wasn't whitewash because I'm not, I'm not, you know? Like living that, you know? I don't think I am.

I feel like my mind has been so warped about all this, that that's why it's taken me so long to now start realizing my heritage. I mean like to actually feel proud and and whatnot. But I'm very proud about being black and I do show it, um I have a shirt too that I'm making that's saying, you know, 100 percent proud, you know, you know, black is beautiful, um and in that [inaudible] going you know, "I'm Mariko Jones, I'm, I'm, you know, myself and I'm fucking proud and what not." 

Everything in my head, I have to figure out how to get everything straightened.

(Woman) There's a community that's gonna be hard for me to reach and they're black, you know what I mean? Like, it's not the indie rock scene, that, I can't imagine that being an issue or a problem because I've seen how supportive they've been with a lot of different artists but the jiggy Negros, I want you! You know what I mean? I want to turn your ass out, you know that mean, open up your mind. Cuz all this music, this so called white music, it's getting sold in the Midwest, a bunch of white kids are buying it. They're at the hip hop shows. You know, it's never hard to get a white audience, I don't feel. You know, I mean history has shown that, you know it's administering to our own community that's the hard part and not the, not the the Bohemian Negroes or the Artic- artists, you know I had a lot of artists come to see me too, you know it's folks on my block, you know what I mean?

Those are the people that need to hear my music. That's gonna be the hard sell.

You know, they be blasting Ashanti, let me hear them blast to Mark Holly, you know what I'm saying? The world would change, you know what I'm saying, if we could get up, get it those folk.

That's going to be the hard sell. 

[Music blasts]

(Woman) Hopefully like, in the future like, a lot of different things will be, you know, black.

(Man) I say I made black music to expand the parameters of what is understood by music.

(Man) Like my grandmother tells me, black people come in all different colors, all different like roses come in different colors. So people will see us walking down the street and they all like give us dirty looks and I'm like, "I don't even know," you know, "yeah I don't know what's up."

(Man) We're not limited, we're not limited to anything, you know what I'm saying? It's like, we can, we can be so many different things. We can, you know, you don't have to have a tunnel vision.

(Man) Most of my conscious existence has had punk rocker and the hardcore in it to some extent. All of my life has been black. It's not ever been anything that I am going to downplay or celebrate less or enjoy less or be less. It's who I am. I just wish that I lived in a place where there were my people, where there was that sense of culture, where I didn't have to, y'know, enjoy and celebrate and think about black life and black issues and being black by myself where there were other people who were interested and not interested in some, you know, textbooky way but interested because it's their life.

I've had it, I got to get out and do something else. I've been as patient as I could.

We had all kind of thought talked a year so ago about moving somewhere. More we thought about, the more we were like, it would be better to just tour because touring is what we enjoy doing and, you know, the more that we've toured and the longer we have, the more we've realized that we can really do whatever the hell we want, so we are going to. We're just going to crisscross the country until we get sick of it, and if we don't get sick of it then we're not going to stop.

You know, now that we're, you know we all want to go I can get out that's good.

We want to go, and we want to play, and we want to do it until we can't. So I'm going to.

[Text on screen]

On August 10th, 2003, three days before another tour, Matt Davis, who never drank or did drugs, had a fatal heart attack.

Having played shows all over the world, he died never having found the community he longed for.

He was 26.

(Man) Try to end this conversation is like, I have no idea what we could say to close this, because it's not closed, you know what I mean?

(Man) Punk and hard core has been like a great great great experience for me and it's like um... I would, I wouldn't trade it for anything and I think that like I'm I think the like every black person should go out and go to experience at least one one punk or hardcore show in your lifetime. You know what I'm saying?

(Man) You know you don't have to go get the new Slayer album or whatever but, you know, just go back and check out Jimmy, you know.

(Man) But to those who think that it was a waste of time or just self-destructive or all of that, it's actually the opposite all of those things, you know. It's like that whole, that whole period of my life for me, I can't speak for nobody else, was a lot of about self learning. You know some of the lyrics on these albums were kids asking a lot of real deep questions about themselves, about their place in the world, about their relationships with their parents, about their future, about their unhappiness, you know, about what they want and when kids ask questions like that people should listen.

(Woman) I think being being at the age that I am at now, it's terribly important for me to be identified as a black person.

(Man) I think it gets more important the older I get. I, it's something that I never really wanted to make an issue. But I think that's naïve. 

(Woman) I don't feel less black because I'm less normal.

(Man) I just wanted to be like, accepted, like, look I might look different but I'm still a black guy, you know.

(Man) I remember, I remember after I had my friends from uptown that were like, they used to make fun of me for years. Then they came to see my band...and they were like, "...Yo. That shit was dope. You could slam like that?" And then, next think I know, motherfuckers calling me up, "Yo we, you we want to get alternative tonight. Want you to go. We want to see some slam dancing," and then I find, I've come to find I start going to clubs, I see that dude that used to be an LSB boy [inaudible], now he got a mohawk!

(Man) But as I got older, there was no question whether I was part of the black community. Like I got introduced to the being an adult black person. I got pulled over by cops when I was walking. There's no, I don't have to say, "Am I a part of the black community?" I walk out on the street, I figured out that like all black people are part of the black community, you don't have to do anything, you're black, you know? Yeah so, that was comforting.

[afro-punk graphic flashes on the screen]

[a james spooner picture]

[afro-punk films]

[Credits: Moe Mitchell, Tamar-kali Brown, Mariko Jones, In memory of Matt Davis 1977-2003]

[The KIDS (in no particular order)]

[Ralph Darden. Philadelphia, PA. Bands: franklin, jai alai savant]

[Nelson. Pamona, CA]

[Harold Graham. Mobile, AL]

[Corianne Baker. Malboro, MA]

[Jeff Jaworski. Sacramento, CA. Bands: red tape]

[Grant Greys. Minneapolis, MN]

[Mike Lythcott. Atlanta, GA. e-zine: bandphotography.com]

[Forbes Graham. Silver Springs, MD. Bands: amalgamation, thought streams, pay the price]

[Temesgen Wuhueh. Washington D.C. Bands: super chilincilla rescue-mission]

["Blade". New York, NY]

[Chaka Malik. New York, NY. Bands: burn, orange 9mm, moving to america]

[Victor. Little Rock, AK]

[Calvin "chaos" Naylor. Chicago, IL. Bands: crusty filth, holy whores]

[Mitch "damage". San Antonio, TX. Bands: angry red]

[Djini Brown. Bronx, NY. Bands: absolution]

[Karla "maddog". Hollywood, CA. Bands: controllers, skull control]

[Gary "g-man" Sullivan. Brooklyn, NY. Bands: cro-mags, tamar kali, bernie warrel, b-52's]

[Walter Kibby. Lost Angeles, CA. Bands: Fishbone]

[Rasheed Hale. Boston, MA. Bands: close call]

[Lauren Brown. NYC, NY. zines: honor roll, rhyme.]

[Pat. NYC, NY. Bands: deviant behavior]

[Santi "steve" Holley. Ann Arbor, MI]

[Latasha Natasha Diggs. Harlem, NY]

[Carley C.O.M.A. Brooklyn, NY. Bands: candiria]

[Kevin Kennebrew. Brooklyn, NY. Bands: white house, swans]

[Rachel Caidor. Chicago, IL]

[Ryan Bland. Beaumont, TX, Bands: home 33, bushmon]

[Shabrina Bernard. San Diego, CA]

[Tex Mosley. Philadelphia, PA. Bands: pure hell]

[Peta. San Francisco, CA. zines: little hands, colored girls]

[D.H. Peligro. Los Angeles, CA. Bands: dead kenndy's, peligro red hot chili peppers]

[Mag Delena. Oakland, CA. Bands: yaphett koto, bread & circuits]

[Ewolf. Detroit, MI. Bands: angry red planet, dirtbombs]

[James Adams. Lost Angeles, CA]

[Stacy Williams. San Antonio, TX]

[Nicole. Chicago, IL. Bands: systemic infection]

[Jimi Hazel. Bronx, NY. Bands: 247-spyz, jimi hazel]

[Zambia Green. New York, NY. Bands: teenbeaters, ours]

[Jonathan Wilson. New Haven, CT. Bands: anasarca]

[Rodg Little. Sacramento, CA. Bands: sans sobriety, data, the kali]

[Jason "jah son". Chicago, IL]

[Lamin. San Bernadino, CA. Band: ruido]

[Scottie. Long Island, NY. Bands: stryder]

[Robert Lowe. Chicago, IL. Bands: 90 day men]

[Angelo Moore. Los Angeles, CA. Bands: fishbone]

[Jaleel Bunton. Louisville, KY. Bands: tv on the radio, pleasure unit, mike ladd]

[Luqmon Brown aka "mc whistler". Harlem, NY. Bands: funk face]

[KYP Malone. Brooklyn, NY. Bands: t.v. on the radio]

[Steve Myers. New Orleans, LA. Bands: afghan whigs]

[Harry Wilson. Austin, TX. Bands: the pegans, fuck emo's]

[Garret. San Diego, CA]

[Clemente McFarland. Panama City, Panama]

[Maya. NYC, NY. Bands: mother goddess]

[Shannon. Brooklyn, NY. Bands: activator]

[Mike Ladd. Amherst, MA. Bands: mike ladd]

[Damon Locks. Chicago, IL. Bands: eternals, trenchmouth]

[Carolyn "honeychild". Louisville, KY. Bands: honeychild, audio dyslexia]

[Asilia Franklin-Phipps. Orange County, CA.]

[Shawn Brown. Washington D.C. Bands: dag nasty, swiz, jesus-eater, sweetbelly freakdown]

[Danny Chavis. Apollo Heights, NC. Bands: the veldt, apollo hieghts]

(Man) The very last question is I want for you to come up with as many punk bands that have black membership.

(Man) oof.

(Man) Wow, damn. You like put me on a lot here.

(Man) Um. Eh.

(Man) There was pure hell.

(Man) Ken Deria.

(Man) Got Bad Brains,

(Man) Make enemies

(Man) Bad Brains

(Man) Bad Brains.

(Man) Fishbone.

(Man) Burn.

(Man) Burn.

(Man) Absolution.

(Man) There was burn.

(Man) Buuurnnnn. Chaka. Orange 9 milimeter.

(Man) Worlds collide.

(Man) No redeeming social value.

(Man) [inaudible] from underdog.

(Man) cro-mags now! Whoa I mean did you see Latinos are black right?

(Man) That fat kid, the drummer, he's Puerto Rican I think. That's black to me.

(Man) That counts.

(Man) I'm gonna say to class cause them [ \_\_ ] had to be black.

(Man) Damn, is that it?

(Man) I think the drummer from slate was an octoroon.

(Man) Damn. Come to think of it, there's nothing but [\_\_]. Holy sh- I can't think of. Wait a minute, how bout this. I can't think of a band without a [\_\_] in it. The question should be how many bands that are all white?

Little biscuit. Oh that's it, corn.

That's all I can think of, little biscuit and corn, all white bands.

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