

THE SQUARE ONE PROJECT  
ROUNDTABLE ON THE FUTURE OF JUSTICE POLICY  
EXAMINING JUSTICE REFORM AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT  
IN THE UNITED STATES:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR  
JUSTICE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Zoom meeting

4:00 p.m. EST

Wednesday,  
August 5, 2020

*ON THE RECORD REPORTING*  
*(512) 450-0342*

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 MS. HUFFMAN: It's so wonderful to be with all  
3 of you all today and to see your faces. My name is  
4 Katharine Huffman. I know many of you in person or by  
5 name and email address, and just really thrilled to have  
6 you join us.

7 I want to sort of start off our conversation  
8 and give you a little bit of background on where we are,  
9 and a couple of opening thoughts. As I think most of you  
10 know, in early 2018, the Square One Project embarked on a  
11 three-year journey with a goal of facilitating and  
12 accelerating and amplifying a national conversation about  
13 how to reimagine justice and to foundationally reconsider  
14 our response to poverty, to violence and to racism in the  
15 United States.

16 We focus on a central question in our work:  
17 if we set aside our traditional responses to crime and  
18 ask what else might be more effective, if we start from a  
19 new square one, how would justice policy be different?  
20 We really want to focus on those foundational questions,  
21 not just thinking outside the box, but going to a whole  
22 different set of boxes and thinking completely  
23 differently about what we would want to do.

24 So over the past two years, we've grappled  
25 with these issues through two distinct methodologies.

1 One is our Executive Session on the Future of Justice  
2 Policy, which is a group of people who agree to meet  
3 regularly over the course of six years and -- I'm  
4 sorry -- three years and look at these issues together.  
5 But the other is our Roundtable on the Future of Justice  
6 Policy, which is what all of you are now officially a  
7 part of.

8           With each of our Roundtables, we gather a new  
9 group of people, a new group of experts, a new group of  
10 experiences and really dig in deeply on a particular  
11 aspect of this question, and really try to move our  
12 thinking forward.

13           So today, we're gathering for this fourth  
14 convening of our Roundtable on the Future of Justice  
15 Policy. It is really great to see you all, and I feel  
16 like, you know, because of the way that this has been  
17 postponed and rescheduled and redesigned, you know, we've  
18 been thinking about all of you all for eight or nine  
19 months now. And it's just really amazing to have you all  
20 here together.

21           I want to thank our supporters in this  
22 particular Roundtable, the Ford Foundation and the  
23 Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, have  
24 provided support for our work together, and we're really  
25 appreciative of that, of that support.

1           So as Sukyi noted, we had originally planned  
2 to gather together in Austin, Texas. And in our past  
3 Roundtables, which have taken place in Durham, North  
4 Carolina, in Oakland, California, and in Detroit,  
5 Michigan, our physical presence in a particular location  
6 and our partnership with a local college or university  
7 and with local community leaders in planning and putting  
8 together our Roundtable have been really important to the  
9 Roundtable's focus and to our learning.

10           We've always had many local and state  
11 participants at the table with us. And in each of those  
12 previous Roundtables, we actually had a session that was  
13 focused on justice in Durham or justice in the city where  
14 we were, which was just a really important part of  
15 anchoring our thinking and really learning from the place  
16 where we were.

17           Obviously, the current health crisis makes it  
18 impossible for us to have that experience together now.  
19 But we have put a lot of thought into how we can adjust  
20 to this virtual space and how we can adjust our format to  
21 still meet our goals with this work together, building  
22 relationships among all of us as participants, creating  
23 the space and building the trust that's needed for us to  
24 have a really open and generative discussion together  
25 over the course of our time together, and facilitating

1 public participation and engagement.

2           And even though we're not physically in  
3 Austin, you'll notice that we have a very strong  
4 representation from Texas here with us. Thank you to all  
5 the Texans. There's a lot happening there in the state.

6           There's a lot happening in Austin, and we hope  
7 to be able to hear a lot from you all now and over the  
8 course of our time together, and possibly in the future,  
9 with some type of justice in Austin conversation, that  
10 conversation we've had to forego in this particular  
11 moment. So huge thanks to all the Austinites and Texans.

12          I feel like you're still sort of our host in spirit in  
13 some way, and we really appreciate that a lot.

14           So a few quick introductions. I want to  
15 introduce the staff of Square One.

16           You all know Sukyi McMahon, our amazing  
17 manager of our Roundtable, who is the brains and brawn  
18 and vision behind so much of this work. She's  
19 incredible. We're also joined off-camera by Anamika  
20 Dwivedi, who is the manager of our Executive Sessions;  
21 Evie Lopoo, who is -- among other things, you all know  
22 her because she's been offering tech support and has been  
23 helping you all with some of the technical planning up  
24 until now; Madison Dawkins, who is also helping keep us  
25 on track today with her timing, and is going to be

1 helping with our communications work.

2 Really just a wonderful team we have at Square  
3 One. So this group of amazing people, along with Jeremy  
4 Travis, Bruce Western, and Stephanie Akhtar, serve as a  
5 steering committee for Square One, and we're really  
6 appreciative that all of them are here.

7 Also, quickly want to mention, we're joined  
8 today, listening in, by our Raben Group communications  
9 team, Steven Fisher, Anthony Perez, Courtney Holdsworth  
10 and Carolyn Pruitt. You will be hearing from them in the  
11 coming weeks, as our work together moves along, and it  
12 becomes more public-facing.

13 They're helping us think about how we make  
14 sure that we're reaching out and sharing this  
15 conversation with the broader public. And finally,  
16 special thanks to our court reporter, Latrice Porter,  
17 from On The Record court reporters.

18 She's helping us record and transcribe  
19 everything that's said, and these transcripts will be  
20 available after our event. That's helpful for our  
21 writers who may want to use those transcripts for any  
22 revisions to their papers, based on our discussions, and  
23 those are also going to be made publicly available for  
24 anyone who wants to review and reflect on what's said  
25 here.

1           And finally, a huge thanks to Michael Kleiman  
2 and Jesse Brown at MediaTank. They are going to be  
3 producing highlight videos from the Roundtable, and have  
4 done that for our past Roundtables, and we're doing that  
5 for this one, too.

6           We recognize that the sort of dynamic video  
7 footage of the Roundtable is a little limited by our Zoom  
8 squares here, but Michael and his team are thinking about  
9 how we can overcome that, and speak about pulling in  
10 other content, as we capture and share via video what  
11 happens here.

12           But that's also -- they were also helpful in  
13 thinking through the fact that we all have our ring  
14 lights, those of us who are able to use those, use their  
15 video. We're asking that everyone keep your camera on  
16 through the course of the conversation so that you can be  
17 visibly part of our video record, as well as everything  
18 else.

19           So with that, I'm going to hand it over to  
20 Bruce Western to talk a little bit more about our  
21 Roundtable format in particular, and where this  
22 Roundtable conversation fits in, but just to say again,  
23 we're just so thrilled and honored that all of you all  
24 are here with us, and really looking forward to the  
25 conversation.

1           So Bruce, I'll hand it over to you.

2           DR. WESTERN: Great. Thanks a lot, Katharine.  
3           Man, it's kind of -- it's bittersweet to see all of you  
4           on the screen like this. It's so fantastic that you've  
5           been able to contribute your time and your creativity and  
6           energy to this project.

7           I'm really sad we can't be together in person  
8           in Austin, and you know, so much of the work, as we all  
9           know with these kinds of events, gets done during the  
10          coffee break and over dinner and at the bar after dinner.

11          And just sort of seeing you all, I'm missing being with  
12          you all at the moment, but very grateful that you have  
13          made time for the Square One Project at a time that is  
14          just -- you know, it is incredibly challenging for the  
15          country, but also incredibly personally stressful for  
16          everyone.

17          So thanks a lot. This is the fourth time  
18          we've gotten together in this Roundtable format for  
19          Square One, and Square One is a group effort. It  
20          involves all of the brilliant, creative people around  
21          this virtual table. It also involves a tremendous team.

22          Today's meeting, as Katharine was saying, was  
23          assembled in this whole online format -- was assembled by  
24          Sukyi McMahon, and Sukyi would have been our host in  
25          Austin. She's been the brilliant organizer of these

1 events, first in Durham, nearly two years ago now, and  
2 then in Oakland, and then in Detroit.

3           So as Katharine was saying, at Square One,  
4 we're trying to contribute to a real transformation of  
5 how justice is done in America. How can we respond to  
6 the social problems that emerge in, you know, context of  
7 deep racial inequality, extreme poverty, that seems  
8 characteristic of America?

9           And you know, this is a social environment in  
10 which police and prisons are currently doing so much of  
11 their work. How can we respond to these social problems  
12 in a way that overcomes mass incarceration and  
13 establishes some accountability in the use of state  
14 violence?

15           I think that's the big public conversation  
16 we're having at the moment. My very good friend, Jeremy  
17 Travis, and I, we started thinking about these questions  
18 as we worked on the National Academy of Sciences report  
19 on incarceration.

20           We enlisted the help of Katharine Huffman.  
21 Katharine built a stellar team that includes Sukyi and a  
22 lot of others that you'll meet over the course of the  
23 coming weeks. So Square One, fundamentally, we think of  
24 it as a project in narrative change.

25           How do we change the way we talk about

1 violence, incarceration, racial injustice, and poverty?  
2 And how do we change that conversation in a way that  
3 promotes greater fairness and safety in American society?

4 We started to tackle this problem in Durham, and there,  
5 the Durham meeting was organized around the theme of  
6 racial and economic inequality.

7 And in Durham, we talked a lot about the  
8 challenge of reckoning with a history of racial injustice  
9 that had to be faced. Right? We have to face the history  
10 of racial injustice in this country and its contemporary  
11 manifestation before transformational change could happen.

12 That's where we landed in the Durham meeting.  
13 From Durham, we went to Oakland. We talked about  
14 criminalization, the role of the courts, punitive excess.

15 From there we went on to Detroit, where we addressed the  
16 very, very challenging problem of violence. And that  
17 meant both interpersonal violence, means the structural  
18 violence of deep inequality, and it also means the state  
19 violence of police brutality and mass incarceration.

20 In this meeting over the next few weeks, we're  
21 pivoting, and we're turning to imagining alternatives.  
22 What's the role of social policy for housing, for health  
23 care, for education, for employment? What's the role of  
24 public policy in these areas, the way we think about these  
25 social challenges in transforming how we respond to all of

1 those problems that are attached to poverty and racism in  
2 America?

3           What is, what should be the nature of our  
4 social contract? Right? That's our big theme. What is  
5 the nature of our social contract? By that, we mean the  
6 web of mutual obligations that bind us together as a  
7 society.

8           Beyond describing what this social contract  
9 should be, the normative question, how do we get there?  
10 How do we get from here to there? I think that's one of  
11 our toughest questions right now. The big questions we've  
12 assembled just an utterly brilliant group of people to  
13 address.

14           Where does this Roundtable sit in the sequence  
15 of all the work we're doing? Well, you've heard where  
16 we've been. And where we're going to next is a fifth and  
17 final Roundtable on the topic of values. What values  
18 should infuse an alternative vision of justice?

19           And we'll address that, I hope, in a meeting in  
20 New York City in the indeterminate future. Maybe it will  
21 be virtual. I would love for us to be able to get  
22 together in person.

23           So with that, I want to hand it off to Jeremy  
24 Travis, who is going to explain how we will do everything  
25 that we hope to achieve in this coming series of meetings.

1                   Jeremy?

2                   MR. TRAVIS: Thank you very much, Bruce. Let  
3 me add my welcome to everybody. I'm going to quickly ask  
4 Sukyi to give us some housekeeping advice on how we're  
5 going to work together.

6                   This is a challenge to have a meeting through  
7 Zoom, and I, too, miss the opportunity to be with all of  
8 you together, but we have experimented with this  
9 methodology with the Executive Session quite successfully,  
10 so we've learned some things. And I'll ask Sukyi just to  
11 take us through some of the tips.

12                   And then I'll come back and talk about how  
13 we're going to conduct this meeting and what it looks like  
14 moving forward.

15                   MS. McMAHON: That's good. Thank you, Jeremy.  
16 I am going to quickly screen-share with you all our Zoom  
17 norms. Here we go. So in terms of how you're going to  
18 get into the speaker queue, you're just going to go down  
19 to the participants icon at the bottom of your screen, and  
20 there, you'll find the raise hand option.

21                   We'll just ask you to raise your hand. On the  
22 host side, it will put you in order by when you've raised  
23 your hand. And when you've finished speaking, we'll just  
24 ask you to lower your hand. If you forget to lower your  
25 hand, we will lower it for you.

1           If you have something you have to jump in on --  
2 I'm sorry. Can -- whoever -- who needs to mute, please  
3 mute. So if you have something you have to say -- someone  
4 said something, and you're, like, oh, I know the answer to  
5 that, or I have to speak to that, you can wave at us.

6           We will see you. Everyone's on one screen. Or  
7 you can send Jeremy a private message, and we'll put you  
8 in at the front of the queue. If it just makes no sense  
9 for you to wait for 10 people, we've got you and we will  
10 put you at the front of the line.

11           I have just some tips for video. If you're a  
12 participant, turn your camera on. Turn your -- you know  
13 to mute already. The chat function, we're not going to be  
14 using. At -- when we're in person or around the  
15 Roundtable and having these sidebar conversations -- we  
16 want to hear your ideas.

17           We want you to voice your ideas here in this  
18 group, so we're not going to do chats. We're going to see  
19 how that goes. You know, if it seems like it feels right  
20 and you can continue doing that, we will, but that's where  
21 we want to start, with having you all get into the queue.

22           If you do have technical issues, please -- Evie  
23 is on here. Just send her a quick message. I think she's  
24 also going to pop her cell phone number into the chat. So  
25 if you somehow get booted, she can help you get back in.

1 And you can feel free to private-message folks, but just  
2 make sure you're messaging the right person.

3 I've already sent Chas a couple of messages,  
4 and like, yes, because that's my good friend and we can do  
5 that, but just be sure you're messaging the right person.

6 There has been some -- you know, some incidents where  
7 that doesn't work out right, if it's the wrong person.

8 If you have HD camera, you can use it. If you  
9 got it from us, the tip that I have on here is based on  
10 whether or not you got that from us. So you would just go  
11 down to the video settings and choose that. If you need  
12 to save some of your bandwidth, you can connect by phone.

13 If you have questions about that, you can also  
14 ask Evie to provide you some insight. So I'm going to  
15 stop sharing that, and pass it back over to you, Jeremy.

16 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you, Sukyi. So I just --  
17 before we dive into some of the journey that lies ahead, I  
18 just want to share my excitement, being with you.

19 The Square One Project, which is now well over  
20 two years old, has been just one of the most exhilarating  
21 things that I've been part of, and I think many of us have  
22 this feeling. And it is a journey. We're not quite sure  
23 where we're headed, but we're a committed band of  
24 explorers who start with a very firm commitment that our  
25 country has gone way off track, that this is a deep

1 problem with historical roots, and particularly in the  
2 institution of slavery and white supremacy, modern roots  
3 in the tough-on-crime era that some of us have written  
4 about, and the results are devastating for our country,  
5 that we have so many people in prison, so many people  
6 incarcerated in jails, in pre-trial detention, on  
7 community supervision.

8 We've diminished the citizenship status of a  
9 wide swath of our -- of residents of this country. And  
10 that it's time to, as we like to say, start over, to go  
11 back to square one, and see if we can imagine a very  
12 different approach to justice in this country.

13 That's the premise of what we have undertaken  
14 here. And this is a group exercise, as Bruce alluded to,  
15 and what is wonderful about the mix of people who have  
16 come together in good spirit and of good will is that we  
17 have people with very different perspectives.

18 We have academics here, and we'll talk a bit  
19 about their contribution. We have people who are doing  
20 community organizing. We have stakeholders who work in  
21 the system. We have people who are policy experts. We  
22 have people who are formally incarcerated, people whose  
23 families have been affected by incarceration and the  
24 punitive excess that we've experienced.

25 Those perspectives are all valued, and one of

1 the jobs that I have as facilitator is to make sure that  
2 we are respectful of each other. It's not hard, given who  
3 has come together. But I just want to state that, at the  
4 outset, it's a value that we lift up, we cherish, and is  
5 very much a foundational part of the Square One premise,  
6 which is that we are in this together and this is a large  
7 and important project that we really carry out on behalf  
8 of the country.

9 I think this is, in a sense, a type of  
10 patriotic duty. Where this is taking us, we're not sure.

11 We're now thinking about what happens after our three-  
12 year journey is over and we start thinking about the next  
13 chapter, and we're open to suggestions that you can share  
14 with us.

15 What I want to do first is to sort of talk  
16 about this Roundtable. This is -- we're imagining we're  
17 in Austin now. We're not in Austin really, but we're  
18 imagining we're there. And we're -- we've come together  
19 to talk about the future, the viability, the defects in  
20 the social contract, and how that reality affects the  
21 pursuit of justice, and how we have to reimagine the  
22 social contract in order to have justice.

23 Bruce has already laid out the work we did in  
24 the first three Roundtables. This one is the fourth and  
25 is the pivot to the end of the Roundtable process, which

1 will end, as Bruce said, in New York, we hope, with a  
2 discussion of values.

3           What are the values we think that should guide  
4 the work in the future? So what I'd like to do is to ask  
5 Sukyi now just to put on the screen, if we can do a share-  
6 screen moment, where we're headed as a group, so that you  
7 see how today, which is in very many -- in many ways, just  
8 a getting-to-know-each-other day, but we're together.

9           We [audio skip] for future sessions how today  
10 has sort of set the stage of getting -- no, I'm unmuted --  
11 okay -- how today sets the stage for the work ahead. So  
12 today, we're having -- if you look at that first agenda,  
13 these are our personal perspectives.

14           What I want to hear from you, and I'll give you  
15 some guidance in a second about how to do this, what  
16 you're bringing to this discussion about the social  
17 contract. And today is getting to know each other, but  
18 really starting to set the fertile ground for the sessions  
19 to follow.

20           You look next at what we're doing on August 12,  
21 a week from today. We're -- we have commissioned papers  
22 by some of our colleagues, Elizabeth Hinton and David  
23 Garland, both of whom are with us today, who are writing  
24 papers.

25           They're in your welcome packet. They really

1 set the big stage for how do we think about the social  
2 contract? Elizabeth Hinton is helping us look at this in  
3 the context of particularly her expertise in the history  
4 of crime policy in America and the legacy of slavery.

5 David is helping us think about this as a  
6 comparative question. How does our thinking about this in  
7 America compare to other countries? And we'll talk about  
8 the format in a second.

9 Well, let's go to where this is headed after  
10 that session. We come together again a week later.  
11 Papers again. Ananya Roy is from UCLA, has written a  
12 paper that is going to look at the housing issues. Vivian  
13 Nixon, our colleague from the Executive Session who heads  
14 the College and Community Fellowship, has written a really  
15 spectacular paper on education as justice reform.

16 And then, third, and certainly not least, we  
17 have Hedy Lee, who was looking at the issues of health  
18 care. So here are the elements, some elements, not all  
19 elements, but elements of the social contract, sort of  
20 this support system that is lacking in our country. And  
21 now is a good time to think about what is necessary for us  
22 to move forward to have a closer approximation of justice.

23 Then we look at the next session. We'll see  
24 that we have papers that are being presented and completed  
25 by Bruce on the issue of poverty and the social contract.

1 Vesla Weaver is from Johns Hopkins, is writing a paper on  
2 political participation, very important part of our -- the  
3 way we relate to each other.

4 How do we relate in our contributions to our  
5 government, to our democracy and civic identity? And then  
6 we go on to another session, which will come up -- there  
7 it is. Right. And this is where we are taking a big step  
8 back and asking Bruce and Danielle Allen to help us think  
9 about how might we frame the aspirations?

10 Where do we want to be, as we're -- a lot of  
11 what we'll be doing will be, sort of, critical analysis of  
12 what's not working. That's an important grounding in the  
13 Square One work. We also want to reimagine justice.

14 That is our tag line: reimagine justice. Our  
15 second tag line is: we don't tinker. We're not just  
16 trying to improve a system; we're trying to reimagine  
17 justice. And the premise of this Roundtable that's at the  
18 core of that is the -- we -- reframing the social  
19 contract.

20 And Danielle and Bruce will help us do that.  
21 And then we will wrap all this up in a neat, little bow --  
22 no, we won't -- try to figure out, what -- where have we  
23 been? And we publish. We contribute to the scholarly  
24 literature.

25 We have videos. We do some social media work

1 in all of this. So the work that we're doing together  
2 over these sessions will be -- will contribute to this big  
3 discussion that, in some ways, could not be more timely.  
4 And what we want to do today is to try to capture  
5 something about this moment that helps us think about the  
6 social contract in new ways, and helps us be more  
7 observant, more critical, more insightful, because of  
8 recent developments in our country.

9 So that's where we're headed, and before I hand  
10 out an assignment to get the conversation started, Sukyi  
11 gave some ground rules for the Roundtable, and the queue  
12 was the important organizing principle. You know, I can't  
13 decide who to call upon, so you have to decide to nominate  
14 yourself to be in the queue. And I'll watch that, as we  
15 move along.

16 You learned about we call the insistent wave,  
17 which is -- anybody who wants to get in because what they  
18 just heard motivates something so powerful and so relevant  
19 that they want to jump the queue, take that privilege  
20 of -- to jump the queue, you'll find me.

21 Something like this -- I can see everybody on  
22 the screen, so just use that sparingly. But if it's  
23 there, it means you've got something really important to  
24 contribute. So use the insistent wave if you need to.  
25 Otherwise, nominate yourself for the queue.

1           So we have some other rules of the Roundtable  
2 that are important here, which is that we try to keep  
3 people's contributions concise. Everybody on this screen  
4 could speak for hours, and we all have, on this topic.  
5 This is not the time.

6           So I try to be judicious in cutting people off  
7 gently. I believe in informal social control, not the  
8 heavy hammer of rules. So the informal social control  
9 might be, you know -- I try to sort of wave at you, or  
10 say, you know, now's the time, or I'm not going to use the  
11 chat function, because then that means you're looking at  
12 the chat function, rather than at your screen.

13           But please, we have a lot of people who are  
14 highly relevant to this conversation. We want to hear  
15 their contributions, but it also means, please be  
16 disciplined, if you can, in being concise. And you're  
17 about to get a test in brevity, which I will lay out in a  
18 second.

19           I participated in a Zoom conference recently  
20 with the U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, where  
21 there was a timekeeper who shut you off at one minute.  
22 We're not going to do that. I was shut off, in something,  
23 I'm sure, was highly relevant, at one minute, and it was  
24 brutal.

25           So we're not going to do that. I don't want to

1 do that. But just have in your mind the notion of mutual  
2 respect and obligation to each other to make your  
3 contributions as concise as possible.

4 So before we go into the -- what's going to  
5 move us into a discussion, I just want to see if there's  
6 anybody who has any questions about how we're going to do  
7 our work together. The same rules are going to apply for  
8 every one of our sessions to follow, but just -- and  
9 today's a practice session, in a way. Any questions about  
10 the rules of the Roundtable before we jump in?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Are you ready? So here's  
13 what we're going to do. We are coming together at a  
14 remarkable time in our nation's history, and people talk  
15 about the triple pandemics. That's one metaphor that's  
16 captured this moment.

17 There's the pandemic that we call COVID-19,  
18 which has upended our society in unimaginable ways. If we  
19 were sitting here in February, we wouldn't know what we  
20 were now talking about. We have the realization that's  
21 been brought home following the murder of George Floyd of  
22 the lingering legacy of racism.

23 It's been brought front and center, the  
24 uprising that has taken over our city streets and has  
25 focused on police brutality, defund the police. Frankly,

1 in my lifetime, I've never seen anything like it. It's so  
2 exciting. It's fraught. It's complicated, but it's got  
3 the potential for big reform. That's the second reality.

4 Then we have the economic reality of a -- you  
5 can call it a recession or call it a depression. Where  
6 are we with unemployment at unprecedented levels, with an  
7 uncertain future?

8 And I would add a fourth pandemic, which is  
9 political paralysis. Now, maybe that will be resolved, we  
10 hope, in the months to come, but right now, how does  
11 our -- how do our political institutions respond to  
12 anything effectively?

13 So we have this reality that we're coming  
14 together in the middle of this very brutal time, frankly.

15 So to talk about the social contract at a time when it  
16 seems to be frayed, to say the least, is an assignment of  
17 the first order. In our own ways, from our own seats and  
18 our own disciplines and our own networks and perspectives,  
19 we are all thinking about this.

20 So your first assignment is the following. And  
21 I'm going to ask you literally -- we're going to have a  
22 moment of silence to think about this. Think about your  
23 answer to this question, and then we will call upon you in  
24 order that I will not disclose, so that you'll never know  
25 when you're about to be called upon to answer the question

1 provided to the group in a way that I'll specify in a  
2 second.

3 Because we want to get a lot of voices in  
4 today, when we have a very short time. We have to get to  
5 know each other, and we want to make substantive progress  
6 on this question of the social contract. So here's the  
7 assignment, and I'll read the question a couple times.

8 As you reflect on the current moment in our  
9 country, the pandemic, the recession and depression, the  
10 uprising, the Black Lives Matter movement, our political  
11 dysfunction, those four characteristics of this  
12 unprecedented time, what insights or lessons have you  
13 taken that make you either optimistic or pessimistic about  
14 the future of our social contract, particularly as it  
15 applies to this question of justice in our aspirations for  
16 justice in relation to crime?

17 So I'm going to read it again, and then we'll  
18 just stop for a moment. You can write it out. You can  
19 just compose your thoughts, and then starting with you,  
20 Eddie Bocanegra, I'm going to call on people. Giving you  
21 advance notice.

22 As you reflect on the current moment in our  
23 country and the four realities of the pandemic, the  
24 recession/depression, high levels of unemployment, and you  
25 know, very strong reminders of socioeconomic inequality,

1 and the uprising, the focus on racial justice and police  
2 brutality, and the political dysfunction, what insights or  
3 lessons have you taken that you want to contribute to this  
4 discussion that make you either optimistic or pessimistic?

5 I'd like you to choose one. I toggle between  
6 both, but choose one, about the future of our social  
7 contract. So if you looked at that calendar we have  
8 coming up, you remember that that last session is the  
9 aspirations for new social contracts.

10 That's where we're headed. How do we think  
11 about our aspirations for new social contracts that will  
12 provide the foundation for a new approach to issues of  
13 crime and justice, that you want to share with this group?

14 So I'll stop there for a second.

15 What we're going to do is -- I'm going to start  
16 with Eddie. And I will always signal the person who's  
17 coming up next to give an answer. Now, anybody can talk  
18 for an hour. We can all talk for hours. You have 90  
19 seconds to answer that question.

20 Eddie, you are my -- I'm counting on you.  
21 Okay, buddy. I'm counting on you.

22 MR. BOCANEGRA: Hi.

23 MR. TRAVIS: You're going to set the pace for a  
24 really terse answer. The challenge we discussed in our  
25 group was, imagine you're writing a tweet. You've got a

1 little more than 140 characters, but not much, and to make  
2 matters worse, you're going to introduce yourself before  
3 you tell us why you think these are the insights and  
4 lessons.

5           So Eddie, my name is Eddie Bocanegra. I'm the  
6 CEO, if that's your title, of READI Chicago. Here's what  
7 I do. And here's my insights that make me optimistic or  
8 pessimistic. Okay? Everybody's got everybody's bio, but  
9 just remind people who you are, your institutional  
10 affiliation, and very brief lessons, insight that make you  
11 either optimistic or pessimistic about the well-being of  
12 our social contract.

13           You ready?

14           MR. BOCANEGRA: I'm ready.

15           MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Eddie's up first, and  
16 then -- there is a method to this madness -- then Kimá Joy  
17 Taylor is next.

18           MR. BOCANEGRA: All right. Jeremy, thanks a  
19 lot, and it's good seeing you as well. So my name is  
20 Eddie Bocanegra. I'm the Senior Director for READI  
21 Chicago, which is an anti-violence program, one of the  
22 largest in -- I would say, in our state for sure, working  
23 with those who are at the highest risk of gun involvement.

24           So the question is extremely relevant to the  
25 work that I do, and here's my two cents. I think, one,

1 this pandemic and everything, all the four things you  
2 outlined, what I -- being optimistic about things, is --  
3 it's definitely disclosed how our country values  
4 punishment versus, you know, healing and restoration. So  
5 that's one thing.

6 And so having said that, I think the other part  
7 that I would just want to highlight, that in this  
8 pandemic, we also have discovered best practices or other  
9 ways that we could be efficient in our work, such as this  
10 particular meeting through Zoom. Right?

11 So I'm optimistic in the work that's taken  
12 place, given our current status, and I would just simply  
13 say that there was a lot that I could share. I'm just  
14 excited about this opportunity. So --

15 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thanks, Eddie. So before  
16 Kimá takes the floor, I just want to note that some of our  
17 colleagues in future who will be with us in future  
18 sessions are not here. Imara Jones is not able to make  
19 it, and she's just -- has a fascinating background and  
20 role in our world.

21 She has a title that has "social contract  
22 project senior advisor." So she should have something to  
23 say about this, and is the founder of TransLash, is doing  
24 work for the transgendered population. Vesla Weaver is  
25 not able to be with us.

1           She's a distinguished professor at Johns  
2 Hopkins, and she's one of our paper writers coming up.  
3 And Fatimah Loren Dreier, who is the director of HAVI that  
4 does work of health interventions and has been a member of  
5 the Roundtable in the past, in Detroit, is not able to be  
6 with us today.

7           So we're going to hear next from Kimá, and  
8 after that, Elizabeth Hinton.

9           DR. TAYLOR: Hi. My name is Kimá Taylor. I'm  
10 a pediatrician by training, but currently do a lot of work  
11 in health policy, particularly around substance use  
12 disorder in the health care system, pulling substance use,  
13 which is a health and social concern, from the criminal  
14 justice realm and treating it as a health and social  
15 concern, especially for Black and Brown people.

16           But my whole breadth of work has really been  
17 focused on eliminating health care disparities. I work  
18 for myself as a consultant, but I'm also a Non-Resident  
19 Fellow at The Urban Institute. I would say I'm somewhat  
20 pessimistic, but maybe sad is a better way to explain it.

21           I don't feel the country has ever truly had a  
22 social contract. It has had social contracts for  
23 different groups at different times, that it is absolutely  
24 willing to take away and destroy, as needed. And so I  
25 feel that perhaps a piece of optimism is that we can learn

1 past lessons from these myriad broken contracts and  
2 actually reimagine and create one that takes those lessons  
3 learned, positive and negative, to recreate one that  
4 really is effective for all.

5 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Wonderful, with -- terse  
6 and very powerful. And after Elizabeth Hinton, we'll go  
7 to Kristian Caballero.

8 DR. HINTON: Hi, everyone. It's really good to  
9 be here to see some old, familiar faces and to make new  
10 friends, and just really quickly, thank you so much, Sukyi  
11 and Katharine and Bruce for bringing us together and also  
12 for the amazing, new tech goodies.

13 You guys have just, like, really upped my Zoom  
14 game, so thanks. So I guess I'm really -- first, I want  
15 to echo Kimá in that, like, for me, the social contract  
16 has never existed for people of color here. So I think  
17 that's like -- that's part of what our discussions are  
18 about. Right? Like, how are we going to -- how can we  
19 imagine building that contract?

20 I'm really optimistic by the speed with which  
21 social movements that have been building for decades have  
22 kind of taken a new national prominence, like, defund the  
23 police and people are talking about abolition more. And  
24 of course, you know, systemic racism is becoming this,  
25 kind of, like, household, buzzword term, and that white

1 people are beginning to really reckon with racism and  
2 their own role in exacerbating racism, and also taking of  
3 the streets.

4 I'm really pessimistic, though, in some ways,  
5 because I think that we're already seeing signs that we're  
6 going back and making some of the old mistakes of the  
7 '60s, looking to solve -- looking to train our way out of  
8 these problems and to invest more in police hardware and  
9 technology, which we know doesn't work. And we'll talk  
10 more about that next week.

11 But I think, on the whole, I'm -- gatherings  
12 like this make me optimistic about what's to come.

13 MR. TRAVIS: Sure. Thank you, Elizabeth.  
14 After Kristian, we'll hear from Emily Wang, who's a member  
15 of the Executive Session.

16 MS. CABALLERO: Hi, you all. I'm Kristian  
17 Caballero. I'm a longtime community activist and  
18 organizer, originally from El Paso, Texas, but I've been  
19 in Austin, Texas for the past 10 years. And I currently  
20 work for a nonprofit organization called Texas Appleseed,  
21 which takes a very legal approach to policy reform on a  
22 variety of social justice issues, so everything from the  
23 criminal justice system to fair housing, disaster  
24 recovery, fair financial services, you name it.

25 We're looking at various institutions, their

1 practices, their policies, and pushing for reform and  
2 worst-case scenario, filing lawsuits, if need be. But in,  
3 as you can imagine, the state of Texas, it's very  
4 difficult.

5 So I kind of have to echo especially what Kimá  
6 Taylor said earlier that, unfortunately, I don't think the  
7 social contract has ever truly existed, especially for  
8 people of color. And I'm pessimistic about this time  
9 because, obviously, especially with this pandemic and the  
10 ongoing institutional racism that has, you know, existed  
11 for centuries, we're going to see a lot of these social  
12 issues be magnified and get worse during this time.

13 And we're not going to really see any  
14 alleviation anytime soon. But I'm optimistic because it's  
15 highlighting how these issues not only have, you know,  
16 existed for a long time, but how they're worsening right  
17 now, and it's definitely activating a lot of people to do  
18 something because, at the rate that we're going, it's not  
19 sustainable.

20 And so you know, thanks to digital and social  
21 media, we're seeing more people get access to information  
22 and exposure to these issues and a level of engagement  
23 that we've never seen before. So I'm optimistic in that  
24 sense, and hopefully, with more people getting involved  
25 and creating these mutual aid systems and pushing for more

1 community-based programs, I'm optimistic that, in the  
2 future, we'll start making some progress in seeing what a  
3 social contract should look like.

4 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thank you so much,  
5 Kristian. Emily, to be followed by Lynda Zeller, also  
6 Executive Session member. Emily, you're muted.

7 DR. WANG: It's without fail that I do that.  
8 Nice to be among friends and to new friends as well. So  
9 I'm Emily Wang. I'm an internist at Yale, and for the --  
10 more than the better half of a decade, have been really  
11 focused on the intersection of delivering primary care to  
12 people that have returned home from correctional settings  
13 as well as researching how incarceration impacts the  
14 health communities that are disproportionately impacted.

15 And I am, you know -- COVID-19 as we've all  
16 seen, you know, has laid bare anti-Blackness in the health  
17 system, as well as in the criminal justice system, and it  
18 feels particularly raw. As someone that practices and  
19 practices within the hospitals and in clinics, it just has  
20 never felt more dire and more urgent.

21 I often come to these settings relating a  
22 patient story, and I'll hold off in the interest of my one  
23 minute. So I'm neither pessimistic or optimistic. You  
24 know, I think the work has to move on. I will say, in  
25 this particular moment, it gives me deep satisfaction to

1 see that Medicaid is expanding in Missouri.

2 I think that that's a huge criminal justice  
3 piece of legislation to be celebrating with Hedy. And I  
4 happened to be at the American Board of Internal Medicine  
5 Foundation meeting yesterday where Don Berwick, who's the  
6 head of CMS for many, many decades, says it's the number-  
7 one issue that internal medicine folks should be working  
8 on these days, and that makes me so damn happy.

9 So I don't feel optimistic or pessimistic, but  
10 I am celebrating these small moments today.

11 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Very cool. Lynda, you are  
12 up, and we'll ask Erik Bringswhite to follow.

13 MS. ZELLER: Thank you, everyone. Whoops.  
14 Sorry. I -- looks like -- hopefully, you can hear me. It  
15 says my video has been stopped by the host.

16 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

17 MS. ZELLER: Let me see. Okay. I'm back.

18 MR. TRAVIS: Yay.

19 MS. ZELLER: Well, I'm really -- can you hear  
20 me now?

21 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

22 MS. ZELLER: Good. So I'm really encouraged by  
23 the witnessing of the convictions of other people around  
24 me, that -- about the impact of our silence as white  
25 people and the power of our voices, especially in systemic

1 racism, injustice and oppression, if we really get started  
2 on it.

3 I'm especially hopeful about the more open  
4 conversations in health and social service circles about  
5 health disparities, especially racial/ethnic, that our  
6 systems have continued to perpetuate or ignore. I'm more  
7 than a little worried about our systems' inability,  
8 especially Medicaid, though, to really acknowledge  
9 systemic oppression to people when we -- our entire  
10 foundation is built on entitlement, which rather assumes  
11 that everybody in different systems sort of starts in  
12 the -- it's harder to find and address those.

13 So it's really tough work, and it's really  
14 important work, and it's really hard to let the  
15 communities lead who need to lead in the solutions in the  
16 entitlement world. So that's my slight pessimism. So  
17 thank you.

18 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thank you, Lynda. Erik,  
19 next, who has also been a member of our Square One family  
20 for a while, to be followed by Marcia Rincon-Gallardo.

21 Are you muted, Erik? Can't hear you.

22 MS. McMAHON: Try it again, Erik.

23 MR. BRINGSWHITE: Hello.

24 MR. TRAVIS: There we go.

25 MR. BRINGSWHITE: Okay. All right.

1 MR. TRAVIS: Hi, Erik. Good to see you, sir.

2 MR. BRINGSWHITE: Good to see you, sir.

3 Greetings, relatives. I'm from South Dakota. I guess,  
4 you know, regarding the pandemic, I feel like it has given  
5 us all a little perspective on what it feels like to be  
6 Native American.

7 All four of them, the recession, unemployment,  
8 racial justice and the political climate, I guess, these  
9 are some of the issues that we have been navigating since  
10 1492. And I'm optimistic, because I feel that we have  
11 answers and solutions to assist in navigating through some  
12 of these issues, with very little resources to do so, and  
13 I'm optimistic in adding our voice to, you know, the  
14 meaningful discussions that are taking place around the  
15 country.

16 So thank you.

17 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thanks so much, Erik.  
18 We'll hear next from Marcia, then Vivian Nixon.

19 MS. RINCON-GALLARDO: Good afternoon, relatives  
20 or colleagues. My name is Marcia Rincon-Gallardo. Can  
21 you hear me?

22 MR. TRAVIS: Yes.

23 MS. RINCON-GALLARDO: Okay. So I'm here in San  
24 Jose, California, but I'm originally from Mexico. I am  
25 Indigenous and Chicana/Mexicana, and I work for actually

1 two different entities. One is NOXTIN, Equal Justice for  
2 All, which is my consulting business, and then also for  
3 the Alianza for Youth Justice.

4 I've been doing reform transformation work of  
5 youth justice for about 25 years, working with systems to  
6 decrease how many youth sit in detention, and using sort  
7 of models like JDAI and the Burns Institute models. But  
8 right now, coming to this work here and at the precipice  
9 of us releasing a national report that talks about how  
10 Latinos, Indigenous, Afro-Latino youth are invisible in  
11 this country, that we still get counted as whites.

12 Then I am inclined to talk about how this  
13 pandemic and the uprising actually makes me feel  
14 optimistic, and the reason for that is -- it took this  
15 pandemic to actually start emptying out some of our  
16 facilities around the country that otherwise would not do  
17 it themselves. And it's taken a lot of our advocates, our  
18 formerly system-impacted young people, our community, who  
19 are actually making room outside of the usual immigration,  
20 housing, education issues.

21 We've expanded who to bring to the table, and  
22 they're actually really pushing for the emptying out, the  
23 abolishment, the closing down of these facilities. Social  
24 contracts have never included us, because we start with  
25 the 1600s and move forward.

1           People start with slavery and move forward, as  
2           opposed to starting with a more global history that talks  
3           about the genocide of our people, of our ancestors, which  
4           then, if you start with 1600 and move forward, we don't  
5           exist as a people. And we've been crossing these borders  
6           and living across these lands.

7           We have our ancestors all over this land and  
8           hemisphere. So I just want to encourage us to include our  
9           ancestors. We don't have to do a whole lot of innovation.  
10          We just need to reach back for some of our ancestral  
11          teachings and ways of being.

12          We talk a lot about, and Erik knows this -- we  
13          talk a lot about *la cultura cura*, culture cures. So thank  
14          you.

15          MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thank you so much, Marcia.  
16          Vivian is up next, and then Aisha McWeay.

17          REV. NIXON: Hi, everybody. I'm really happy  
18          to be here. Thank you so much. Square One has been a  
19          really growing space for me, for these past couple of  
20          years. Coming to a close, that makes me sad. I'm Vivian  
21          Nixon, Executive Director of College and Community  
22          Fellowship here in New York City.

23          I -- you know, I -- lessons, I don't know what  
24          lessons I've learned. I've kind of learned some new  
25          language around what I feel we've often called co-optation

1 of the ideas of marginalized people by larger  
2 institutions.

3 I now am trying to frame it and doing a lot of  
4 thinking about how it mimics colonization. I don't frame  
5 my hope in terms of optimism. I actually prefer the term  
6 hope, and it comes from knowing the difference between the  
7 two.

8 Optimism relies on evidence and there's not a  
9 whole lot of evidence that we can sustain the kind of long  
10 term look in the mirror that we need to sustain in order  
11 to get where we need to be, but I am hopeful because  
12 somehow we always manage to make some progress despite  
13 that.

14 And then the last thing I'll say is, that I've  
15 been fixated on how to best phrase that, which is -- I  
16 have a hope. Unhopeful, but not hopeless. And that's how  
17 I entered this conversation.

18 MR. TRAVIS: You know, Vivian, as I was writing  
19 out that question and I didn't -- I set it aside, but I  
20 remembered our conversation a few weeks ago about the  
21 difference between optimism and hope. And I'm so glad you  
22 reminded me and others about that difference, so thank you  
23 for that.

24 Aisha, you're up next, and then we'll hear from  
25 Gabriel Salguero.

1 MS. McWEAY: Setting a timer to make sure I  
2 stay at 90 seconds. I'm Aisha McWeay, Executive Director  
3 of Still She Rises Tulsa. Set behind me is a picture of  
4 Black Wall Street prior to the Tulsa Race Massacre and  
5 after. And that context, for me, sets this entire  
6 discussion that we're having and how I enter this  
7 discussion.

8 I am pessimistic in a number of ways, because I  
9 don't think that we are as far from this picture behind me  
10 as we should be 100 years later, and that for me is soul-  
11 crushing at times. On the flip side, I do think that,  
12 when we think about some of the spaces where we have seen  
13 real progress and real showing of potential, it has been  
14 in really the youth in this country and their movement  
15 right now, in all kinds of spaces, but really politically  
16 around social justice and racial justice. And that is  
17 something to be optimistic and hopeful about.

18 I will say that the most -- the thing I'm most  
19 pessimistic is the erasure of poor people and people of  
20 color during COVID-19 and their dignity and their  
21 humanity. I am a career public defender, and so being  
22 proximate to this work has meant that I get to see that  
23 firsthand. And that is really hard to watch, and so it's  
24 really difficult to be optimistic in that regard, but I'm  
25 trying.

1           MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thanks, Aisha. Yeah, and  
2 your timer just went off. Perfect. Gabriel is next, and  
3 then Ananya Roy will follow him.

4           MR. SALGUERO: Gabriel Salguero. I'm the  
5 President and founder of the National Latino Evangelical  
6 Coalition, and we work historically on protecting anti-  
7 poverty policy and initiatives on immigration injustice  
8 and on criminal justice reform, and that's -- our acronym  
9 is NLEC, National Latino Evangelical Coalition.

10           I live in Orlando, Florida, although I am a  
11 Jersey-Rican. That's a Puerto Rican born in New Jersey,  
12 not to be confused with a Nuyorican, as my wife -- she was  
13 born in Brooklyn. I too use the words of Vivian Nixon,  
14 who I have not met, but I'm impressed by.

15           Today, I'm a prisoner of hope. That comes both  
16 from my faith tradition and my life experience, but it's  
17 not Pollyannaish. It's rooted in reality, and hope is  
18 paradoxical.

19           It examines reality and tries to create a new  
20 future, and I think that's where I live. I'm the son of a  
21 formerly incarcerated person, and so that has been my  
22 reality since my early youth.

23           And so here are three things that I think  
24 are -- keep me hopeful, even though I'm aware of the grim  
25 reality: the acceleration and democratization that social

1 platforms have brought to certain justice initiatives,  
2 even though, conversely, it has led to Balkanization and  
3 false narratives on those same platforms, and so that's  
4 two sides of the coin of the acceleration and  
5 democratization, while they're also founts of  
6 misinformation and Balkanization.

7           Number two, or especially in the space of  
8 criminal justice and policy reform, unusual alliances that  
9 I have seen and conversations that have moved the ball  
10 nowhere near where it should be, but I think it has moved  
11 the ball forward.

12           I am encouraged by the leadership of young  
13 people. It's an intergenerational movement, especially by  
14 the leadership of Dreamers and young men and women in the  
15 area of Black Lives Movement. I think that that has been  
16 quite impressive, and I've learned a lot.

17           The flip side of that is the invisibility, as  
18 someone else mentioned. That is discouraging, that entire  
19 groups of people and policy initiatives remain invisible  
20 to many of my sisters and brothers in spaces that I  
21 inhabit with a great deal of tension.

22           And so one of the concerns that I have is how  
23 these issues are so visible to so many of us, and  
24 invisible to so many of others of us in this flawed,  
25 frayed, dangling discord of a social contract we call

1 American democracy. Thank you.

2 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you, Gabriel. Ananya, and  
3 then followed by Heather Rice-Minus.

4 DR. ROY: Hello, everyone. I'm Ananya Roy,  
5 Professor of Urban Planning, Social Welfare and Geography  
6 at UCLA, where I also serve as the Director of the  
7 Institute on Inequality and Democracy. I want to say,  
8 first of all, that of course while this work takes place  
9 at UCLA, UCLA itself sits on stolen land, on the land of  
10 the Tongva people.

11 As -- you know, these controlled crises remind  
12 us that the question of the social contract has be  
13 situated in the broader context of racial capitalism. So  
14 as so many of you have noted, in the best of times, what  
15 we've had in the United States is a racialized social  
16 democracy.

17 So this excluded Black, Brown and Indigenous  
18 communities, and particularly criminalized women of color  
19 in the context of welfare programs. But at the same time,  
20 the inclusion into the social contract has been, as so  
21 many scholars have shown, the grounds of white unity, and  
22 it's created structures of whiteness that are quite  
23 difficult to dismantle.

24 But these are the worst of times, and I'm  
25 actually really fired up in these times. I'll share just

1 one example. So since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic,  
2 we've been working at feverish pace in LA to begin to  
3 outline what we believe will be the largest mass  
4 displacement in the history of the region since Indigenous  
5 genocide and dispossession, and that is mainly the  
6 eviction crisis that is about to hit LA, and is already  
7 hitting so many U.S. cities.

8 But our work shows that nearly half a million  
9 rental households in LA will most likely face eviction  
10 this year, when evictions restart, which is most likely as  
11 soon as August 14. But that mass displacement, which is  
12 part of the forced removals of people of color in this  
13 region, is also grounds, not only for uprising and  
14 incredible alliances between housing justice movements and  
15 racial justice movements, but in that uprising, what we're  
16 seeing is a rethinking of everything that was taken for  
17 granted.

18 And in particular, I want to say that what has  
19 me fired up is that -- is a rethinking of the entanglement  
20 of property, personhood, and police. And that  
21 entanglement of property, personhood, and police, I would  
22 argue, goes to the very heart of a racialized social  
23 democracy in the U.S., of how racial capitalism functions.

24 And all of that now is ready to be dismantled,  
25 whether that is, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore notes in her

1 upcoming book, it means, change everything, or whether it  
2 means, burning everything to the ground and starting from  
3 scratch.

4 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you, Ananya. We hear next  
5 from Heather, and then after Heather, we go to Chas.

6 MS. RICE-MINUS: Thanks, Jeremy. I'm Heather  
7 Rice-Minus. It's really good to be with you all today. I  
8 am the Senior Vice President for advocacy and church  
9 mobilization for Prison Fellowship, which is the nation's  
10 largest Christian nonprofit serving people behind bars,  
11 their families and the formerly incarcerated.

12 Yeah. I think -- I have sort of a mix of  
13 feelings on this in terms of pessimistic and optimistic.  
14 I think when I look at sort of the public sphere and  
15 politics -- you know, a big portion of my career has spent  
16 in lobbying Congress and the Administration. And so when  
17 I look at politics, as probably most Americans feel,  
18 pessimistic generally.

19 And I feel like this moment can often be used  
20 for political gain of either side. And I see more -- I'm  
21 also pessimistic about the obstructionist kind of  
22 mentality, when I actually think there's a real  
23 opportunity here.

24 But I do feel hopeful. I like that word,  
25 Vivian. That resonates with me, as well. I feel hopeful

1 when I think of the most personal interactions I've had.  
2 Never before been able to use certain words in lobby  
3 visits that I'm able to use right now, and to have the  
4 response that I have right now to them.

5 And never before had such an outpouring of  
6 interest in wanting to learn from the Christian community  
7 than ever before. We've just seen such a spike in people  
8 wanting to use our small group curriculum to talk about  
9 justice issues, to join our Ambassador Program.

10 Had my pastor who's, you know, a mega church  
11 pastor, reach out to do a listen-and-learn with us on mass  
12 incarceration for the first time. So just glimmers of  
13 hope in kind of the personal, and that I'm hopeful that we  
14 can get to a place where we could take steps forward.

15 MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Thank you so much, Heather.  
16 Chas, to be followed by Hedy Lee.

17 MR. MOORE: First, just, you know, hey,  
18 everybody, or hey, y'all, like we say in Texas. Chas  
19 Moore, Executive Director and founder of the Austin  
20 Justice Coalition, and a justice-impacted person, like  
21 Jorge would want me to say.

22 But for those that don't know, that means  
23 somebody that has been convicted of a felony, and that is  
24 what brings me to the work, my lived experience. I also  
25 want to thumbs-up or high-five, whatever, Vivian, hope.

1 Because I think hope is what keeps us going, right --  
2 because we have no evidence that things are going to get  
3 supremely better as they should.

4 But I'm pessimistic for a few different  
5 reasons. One, I'm loving the energy in the yard signs and  
6 the donations, and you know, the hashtags, and people, you  
7 know, are coming to the meetings and asking for the  
8 talking points at, you know, city council meetings.

9 But I'm pessimistic because I don't know if  
10 that conviction is real. I don't know if that conviction  
11 is, like, long withstanding. I just -- you know, I think  
12 it's a moment in this time in which, you know, white  
13 people and people in power feel some type of way, and  
14 then, you know, we get -- you know, I call it, the 9/11  
15 effect, right.

16 For six months in this country, everybody love  
17 one another. Then six months after that, we went back to  
18 the America that we were. I'm also pessimistic because of  
19 this attack on reform. Granted, I think reform should be  
20 critiqued, but I think it gets to a point to where if we  
21 get so caught up in wanting the thing on the other side of  
22 the door and not doing the reform work, then the system  
23 will swallow us whole, as it is intended to do.

24 So the infighting between the movement about  
25 reform and reform not being good enough -- and granted,

1 some reform is just trash, right? But I think there is  
2 some good folks that do radical reform that's based in  
3 abolition and transformational change, and I think we have  
4 to hold that space and be okay with that.

5 I'm also pessimistic because I think a lot of  
6 us are fighting the system, right -- the outward thing,  
7 but we're not doing the inner work. And I say that as a  
8 cisgender, you know, heterosexual Black man.

9 And I see Black men at the Marches for Black  
10 Lives, but they're still very much homophobic. They're  
11 still very much misogynistic, right. So I think we also  
12 have to be careful, because as we're trying to fight and  
13 combat the system, like the ideology -- right -- of white  
14 supremacy is still very much rampant. And if we're not  
15 careful, you know, we can burn this down but then we'll  
16 take these things with us, and then we'll just replicate  
17 what we have now.

18 And the last thing is, my brother Erik, I  
19 definitely agree. I think the erasure of people and  
20 communities within this time that we're in -- right?  
21 Because so many of us outside of the marginalized  
22 communities think this is just about policing.

23 Right? It's about -- it is about the  
24 colonization. It is about the fact that Black women are  
25 dying just from having birth. It's about the fact that

1 Black people and Indigenous folks and queer folks and  
2 trans folks, almost in every column you pull up, are going  
3 to be at the bottom.

4 Right? So it's really about this  
5 transformational change and shifts that we need. But,  
6 like, we keep forgetting that, you know, the social  
7 contract that we speak of, Jeremy, and I'm fixing to wrap  
8 up. That social contract was built on the blood and  
9 murder of Indigenous folks and enslaving the Black folks.

10 Right? So a social contract exists. It just  
11 doesn't exist for Indigenous, Black, you know, women of  
12 color, poor folks. Right? So -- but yeah. I say all  
13 that to say -- and I know that was, like, my Debbie downer  
14 moment.

15 But I am hopeful because I know my history and  
16 I know people of color. I know women of color. I know  
17 people in the margins are always one that shift this  
18 paradigm. And I know we'll do it again, but you know.

19 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thanks, Chas. That was  
20 great. Hedy Lee, and then Courtney Robinson.

21 DR. LEE: Hi. Hopefully you can hear me,  
22 because my internet's going in and out. So sorry about  
23 that. My name is Hedy Lee. I'm a Professor of Sociology  
24 at Washington University in St. Louis. [audio cuts out]

25 MR. TRAVIS: We just lost you.

1 DR. LEE: [audio skip].

2 MR. TRAVIS: We lost you for a minute, so try  
3 again.

4 DR. LEE: [audio skip] my optimistic thing I  
5 wanted to talk about in the [audio skip]. Can you hear --  
6 [audio cuts out]

7 MR. TRAVIS: You're in and out. So let's try  
8 one more --

9 DR. LEE: How about you skip me -- how about  
10 you come back to me, and I'll try to get better internet?

11 MR. TRAVIS: I -- we will come back to you.  
12 Okay. Thank you. Courtney, you're up next, and then  
13 David Garland.

14 DR. ROBINSON: Hi. I'm Courtney Robinson.  
15 It's great to be with everyone. Thank you, Sukyi, for  
16 inviting me to this wonderful project. I am the founder  
17 and CEO of the Excellence and Advancement Foundation, and  
18 also an Adjunct Professor at Huston-Tillotson University.

19 I am in Austin. Wish you all could be here in  
20 Austin with us. So the work that we do at the Excellence  
21 and Advancement Foundation is that we're dedicated to  
22 transforming how communities combat the school-to-prison  
23 pipeline, and we really look at an ecosystems approach.

24 So we have services for kids who have found  
25 themselves entangled in school discipline system, in the

1 criminal justice system, but we also serve children who  
2 have not had any involvement at all. But we understand  
3 that children who are Black or Brown are at greater risk  
4 of being involved in the school discipline system.

5 We have all kinds of advocacy work that we do  
6 with partners, policy partners, other organizations around  
7 advocacy and community awareness and support, and we also  
8 have trainings for teachers and administrators. And so we  
9 really -- from our perspective, we want to change the  
10 system, but we know that we have to serve the people that  
11 have already been impacted by that system.

12 So with that said, for me, the first thing that  
13 comes to mind is that Nelson Mandela said, "There's no  
14 keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in  
15 which it treats its children." And I feel like, in this  
16 moment, we are doing what we've done so many times before.

17 We are putting our children in harm's way. We  
18 talk about *Brown v. Board* as this landmark, you know,  
19 piece of legislation. It was landmark, but we really  
20 chose to put our children in harm's way before we even  
21 began to deal with the unemployment for adults, housing --  
22 I mean, like, we just take our children and sacrifice them  
23 in ways that I think is unacceptable.

24 And so when I think about the pandemic and how  
25 we are reopening schools, kind of willy-nilly, without

1 really considering what that really means. We're asking  
2 10-year-olds to keep on a mask all day, and what happens  
3 when Black and Brown children put a mask on their wrist,  
4 or flick the mask across the room, then who and how  
5 they're disciplined and why they're disciplined.

6           So for me, I don't think that we, as a country,  
7 value children enough. I'm hopeful because we have  
8 decreased the number of children in cages. That makes me  
9 very, very hopeful. Thank you, Ms. Vivian. High-five for  
10 the hopeful.

11           But I feel stressed because I recognize how  
12 much work needs to be done for us to be the country that  
13 we need to be. And every day, when I talk about race and  
14 how race is the most salient factor in the school-to-  
15 prison pipeline, I have white people push back on me at  
16 every single point. And so the whiteness that we deal  
17 with on a daily basis and how that influences all of us,  
18 all of us. It's the air that we breathe. I'm less  
19 hopeful about the progress that we can make.

20           Can we make progress? Absolutely. But can we  
21 make the progress that we should make? I'm not as hopeful  
22 about that part.

23           MR. TRAVIS: Thank you --

24           DR. ROBINSON: And I come to this conversation  
25 as a daughter of a young man who was incarcerated when I

1 was six months old. He was 17 when he committed his crime  
2 and 18 when he was incarcerated. And so I come to this  
3 work both with the lived experience, but also the research  
4 and the dedication to the educational pieces of this work.

5 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you so much, Courtney.  
6 We'll hear from David Garland, and see whether Hedy is  
7 back in touch with us.

8 DR. LEE: Hey, I'm ready. I think I'll be  
9 ready after David Garland.

10 MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Good. So we'll come back  
11 to you after we hear from David.

12 DR. GARLAND: Okay. Thanks, Jeremy, and hi,  
13 everyone. So my name is David Garland. I'm an academic.

14 I'm really pleased to be part of this conversation. I  
15 spend way too much time in the library, not enough time in  
16 conversation with other people with different  
17 perspectives, so this is great for me.

18 I'm Scottish originally. I moved here about  
19 20 years ago. So I still have a, kind of, half-in, half-  
20 out outsider's view of the place. I've worked on American  
21 topics, the death penalty and lynching and mass  
22 incarceration. But right now, I'm kind of cheering myself  
23 up by working on a British topic, namely, the way that the  
24 welfare state was understood and debated and struggled  
25 over its meaning in the post-war years in the 1940s and

1 1950s in Britain.

2           So to answer Jeremy's question, I think, from  
3 my kind of observation, the U.S.A. does have a social  
4 contract, just not one that everyone accepts. It's  
5 contested. But it can probably be crudely put something  
6 like this: you should work hard, play by the rules,  
7 accept the sanctity of private property, market outcomes  
8 and white supremacy.

9           That's pretty much the American mold. And  
10 people struggle against this and people protest it, but by  
11 and large, that's the underlying contract that most people  
12 are living by. This country never made the transition  
13 from the, kind of, Lockean liberalism market society to  
14 social democracy.

15           The New Deal came close. It was a beginning,  
16 but it was kind of fatally limited by the institutions of  
17 the time, particularly by racial exclusions. It's  
18 continued to be that way ever since.

19           One reason to be cheerful in the kind of  
20 current circumstance, if you kind of -- if you're inclined  
21 to see the silver lining, is of course that major social  
22 change usually is prompted by or enabled by catastrophes,  
23 by wars, by depressions, by pandemics. So, you know,  
24 maybe people look at masses in the streets today and think  
25 that maybe the prospect for racial justice -- they look at

1 Bernie Sanders' success, Elizabeth Warren.

2 Really, the prospects for economic justice are  
3 bigger than ever. I tend to be really depressed by the  
4 nature of the American polity. I look -- this country is  
5 very weakly, very poorly governed. It's a huge  
6 continental land mass.

7 The capacity of the government, the federal  
8 government, to exert its control, its power, even where it  
9 choose to do that, is really very limited. And of course,  
10 in every level, there's contestation. There's devolved  
11 government.

12 There's, kind of, crazies who are in charge of  
13 things around the place. So the notion that this is a  
14 country that can never undertake social change in a kind  
15 of rational, collective way, that seems to me unlikely,  
16 that the institutions we have are designed to resist  
17 change, basically, that they're organized in a way that  
18 makes change of eclectic nature very difficult. And  
19 today, they're even dysfunctional in their own terms.

20 So you know, this is a moment where we're right  
21 on the edge of either important change for the better or a  
22 reaction for the worse. It makes me anxious, not  
23 optimistic.

24 MR. TRAVIS: We have another descriptor here,  
25 which is anxious, and Courtney said, stressed. The

1       adjectives are -- there are many of them that describe  
2       this moment. So Hedy, so you --

3                 DR. LEE: Yes.

4                 MR. TRAVIS: -- fixed the technology, and  
5       you're raring to go. Okay.

6                 DR. LEE: I am hoping so.

7                 MR. TRAVIS: The floor is yours.

8                 DR. LEE: Like, let's just see if I can get  
9       through these 60 seconds, since I already took away  
10       30 seconds. My name's Hedy Lee. I'm a Professor of  
11       Sociology at Washington University in Missouri. Very  
12       excited about the expansion of Medicaid, that Amendment 2  
13       was passed. Thank you, Emily, for shouting that out.

14                 My work focuses on -- I study health  
15       disparities as a demographer. And I focus a lot on the  
16       health of family members that are connected to individuals  
17       that are in prison and have other forms of criminal  
18       justice contact.

19                 And for me, you know, like all of you, there's  
20       lots of pessimism in the ways in which we choose for some  
21       bodies to be disposable versus others, et cetera, which is  
22       very problematic. But I also think this is a time where  
23       we're contending with a virus that doesn't have social  
24       boundaries.

25                 I mean, we do of course see disparities across

1 race, ethnicity and class with COVID-19, but you cannot  
2 have a healthy society unless everyone is healthy,  
3 especially with a virus like COVID-19. And I think that's  
4 going to cause some reimagining of what is health policy,  
5 and health policy isn't going to just be about health  
6 care.

7           If we want people to be healthy, we have to  
8 keep people connected to their families. If we want  
9 people to be healthy, they need to have jobs that will  
10 allow them to be safe, et cetera. So I'm really excited  
11 about how future political conversations and policy  
12 conversations are really going to have to think through  
13 and no longer try to, you know, put us in different boxes,  
14 like this is the health care policy box.

15           This is the criminal justice policy box. This  
16 is the educational policy box. But that we all -- we're a  
17 cube. We're not a box. We're a cube. That's what I'm  
18 thinking. And so those are my quick thoughts, and I'll  
19 stop there.

20           MR. TRAVIS: You did it. The technology  
21 supported you. And I love the cube metaphor. Talk about  
22 thinking inside a cube.

23           So I've failed to set up the next person, and  
24 so therefore, Katharine Huffman gets to go next, because I  
25 know that she'll forgive me for not doing that, and then

1 after Katharine, we'll hear from Dona Kim Murphey.

2 MS. HUFFMAN: Thank you, Jeremy. Yes. I am  
3 happy to jump in.

4 So it's been great listening to everyone, and  
5 I've been -- had the luxury of updating my thoughts, as  
6 you all have all been talking here. But you know, the  
7 thing that is really, I'm finding, really -- the thing  
8 that is making me feel optimistic and hopeful in this  
9 moment is that because of all of these pandemics that you  
10 described, Jeremy, we are seeing the impossible in a new  
11 way.

12 And you know, we always knew that in order to  
13 get to a social contract, a social understanding, a  
14 collective health and thriving, would require imagining  
15 something that we had never seen before. We still haven't  
16 seen it, but we've seen the fact that things that we  
17 thought were impossible can happen, and that, to me, feels  
18 like encouragement. That feels like something really  
19 emboldening to build on and to work with.

20 You know, the thing that I am stressed about,  
21 you know -- I think what we've also seen and what we've  
22 learned in Square One and what we've all seen in our lives  
23 is that, you know, these iterations -- you know, the same  
24 things have been happening for centuries, and the -- you  
25 know, the beast recreates itself in whatever way it needs

1 to in order to hold onto power, in order to hold onto  
2 structures and -- that currently exist, and so that's the  
3 thing that I feel like that we're going to have to really  
4 be on such incredibly vigilant guard against in all of  
5 this.

6 But you know -- but that does make me feel  
7 inspired and ready to go to work even more, rather than  
8 daunted. Because, you know, I think we have the benefit  
9 of all of that learning from so many eras before, so many  
10 people before us, that we can really move forward.

11 So I'm purposely avoiding the word pessimistic,  
12 but I am very mindful that this is not something that  
13 happens without our concerted efforts to make it happen.

14 MR. TRAVIS: Dona, and then Jorge.

15 DR. MURPHEY: I am Dona Murphey. I live in  
16 Pearland, Texas, which is interestingly now the burial  
17 place of George Floyd. It's a suburb outside of Houston.

18 About a year ago, I ran for public office here. I'm a  
19 physician scientist.

20 I'm here actually because Doctors for America  
21 wanted to send a representative here, and so here I am.  
22 About a year ago, I ran for school board.

23 In Pearland, Texas, we've had a number of  
24 assaults against Black boys in our school districts. And  
25 I discovered, in running for local public office, that we

1 had actually really entrenched anti-Blackness in a city  
2 that was part of the county that was the last bastion of  
3 slavery that, for 184 years of our history, never had a  
4 black county officeholder.

5 And I didn't know any of this, right? I'm  
6 Asian American. I've benefitted from all kinds of  
7 intersecting privilege. Moved here because this was close  
8 to the Texas Medical Center. And my children, you know,  
9 were fine, because they also had similarly benefitted from  
10 privilege.

11 And yeah. So just kind of being -- becoming  
12 more aware of all these kinds of injustices, which I had  
13 been aware, in intersecting spaces. I've done a lot of  
14 advocacy for several years now in immigration justice. So  
15 certainly, I've seen it in that space.

16 I hadn't realized that it's so pervasive --  
17 right -- in this, like, idyllic, suburban community. I  
18 didn't realize. And you know, have just felt very moved  
19 to do something about that.

20 In the pandemic, I think -- I feel a bit  
21 pessimistic. I personally -- and I'm, like, four or five  
22 months out with COVID myself, and have significant issues  
23 with it. I'm worried about the existential threat of  
24 COVID, quite frankly.

25 So when Courtney talks about children dying

1 when they open our schools, that's a very real  
2 possibility, and that frightens me. And, you know, in  
3 order to do this work collectively, we have to be well.  
4 And I know that, chronically, historically, people have  
5 been unwell because of the structures that we have created  
6 that have oppressed groups of people, that have erased  
7 groups of people.

8 Now, I think this is going to be almost --  
9 well, I can't say, indiscriminate, because certainly,  
10 there's been disproportionate harm with COVID. But there  
11 will be a very large number of people affected, and a  
12 very, very large number of people dead, right? And so I  
13 worry about this.

14 I worry about the existential threat of what  
15 happens with the -- what is happening with the American  
16 government, you know, with, you know, CBP that's been  
17 repurposed from our border, which has been, you know, just  
18 horrifying for a very long time, and now, being, you know,  
19 just again -- so yeah. I guess, I'll stop there.

20 It's a lot of pessimism from me at the moment,  
21 and I'm actually a very optimistic person. So it's very  
22 unusual for me to feel this way, but there it is.

23 MR. TRAVIS: There it is. Yeah. Welcome to  
24 that toggle world of going back and forth. So we'll hear  
25 next from Jorge, and then from Diana.

1 MR. RENAUD: Yeah. Hi. My name is Jorge. I'm  
2 sure everybody read their bio, so --

3 FEMALE VOICE: We've all been all been quiet  
4 now?

5 MR. RENAUD: I don't know who that is. So --  
6 okay. Anyway, my name is Jorge. I'm sure everybody read  
7 the bio, so there's no need to go into that. Right?

8 I'm going to present y'all, I guess, with a  
9 quick hope sandwich, with two pieces of hope, with a  
10 couple of pieces of pessimistic gristle in the middle.  
11 Someone who spent -- as someone who's spent 27 years in a  
12 Texas cage, I am optimistic that the -- that my  
13 abolitionist comrades are now starting to get a little  
14 sunlight. And people are starting to see that they're not  
15 just preaching, open up the cages, which is, of course,  
16 just simple incarceration.

17 But people are starting to understand being led  
18 into the light by the defund the police movement, that  
19 it's actually about transformation, that it's about  
20 recognizing the lifelong trauma that we inflict on  
21 everybody who lives in this country.

22 I'm a little bit pessimistic about -- as a born  
23 and bred Texican who still has a foot in the barrios, I'm  
24 a little bit pessimistic about people who have been  
25 colonized for centuries in this particular part of the

1 country. And I sense their resentment of the boys in the  
2 hood, at what they perceive as an imbalance of empathy and  
3 honor and respect being accorded to BLM and their  
4 perceived hurts and history being ignored. Okay? And I  
5 don't say that that's among the educated, privileged, woke  
6 Chicanos, but that's among the boys in the hood, and  
7 that's the way they feel.

8 I am also a bit pessimistic about the ability  
9 of the non-Black individuals in this country being willing  
10 to step up to the plate, right -- in the BLM landscape,  
11 and not have their feelings hurt every time, and not  
12 being -- and not perhaps retreating in doubt and whatever,  
13 and reverting to another kind of patronization and  
14 marginalization by according everything that we say as  
15 coming -- as being written in scripture or whatever,  
16 right, which, to me, is almost as bad as the other side of  
17 the coin.

18 And I am optimistic that there will be --  
19 talking about a social contract and being torn asunder by  
20 a virus. And not the coronavirus, but the virus that has  
21 somehow taken root in D.C., tearing up the social contract  
22 and diminishing more and marginalizing more the history of  
23 the immigrants in this country, as evidenced, perhaps, I  
24 think -- and I say this not as a critique but as a  
25 lamentation, as someone who partners and collaborates

1 quite a bit with individuals who are deeply enmeshed in  
2 the immigrant community.

3 And realizing that a cage is a cage is a cage,  
4 and not maybe seeing their voices here today, and feeling  
5 a bit optimistic that at some point in the future that we  
6 will realize that the *paisanos* need to be at the table,  
7 too.

8 So yeah.

9 MR. TRAVIS: Thanks, Jorge. And before we turn  
10 it over to Deanna -- so this is the facilitator's  
11 nightmare that, before I turn to Bruce to offer his  
12 assessment of the moment, that I might have missed  
13 somebody.

14 Now, I know that Danielle Allen, that we hoped  
15 would be here, who is a very important member of this  
16 Roundtable, wasn't able to join us today. She'll be here  
17 next week. So we look forward to her participation.

18 If you have -- if you're here, and I haven't  
19 called on you, and you're not Deanna and you're not Bruce,  
20 wave at me, and I'll come find you.

21 Deanna, please?

22 MS. VAN BUREN: Thank you. Hello, everybody.  
23 It's really great to be here. My name's Deanna Van Buren.  
24 I'm based in Oakland, California, and I'm an architect  
25 and an artist and a real estate developer.

1           And we -- my business partner and I started an  
2 organization called Designing Justice + Designing Spaces,  
3 which is an architecture and real estate development firm  
4 building the infrastructure to end mass incarceration by  
5 attacking it at its roots. You know, these are  
6 restorative reinvestments in community, the repurpose and  
7 reimagining of empty criminal justice infrastructures,  
8 supporting and closing it down, and creating a sort of  
9 infrastructure for restorative reentry.

10           So we're abolitionists. And I think that --  
11 when I think of the question, pessimism I experience as  
12 fatigue. Right? So I'm feeling fatigued by white  
13 supremacy and the patriarchy. I always think they go  
14 together and they're a big part of this.

15           And so I've been really thinking more about  
16 Black folks helping each other and our social contract  
17 with one another, as a sort of we-keep-us-safe model. And  
18 so what's been hopeful, and kind of exciting is to see  
19 Black folks across a range of class spectrums in various  
20 financial institutions coming together to redirect the  
21 flow of capital into Black and Brown communities.

22           I've never seen it before. These are Black  
23 angel investors talking to Black folks in philanthropy,  
24 and like, Citibank and all over the place, finally working  
25 together, being able to stand up, to move that capital

1 where it needs to go. And look at -- seriously looking at  
2 how community ownership and equity, from land banking to  
3 other forms of cooperative ownership, which I think is  
4 critical for the issues.

5 So that's been really amazing to see and to  
6 have people interested in the kind of projects we're  
7 talking about, as we divert capital. So that's my hopeful  
8 and exciting and yet fatigued place that I'm in right now.

9 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you. Add fatigue to that  
10 list. So let me just pause here for a second, and I'm  
11 going to ask Bruce for his guidance.

12 As you looked at the structure of the  
13 Roundtable proceedings, and we do this at the Executive  
14 Session also, we always start with a discussion prompted  
15 by an academic paper. Those papers ultimately get  
16 published so that we're contributing to scholarly  
17 literature.

18 These are not academic conferences, however, so  
19 we start with that. And many of them are, sort of,  
20 historical in their perspective on these issues. And then  
21 we have our very, always lively discussion, prompted by  
22 that paper, and then we -- at the end of every half-day,  
23 we ask Bruce to come and provide some framing observations  
24 as he reflects on the discussion that we just had.

25 And if you know Bruce, and he's our leader in

1 the Square One Project, he has a great gift for finding  
2 those threads. So we're going to do the same today. And  
3 before we break with an opportunity for Bruce to offer  
4 some observations, but he's also on the list as somebody  
5 who could say how he's looking at insights, his own  
6 insights of the optimism/pessimism view of the social  
7 contract.

8 So Bruce, I turn to you to say, you can either  
9 hold off your observations and be -- play the role of  
10 the -- we know you play well, which is to go above the  
11 discussion and find some common threads, and/or you get  
12 two bites of this apple, answer the question that  
13 everybody else answered.

14 Which would you like? But you're muted. You  
15 can't do either if you're muted.

16 DR. WESTERN: I'd like to do both.

17 MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Good. That's fine.

18 DR. WESTERN: I'll be very, very --

19 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

20 DR. WESTERN: -- brief. I don't want to crowd  
21 our time. Can I be very --

22 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Let me just tell folks  
23 where we're going after that. That's absolutely fine. So  
24 we're now -- we've got basically 20-plus minutes left in  
25 our time together, and we try to be punctual in our

1 endings and beginnings at Square One, so we will end close  
2 to that time.

3 We're going to offer Bruce, you know, five  
4 minutes or so at the end to do some summary observations.

5 Sukyi has some things she wants us to be mindful of.

6 But after Bruce does his answer to the  
7 question, I'm going to open it up to see -- and the next  
8 assignment is: of the things that you've heard that you  
9 want to comment on it and sort of reinforce, that sound  
10 important and new to you, you get to nominate someone  
11 else's observation.

12 This is not a time to say, And here's a  
13 furthermore, here's what I think. But you would say,  
14 there's something important that so-and-so said that I  
15 want to make sure we hold onto. So that would be the  
16 framing of an intervention that you want to make before we  
17 turn it over to Bruce.

18 So just think about that as we give Bruce his  
19 90 seconds, and just, you know, wave at me. And the  
20 sentence you should sort of lead with is, So-and-so said  
21 something which I think is really important. I hadn't  
22 thought about it before, and I want to make sure I hold  
23 onto that, that we hold onto that before we go and before  
24 we come back again next week.

25 So that's the opportunity that I'll provide for

1 anybody who wants to reinforce what someone else said, and  
2 just wave at me, and we'll come -- we won't use the Zoom  
3 queue function for this. We'll just come back at you if  
4 you get my attention.

5 Okay, Bruce.

6 DR. WESTERN: So very quickly, I'm Bruce  
7 Western, and I teach sociology at Columbia University. So  
8 like a lot of people, I think we're really on a knife edge  
9 right now and very dramatic change is possible. But on  
10 the one side is catastrophe and on the other side is  
11 significant progress to justice.

12 And, for me, the possibility of fundamental  
13 change lies partly in the fact that, with all of the  
14 events of the first part of this year, what's emerged in a  
15 very large way, I think, is a really deep crisis of  
16 legitimacy of the criminal justice system. And so, you  
17 know, the official ideology of the system is -- it is to  
18 keep us safe, right? That's the official mission of the  
19 criminal justice system.

20 And yet we've seen in vivid and graphic ways --  
21 we're steeped in this world, and we know all of the ways  
22 in which the system does not keep us safe. But now a  
23 public conversation has exploded onto the media stage in  
24 which the failure of the system to keep us safe, in which  
25 it's really actively very harmful, both in terms of the

1 police use of force and the way the pandemic has just  
2 caught fire in correctional facilities and so on.

3 The system is in a deep crisis of legitimacy.  
4 I think a lot about Eastern Europe. And in Eastern  
5 Europe, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, you know, you  
6 had this massive edifice of state socialism across Europe,  
7 whose -- the official mission of that system was to  
8 deliver democracy and well-being to workers.

9 It wasn't doing that. It was rotten at its  
10 core because of this crisis of legitimacy, and the system  
11 fell down like a house of cards. And this is kind of the  
12 possibility of this moment for me, that the system is  
13 really facing a crisis of legitimacy now, and the  
14 potential for very significant change is there.

15 Of course, we're on this knife edge because  
16 there are very powerful forces that are arrayed against  
17 the possibility of change. But I think this moment is  
18 very, very unusual and ripe with the possibility of  
19 change.

20 MR. TRAVIS: Thanks, Bruce. So the floor is  
21 open for somebody, just with a wave of the hand, and I  
22 have to get both screens working here, just to say,  
23 there's something that somebody said, that was not you,  
24 that you thought was really important.

25 Now, this is not a chance to say, what I said

1 was brilliant, and I hope everybody remembers it.  
2 Somebody else said -- and Courtney, you're up. I love it.  
3 What did someone else say that you thought was really  
4 important for us to hold onto?

5 DR. ROBINSON: What Jorge said is palatable for  
6 me, because I think about all the children that we have in  
7 cages because they are undocumented, and that, I think, we  
8 should hold onto, is that are we changing -- are we  
9 running out of Black people to cage, and so now, we're  
10 caging people who are undocumented?

11 So like, you know, thinking about how we are --  
12 how the system is trying to keep itself going by  
13 finding --

14 MR. TRAVIS: Great.

15 DR. ROBINSON: -- another group --

16 MR. TRAVIS: Great.

17 DR. ROBINSON: -- to incarcerate --

18 MR. TRAVIS: I'm going to cut you off there,  
19 just because we want to get as many in as we can. Who  
20 else would like to reinforce -- Gabriel?

21 MR. SALGUERO: Yeah. I think it's Chas. I  
22 hope I'm pronouncing your name right, Mr. Moore. Chas  
23 talked about the spectrum and how sometimes we have  
24 interstitial [audio skip], but sometimes it's intention,  
25 and we -- I'm paraphrasing, Chas.

1           I -- please, if I quote you -- if I'm getting  
2 you wrong, correct me. How sometimes we let the perfect  
3 be the enemy of the good and that kind of -- that can  
4 stifle progress, as we see both in criminal justice,  
5 immigration, racialized policing, and I thought that was  
6 an important point that we need to speak to.

7           MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thank you.

8           Deanna, what would you like to reinforce from  
9 one of your colleagues?

10          MS. VAN BUREN: I really wanted to reinforce  
11 something Ananya said. I hadn't even thought about it,  
12 about the mass displacement that's potentially coming,  
13 just because we've been looking at the mass -- you know,  
14 people coming out of prison and jail and the housing --  
15 lack of housing for that. This is a whole other layer to  
16 it, so thank you for bringing that.

17          MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Great. Ananya, what do you  
18 want to reinforce?

19          DR. ROY: Well, Ms. Deanna, and I didn't plan  
20 this, but I wanted to lift up what Deanna said and link it  
21 to what Aisha said, which is to think about capitalism,  
22 but to think also about alternative formations of capital  
23 accumulation, and what that might mean in our struggles  
24 for justice.

25          MR. TRAVIS: Great. And Kimá?

1 DR. TAYLOR: I wanted to reinforce something  
2 Chas said as well, but something different, but really  
3 needing to look at and do the internal work. Otherwise,  
4 you've incorporated all of these lessons and you -- after  
5 you've burned everything down, you reinvent the exact same  
6 system.

7 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. That was powerful. Agreed.  
8 Who else do we have up for a reinforcing observation?  
9 Yes, Aisha, please.

10 MS. McWEAY: So actually, I'm not sure if this  
11 is reinforcing as much as a -- I want to wrestle with it,  
12 and it was something Bruce just said, right? I think it  
13 was the idea that the criminal justice system was created  
14 under this construct to keep us safe.

15 And I want to engage with that, because I think  
16 there is some discussion around the actual formation of  
17 it, and what it was formed to actually do. And so I want  
18 to talk more about that at some point.

19 MR. TRAVIS: Great. Love it. Welcome to the  
20 next Square One. Eddie?

21 MR. BOCANEGRA: Yeah. Just something that  
22 George -- or Jorge and Erik Bringswhite mentioned earlier,  
23 which I took away from their comment was putting the  
24 people at center, right -- putting the client, the  
25 participant, those who are impacted by the issue front and

1 center, and that the solutions are also there.

2 Right? When you talk about 1492, how many  
3 years or decades or centuries -- right -- of oppression,  
4 that -- how are we taking those lessons learned and  
5 applying it? And also, not to marginalize within the  
6 marginalized, which is what I heard from George as well,  
7 right? How are we being inclusive in this process?

8 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Great. The floor is open.

9 Other things we want to hold onto before we move onto our  
10 next week's gathering.

11 MS. CABALLERO: I guess I can add something. I  
12 can't remember --

13 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah, please.

14 MS. CABALLERO: -- who touched on  
15 sustainability, but I think that, even through our  
16 optimism or hopeful nature of seeing how more people are  
17 being activated and becoming more aware of these issues  
18 and the need for them to be addressed systemically, when  
19 we reimagine and re-envision what reform and justice looks  
20 like, we need to make sure that it's sustainable. Because  
21 at the rate that we are right now, especially with the  
22 social uprising, it's not sustainable.

23 So we need to look at that more long term.

24 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Great. Yes, Chas? The  
25 aforementioned Chas. You've got two reinforcements

1 already. Go ahead.

2 MR. MOORE: I definitely want to add to  
3 something I think Deanna said about abolition. I think  
4 that absolutely that should be the goal for most of us,  
5 right -- to make sure we're not a part of, like, this  
6 nonprofit industrial complex where we're trying to, you  
7 know, keep a job.

8 Like, we should all be working to not have a  
9 job. But I also think that another huge part of abolition  
10 is the abolition of, like, our mind prisons, right? We  
11 also have to be willing to, like, really imagine this  
12 better world and all these things.

13 And then, again, Vivian with the hope, you  
14 know, because after the streets and those activities die  
15 down, all of us crazy folks will still be engaging in this  
16 work, which makes us crazy as hell. But again, I think  
17 we're all fueled by hope.

18 So I just want to uptick that.

19 MR. TRAVIS: Going once, going twice, last  
20 call?

21 REV. NIXON: Yeah. So I want to -- that's the  
22 theme of abolition and reform. Because those of us who  
23 are really on the ground, and who have been doing this for  
24 20 years, and will do it for the next 20, have to be  
25 careful of -- being very careful about the claims of --

1 belief in abolition and where they're coming from, and  
2 being dismissive of claims of reform that are coming from  
3 the people in the margins, because they're not enlightened  
4 enough to have gotten to abolition.

5 I think it's really important, Chas, that that  
6 conversation be really honest and that there's already  
7 issues around that that could prevent progress.

8 MR. TRAVIS: Yes, Dona?

9 DR. MURPHEY: I would just want to add to that,  
10 that I think it's -- I know that there are a lot of  
11 academics here. I feel like I'm a would-be academic. I  
12 decided to leave academia.

13 But I think it's important also that, like, I  
14 think the most potent, the most relevant policy ideas or  
15 solutions, right, come from the people who are closest to  
16 the struggle. And those people, like Vivian says, they're  
17 not always the people who are the "most enlightened,"  
18 right -- or are pushing for the most progressive  
19 solutions, and I think it's really important to keep  
20 coming back to that.

21 Yeah --

22 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

23 DR. MURPHEY: -- around that idea.

24 MR. TRAVIS: Has this discussion generated any  
25 more observations about -- ideas that we want to hold

1 onto? Okay.

2 They will come to you at 2:00 in the morning,  
3 so your assignment --

4 MS. HUFFMAN: One more.

5 MR. TRAVIS: -- is to say, God --

6 MS. HUFFMAN: Marcia had her hand up.

7 MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Marcia? Sorry. Marcia,  
8 go.

9 MS. RINCON-GALLARDO: Yeah. I wanted to just  
10 make a comment or add to what Bruce had said, and a couple  
11 of other folks, around, you know, the deep crisis of  
12 legitimacy. I too want to open up that conversation.

13 In the guise of public safety that, in fact,  
14 it's around social control and, you know, protection of  
15 property. And that it goes all the way back to the  
16 original peoples of this land, and how, you know, there  
17 was the taking of the land, right -- as opposed to sharing  
18 of the land.

19 And so that -- how does that play out today?  
20 Right? How does it play out in the sense of -- even as  
21 we're talking about reform or abolition or defunding of  
22 the police, there's so many lessons learned from what has  
23 been done and what hasn't been done in terms of reform of  
24 the system, particularly the youth justice system.

25 And so there's -- I think there's a bigger

1 discussion to be had as to the actual need to defund, but  
2 how? So that you don't stop that reform.

3 MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. As Bruce said, we're on the  
4 knife edge right now. We're trying to figure out what --  
5 how to move forward. So let's end this conversation here.

6 As I was saying, it doesn't mean that your  
7 brains are going to stop. And at the time you least  
8 expect it, you'll say, I wish I had said something. Hold  
9 onto those thoughts.

10 The benefit of this format of the Roundtable,  
11 you know, spread over a number of weeks rather than a  
12 number of days, is that we will have, you know, time to be  
13 in touch with each other in between sessions. And there  
14 is a way for you to just write to us, to -- we can send  
15 things out.

16 Something -- you've read an article that just  
17 is apropos of our conversation. We're happy, as the staff  
18 from the Roundtable, to share that. You've listened to a  
19 podcast that's really perfect.

20 We're in the business of curating ideas and  
21 creating a large network of people who are thinking  
22 critically about our current state of affairs. And the  
23 Roundtable is one way we do that, but we -- as you know,  
24 from Katharine's description, we have now four of these.

25 So there's hundreds of people who are connected

1 to Square One. We've done some town halls, that I would  
2 encourage you to look at, if you haven't already. They're  
3 on the Square One website, on YouTube.

4 We have active Twitter accounts. So there's  
5 lots of ways we're trying to engage folks, and as we think  
6 about the phase -- the next phase of Square One, and  
7 Vivian, it may not be over, so don't start feeling like  
8 you miss it yet. I have the same feelings. I love this  
9 group.

10 But we're trying to think about what's next.  
11 And in particular, how do some of these ideas get  
12 operationalized and actualized? And a way that we like to  
13 capture that phrase is, how do we go from blue sky to the  
14 ground?

15 How do we make some of the -- have influence in  
16 the world of change, whether you call it reform, you call  
17 it abolition, you call -- change is absolutely what we are  
18 about, in part, large part, because we think that we've  
19 done significant damage with what we've created.

20 So I'm going to turn to Bruce now to provide  
21 some closing observations, and then Sukyi will have some  
22 closing observations. And then I'll come back and just  
23 round it out quickly before we bid farewell.

24 Bruce?

25 DR. WESTERN: Yeah. So I'll quickly -- I want

1 to pick out four themes that I heard recurring through  
2 people's remarks, both in the first part and with the  
3 second prompt that Jeremy gave us. So -- and I started  
4 out -- but I was trying to, like, count up the votes.

5 On balance, are we optimistic or pessimistic?  
6 But a lot of people had an each-way bet, as we say in  
7 Australia. They say, well, I'm a bit, you know,  
8 optimistic and pessimistic. Optimism, so theme one,  
9 optimism.

10 What are we optimistic about? This came up in  
11 a variety of ways through the comment. A number of people  
12 spoke clearly about the fact this is a period of really  
13 rapid change, and already, some very dramatic things have  
14 happened.

15 And Elizabeth spoke to this, Katharine, Dona.  
16 Marcia spoke to this. Prisons have emptied out. There's  
17 been a language shift that has been very rapid over the  
18 last few months. The discourse of abolition has moved  
19 from the fringe to -- much more to the center of public  
20 conversation.

21 White supremacy as an analysis of racial  
22 inequality and injustice has moved to the center of the  
23 public conversation. That's happened really, really fast.

24 People are very optimistic about mobilization. There's  
25 been a really tremendous [audio skip] for mobilization,

1 that we all know well, and a lot of it -- and Aisha spoke  
2 to this. A lot of it has been driven by young people, and  
3 that's a source of optimism. So that's theme one that I  
4 pulled out.

5 The second theme, I think, is this idea of  
6 invisibility or erasure, and this came up in a variety of  
7 ways in different comments. And for me as a sociologist,  
8 you know, my natural language for talking about this idea  
9 is inequality, but inequality is somewhat different from  
10 invisibility or erasure.

11 I think this idea -- and Gabriel and others  
12 spoke in these terms -- this idea of invisibility is much  
13 more about how inequality is represented, how it's  
14 subjectively experienced, both by people who are  
15 privileged and those whose lived experience is being made  
16 invisible.

17 And it's interesting to me, we're talking about  
18 inequality in these terms. There's a real political edge  
19 to this. The fact of inequality is less important right  
20 now than how it's actually being subjectively experienced,  
21 because that's what's going to drive social change. So  
22 that's theme two, invisibility and erasure, which came  
23 through in many comments.

24 Third big theme. There was kind of a rejection  
25 of the idea of optimism, and Vivian replaced with the idea

1 of hope. And she very helpfully drew on Dubois, right?

2 Optimism is kind of a prediction. It's -- or  
3 it's at least our disposition towards a prediction. It's  
4 based on evidence. But hope comes from somewhere else.  
5 And the way I heard it, people are hopeful.

6 A lot of people said they were hopeful, and  
7 that's not a prediction about what's going to happen.  
8 That's a statement about one's own commitment or one's own  
9 personal engagement in trying to have an effect on what's  
10 going to happen over the coming months and years. And I  
11 want to sort of push us on that.

12 Where is that hopefulness coming from? What is  
13 driving it? Part of it, I think, is the value commitments  
14 we have. What are those value commitments? Can we bring  
15 that to the surface and make it more explicit?

16 I think part of the resonance of hope that a  
17 lot of people attached themselves to was that there are a  
18 bunch of different ways of knowing, right. And for me, as  
19 an academic, there's really only one way of knowing. It's  
20 this sort of -- positivistic. You go out and collect data  
21 in a systematic way, and you analyze it and so on.

22 But I think when people are appealing to hope,  
23 they're saying, look, there's a lot of different ways of  
24 knowing about the social world, and part of it can also be  
25 rooted in our values and our lived experience. And my

1 sense of personal engagement isn't coming from an  
2 empirical prediction about what's going to happen, but it  
3 is coming from my value commitment and my lived  
4 experience.

5 Now, I want us to be open. We're a very  
6 pluralistic group with -- some of us are academics. Some  
7 of us are doing very difficult work on the ground. I want  
8 us to be open to all these different ways of knowing, and  
9 the positivistic ways and the power of lived experience  
10 and the power of our value commitment.

11 Fourth big theme that I heard, and Chas put  
12 this on the table most bluntly. I think it's a big  
13 question. It is, what is transformational change?

14 You know, what -- there's all sorts of  
15 different changes that can happen. What can we say? Can  
16 we come up with criteria that would distinguish? Can we  
17 figure out whether change is meaningful or it's just on  
18 the surface? It's superficial.

19 And I do not at all want to be misunderstood to  
20 be saying that -- police reform. Austin, I know, have  
21 done brilliant work, for example, with the union contract  
22 with the PD in that area. To me, that feels pretty  
23 transformational, actually.

24 And so I don't want to dismiss the change  
25 that's going on the ground as not transformation, but we

1 went back and forth a little bit on that, particularly  
2 after Jeremy's second prompt. So I want to push us as a  
3 group to think about this question of, what is  
4 transformational change?

5           What makes change disruptive of the logic of  
6 the system? Right? Rather than reproducing the kinds of  
7 inequalities and injustices that we're so familiar with,  
8 what will change have to be to be that disruptive kind of  
9 change that changes the logic of the system?

10           So that's my wrap-up. Optimism, invisibility,  
11 hope and transformational change, they were the four big  
12 themes I saw in the discussion.

13           MR. TRAVIS: Thank you again, Bruce -- when I  
14 say, again, it's because we count on you at moments like  
15 this to just help us put lots of thoughts together in an  
16 organized way, and you've done it again brilliantly.  
17 Thank you for that.

18           I'm going to ask Sukyi to say a few words about  
19 where we're headed. Then I'll wrap up and we'll bid  
20 farewell for now.

21           Sukyi?

22           MS. McMAHON: Thanks, Jeremy. This is amazing,  
23 y'all. It's a pleasure to have created a space and to see  
24 y'all do your work, and I look forward to next week. I  
25 had the privilege of reading these papers that are coming

1 up next week in March, and I will hear your brains explode  
2 around the country as you're reading them, too, because  
3 that happened to me back then. And I'm just so excited to  
4 get into that conversation.

5 So tomorrow, you're going to get an email  
6 that's going to ask you to provide feedback. It has a  
7 brief survey. I've seen people coming in, going, and  
8 maybe it's because you're having a video issue or an  
9 internet issue, and we're going to try to help with that  
10 before we meet next time.

11 So there's an opportunity for you to let us  
12 know how this is going for you, and it also has an  
13 opportunity for you to voice any lingering thoughts about  
14 this conversation which we will share out to the group  
15 before we get here next week.

16 So we want to, kind of, come -- bring this to  
17 a -- close the loop on this discussion, because next week  
18 we're off to different things, but we don't want to leave  
19 y'all with these thoughts and nowhere to put them. It's  
20 important.

21 So look for that tomorrow, and we'll ask you to  
22 provide that by Friday at end of business so that we can  
23 share that out. That's all I have.

24 Over to you, Jeremy.

25 MR. TRAVIS: Thank you. So if -- you probably

1 have this experience also. There's lots of ways that  
2 people relate to each other in the, you know, lockdown,  
3 COVID-related lives that we lead, and one of them is this  
4 way. We see each other on Zoom screens, and we have  
5 conversations and move onto the next one, and it's --  
6 there's lots of benefits to this technology.

7           What we hope is different here, and as we  
8 reconstitute the Roundtable using this technology over a  
9 number of weeks, is that we deepen the bonds between us,  
10 and that there's a way in which we are all pushing each  
11 other in our contributions, in our reading, in our  
12 thinking, and that we emerge from this, at the end of this  
13 time together, with a very strong sense of community.  
14 That's what has happened as we've gathered together in  
15 cities around the country.

16           That's what the Square One idea is about, is to  
17 really create a -- we talk about a narrative change, a  
18 movement, maybe that's too big. But at least a community  
19 of people who are working together spiritually,  
20 intellectually, politically, in an academic way, in an  
21 idea-generating way.

22           So the hope for this session, which you have so  
23 far exceeded, was that we would begin that process of  
24 getting to know each other. And I feel just so privileged  
25 to be in the room virtually with all of you on this

1 kickoff session, and so excited about what we're about to  
2 do.

3 I'm not aware of anything else like this, in  
4 this area, where we're just pushing hard on generating  
5 ideas and curating ideas, being, in constructive ways,  
6 critical of each other's thinking, so that we are really  
7 advancing the discussion in ways that will benefit the  
8 people who are of interest.

9 So we do this work for lots of reasons. Some  
10 of them are admittedly very self-centered. We like to  
11 feel some satisfaction from working with colleagues and  
12 reading and having our ideas tested.

13 But as we close out today, I just want to  
14 remember the number of times that each of you said, we're  
15 doing this on behalf of those who are not here, those who  
16 are incarcerated, those who are in cages on the border,  
17 those who are young people trying to figure out their life  
18 in the era of, you know, school displacement, those who  
19 are suffering, those who are experiencing unemployment and  
20 accentuated poverty and home insecurity.

21 So we're doing this work, and we always like to  
22 remind ourselves as we go forward, not for the people who  
23 are on this screen, and certainly not for the larger  
24 Square One community, but because there are people who are  
25 suffering. And the suffering has been accentuated,

1 exacerbated, driven home by the four pandemics that got us  
2 started today.

3 So in that spirit, I want to thank you for the  
4 work you're doing on their behalf, on behalf of the larger  
5 community in our country, and even around the world. And  
6 thank you for giving yourselves to this project and this  
7 enterprise.

8 So we'll see each other in a week. Be in  
9 touch, please. We have lots of ways we can support each  
10 other.

11 And I wish you well, as we -- I was going to  
12 say, as you travel home -- you're already home, so I'll  
13 take that off the table -- but as you go about your  
14 business. Thanks for being as generous as you've been and  
15 as thoughtful and as thought-provoking as you've been.

16 So be well. Take care. And the Square One  
17 team stays on. We know that. Right?

18 Now, take care.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Bye, everyone. Thank you.

20 (Whereupon, at 6:09 p.m., the meeting was  
21 adjourned.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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MEETING OF:       The Square One Project Roundtable  
LOCATION:            via Zoom  
DATE:               August 5, 2020

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,  
numbers 1 through 91, inclusive, are the true, accurate,  
and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording  
made by electronic recording by Latrice Porter.

DATE: August 10, 2020

/s/ Adrienne Evans-Stark  
(Transcriber)

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