

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

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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.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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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