THE SQUARE ONE PROJECT

ROUNDTABLE ON THE FUTURE OF JUSTICE POLICY

EXAMINING JUSTICE REFORM AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

IN THE UNITED STATES:

IMPLICATIONS FOR

JUSTICE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Zoom meeting

4:00 p.m. EST

Wednesday,
August 5, 2020
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MS. HUFFMAN: It's so wonderful to be with all of you all today and to see your faces. My name is Katharine Huffman. I know many of you in person or by name and email address, and just really thrilled to have you join us.

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

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

So over the past two years, we've grappled with these issues through two distinct methodologies.
One is our Executive Session on the Future of Justice Policy, which is a group of people who agree to meet regularly over the course of six years and -- I'm sorry -- three years and look at these issues together. But the other is our Roundtable on the Future of Justice Policy, which is what all of you are now officially a part of.

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

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

I want to thank our supporters in this particular Roundtable, the Ford Foundation and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, have provided support for our work together, and we're really appreciative of that, of that support.
So as Sukyi noted, we had originally planned to gather together in Austin, Texas. And in our past Roundtables, which have taken place in Durham, North Carolina, in Oakland, California, and in Detroit, Michigan, our physical presence in a particular location and our partnership with a local college or university and with local community leaders in planning and putting together our Roundtable have been really important to the Roundtable’s focus and to our learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She's helping us record and transcribe everything that's said, and these transcripts will be available after our event. That's helpful for our writers who may want to use those transcripts for any revisions to their papers, based on our discussions, and those are also going to made publicly available for anyone who wants to review and reflect on what's said here.
And finally, a huge thanks to Michael Kleiman and Jesse Brown at MediaTank. They are going to be producing highlight videos from the Roundtable, and have done that for our past Roundtables, and we're doing that for this one, too.

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

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

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

DR. WESTERN: Great. Thanks a lot, Katharine.

Man, it's kind of -- it's bittersweet to see all of you on the screen like this. It's so fantastic that you've been able to contribute your time and your creativity and energy to this project.

I'm really sad we can't be together in person in Austin, and you know, so much of the work, as we all know with these kinds of events, gets done during the coffee break and over dinner and at the bar after dinner. And just sort of seeing you all, I'm missing being with you all at the moment, but very grateful that you have made time for the Square One Project at a time that is just -- you know, it is incredibly challenging for the country, but also incredibly personally stressful for everyone.

So thanks a lot. This is the fourth time we've gotten together in this Roundtable format for Square One, and Square One is a group effort. It involves all of the brilliant, creative people around this virtual table. It also involves a tremendous team. Today's meeting, as Katharine was saying, was assembled in this whole online format -- was assembled by Sukyi McMahon, and Sukyi would have been our host in Austin. She's been the brilliant organizer of these
events, first in Durham, nearly two years ago now, and
then in Oakland, and then in Detroit.

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

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

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

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

How do we change the way we talk about
violence, incarceration, racial injustice, and poverty? And how do we change that conversation in a way that promotes greater fairness and safety in American society? We started to tackle this problem in Durham, and there, the Durham meeting was organized around the theme of racial and economic inequality.

And in Durham, we talked a lot about the challenge of reckoning with a history of racial injustice that had to be faced. Right? We have to face the history of racial injustice in this country and its contemporary manifestation before transformational change could happen. That's where we landed in the Durham meeting.

From Durham, we went to Oakland. We talked about criminalization, the role of the courts, punitive excess. From there we went on to Detroit, where we addressed the very, very challenging problem of violence. And that meant both interpersonal violence, means the structural violence of deep inequality, and it also means the state violence of police brutality and mass incarceration.

In this meeting over the next few weeks, we're pivoting, and we're turning to imagining alternatives. What's the role of social policy for housing, for health care, for education, for employment? What's the role of public policy in these areas, the way we think about these social challenges in transforming how we respond to all of
those problems that are attached to poverty and racism in America?

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

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

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

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

So with that, I want to hand it off to Jeremy Travis, who is going to explain how we will do everything that we hope to achieve in this coming series of meetings.
MR. TRAVIS: Thank you very much, Bruce. Let me add my welcome to everybody. I'm going to quickly ask Sukyi to give us some housekeeping advice on how we're going to work together.

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

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

MS. McMAHON: That's good. Thank you, Jeremy.

I am going to quickly screen-share with you all our Zoom norms. Here we go. So in terms of how you're going to get into the speaker queue, you're just going to go down to the participants icon at the bottom of your screen, and there, you'll find the raise hand option.

We'll just ask you to raise your hand. On the host side, it will put you in order by when you've raised your hand. And when you've finished speaking, we'll just ask you to lower your hand. If you forget to lower your hand, we will lower it for you.
If you have something you have to jump in on --
I'm sorry. Can -- whoever -- who needs to mute, please
mute. So if you have something you have to say -- someone
said something, and you're, like, oh, I know the answer to
that, or I have to speak to that, you can wave at us.

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

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

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

If you do have technical issues, please -- Evie
is on here. Just send her a quick message. I think she's
also going to pop her cell phone number into the chat. So
if you somehow get booted, she can help you get back in.
And you can feel free to private-message folks, but just
make sure you're messaging the right person.

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

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

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

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

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

The Square One Project, which is now well over
two years old, has been just one of the most exhilarating
things that I've been part of, and I think many of us have
this feeling. And it is a journey. We're not quite sure
where we're headed, but we're a committed band of
explorers who start with a very firm commitment that our
country has gone way off track, that this is a deep
problem with historical roots, and particularly in the
institution of slavery and white supremacy, modern roots
in the tough-on-crime era that some of us have written
about, and the results are devastating for our country,
that we have so many people in prison, so many people
incarcerated in jails, in pre-trial detention, on
community supervision.

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

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

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

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

I think this is, in a sense, a type of patriotic duty. Where this is taking us, we're not sure. We're now thinking about what happens after our three-year journey is over and we start thinking about the next chapter, and we're open to suggestions that you can share with us.

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

Bruce has already laid out the work we did in the first three Roundtables. This one is the fourth and is the pivot to the end of the Roundtable process, which
will end, as Bruce said, in New York, we hope, with a discussion of values.

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

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

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

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

They're in your welcome packet. They really
set the big stage for how do we think about the social contract? Elizabeth Hinton is helping us look at this in the context of particularly her expertise in the history of crime policy in America and the legacy of slavery. David is helping us think about this as a comparative question. How does our thinking about this in America compare to other countries? And we'll talk about the format in a second.

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

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

Then we look at the next session. We'll see that we have papers that are being presented and completed by Bruce on the issue of poverty and the social contract.
Vesla Weaver is from Johns Hopkins, is writing a paper on political participation, very important part of our -- the way we relate to each other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Something like this -- I can see everybody on
the screen, so just use that sparingly. But if it's
there, it means you've got something really important to
contribute. So use the insistent wave if you need to.
Otherwise, nominate yourself for the queue.
So we have some other rules of the Roundtable that are important here, which is that we try to keep people's contributions concise. Everybody on this screen could speak for hours, and we all have, on this topic. This is not the time.

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

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

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

So we're not going to do that. I don't want to
do that. But just have in your mind the notion of mutual
respect and obligation to each other to make your
contributions as concise as possible.

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

(No response.)

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

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

It's been brought front and center, the
uprising that has taken over our city streets and has
focused on police brutality, defund the police. Frankly,
in my lifetime, I've never seen anything like it. It's so exciting. It's fraught. It's complicated, but it's got the potential for big reform. That's the second reality.

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

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

So we have this reality that we're coming together in the middle of this very brutal time, frankly. So to talk about the social contract at a time when it seems to be frayed, to say the least, is an assignment of the first order. In our own ways, from our own seats and our own disciplines and our own networks and perspectives, we are all thinking about this.

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

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

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

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

As you reflect on the current moment in our country and the four realities of the pandemic, the recession/depression, high levels of unemployment, and you know, very strong reminders of socioeconomic inequality,
and the uprising, the focus on racial justice and police
brutality, and the political dysfunction, what insights or
lessons have you taken that you want to contribute to this
discussion that make you either optimistic or pessimistic?

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

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

So I'll stop there for a second.

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

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

MR. BOCANEegra: Hi.

MR. TRAVIS: You're going to set the pace for a
really terse answer. The challenge we discussed in our
group was, imagine you're writing a tweet. You've got a
little more than 140 characters, but not much, and to make
matters worse, you're going to introduce yourself before
you tell us why you think these are the insights and
lessons.

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

You ready?

MR. BOCANEGRA: I'm ready.

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

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

So the question is extremely relevant to the
work that I do, and here's my two cents. I think, one,
this pandemic and everything, all the four things you outlined, what I -- being optimistic about things, is -- it's definitely disclosed how our country values punishment versus, you know, healing and restoration. So that's one thing.

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

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

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

She has a title that has "social contract project senior advisor." So she should have something to say about this, and is the founder of TransLash, is doing work for the transgendered population. Vesla Weaver is not able to be with us.
She's a distinguished professor at Johns Hopkins, and she's one of our paper writers coming up. And Fatimah Loren Dreier, who is the director of HAVI that does work of health interventions and has been a member of the Roundtable in the past, in Detroit, is not able to be with us today.

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

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

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

I don't feel the country has ever truly had a social contract. It has had social contracts for different groups at different times, that it is absolutely willing to take away and destroy, as needed. And so I feel that perhaps a piece of optimism is that we can learn
past lessons from these myriad broken contracts and
actually reimagine and create one that takes those lessons
learned, positive and negative, to recreate one that
really is effective for all.

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

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

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

I'm really optimistic by the speed with which
social movements that have been building for decades have
kind of taken a new national prominence, like, defund the
police and people are talking about abolition more. And
of course, you know, systemic racism is becoming this,
kind of, like, household, buzzword term, and that white
people are beginning to really reckon with racism and their own role in exacerbating racism, and also taking of the streets.

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Sure. Thank you, Elizabeth.

After Kristian, we'll hear from Emily Wang, who's a member of the Executive Session.

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

We're looking at various institutions, their
practices, their policies, and pushing for reform and worst-case scenario, filing lawsuits, if need be. But in, as you can imagine, the state of Texas, it's very difficult.

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

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

And so you know, thanks to digital and social media, we're seeing more people get access to information and exposure to these issues and a level of engagement that we've never seen before. So I'm optimistic in that sense, and hopefully, with more people getting involved and creating these mutual aid systems and pushing for more
community-based programs, I'm optimistic that, in the future, we'll start making some progress in seeing what a social contract should look like.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yay.

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

MS. ZELLER: Good. So I'm really encouraged by the witnessing of the convictions of other people around me, that -- about the impact of our silence as white people and the power of our voices, especially in systemic
racism, injustice and oppression, if we really get started on it.

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

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

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

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

MS. McMAHON:  Try it again, Erik.

MR. BRINGSWHITE:  Hello.

MR. TRAVIS:  There we go.

MR. BRINGSWHITE:  Okay. All right.
MR. TRAVIS: Hi, Erik. Good to see you, sir.

MR. BRINGSWHITE: Good to see you, sir.

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

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

So thank you.

MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thanks so much, Erik.

We'll hear next from Marcia, then Vivian Nixon.

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yes.

MS. RINCON-GALLARDO: Okay. So I'm here in San Jose, California, but I'm originally from Mexico. I am Indigenous and Chicana/Mexicana, and I work for actually
two different entities. One is NOXTIN, Equal Justice for All, which is my consulting business, and then also for the Alianza for Youth Justice.

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

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

We've expanded who to bring to the table, and they're actually really pushing for the emptying out, the abolishment, the closing down of these facilities. Social contracts have never included us, because we start with the 1600s and move forward.
People start with slavery and move forward, as opposed to starting with a more global history that talks about the genocide of our people, of our ancestors, which then, if you start with 1600 and move forward, we don't exist as a people. And we've been crossing these borders and living across these lands.

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

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

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

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

I -- you know, I -- lessons, I don't know what lessons I've learned. I've kind of learned some new language around what I feel we've often called co-optation
of the ideas of marginalized people by larger institutions.

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

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

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

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

Aisha, you're up next, and then we'll hear from Gabriel Salguero.
MS. McWEAY: Setting a timer to make sure I stay at 90 seconds. I'm Aisha McWeay, Executive Director of Still She Rises Tulsa. Set behind me is a picture of Black Wall Street prior to the Tulsa Race Massacre and after. And that context, for me, sets this entire discussion that we're having and how I enter this discussion.

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

I will say that the most -- the thing I'm most pessimistic is the erasure of poor people and people of color during COVID-19 and their dignity and their humanity. I am a career public defender, and so being proximate to this work has meant that I get to see that firsthand. And that is really hard to watch, and so it's really difficult to be optimistic in that regard, but I'm trying.
MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thanks, Aisha. Yeah, and your timer just went off. Perfect. Gabriel is next, and then Ananya Roy will follow him.

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

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

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

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

And so here are three things that I think are -- keep me hopeful, even though I'm aware of the grim reality: the acceleration and democratization that social
platforms have brought to certain justice initiatives, even though, conversely, it has led to Balkanization and false narratives on those same platforms, and so that's two sides of the coin of the acceleration and democratization, while they're also founts of misinformation and Balkanization.

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

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

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

And so one of the concerns that I have is how these issues are so visible to so many of us, and invisible to so many of others of us in this flawed, frayed, dangling discord of a social contract we call...
American democracy. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

But these are the worst of times, and I'm actually really fired up in these times. I'll share just
one example. So since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've been working at feverish pace in LA to begin to outline what we believe will be the largest mass displacement in the history of the region since Indigenous genocide and dispossession, and that is mainly the eviction crisis that is about to hit LA, and is already hitting so many U.S. cities.

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

And in particular, I want to say that what has me fired up is that -- is a rethinking of the entanglement of property, personhood, and police. And that entanglement of property, personhood, and police, I would argue, goes to the very heart of a racialized social democracy in the U.S., of how racial capitalism functions. And all of that now is ready to be dismantled, whether that is, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore notes in her
upcoming book, it means, change everything, or whether it means, burning everything to the ground and starting from scratch.

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

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

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

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

But I do feel hopeful. I like that word, Vivian. That resonates with me, as well. I feel hopeful
when I think of the most personal interactions I've had. Never before been able to use certain words in lobby visits that I'm able to use right now, and to have the response that I have right now to them.

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Okay. Thank you so much, Heather.

Chas, to be followed by Hedy Lee.

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

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

because we have no evidence that things are going to get

supremely better as they should.

But I'm pessimistic for a few different

reasons. One, I'm loving the energy in the yard signs and

the donations, and you know, the hashtags, and people, you

know, are coming to the meetings and asking for the
talking points at, you know, city council meetings.

But I'm pessimistic because I don't know if

that conviction is real. I don't know if that conviction

is, like, long withstanding. I just -- you know, I think

it's a moment in this time in which, you know, white

people and people in power feel some type of way, and

then, you know, we get -- you know, I call it, the 9/11

effect, right.

For six months in this country, everybody love

one another. Then six months after that, we went back to

the America that we were. I'm also pessimistic because of

this attack on reform. Granted, I think reform should be

critiqued, but I think it gets to a point to where if we

get so caught up in wanting the thing on the other side of

the door and not doing the reform work, then the system

will swallow us whole, as it is intended to do.

So the infighting between the movement about

reform and reform not being good enough -- and granted,
some reform is just trash, right? But I think there is
some good folks that do radical reform that's based in
abolition and transformational change, and I think we have
to hold that space and be okay with that.

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

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

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

Right? It's about -- it is about the
colonization. It is about the fact that Black women are
dying just from having birth. It's about the fact that
Black people and Indigenous folks and queer folks and trans folks, almost in every column you pull up, are going to be at the bottom.

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

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

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: We just lost you.
DR. LEE: [audio skip].

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

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: I -- we will come back to you.

Okay. Thank you. Courtney, you're up next, and then David Garland.

DR. ROBINSON: Hi. I'm Courtney Robinson. It's great to be with everyone. Thank you, Sukyi, for inviting me to this wonderful project. I am the founder and CEO of the Excellence and Advancement Foundation, and also an Adjunct Professor at Huston-Tillotson University. I am in Austin. Wish you all could be here in Austin with us. So the work that we do at the Excellence and Advancement Foundation is that we're dedicated to transforming how communities combat the school-to-prison pipeline, and we really look at an ecosystems approach. So we have services for kids who have found themselves entangled in school discipline system, in the
criminal justice system, but we also serve children who have not had any involvement at all. But we understand that children who are Black or Brown are at greater risk of being involved in the school discipline system.

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

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

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

And so when I think about the pandemic and how we are reopening schools, kind of willy-nilly, without
really considering what that really means. We're asking 10-year-olds to keep on a mask all day, and what happens when Black and Brown children put a mask on their wrist, or flick the mask across the room, then who and how they're disciplined and why they're disciplined.

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Thank you --

DR. ROBINSON: And I come to this conversation as a daughter of a young man who was incarcerated when I
was six months old. He was 17 when he committed his crime and 18 when he was incarcerated. And so I come to this work both with the lived experience, but also the research and the dedication to the educational pieces of this work.

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

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

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

DR. GARLAND: Okay. Thanks, Jeremy, and hi, everyone. So my name is David Garland. I'm an academic. I'm really pleased to be part of this conversation. I spend way too much time in the library, not enough time in conversation with other people with different perspectives, so this is great for me.

I'm Scottish originally. I moved here about 20 years ago. So I still have a, kind of, half-in, half-out outsider's view of the place. I've worked on American topics, the death penalty and lynching and mass incarceration. But right now, I'm kind of cheering myself up by working on a British topic, namely, the way that the welfare state was understood and debated and struggled over its meaning in the post-war years in the 1940s and
So to answer Jeremy's question, I think, from my kind of observation, the U.S.A. does have a social contract, just not one that everyone accepts. It's contested. But it can probably be crudely put something like this: you should work hard, play by the rules, accept the sanctity of private property, market outcomes and white supremacy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: We have another descriptor here, which is anxious, and Courtney said, stressed. The
adjectives are -- there are many of them that describe
this moment. So Hedy, so you --

DR. LEE: Yes.

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

DR. LEE: I am hoping so.

MR. TRAVIS: The floor is yours.

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

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

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

I mean, we do of course see disparities across
race, ethnicity and class with COVID-19, but you cannot have a healthy society unless everyone is healthy, especially with a virus like COVID-19. And I think that's going to cause some reimagining of what is health policy, and health policy isn't going to just be about health care.

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

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

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

So I've failed to set up the next person, and so therefore, Katharine Huffman gets to go next, because I know that she'll forgive me for not doing that, and then
after Katharine, we'll hear from Dona Kim Murphey.

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

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

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

You know, the thing that I am stressed about, you know -- I think what we've also seen and what we've learned in Square One and what we've all seen in our lives is that, you know, these iterations -- you know, the same things have been happening for centuries, and the -- you know, the beast recreates itself in whatever way it needs
to in order to hold onto power, in order to hold onto structures and -- that currently exist, and so that's the thing that I feel like that we're going to have to really be on such incredibly vigilant guard against in all of this.

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Dona, and then Jorge.

DR. MURPHEY: I am Dona Murphey. I live in Pearland, Texas, which is interestingly now the burial place of George Floyd. It's a suburb outside of Houston. About a year ago, I ran for public office here. I'm a physician scientist.

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

In Pearland, Texas, we've had a number of assaults against Black boys in our school districts. And I discovered, in running for local public office, that we
had actually really entrenched anti-Blackness in a city that was part of the county that was the last bastion of slavery that, for 184 years of our history, never had a black county officeholder.

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

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

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

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

So when Courtney talks about children dying
when they open our schools, that's a very real
possibility, and that frightens me. And, you know, in
order to do this work collectively, we have to be well.
And I know that, chronically, historically, people have
been unwell because of the structures that we have created
that have oppressed groups of people, that have erased
groups of people.

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: There it is. Yeah. Welcome to
that toggle world of going back and forth. So we'll hear
next from Jorge, and then from Diana.
MR. RENAUD: Yeah. Hi. My name is Jorge. I'm sure everybody read their bio, so --

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

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

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

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

I'm a little bit pessimistic about -- as a born and bred Texican who still has a foot in the barrios, I'm a little bit pessimistic about people who have been colonized for centuries in this particular part of the
country. And I sense their resentment of the boys in the
hood, at what they perceive as an imbalance of empathy and
honor and respect being accorded to BLM and their
perceived hurts and history being ignored. Okay? And I
don't say that that's among the educated, privileged, woke
Chicanos, but that's among the boys in the hood, and
that's the way they feel.

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

And I am optimistic that there will be --
talking about a social contract and being torn asunder by
a virus. And not the coronavirus, but the virus that has
somehow taken root in D.C., tearing up the social contract
and diminishing more and marginalizing more the history of
the immigrants in this country, as evidenced, perhaps, I
think -- and I say this not as a critique but as a
lamentation, as someone who partners and collaborates
quite a bit with individuals who are deeply enmeshed in
the immigrant community.

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

So yeah.

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

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

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

Deanna, please?

MS. VAN BUREN: Thank you. Hello, everybody.
It's really great to be here. My name's Deanna Van Buren.
I'm based in Oakland, California, and I'm an architect
and an artist and a real estate developer.
And we -- my business partner and I started an organization called Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, which is an architecture and real estate development firm building the infrastructure to end mass incarceration by attacking it at its roots. You know, these are restorative reinvestments in community, the repurpose and reimagining of empty criminal justice infrastructures, supporting and closing it down, and creating a sort of infrastructure for restorative reentry.

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

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

I've never seen it before. These are Black angel investors talking to Black folks in philanthropy, and like, Citibank and all over the place, finally working together, being able to stand up, to move that capital
where it needs to go. And look at -- seriously looking at how community ownership and equity, from land banking to other forms of cooperative ownership, which I think is critical for the issues.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Let me just tell folks where we're going after that. That's absolutely fine. So we're now -- we've got basically 20-plus minutes left in our time together, and we try to be punctual in our
endings and beginnings at Square One, so we will end close
to that time.

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

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

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

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

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

So that's the opportunity that I'll provide for
anybody who wants to reinforce what someone else said, and just wave at me, and we'll come -- we won't use the Zoom queue function for this. We'll just come back at you if you get my attention.

Okay, Bruce.

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

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

And yet we've seen in vivid and graphic ways -- we're steeped in this world, and we know all of the ways in which the system does not keep us safe. But now a public conversation has exploded onto the media stage in which the failure of the system to keep us safe, in which it's really actively very harmful, both in terms of the
police use of force and the way the pandemic has just
caught fire in correctional facilities and so on.

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

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

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

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

   Now, this is not a chance to say, what I said
was brilliant, and I hope everybody remembers it.

Somebody else said -- and Courtney, you're up. I love it.

What did someone else say that you thought was really
important for us to hold onto?

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Great.

DR. ROBINSON: -- another group --

MR. TRAVIS: Great.

DR. ROBINSON: -- to incarcerate --

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

MR. SALGUER0: Yeah. I think it's Chas. I
hope I'm pronouncing your name right, Mr. Moore. Chas
talked about the spectrum and how sometimes we have
interstitial [audio skip], but sometimes it's intention,
and we -- I'm paraphrasing, Chas.
I -- please, if I quote you -- if I'm getting you wrong, correct me. How sometimes we let the perfect be the enemy of the good and that kind of -- that can stifle progress, as we see both in criminal justice, immigration, racialized policing, and I thought that was an important point that we need to speak to.

MR. TRAVIS: Great. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Great. And Kimá?
DR. TAYLOR: I wanted to reinforce something Chas said as well, but something different, but really needing to look at and do the internal work. Otherwise, you've incorporated all of these lessons and you -- after you've burned everything down, you reinvent the exact same system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah, please.

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

So we need to look at that more long term.

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. Great. Yes, Chas? The aforementioned Chas. You've got two reinforcements
already. Go ahead.

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

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

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

So I just want to uptick that.

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

REV. NIXON: Yeah. So I want to -- that's the theme of abolition and reform. Because those of us who are really on the ground, and who have been doing this for 20 years, and will do it for the next 20, have to be careful of -- being very careful about the claims of --
belief in abolition and where they're coming from, and
being dismissive of claims of reform that are coming from
the people in the margins, because they're not enlightened
even to have gotten to abolition.

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

MR. TRAVIS: Yes, Dona?

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

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

Yeah --

MR. TRAVIS: Yeah.

DR. MURPHEY: -- around that idea.

MR. TRAVIS: Has this discussion generated any
more observations about -- ideas that we want to hold
They will come to you at 2:00 in the morning, so your assignment --

MS. HUFFMAN: One more.

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

MS. HUFFMAN: Marcia had her hand up.


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

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

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

And so there's -- I think there's a bigger
discussion to be had as to the actual need to defund, but how? So that you don't stop that reform.

    MR. TRAVIS: Yeah. As Bruce said, we're on the knife edge right now. We're trying to figure out what --
    how to move forward. So let's end this conversation here.
    
    As I was saying, it doesn't mean that your brains are going to stop. And at the time you least expect it, you'll say, I wish I had said something. Hold onto those thoughts.

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

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

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

    So there's hundreds of people who are connected
to Square One. We've done some town halls, that I would encourage you to look at, if you haven't already. They're on the Square One website, on YouTube.

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

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

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

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

Bruce?

DR. WESTERN: Yeah. So I'll quickly -- I want
to pick out four themes that I heard recurring through people's remarks, both in the first part and with the second prompt that Jeremy gave us. So -- and I started out -- but I was trying to, like, count up the votes.

On balance, are we optimistic or pessimistic?

But a lot of people had an each-way bet, as we say in Australia. They say, well, I'm a bit, you know, optimistic and pessimistic. Optimism, so theme one, optimism.

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

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

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

People are very optimistic about mobilization. There's been a really tremendous [audio skip] for mobilization,
that we all know well, and a lot of it -- and Aisha spoke
to this. A lot of it has been driven by young people, and
that's a source of optimism. So that's theme one that I
pulled out.

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

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

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

Third big theme. There was kind of a rejection
of the idea of optimism, and Vivian replaced with the idea
of hope. And she very helpfully drew on Dubois, right?

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

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

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

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

But I think when people are appealing to hope, they're saying, look, there's a lot of different ways of knowing about the social world, and part of it can also be rooted in our values and our lived experience. And my
sense of personal engagement isn't coming from an empirical prediction about what's going to happen, but it is coming from my value commitment and my lived experience.

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

Fourth big theme that I heard, and Chas put this on the table most bluntly. I think it's a big question. It is, what is transformational change? You know, what -- there's all sorts of different changes that can happen. What can we say? Can we come up with criteria that would distinguish? Can we figure out whether change is meaningful or it's just on the surface? It's superficial.

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

And so I don't want to dismiss the change that's going on the ground as not transformation, but we
went back and forth a little bit on that, particularly after Jeremy's second prompt. So I want to push us as a group to think about this question of, what is transformational change?

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

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

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

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

Sukyi?

MS. McMAHON: Thanks, Jeremy. This is amazing, y'all. It's a pleasure to have created a space and to see y'all do your work, and I look forward to next week. I had the privilege of reading these papers that are coming
up next week in March, and I will hear your brains explode around the country as you're reading them, too, because that happened to me back then. And I'm just so excited to get into that conversation.

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

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

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

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

Over to you, Jeremy.

MR. TRAVIS: Thank you. So if -- you probably
have this experience also. There's lots of ways that people relate to each other in the, you know, lockdown, COVID-related lives that we lead, and one of them is this way. We see each other on Zoom screens, and we have conversations and move onto the next one, and it's -- there's lots of benefits to this technology.

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

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

So the hope for this session, which you have so far exceeded, was that we would begin that process of getting to know each other. And I feel just so privileged to be in the room virtually with all of you on this
kickoff session, and so excited about what we're about to do.

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

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

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

So we're doing this work, and we always like to remind ourselves as we go forward, not for the people who are on this screen, and certainly not for the larger Square One community, but because there are people who are suffering. And the suffering has been accentuated,
exacerbated, driven home by the four pandemics that got us started today.

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

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

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

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

Now, take care.

FEMALE VOICE: Bye, everyone. Thank you.

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

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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