



The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

Narrator ([00:09](#)):

Welcome to the Activist Files, the Center for Constitutional Rights podcast, where we feature the stories of activists, lawyers, and storytellers on the front lines fighting for justice and liberation. If you want to know more about the Center for Constitutional Rights or our work, visit our website at ccrjustice.org. You can sign up for our weekly newsletter, Frontlines of Justice, and we'll keep you up-to-date on important developments and exciting events near you or online. You can also make a donation to help us keep doing the vital work of supporting our partners, movements and communities. As always, don't forget to subscribe to the Activist Files and rate us on iTunes, Spotify, and SoundCloud. And now, here's the Activist Files podcast.

Leah Todd ([01:06](#)):

Hello, and welcome to the Activist Files. I'm Leah Todd, legal worker at the Center for Constitutional Rights, and I'm joined by two illustrious members of the CCR family for our podcast today. With us today, we have Britney Wilson, Associate Professor of Law and director of the Civil Rights and Disability Justice Clinic at New York Law School. Britney is also a poet and writer. And we're also joined by Lucy Trieshmann, who's a third year law student at NYU Law School, co-founder of the Breaking Point Project, and Treasurer of the National Disabled Law Students Association. I'm so excited to have them both here today and, you know, as CCR family members Britney is a former Bertha Justice fellow and Lucy is a former Ella Baker summer intern. So it's so great to have you both in conversation as you know, key people we've just benefited so much from with your learning and brilliance, and I'm excited to do more of that today. So welcome. Thank you so much, both of you, for being here.

Britney Wilson ([02:07](#)):

Thank you for having me.

Lucy Trieshmann ([02:09](#)):

Thanks for having us.

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

Leah Todd ([02:11](#)):

Excellent. Well, yeah, to start off again, thank you for being here. You know, we're speaking today about looking at how art and storytelling work to promote disability justice work. And, first off, I'd love to hear from both of you, you know, ways that you might've used art and storytelling in your work for disability justice and other liberation work, because I know you work in many areas, and you know, how you find doing that using, using art to be kind of an effective way to do this advocacy work.

Britney Wilson ([02:45](#)):

Yeah, sure. I mean, I don't know that I ever deliberately set out to use art as part of my quote unquote social justice work. I was just sort of a writer first. It was something that I've loved to do since I was a child. You know, I love to write stories. I also sing. So I just, it was a way for me to express myself, to talk about my experiences. And then I sort of, when I got a little bit older, stumbled into the world of spoken word poetry. Back in the day, I was on a show called Brave New Voices on HBO, which chronicled the experience of my slam team. I was part of an organization called Urban Word NYC. And I made the slam team, which went to the International Youth Spoken Word Competition, which is also called Brave New Voices.

Britney Wilson ([03:34](#)):

And that became a whole thing, but I, I got into performing my poetry completely accidentally because I'm also a basketball fan. And one day I was watching the Knicks game and they were like, Hey, do you have poems? Want to come down to the next poetry slam? And I was like, oh yeah, I got poems. I just kept them in a folder in my room at the time. And I went to the slam because it seemed interesting. And that's how I accidentally entered the world of spoken word. And it just so happened that a lot of my poems were about my experience as a disabled person. And it became a way for me to connect with people. I sort of saw the value of not just keeping the poems in a folder in my room. I was like, oh wow, there's a stage. And people listen to you and you get reactions. And sometimes people want to talk to you afterwards about your experiences. So I sorta learned the value of connecting with people through words. And then I think lawyers are inherently storytellers. And so even as I sort of, wasn't deliberately trying to connect those things, I found that that side of me was very beneficial to my advocacy in general, because you can sort of make complex issues and complicated issues relatable and translatable to everyone that way. So.

Leah Todd ([04:55](#)):

And I know, Lucy, you have a pretty robust project that uses art as a way to kind of center the experiences of people in prison with disabilities. So I would love to hear kind of how you have done that work and also how you bring it into, you know, the work you do as, as a law student and advocate.

Lucy Triesmann ([05:14](#)):

Absolutely. I mean, similar to Britney, art has always been a really big part of my life, particularly in the form of music. I played music since I was a child. It's something that my whole family does, and it was a form of expression that was safe and comfortable for me at times where expressing my emotions wasn't necessarily safe or comfortable. So it's always been a constant for me. And I was actually in the marching band in college, and played the tuba for 10 years. And then I acquired my disability when I was 21 and wasn't able to play anymore and kind of felt a big gap in my life for a little while when I lost that outlet that I had had for so long and then slowly figured out other ways of expressing the same thing. And

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

when I had the opportunity at NYU to start a project with a friend of mine on pretty much anything we wanted, we decided to put together a project at the intersection of disability justice and abolition that involved art.

Lucy Triesmann ([06:23](#)):

So a friend and I started the Breaking Point Project as two disabled women who are committed to abolition and trying to figure out, you know, how to uplift and center the voices of folks actually impacted as opposed to the way the law frames it. We thought that art would be a really important way to make that happen. So we interview incarcerated disabled folks, or however they identify: disabled, having chronic health conditions, mad, neurodivergent, any of the above. We interview them and, together with them, condense that down into a shorter narrative and then share, with their permission, that narrative with a disabled, mad, chronically ill, neurodivergent artist, who then brings that to life through visual art. And we publish them alongside each other on our website, [theBreakingPointProject.com](#). And it's been a really powerful process, even like just the act of being in community with other disabled folks from all of these varied backgrounds and coming together to put together something that we all hope has this larger impact, but at the same time, the process of the creation of art is part of the magic of it.

Lucy Triesmann ([07:42](#)):

So we've been publishing those as part of a larger argument for abolition, but also as a way of deconstructing this hierarchy of power that we have in the law between those who like quote unquote know the law and those who are impacted by it and trying to collapse that to the extent that's possible, which, you know, fully collapsing, it would never be, but that's the goal. And also trying to get people to understand something that they might not otherwise expose themselves to. So I use the example of my mom. Like, she doesn't love to talk about really challenging, tough things. You know, it really gets - she's very empathetic and it really hurts her heart, but when she, so she would never read one of the narratives necessarily, like that would be really hard for her, but she sees the art and that sparks the conversation instead. So trying to give people multiple ways of accessing something that they might not otherwise be exposed to, so that we can move towards collective liberation through art.

Leah Todd ([08:48](#)):

I really love that. And it was interesting to hear you both kind of talk about the ways that art and storytelling kind of demystify law or like make, make law accessible as well, as well as like these stories and important kind of narratives. Yeah. And I, I'd love to hear kind of a little more of your thinking about that. I'm, I'm somebody who's also a big believer in the way that law kind of creates obstacles and barriers and that like our work needs to be to deconstruct them. You know, and I know so much of this - "access" means so many things in the context of this conversation. So yeah. I would love to hear a little bit more about your thinking about how you do that. And, you know, in the case of you, Britney, I know that you're doing a lot of work with your clinic on these issues. And I imagine storytelling is a big part of that. So yeah, I'd just love to hear a little bit more about that from you both.

Britney Wilson ([09:34](#)):

The clinic is a little bit different because I'm, you know, I'm very newly a law professor making the transition to academia. I can talk a little bit about why I did that if you're at all interested, but I think for, for the purposes of the clinic, obviously my, my goal is to teach law students how to become lawyers and advocates more broadly, and to expose them to the concept of disability justice, which is not

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

something that I got in law school at all, ironically, despite my very personal reasons for going to law school. So I don't think that storytelling in the way that we're talking about it right now is necessarily what I'm doing with them at this point, because we're sort of working on more traditional development of legal skills, but I definitely stress the point to them that you have to be able to communicate, go from your meeting to your brief, to your interview with the reporter, to talking to your clients and community members and sort of the different forms of communication and different ways of understanding and breaking down issues.

Britney Wilson ([10:45](#)):

I don't know that art specifically in the way that we're talking about it has come into play in that way, but I've definitely sort of talked about the different forms of communication and their value. I think on the art side, an interesting thing that I would add, I wrote an essay a few years ago about an experience that I had on Access-a-Ride, which is New York City's paratransit service. And I chose to write that essay largely because something really horrible happened to me on Access-a-Ride. And I knew sort of the limitations of the law in dealing with that. I knew that, like, if I were to pursue that incident legally, not much would come of it and it would take a lot of energy and resources. And it also wouldn't tell the story that I wanted told or, or get at the issues that I wanted to get at in the way that I wanted to get at them.

Britney Wilson ([11:38](#)):

I hope this is not like too abstract, but I was just like the damages or whatever I could potentially get from this legally would not accomplish the larger goals that I wanted to accomplish by actually telling the story of what happened and the apparatus that is Access-a-Ride and paratransit in the more nuanced way. So that was actually a strategic decision on my part to like, I'm going to write about this instead. And I hope that the writing will illuminate more than me doing any XYZ legal thing or advocacy thing, quote unquote traditional advocacy thing, ever could, because it allowed me to talk about how Access-a-Ride illustrates disability, race, class, gender issues, intersectionally all in one space. And I could never do that in, say, a lawsuit, unfortunately.

Leah Todd ([12:33](#)):

Thank you for that. That's so, like, so powerful to kind of break down and hear. And yet, you know, Lucy, I heard you kind of talking about, and, you know, I've heard you before, I have the benefit of having spoken to you before, talk about your project, not only as a means of, like, sharing stories, talking about disability justice, but like pushing an abolition narrative. I know that you both work really, you know, like Britney, you were just saying in these intersections of, you know, you can't really separate out disability justice from racial justice, gender justice, like all of these kind of liberation projects or movements. And you know, I know that, I know that that's kind of a goal in your work Lucy, so I'd love to hear kind of how you've been able to like maybe even demystify abolition or, you know, the, the point and goals of that by, you know, telling these stories.

Lucy Trieshmann ([13:23](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. I think I realized the influence that storytelling, you know, using an expansive definition of storytelling, be that through visual art or spoken word, or, you know, music, any of the mediums, I realized the role that it could play in helping people access something they might not otherwise, most acutely, when I was home in Virginia with my family for the COVID-19 pandemic. I spent about five months with my family, which I haven't done since before I was 18. And they have very different political

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

views than I do and have had very different lived experiences than me. We come from, you know, we come at topics that are in the news from very different angles and something that my family and I were able to find common footing on that summer in the wake of George Floyd's murder and Brianna Taylor and everything that happened was the stories - that was something that we could actually connect on.

Lucy Trieshmann ([14:28](#)):

And so that experience, like those conversations were happening in the months leading up to when this project began. And I had already figured out, thankfully, that I wanted to take disability justice in the direction of decarceration and abolition with my career. And it seemed like everything was kind of leading me towards what has now become the Breaking Point Project. And I think speaking to what Britney was saying at the beginning about how she's handling her clinic, like that's a big part of the reason that my friend and I, Maya Goldman, pursued this is because we weren't getting the education that we needed in the classroom. I was coming out of my first year of law school feeling so, like, more distant than ever from the reason that I came, and I came because of people. And I came because of what had happened to me and because I never wanted that to happen to anybody else ever again.

Lucy Trieshmann ([15:31](#)):

And I had never felt so distant from that goal as I did at the end of my first year of law school. And so, then, living at home and going through, you know, all of that and the pandemic, and then coming into my second year of law school, I was desperate for some artistic outlet and I felt so distant from myself. And this project has really helped me reground myself in what I know my values are because I come from a public health background, a public health and anthropology background. I was going to get a PhD in Anthropology and, you know, be an academic and do that for the rest of my life. And then I became disabled and people started treating me like shit. And I realized I had to go to law school, you know, cause nobody else was going to. So like that's how we all ended up where we are and the whole, the thread of my career and my lived experiences so far has definitely been storytelling.

Lucy Trieshmann ([16:26](#)):

And this disconnect between what the law, what I believe the law ought to be and what it actually is in practice, and, most poignantly, what my classmates seem to think it should be, has been a challenge recently. So that's kind of how we, how we came to this project and the timeliness of, you know, the abolition movement gaining a lot of momentum in the wake of that summer, I think helped push the project along as well. We were able to win some grant money to keep it going. And we compensate everybody, which was really important to us from the beginning, the storytellers and the artists and everybody. We're applying for further grant funding right now to expand the project with a short term goal being putting together a Vagina Monologues-style presentation, performance, when that becomes safe or doing it over Zoom, that would be people telling their stories on stage. And that would be something really powerful, I think, to further both, like, legal and social narratives about incarceration and people who are incarcerated in particular and these misconceptions that people seem to carry about criminal justice, which isn't really justice.

Leah Todd ([17:49](#)):

Thank you so much for that. And, you know, as somebody who's also, you know, worked in this sphere, Britney, I certainly want to invite you to speak about, I know you have a long history of work in racial justice and, and challenging the criminal legal system and its consequences. And I know this, this

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

conversation around, you know, how as a society you know, the way we deal with access issues and meeting needs is to throw people in prison very often. You know, so I know that you both are doing really incredible work on this, so definitely want to invite you to speak to that. And I, you know, I also, just to throw a couple of questions into the mix, you know, I also appreciate that the question of the pandemic came up a couple of times and I, you know, I think so many really important thinkers and people that I respect have really raised the fact that - I've heard from this from you both too -

Leah Todd ([18:47](#)):

I think that, you know, the pandemic has been a moment when issues of access have really come to the fore and been a conversation. It's been a moment where, you know, I think disability justice activists and advocates have rightfully chastised, you know, all sorts of systems and institutions for not providing the kind of tools that they were clearly always able to provide, when, you know, whether that be technology, whether that be, you know, more flexibility around certain kinds of structures, that the answer was no so often until this moment where, once everyone is impacted, you know, those solutions were found, so I've really appreciated that, you know, this has been like a moment of learning. I do fear that it's learning that people are trying to move away from right now. So yeah, so I'd love to invite you both to speak further about this kind of work around incarceration, but also speak to what it has meant to, like, live through a moment where access has really been a larger conversation and kind of how that's impacted you.

Britney Wilson ([19:49](#)):

Yeah. I mean, nothing forces you to talk about the intersection of race and disability like living through a literal pandemic where people are dying, people are getting sick, and disproportionately people of color, right. So I think on the one hand, it, this has been horrible, of course, but it's also been like this is what we've been telling you for ages, for decades. Like now, are you, are you paying attention now? And like you said, things that we've been fighting for for, for decades we now see has been possible all along, you know, accommodations, flexibility, remote work, remote education that, you know, I want to acknowledge is not what every, every disabled person needs. If there are different disabilities, different people have different needs and you know, different, different levels of access to technology, which is itself an issue. But for many people, these options and these - this flexibility has been so helpful and what we've always needed.

Britney Wilson ([20:56](#)):

You know, as someone with a mobility impairment myself, just the, the, the option to not have to take paratransit every single day for 18 months was huge. I know that just the doors that it opened for people who had issues getting employment, you know, employment is a huge issue for people with disabilities and a huge part of that is lack of reliable transportation. So when you sorta take out that, that, that middle man, the doors that it should open, which ironically, it seems like it hasn't, or which you know, ableism, I'm sure it's the reason for that, we can have a whole conversation about that, but the doors that it could open and then that it should open because of these new, new ways that we found for navigating our lives. But like you said, unfortunately, the rhetoric now is about quote unquote going back to normal, which, normal was always ableist and always problematic.

Britney Wilson ([21:55](#)):

So I worry that the lessons that we should've learned, we didn't really learn. And we sort of just did what we had to do for the moment, but I do hope that we're not going back to what we were, because

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

not even just, not even just employment and school, but like things like concerts and people being able to have social lives, you know, like watching Instagram Live concerts and having immediate access to that sort of entertainment, all these things are things that should have been accessible in the first place. And that we don't just want to go back to quote unquote ableist normal.

Lucy Triesmann ([22:34](#)):

Yeah. I would definitely say I have similar feelings about the move back to how things were before. Because that is quite literally what's happening. Everybody is trying to go to exactly how things were before all of this happened as if we didn't learn any of the lessons that Britney was just talking about. And I have mostly been working on these issues in the context of access to the classroom, and it has been truly terrible, to be completely frank, like how dehumanizing and how belittling and just profoundly, deeply ableist in ways that people like could not have conceptualized. I had the dean of our law school, Trevor Morrison, actually yelled at me in a meeting. He told me that I was being disrespectful, that I wasn't being, you know, respectful of all of the effort that went into the remote learning environment.

Lucy Triesmann ([23:34](#)):

When I told him what Britney was saying at the beginning about how it's been really challenging for disabled students to see suddenly all of these things that we've needed all along and asked for become available as soon as non-disabled students needed it, and I was told I was being unreasonable for being upset about that. And that's been really challenging. And now that we are mostly in-person at NYU and a lot of law schools are mostly in-person, I didn't find out until two days before the beginning of the semester that I would be able to attend class remotely. I have, I'm immunocompromised and they wanted me to go into a classroom with a hundred of my peers in the middle of a pandemic that could quite literally kill me and thought that was reasonable, and I had to fight, and honestly, you know, bring in some of the legal education they give me, they gave me in order to get what we needed.

Lucy Triesmann ([24:29](#)):

And so thankfully I have been able to attend remotely, but I've been doing a lot of advocacy with students at other schools, and it's just not been the case. And these institutions think they can tell us what we need and what will work for us when that's never been the case. And it never will be the case that anybody will have a better idea of what I need in terms of my disability and access than I do. So that has been a really disappointing and, you know, bittersweet aspect of the move back to how things were before, and I would hope that people will actually learn these lessons, and I do think that some people have, but it's exhausting to always be someone else's education point, you know, for my lived experiences and the things that happened to me to always serve to educate somebody else rather than them just be, as they are, which is obviously like, you know, very different for me as a white woman than it is for BIPOC folks. And it's just been, this whole thing has been so dehumanizing and I am so excited to graduate and start actually working on these issues and fixing them from the ground up instead of just having these systems beat people down over and over again.

Britney Wilson ([25:51](#)):

I can't promise you it changes, unfortunately, on the other side, but I feel you.

Leah Todd ([25:57](#)):

Yeah, I'm so sorry that that continues to be such an unnecessary struggle. And kind of on this point

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

which you just, you just kind of spoke about being tired of being the kind of means of education and yet are so often asked to do it so appreciation for being here and, you know, educating all, all of our listeners and myself. But, you know, I think about, I feel like I've mentioned to both of you before my like deep love of Mia Mingus, who is just one of many brilliant advocates and, and like educators and thinkers, but, you know, I've really personally learned so much from the way that she has like, particularly hearing it from her - I know this is a conversation that others have, but the kind of reframing of, you know, we, I think there's often conversations around like, oh, ADA compliance and that's, that's all we that's, that's the bar we need to meet.

Leah Todd ([26:51](#)):

And, and she really speaks about interdependence and moving from, like moving to like access and interdependence and understanding that like, away from this concept of like self-reliance and independence and like understanding the reality that like, if we really recognized that everyone has needs and nobody can operate without the support of other people you know, we could do much better around meeting, you know, achieving disability justice. So, you know, moving from this, like, idea that anyone can be truly independent, which is such, like, a false idea and really just an ableist idea and just, you know, thinking about access as just one form of being interdependent in achieving these things. I've just really been thinking about that a lot in this conversation. So thank you. But yeah, I don't know, I don't know if that's been kind of a way that you frame your work or something that's been useful for you as a concept.

Britney Wilson ([27:46](#)):

I mean, yeah, definitely. I'm really glad you brought up Mia because, you know, I have my students reading Mia and I think we've been having this whole conversation about disability justice but we didn't really define what it is. And I think that it has become one of those quote unquote trendy buzzwords that people use, sort of like intersectionality, when they, when they don't actually know what it means, but they're using it because they have a sense that it's better than maybe another word. And so I want to say like, you know, I run the Civil Rights and Disability Justice Clinic, and that, that word choice was intentional, but I also want to acknowledge the irony of that word choice because I'm a law professor, right? And I'm training students to be lawyers and disability justice is not disability rights. So, inherently I'm doing disability rights work because I'm working within the framework of the law and training people to be lawyers.

Britney Wilson ([28:42](#)):

Disability justice is broader than that. It has principles, it has 10 principles. It, it openly recognizes sort of the limit, the limitations of disability rights as a framework as, as a mostly access-based framework. And that's a lot of what Mia's work focuses on, that disability rights talks about access. It talks about laws. It talks about it's, it's sort of based in the equality framework, which, which doesn't work and has never worked for people with disabilities. Like you said, this notion of self-reliance and independence and all we need is access. And if you give us access, it's all good. Where disability justice, again, focuses on the intersections. It focuses on the experiences, particularly of people of color with disabilities, queer people with disabilities. It focuses on cross-disability solidarity, different types of disabilities, not just what you can get from a lawsuit or rights or things like that, but how we get free collectively and on a more broad basis than that. So I think while using the law as a vehicle, because I'm training law students, and while disability rights is important, my goal is to teach people that the goal is freedom and the goal is justice more broadly, which is why I chose the clinic name that I did. And, and I try to do

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

disability justice work even, even while coming from a disability rights jumping off point just by virtue of being a lawyer. So I just wanted to put that out there.

Lucy Trieshmann ([30:19](#)):

Yeah. I have similar qualms about, you know, this newfound adoption of the term disability justice. So I'm glad that you, like, outlined all of that. And I, this moving away from self-reliance I think is exactly what the disability community and the disability justice movement has to offer other liberation movements, because this is what we've done all along. You know, like our community has always been interdependent and we've always recognized the value of relying on others and not convincing yourself that you have to be isolated and independent in whatever that means, and this like redefinition and radical re-imagining of what it means to be a person in the world. And I think that also underlies, you know, commitments to abolition. And I don't think it's possible to be abolitionist if you're not also committed to disability justice and racial justice and queer justice and all of these things, because this is the, that's the starting point.

Lucy Trieshmann ([31:27](#)):

The starting point is these justice principles and values. And I think that's missing from a lot of how white quote, unquote activists approach the work, particularly white non-disabled, non-otherwise marginalized in any way activists, you know, as to how they label themselves. And so they end up doing a lot more harm than they actually do good. And the shitty part about it is that they're the ones with the most influence and power. And then it falls to the marginalized folks to pick up the pieces of this, like, patchwork framework that people are trying to propose. So that is something that I hope starts to gain more traction and that people start to, you know, give credence to from the disability community about what it means to be a person in a community in a truly interdependent society, non-hierarchical society that like we've been modeling a lot of those principles for years out of necessity and out of desire, because I think, you know, we understand that no person can do all things by themselves. And even if they can, sometimes it's better if you don't and that's something that we've lived and practiced. And I hope that that's the direction that these larger liberation movements start to move in.

Leah Todd ([33:00](#)):

Thank you so much for all of that. And I really appreciate kind of you both sort of ending on like hopes and yeah, I'd love to hear as we sort of move towards closing out, you know, what do your freedom dreams look like? And like, what's kind of the next thing you'd like to see to get there, like, what's, what's kind of like a basic first step that maybe we, we probably should have already done, but like we really absolutely could do to get there? And kinda, you know, what, what would you like to see 800 steps down the line?

Britney Wilson ([33:33](#)):

That's a really hard question. I don't know. I've been thinking a lot lately about how hard it is for me to actually imagine, like, certain futures. Like that sounds horrible. Like even for myself, I don't really know. Like I really struggle to imagine certain things for myself and, I think, I blame ableism. Like, I'm just like, can I really do that? Is that a thing? I don't know. What do I want to see, so many things, but I really just want to see us all free. I know that sounds super cliché, but I'm tired of having, like, the same conversations and then it feels like you think that there's some understanding of a concept and then there seems to be more people on board and then it sort of becomes like a big commercialized thing. I think we saw a lot of that in the wake of George Floyd.

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

Britney Wilson ([34:25](#)):

You know, it's all just conversations. Everybody's buying these racial justice books and there are all these, you know, and then it's like, well, then we get some statues and then it's like, oh well, what do we like, what did we actually just do? So I'm kind of just tired of that whole thing constantly. And I want us to just really talk about how we deconstruct these barriers that are, that are keeping us all locked in and in different respective ways, but I don't know that we're really ready for that. I don't know when we will be, so I don't, that was, that was a horrible answer, but I, I'm struggling with imagining right now.

Leah Todd ([35:04](#)):

It's a true answer and like, I appreciate it. Like, and you know, it's, it's - people gotta get ready. That's not on you. Yeah. How about you, Lucy?

Lucy Triesmann ([35:17](#)):

I am very with Britney in those respects. So I guess I will just say like what I specifically am doing to hopefully, you know, move towards next steps. I am applying for fellowships right now for after I graduate. And my project is on alternate responses to policing for folks who are experiencing behavioral and mental health crises. So starting to deconstruct our collective idea of what policing should be and what the role of police should be, which in my opinion is nothing. But, you know, why are we asking people who have no training, no specialized training to respond to these situations? And when people are having physical health crises, why do we send specialized ambulances, but when people are in mental and behavioral health crises, we send the police who also write parking tickets and arrest people and have guns? And it just doesn't really make any sense. And so, you know, starting to do what we can to chip away at the carceral state and the police state. And that's what gives me hope, is the idea that there are more steps to take and that there are people who are supportive of that. And that's what kind of keeps me going.

Leah Todd ([36:43](#)):

That's really exciting work. I'm so grateful to hear you're working on that.

Britney Wilson ([36:48](#)):

I think working with students gives me hope. I hope that's not a cliché new professor thing to say. Like, I feel like I like working with students a lot more than working with actual attorneys, even though I'm still working with actual attorneys, no shade to y'all, but I just feel like maybe there is, maybe there's an opportunity to get at the root a little bit more and, and, and sort of change things and push the envelope from a little bit more from the source, recognizing all the problems with law and with law schools. I personally hated the experience of law school. I never really thought I would be back in one full-time, but I think it sort of gave me a space to be, be the change quote unquote that I wanted to see in the profession by, by starting from that source. And I'm excited about them learning about these concepts, their openness, to learning about these concepts and the work that we're getting to do. So I guess that gives me hope. That is where my hope comes from right now.

Leah Todd ([37:54](#)):

Well, I appreciate, I appreciate you closing us out on a more positive note with the possibilities, but I actually, I think just like talking about this, like uplifts so many possibilities and like ways we could be.

The Activist Files Episode 43: The Power of Art - Talking Disability Justice and Movements for Liberation

So, you know, I think there's, there's something hopeful I take out of it, even though we do have to be real about how awful and how much of a struggle things are as well. But yeah, I really appreciate you both taking the time to be here and talk about this and really hope for more, not just conversations, but like you said, more action. I, obviously, it needs to be the next thing. So thank you for all the work that you're doing on your end. And, you know, I am hopeful that it will, it will get us there, that we'll get everyone to make, to take the actions they need to be taking. So thank you so much to you both again, and yeah, really grateful. And thanks for this conversation. And hopefully we not just talk more but do more.

Britney Wilson:

Thank you.

Lucy Trieshmann:

Yeah, thank you, this was wonderful.

Narrator ([39:05](#)):

We hope you enjoyed this episode of the Activist Files, the Center for Constitutional Rights podcast. Just a reminder to subscribe and rate us on iTunes, Spotify, and SoundCloud. And if you want to find out more about our work, visit our website at ccrjustice.org. That's all until next time on the Activist Files.