(Content note: Violence, murder, sexual assault)

K: Lately, I've been thinking about letting people in and dropping down my wall, and being really vulnerable. I want to say the process started about a year ago. When did I come out as hard of hearing?

C: I think it's been about a year.

K: Okay. Part of this is something that's really hard for me. That is that I have always worked really hard to, while I own that I'm Black, and I introduced myself as Black, and I am super proud of being Black, I do make sure that my Black is always palatable. I think that, for me, the Black Lives Matter movement is just not about cops killing Black people, it is absolutely about that. It's about the quality of life for Black people. There's not a moment of the day, of any day, that I am not aware of the fact that I am Black.

K: If you go to our Twitter page and you see me sitting next to my husband in the photo, we look damn near the same color, but I have never passed as white. Nobody has ever not known that, there's something not quite white about me. People my whole life have asked me, except for Black folks, they know I'm Black, but people who aren't Black have asked me my whole life, "What are you?" Which is such a demeaning question. "What are you?" That has stuck with me my whole life and has really, for a lot of years, damaged me. Now, it doesn't, and that's not the most damaging thing. I've been called every racial slur in the book, even for races that I don't belong to. I believe we're all part of the human race, so ethnicities that I don't belong to.

K: I feel like, for me, me being a part of this conversation is lending my privilege because colorism is a thing, and there are spaces in which my Blackness is palatable because I'm pale, and I'm just light enough, and I'm just not “really” Black. I've had people tell me, "Well, you're not really Black." I'm like, "Yes, I am. I'm Black." It's so painful and exhausting to have to start every new relationship with, I'm Black, so that they don't do the racist crap that they do when they don't know I'm Black because I've made that mistake, just thinking I can just be and have people just be horrible. The reason that Chad and I are doing this episode together is because I believe people listen to people that look like them. When it comes to talking to Japanese nationals about Black Lives Matter, our son, Rasta, is the most fluent in Japanese, and he's taking on that education burden and responsibility in a time of great pain and a time of great somberness.

K: Chad has taken on the responsibility of speaking to white people because he is white, and why is he shouting Black Lives Matter?

C: I think because people don't listen otherwise. I think that there's a lot of ... See, I think the thing about like, “we're all part of the human race” is one of those things that while it's technically true, it's so often misused and subverted that you have to say, okay, this is true, but irrelevant. It's a non-sequitur. When you say that you always make sure that people know you're Black when you introduce yourself, but that you've tried to be, I forget how you phrased it, but I think of it as one of the respectable Blacks.

K: Yeah, a palatable level of Blackness.

C: Right. That, that in itself, that concept itself implies that there is a certain burden to identifying as Black, that it carries with it certain assumptions. When people hear that you're Black, they say, okay, well, here's what your standard Black person is like.

K: Don't make her mad.

C: Right. For example.

K: People telling me, "Ooh, you must have a bad temper," because I must be an angry Black woman, and damn straight, I am an angry Black woman.

C: I think there's that stereotype about so many different ethnicities. I find that talking to white people, in particular, some of the more "liberal white people" are like, well, ethnicity is culture. So, you can't say that being Black is an ethnicity because well, being Igbo is an ethnicity.

K: Yeah.

C: And being Nigerian is a nationality, but what's being Black?

K: Being Black is being killed by the police, being Black is when I was 25 years old, I drove up to Oregon, and driving from California to Oregon, every single day I was pulled over by the police. I was driving the speed limit. I wasn't breaking laws. Every single day, I was stopped by the police, I was pulled out of my car for not speeding, for not doing anything because I look like a gang member. I was driving a white car. It was a classic car. They pulled me out of my car every single day. When I was living, I lived, because when my mother was dying, I lived in Oregon. My mother lived in Coquille, Oregon, and I would drive back and forth to work every day. The same state trooper would pull me over every single day and search my car and frisk me, and say to me, "One day, I'm going to catch you." I didn't know what ...

C: What he was going to catch you at.

K: Yeah, I didn't know what he was talking to, and I would just respond, "No, sir. I always follow laws.” He would have these really racist conversations with me. Like, “you know the city that you're in was one of the last cities in Oregon to take down the no n-words allowed sign.” Then, there were ... “we don't like coloreds,” literally. Literally, in some of the restaurant windows in this town, and it was so incredibly painful for me. The assumption that I was on welfare and the ... Every single day for three months, this state trooper took a picture of my one tattoo that I had on my wrist, every single day. Every single day. Mind you, I was up there because my mother was in the hospital. She had had a stroke, and she was dying. So, I was up there every single day driving to and from work ...

C: Until she did die because ...

K: Yeah. Until she did die because ... It was horrific. I would go visit my mother in the morning. I would bathe her. She had lost her ability to speak. If y'all follow us on Twitter, you know my relationship with my mother is very fraught and very difficult. I had that whole twisted thing up in my head, dealing with that. Then knowing that I would be stopped, and there were some days that literally, in the span of a 45 minute drive, I would be stopped five times, and they all knew my name. And they're like, "Do you have your driver's license with you? Why is it a California driver's license? Why are your plates still California?"

K: I'm like, "Because I'm not moving here. I'm not moving here." They knew my story. They would say, "When is your mother going to die so you can get out of our city? We're sick of seeing you." I would think in my head, I'm sick of seeing you too. I'm sick of you groping me and copping a feel every time you frisk me. I'm being groped by the police, I'm having my car ransacked. There's absolutely nothing in my car at this point, except just the documents that need to be. I know the officer's names, and I don't complain because their boss has been in on it. I had state police and sheriffs, and just every law enforcement agency stop and search me. Then the drive back after my mother died, I was stopped in every single city between Coquille, Oregon and San Jose, California.

K: I was stopped in every single city, and not once did I ever speed. Not once was I ever speeding. Every single time that I was stopped, that police officer had his hand on his gun, and every single time I was stopped, I was afraid for my life. Every single time. It's so hard. It's hard to breathe. I can't breathe. It's just so frustrating. It's so difficult to explain what that's like. It's so difficult to explain what it's like being five years old and practicing hiding under the blanket in the back seat because we have entered the South. We always knew whenever we crossed the California state line, every summer, when I was with my mom who would drive cross country. We would practice, in California, getting under the seat and pulling things on top of us.

K: We had this makeshift setup to make it look like it's not people under it for me and my brother, because when we entered into Texas, specifically, that was the time when we would have to practice going under the blanket. We were not able to have our heads above the window. We were always supposed to be below the window because as we were driving through the Southern States, this was in the 70s, it was very clear to us, our mother had to explain to us that she would be taken into custody, beaten and raped because she had given birth to two Black children, and she would be considered a race traitor, and we would be taken into custody and removed from her care. That conversation, I never got how hard that conversation must have been for my mother.

K: So, I had the conversation with my son about what to do if he is ever pulled over by the police when he went to Australia about keep your hands on the wheel, do not take your hands off of the wheel until you have permission from the officer. Roll your window down, ask permission for everything that you do. Do not take your hands off the steering wheel. If they say, give us your license, say where your license is, ask for permission to get your license out. Tell him every step of the way what you're doing. I'm opening my bag. I'm getting my wallet, make sure that they can see in your bag, make sure that they can see in your wallet. Make sure that you do not scare the person with the gun. Our son is 5'5".

C: He's 5'7".

K: Okay. I think he's 5'5. Okay. Give him his ...

C: That's just because of how much taller I am.

K: Yeah, he's 5'7" and weighs 125 pounds soaking wet. He's so thin that we worry about him because sometimes he gets so thin you can actually see his heart beating in his chest. He is a wisp of a person, but he has an Afro.

C: Yeah.

K: That's when I got how hard that conversation was for my mother, but I also know that every single time we were pulled over on that drive from California to Alabama, I would piss myself. It was such a common thing that, whenever I saw a police officer, I would wet my pants, that it became normalized for me, that, "It's okay, let's get you cleaned up. It's not a big deal. Guns are scary." Having to be okay, but being terrified every time I saw a police officer that he was going to kill my mother for having given birth to me. Yeah. That hasn't changed.

C: Yeah.

K: That hasn't changed. When people are asking, why are we so angry, it's because we're having the same conversation where this conversation hasn't changed. It's a conversation that has been existing for me my entire life, it's the conversation that existed for my grandmother. It didn't exist for my great grandfather because he was a slave.

C: That was a different conversation.

K: Yeah. You wonder why I can't breathe, it's because I can't do what I normally do to not think about all of that, because here's the thing. Every time a police officer has stopped me and pulled a gun on me, I have then just gone about my day like that's normal. For me, it was just normal. It was to the point when I was doing that 45 minute drive to work, I would just pull over. We had a designated pull over and search Kisstopher spot. At the time, I was 5'4", and literally 105 pounds. This man, who's just a mountain of a man would just tell me horrific racist stories and what could happen to me and what could be done to me. I had no choice. I had to go to work, and I had to drive, and after being threatened horrible things by an officer of the law, I would then go to work.

K: Then, it would happen again as I was leaving work, and then I would just go take care of my dying mother. I just kept it moving. I'm having a hard time right now keeping it moving.

C: Yeah.

K: So, no, I can't breathe, and yes, I need to tweet out Black Lives Matter. I'm trying to keep it positive. I'm trying to step into the LGBTQIA+ part of it, but my trans siblings, my Black trans siblings are just being slaughtered for existing. There's no safe haven. There's no place for me to exist that's safe. Even in Japan, where for the most part, it's not being screamed at me, the police stop Rasta who drives, our son Rasta, who drives and have frisked him and sat in his car, and searched his car. He gets stopped while riding a bike. He's been stopped by the police three times. That's amazing to me. He's 25 years old and he's only been stopped by the police three times in his life, and it's stunning to me, that number is so small and other people might be like, "Wow, he's doing nothing wrong. He's following the speed limits, and he's riding a bike he owns. Three times, that's outrageous."

K: And I'm like, "That's amazing, on the positive. Yeah, what's your experience been with the police?

C: My experience with the police has been mixed. I think that, first I have to separate out, so my father was an attorney, but before that, he was police. My involvement with the police when my father has been involved has been universally negative. I never felt like I was personally in danger, but it was always clear that they were there to enforce his rights to abuse me without consequence. On that, I've always seen the police as there to enforce the social order without regard to whether it's good or bad.

K: But this is profound. This is profound. This is what people need to get. My white husband was afraid of the police as a child because he got that they were there to uphold his white father's rights. This isn't just about Black people. This is about your right as women, this is about children's rights, this is about everybody's rights who aren't part of the status quo, who aren't part of the power structure.

C: Right. I think the stakes were always different. For me, the stakes were always that, if I spoke up, then, well, we could find something to arrest you for, that kind of thing. It wasn't, we're going to shoot you. I don't feel like my life has ever been endangered by the police except for one time, which I'll talk about. Then, when I was living on my own in Fairbanks, it was being hassled by the police because I was poor. I say hassled, because I wasn't threatened, I was just hassled. They would pull me over because they would be like, "Well, your car," which wasn't even my car, “is rundown. Here's something you need to fix." Sometimes it was like, okay, yes, I should fix that. Other times it was like, “your tires are too bald.”

C: Well, there's no law against having bald tires, but you need an excuse to pull me over and say something. I get that me being poor was offensive, but I never felt in danger from that. I felt hassled, and again, it was about upholding the social order. Don't make things ...

K: Uncomfortable.

C: ... uncomfortable. Right. Then, with the police in California, I didn't really have any interactions. I don't think at all with the police in California, except for once when our business was vandalized and once when my car was vandalized. They came out and they were like, when my car was vandalized, there was like, well, there's nothing to do, but here's your police report so you can file an insurance claim. When the business was vandalized, they did find the guy who did it. I don't know what happened after that, but I think nothing. In both cases, the police did not actually do anything to help. When people are like, "Well, if there were no police, what would happen if you got robbed?" The same shit that happens now. Nothing.

K: I've had the people in Oregon say, Californians are so liberal. California is so liberal. No, it's not as liberal as you think. So I have been stopped by the police for wearing shorts while pushing my son in a stroller, literally because they felt that I was indecently exposed and they were trying to arrest me for prostitution. I was walking down the street from my house down the street, a block to the local 7-11, where they know me. I knew all my neighbors, and my neighbors were like, so I did live in a gang affiliated neighborhood. They'd be like, "Yo man, leave her alone." There was always witnesses. I feel like the reason that I was never arrested was because there were too many witnesses. I think that they were actually afraid because they were outnumbered.

K: I've had police follow me to my home. I've had police knock on my door and accuse me of crimes when, I'm like, I have no idea what you're talking about. I've had the police come knock on my door and accuse me of dealing drugs, which was bizarre and strange. I've had the police follow me into, when I was parking, and outside my vehicle to try and cite me for a moving violation. The most stunning for me was when the cops followed me all the way to my home, and I parked and I got out. The senior officer wanted to write me a ticket, and the junior officer was like, "No, we should just let her go." He was like, "No, they'll never learn." I could see the junior officer being stunned and confused. They had a discussion that was really bizarre to watch, and then they decided to not give me a ticket.

K: It was terrifying for me because the senior officer was getting more and more heated and the junior officer was like, and this was amazing. The junior officer was like, "I'm not doing this," and risking subordination. I don't know if the junior officer left the force, or what-have-you, but I feel like that junior officer almost talked the senior officer through the argument of arresting me. I was like, please stop defending me. I was thinking in my mind, please stop. Just let me get the ticket. Just let me get the ticket and go about my day. I don't want to be arrested for your sense of morality, and then they drove off. But for me, I've always been harassed by the police. I think I know the incident you're talking about where you were afraid for your life. When was that?

C: That was when we had already moved to Japan, but we went back to the United States, and we drove across country and went to see Niagara Falls and everything, and in Idaho, we got pulled over. Kisstopher was driving. because of the way that she had pulled over, which was the right way in California, and this is what the officer said, he approached the car with his gun drawn, and I believe intending to shoot Kisstopher until he saw Rasta, who was 12 or 13 at the time, and me in the car, and was like, “oh man, I'd have to murder three people, and I was only ready to murder one.”

C: Then, I find it difficult to frame it any other way than he robbed us at gunpoint, because although you were speeding, he said, "Well, in Idaho, for people who aren't from Idaho, we have a special kind of ticket, and you just give me $80 right now and then there's no ticket in the system.”

K: Yes.

C: In Idaho, we had an officer rob us at gunpoint because Kisstopher's Black.

K: Yes. He said another officer has been killed. He wanted to kill me in retaliation for a different officer had being shot, not killed. There was no news or incident report that verified what he was saying. He just ...

C: It happened 50 years ago, but it happened.

K: Yeah. I was just like, this is so bizarre. I was shaking for a few minutes, and he was like, "You need to go now." Before I could even compose myself, he was like, "Get back on the road." I was not safe to drive. We were not allowed to change drivers, and I was pulled out and driving really slow, and he was like, "Speed it up." I was like, I just got pulled over and you just pulled your gun on me for speeding. I was terrified, and I was like, okay, this is it. For me, it leaves me speechless now for me to be like, okay, this is it. This is how we die. There wasn't any recourse for me. In my mind, there's no recourse. There's nothing I can do. Okay. I'm dying now. This is what's going to happen, and I'm just thinking to myself, it's been great though.

K: Literally, I'm thinking, but for the most part, I've had these high moments. that's the police side of things.

C: Yes. I do want to say one more. I know that some people are like, don't say all cops are bastards, and I don't think they are, but I think that the ones who aren't, quickly become socialized into being. I have met one person in my entire life who was an exception, and he was my political science professor, he's Black, which is relevant. He had been on the force for 30 years and people asked him, "How were you on the force for 30 years?" He said, "One week after I graduated from the Academy, I joined Internal Affairs and I spent 30 years taking down dirty cops." He said, "And we never ran out of cops to take down." He was involved in setting up sting operations for cops who were raping, and robbing, and killing in the San Jose Area.

K: And beating their wives and intimate partners.

C: That was like his entire career. He said, "I never had anything to do with the civilian population. The only people that I ever dealt with in my job were cops, and they were either the other cops in IA or the cops we were busting." He's the only cop that I've ever met who I don't think, either started out wanting to use violence against people or ended up that way, because they were socialized into that or quit.

K: On the daily life side of things, I have been standing in line at a deli counter and had the person who was making sandwiches refuse to take my order until every white person who was behind me had been served. I have been in line to buy movie tickets and have the person who was buying movie tickets refuse to sell me a ticket until the people behind me had been served. Most of my life, whenever I've done any type of shopping or social events, I've always had a white person with me. I just developed the habit of having one white friend, always, and hanging out with them, and having them go, even if I would pay. I didn't realize that I had done this until we were hanging out as friends. You were like, “no, no, you go, you order.” And what happened when you were like, "No, no, you go before me?"

C: I don't remember.

K: I wouldn't go back to places, so people say don't go back to places that treat you this way.

C: You run out of places.

K: Yes. At my local, there were three different convenience stores around our house. All three convenience stores had done it. For me to find a convenience store that had never done that to me, like a 7-11 or QuikStop, or what-have-you, I would have to drive 30 minutes away from where I lived to go to the convenience store. If I wanted to ...

C: Nobody was giving you that gas for free.

K: Right. If I wanted it to get gas at a gas station that never happened, that gas station was 45 minutes from where I lived. Chad and I are standing in line, and I was like, I always had him order, you order. The lady at the counter said “next,” and I was standing there, and I walked up, and she looked around me, leaned over, which is ironic because you're taller than me, she didn't need to lean, but just really wanted me to know in a pointed manner. And she said, "Sir, what would you like to order?" You said, "Uh-uh, she's ordering." Then, I placed the order for both of us, and then you spoke to the manager and ranted and raved, and here's the trippy part.

K: Chad was flaming pissed. I was not. I was just like, I just want to get my sandwich and go. It's not worth it. Chad's education and revolution of understanding racism, he would listen to me and my friends talk about our lived experiences, and he was like, "I've never witnessed that." But as Black people, we forget how much we just accept all of these microaggressions and how much we just, if we're in a group, we just thought the white friend could order. If we're paying for something, we don't get outraged when they give our change to the white person in our group. We're just happy when they give it back to us. We don't complain when the police officer stops us for walking or just being ourselves. We just get on with life.

K: We don't complain when we're not included on the email chain. We don't complain when ... just, the list goes on and on. We don't complain when they say they don't have our shoe size, even though we have the standard foot size, because I had the standard foot size. I don't complain when they say they don't carry my shoe size, except for one time I did, because I was at a high end store. It was so bad the way that they treated me, that I went back and complained, and the person was subsequently fired because they treated me so bad.

C: It was Neiman Marcus. I don't mind saying that.

K: Okay. For me, I feel like there's so many things that you just reach a point when it's like, I can't take it anymore because all of these things is how people get to the place where it's okay to kill us. Now, it's okay to kill us when we're sleeping in our bed. When is it going to stop? When is this going to stop? That's why Black Lives Matter is a global movement. It is global. We're here in Japan and we're marching for our rights in Tokyo. I personally can't march because of COVID, and I have lupus and hereditary coproporphyria. What I'm doing is this podcast, and I'm using my social media platform to educate. I have been finding videos that are children-friendly for our allies to show their children. I have been finding books. I have been elevating scholars and I have been retweeting Black artists.

K: For me, it's “saying Black Lives Matter is controversial,” what the fuck is wrong with you? Saying that my life matters is controversial and you're not doing that on your social media, performative support because of what your friends might think of you. Then, fucking bye, just leave. I'm just so hurt and angry at all of the people who are acting like this is something that's up for debate. That saying that my life matters is something that's up for a debate. It's too radical an idea to say that my life matters to you. Yes, we have been doing a purge on our social media of people who feel like that's too radical an idea. We have lost followers on our social media, and I'm like, thank goodness, I didn't know that you were a racist. It is not enough that you are not racist.

K: That's not enough. You need to talk to people about why you think my life matters because you might change their mind. You have to use your influence and privilege to elevate the voices. If you don't feel comfortable using the hashtag, just retweet, just promote Black artists, just elevate melanated voices, follow melanated people. If you like video games, find out what video game was made by a Black person and then go buy that game. What we choose to spend our money on will change the world because green is the language everybody understands, and is the color that everyone can agree on if you're American, because Americans have green money, but Japan doesn't. But you get what I'm saying. Money matters. When we put our money where our morals are, I believe we can change the world. Brands that are doing performative, like L'Oreal, who dropped a prominent trans woman from their campaign and is now saying Black Lives Matter, well, they dropped that trans model because she was saying Black Lives Matter.

K: Look at their history. Don't let the brands just slap up Black Lives Matter, and be like, "Oh, they're down." Look at Ben & Jerry's, look at Lego. That's how you do it. Because look at Seth Rogen, that's how you do it. There are people that are doing more than performative and find Black leaders and follow their accounts and boost their voices. If people are just putting Black Lives Matter next to their name, that's not enough. Are they elevating melanated voices? And having the hashtag, are they sharing books? Are they sharing resources? Are they actually engaging in allyship that is beyond performative? For all of you that put the black tile out on Blackout Tuesday, that was performative, and it was wrong, and it was hurtful to the movement, listen to the leaders of the movement.

K: If you don't know who they are, Google that shit. See who the leaders are in your city, in your town. I feel, for me, Ice Cube and Ice T are always on point. They've been on point my entire life. I know Ice T has light skin with light eyes, just like me, and we have fought for our Blackness because of colorism and all of those kinds of things that are not appropriate for this episode. Because we value our Blackness. Because even though it hurts to be Black, it is my strength and my honor to be Black. What do you think, babe?

C: I think that the amount of strength that it takes for you is both astonishing and a shame. It shouldn't be that way.

K: You're saying the strength for me to get up every morning and function.

C: Yes.

K: Because being Black is not a choice.

C: Yes.

K: I am.

C: I think that when we look at saying Black Lives Matter, I think the revolutionary part of that, the part that makes people uncomfortable is that the Black Lives Matter movement is not about being content with the place that Black people have in society. I think if you look at like a lot of people criticizing the NFL, which just, in a statistical sense, Black players in the NFL, are a much higher percentage than Black people in the United States. But if you look at who the GMs are, if you look at who the coaches are, if you look at who the owners are, Black people are not over-represented. We have a sport where we're quite happy for Black players to be overrepresented, and the people go out there and get hurt, get permanently ... many of them permanently disabled by playing for our entertainment. We're happy with Black gladiators, but we don't have Black generals.

K: Yeah. We've been with Kap since the beginning, we stopped our affiliation with the NFL. I was a huge football fan. He was before his time, but he is a revolutionary, and taking a knee was an act of revolution. I find it interesting that y'all want to protest because you can't go to the beach, but then when we want to protest because you're killing us, whoa, that's too. I know that this episode has been all over the place and raw and angry, and probably not my most eloquent moment, but fuck you if you expect eloquence right now, is just where I’m at. Just really, I can't. I can't breathe, and getting up and functioning, and being a therapist. I will be honest, I've had to reduce the amount of clients that I work with, and I've had to ... there are certain clients that I'm not able to work with right now. I'm so tired and I can't sleep. I can't think, and I can't breathe.

C: It’s so sad. It's sad in a way that it makes me angry. It makes me angry that you feel like you have to justify why you're not going the 200 miles to Tokyo, to march during the middle of a pandemic, to try and get somebody in the United States to pay attention.

K: Trip on that. If you're not doing anything to support this movement, if you think not being racist is enough, you're wrong. You need to be anti-racist. If you think elevating melanated voices is too far, really, to save a life? To save a life of a human being. You don't want to risk what?

C: Clout.

K: For me, I feel like there's so much more clout in being human.

C: If your clout is based on Black lives ...

K: Racism.

C: ... is based on Black lives not mattering, then you should rethink your choices in life.

K: Yes. If you stuck around this long, thank you. We hope that you follow us over to Patreon, and do something. Please do something. Tweet the hashtag, follow a Black person on Instagram, and hit their comments section, and shower them with love. Tell a Black friend I see you and I love you, and I am here for you. Go on Google and Google Black businesses in your town. Or if they're not in your town, hit them up and order from them on Amazon.

C: Online, I would say.

K: Online, sorry. Amazon's a shitty company, but I'm not going to pretend like they haven't cornered the market.

C: Yeah. But there are Black businesses selling directly online. They're choosing not to be part of Amazon.

K: Yes. Buy directly from them if you can. If not, use some sort of service. Donate to the ACLU, donate to the NAACP. There's so many things you can do. But do something. I don't pretend to have all of the answers, and I am not perfect.

C: Again, you don't need to be, that's not the standard. That should not be the standard for your voice to matter. That should not be the standard for your life to matter.

K: Do you see how ingrained in me that it is? Because right now, I'm not trying to be palatable, and I feel afraid. There's fear of not being palatable.

C: Yeah.

K: On that note, thank you for listening. We're going to head on over to Patreon and do the Take Two, and we hope that you come with us. Black Lives Matter.

C: We hope you'll be back next week. Bye.

K: Bye.