

ANTIONETTE: Welcome back to the Reimagining & Redesigning podcast with Antionette D. Carroll. Today, we have Jacob Smith with us. And Jacob, I have known now for many, many years, have seen his progression of centering young leaders through organizing for mobility. We also worked with each other through the lens of, like, what does it look like navigating philanthropy and the systems of power in that space and systems of White supremacy? How do we not fall into the mission creep trap?

So, you know, today's conversation is going to be a combination of looking at, like, what does mobility justice look like, to a conversation of what does it look like navigating these different systems of the world and the power structures that be? And so, with that, I want to open the floor to Jacob. Welcome, Jacob.

JACOB: Thank you so much. So glad to be here.

ANTIONETTE: I always tell people, yes, I could read your bio. But I've been in the space where people have read my bio, and I'm like, oh, that's not right.

JACOB: [laughs]

ANTIONETTE: Or, oh, that is not the point I wanted you to highlight. And so, I want you, from your words, to tell us about yourself. And what systems are you working to reimagine and redesign?

JACOB: Yeah, so excited to be here. So, as you mentioned, I'm Jacob Smith. I'm a Black, queer community organizer, mobility justice advocate. I put that at the forefront because it really is personal to me to be able to hold my identities close when I do this work and represent my community.

What I'm really trying to work on, you know, in my personal life, in my professional life, is really tackling mobility justice and how young people move, and breathe, and navigate their world through mobility and through public spaces. And how do we envision public spaces that are vibrant and inclusive? And I think that's at the root of mobility justices, is moving beyond cars but actually looking at people's identities and what their bodies hold, and how that really shapes how we build spaces for young people.

ANTIONETTE: I love that. So, for folks that are listening, you know, some people maybe never even think about, like, the right to mobility, right? Like, as you stated, it's beyond cars. Yes, cars

is an element of it. It could be also looking at public transportation access, but it also could be mobility of our own bodies and literally looking at the spectrum of that. And so, for the folks that are new to understanding mobility, understanding mobility justice, can you define what mobility justice is? And how do you use that to promote equity within communities?

JACOB: Yeah, yeah. So, mobility justice, I'm very simple with my mobility justice, you know.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs]

JACOB: I don't have all the big words that people try to put in.

ANTIONETTE: Perfect.

JACOB: They're important, but I look at mobility justice as looking at the historical aspects of injustices that prohibit people from moving and breathing and living the way that they want to live. We have to take a historical context of mobility justice and recognize that people have been prohibited from actually being and living the way that they want to live based off of their bodies and their identities. And so, mobility justice recognizes that people have the right to move, people have the right to breathe and live and navigate spaces based off of who they are, not based off of history of oppression.

Something that is very close to me is disability justice. And how does disability justice play into mobility work? And so much of our world is curated to where folks who are disabled or identify as being disabled don't have the ability to move around as much as they like don't have the agency. People don't allow them to have that agency to move as they'd like to move. And so, mobility justice really takes a look at the history first and looks at the identities that people hold.

ANTIONETTE: What I love about this is that it is something that we need to be more conscious of because it affects all of us. And a lot of us, I would argue, that are in more privileged, able-bodied, you know, or maybe have flexible transportation, we are, in many cases, taking advantage of it.

As you were speaking, it made me think about my grandmother. Like anyone that knows me knows me know that I talk about my grandmother as the example of a woman that I want to be. She's powerful. Everyone in the family says she raised us. She raised us all. Like, even with

my kids, people are like, well, you know, you travel a lot. Look, my grandma partly raised my children, and I'm proud of it, right?

[laughter]

And I was one of the only ones in my family that actually lived with my grandmother physically. Like, my mother had all of my other siblings, but I lived with my grandparents. And as years was going on, she started to have different issues around arthritis. And I didn't really understand the impact on it, except two times, one when she had to have knee surgery. And her job of almost 30 years fired her afterwards because she was a house [inaudible 05:17].

And it made me think about kind of, like, the disparities, inequities there and, you know, the economic impacts of it. It also kind of came to the forefront now, and when I say now, as of probably five years ago. You know, my grandmother, she's immobile, like, she literally cannot move anymore. And it kind of deteriorated over time.

And so, I remember talking about the privilege of being one of the only people to have flexible, physical transportation in my family. But then, now we also have to look at this reality that our grandmother, our matriarch, a woman that literally all of us strive to be, is immobile. And the world doesn't think about the fact that one it could happen to any of us. But also, you're not designing communities and systems to work with folks that don't have either transportation or don't have the ability and, the right, and the privilege to freely move in their own bodies.

JACOB: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Wow, so powerful and true.

ANTIONETTE: Yeah. And so, I'm curious, when you think of the folks that you've worked with, and this could be, you know, from your own experience, this could be from some of the communities that you and the young leaders that you partner with have actually engaged with, like, what are some of those misconceptions that people have around community members as it relates to movement? And honestly, I would even argue whether, again, transportation or disability, that we need to be very mindful of if we're trying to be advocates in the mobility justice space.

JACOB: Yeah. So, I start with the young people because, you know, internet, we both agree young people [laughs] --

ANTIONETTE: They are architects of change.

JACOB: They are architects of change.

ANTIONETTE: If you've been looking at what's changed, young people have been behind it.
[laughs]

JACOB: Yes, period. Looking at young people in regards to mobility justice is a powerful aspect of our work. And there's two...I separate this because we have the folks who look at safety. They look at transportation safety. They don't look at identities. They don't look at bodies. They don't look at anything but safety. But there's a very different aspect of safety: transportation safety and mobility justice because someone can be safe with the mode of transportation and be unsafe as an identity.

When we talk about young people, teen driving is changing. Young people are not wanting to drive anymore unless they're being required in their communities. They're recognizing that, hey, these cars are jeopardizing our climate. They're recognizing that I want to walk and bike more. I want to breathe and live. There's a huge push for people to recognize that mobility equity and mobility justice need to be at the forefront of how we address safety.

We cannot continue to have this same narrative of make sure teen driving crashes are decreasing and make sure young people are safe on the road. We can't continue this victim blaming. Period. We have to look at the root cause of why folks are dying and why folks don't feel safe in these communities, and look at their identities first, and look at the historical inequities, the highways that are dividing our communities, and really grapple with that and look at what does it take to address the root of mobility justice?

So, I tell people all the time we can envision a world that is so much more beautiful than it is now. [chuckles] But instead, we focus on the modes of transportation so much more than the actual lived experiences and identities that make up how people are safe.

ANTIONETTE: That is so powerful. You're even making me think differently in this conversation. Because, you know, immediately when I thought about mobility justice, there were two ways to take it, and I wasn't sure which one, right? But what I love about what you're saying is that this is intersectional. Yes, it's not saying let's not talk about, you know, safety on the road because, one, whether they're biking or walking, the roads are going to affect them, right? [laughs] Let's talk about it, right? That's important. But also, what does it look like to be safe in your identity?

It makes me think about some years ago. If anyone's ever driven to Des Moines, Iowa, let me tell y'all something: painful drive my husband and I have ever done. We are still driving, but we talk about how you just never know if your next corner gon' be a steep drop. Like, you don't know.

But I remember GPS took us through a community where the roads were, like, you could barely see them. There weren't any lights up. It was more rural, which there's nothing wrong with rural community. It was just, at that time, there was no lights. It was extremely dark. The roads were winding. Our GPS started acting up, and, literally, we started talking about how we couldn't find a gas station. And we started feeling this inherent fear of our identities when it comes to if our car stopped in their community, right?

Now, there's different biases and stereotypes that we have to, of course, work through ourselves. And why do we automatically think this? And we look at the Green Book, and, like, even what's coming up now are different communities and organizations saying. "Hey. This neighborhood, this state may not be safe for Black people." We had to think about all of that.

So, we had to think about the physical of the transportation of driving, you know, and getting to someplace not having the map, right? [laughs] But then we also had to think about the mental, spiritual, and physical of our bodies on; if we are stopped in this field right now, what are we going to do? Because there's too many unfortunate realities of what happens to Black people in communities that's not theirs.

JACOB: Yeah, I have a really good friend, Charles Brown, that does some conversations around that, around Arrested Mobility, and looking at Black and Brown folks and how our society has been created to actually create these barriers for Black and Brown folks and essentially, you know, arresting us in terms of our mobility, keeping us bound from being able to explore and create experiences for ourselves. And that comes with enforcement, that comes with the way, like you mentioned, with communities and feeling a sense of fear and [SP] unfairness. So, it's something that's extremely powerful in terms of looking at how we move around and what our identity is shaped with that.

ANTIONETTE: I think I even heard you speak about a little bit of, like, challenge of perception and language when it comes to doing this work. Some folks, when they hear mobility justice, they're only thinking about safety when it comes to the road, right?

So, what are some of the other challenges that you've had to navigate to really get us to the space of equity and mobility justice, especially if we think about, like, limited resources or political influences? Like, what are some of the challenges you maybe have had to overcome in doing this work?

JACOB: Yeah. I think the biggest one is individualism. That has a huge role when we look at mobility justice and transportation safety. There's been decades of saying that everything is your fault. Everything is just you. It is solely you. You're the problem. If you don't change, then nothing will change. And, with this work, I really take it from a community perspective and a community because, for example, I can tell someone every day, "Hey, don't jaywalk. Don't jaywalk. Don't jaywalk," which has a racist history within itself. The term jaywalking does, extremely racist history.

And so, I can tell someone [inaudible 12:52] don't jaywalk. But if they live in a community where there's not even sidewalks, where there's not lighting, where there's not infrastructure, built infrastructure in place to keep someone safe and feel protected from other things that may be larger or bigger than them, then I'm doing them a disservice by not allowing them to look at the root issue here. And so, that's just one example of how I find it so challenging, especially with young people. Like, they were born into this system of transportation inequities. So, they should be at the forefront, but we should really look at them as architects of change who can reimagine how our cities are built.

Let's not keep with the same old process of how our communities are created in terms of transportation. And so, I will say that's probably the hardest is because you can't talk about individualism and continue to talk about mobility justice. You can't have a mobility justice future without centering a community's lived experience. And I take that very strongly.

ANTIONETTE: You talked a lot about, like, the importance of young leaders in the work that you do. What are some of the strategies that you've used to employ, amplify, center young leaders when it comes to doing work around mobility justice in itself?

JACOB: So, I think a big one that I actually just went up on is we have a National Youth Transportation Equity Fellowship that really allows young people to go out into their community and design projects and work to design projects that address transportation inequities in their community. And what I love about it is because we start with a clean slate. We start with an extremely clean slate, which, you know, I learned that from folks like Creative Reaction Lab.

ANTIONETTE: [laughs]

JACOB: And really allow them to address their own lived experience. And, you know, on Monday, I had someone who focuses on housing insecurity, like, deeply as a housing insecurity advocate for youth and came to us and said, "Hey, my community on the north side, we have sidewalks; we have bike lanes. I can go across a railroad track and not have my car feel bumpy. Everything just feels so great. And I can walk, bike, move. I feel so, so great, but it also feels hostile.

But then, when I go to my side of the community, the south side, it feels extremely like, nothing is fixed. Like, nothing feels safe. I can't get to where I need to go to from school. I feel like I'm harmed if a car hits me on my way to school." That was the start of the conversation. And then, we did some research and figured out that they have a highway segregating the community that's been there for decades.

ANTIONETTE: Wow.

JACOB: And so, it was just something where this type of work is very hard because young people, when you first go into school, the first thing you hear, "Don't text and drive. Buckle up your seat belt." Great topics. I'm not saying that they're not important. But there is something much deeper that is shaping the trajectory of transportation safety and mobility justice that young people are seeing. We just tend to not give them the agency and the resources for them to actually take action.

ANTIONETTE: I love this example that you gave of kind of, like, this young leader really seeing this greater disparity and obviously having to grapple with the history that they probably wasn't aware of because there's been an intentionality of erasing our history. And when I say our, I'm talking just the human race. Like, I'm not even talking about different racial identities, which we can go [inaudible 16:22] different gender identity. Just history of humanity has always been slanted towards whoever is writing the story, right?

And so, there's been so much that we didn't learn. A lot of us didn't learn about redlining, Levittown. We didn't learn about any of that, right? And so, I'm pretty sure for this young leader, this was a learning moment of, they did what now? [laughs]

JACOB: Yeah. Yeah. [laughs]

ANTIONETTE: Which is something I had to grapple with with my own family because a neighborhood my community grew up in one of them was called Robinson. And it was completely displaced, like, literally the community members that was there, you know, was bought up by McDonnell Douglas, now known as Boeing, because Boeing acquired them. And I grew up going to the Robinson picnic, which I saw as a family reunion. But I didn't know that that was a representation of a neighborhood that was completely displaced, removed for a cooperation.

JACOB: Wow.

ANTIONETTE: Right?

JACOB: Wow.

ANTIONETTE: And a lot of Black people that was in our neighborhood, including my grandmother, ended up with cancer because of different wastes and everything that was put into that space, right? Again, histories that we are not taught. And I can see, from what I'm hearing, that this fellowship is not only giving them the space to come up with their own projects but also giving them the space to build their own consciousness that will actually be beneficial in the long run for any work that they're trying to do within their communities. Would you agree with that?

JACOB: Yeah, absolutely. And I can even say, for myself, I got into this work from a terrible car crash that left me in a coma for three months. And I came out, like, yes, everybody needs to drive safe, which, yes, everyone does need to drive safe. But then, when I started to grapple with the fact that I have a traumatic brain injury; I'm not able to drive; I'm a queer individual; I'm disabled, and I can't even...the only mode of transportation that I have is walking or biking, or not even biking, you know, I have limited transportation options. And there are systems of oppression that are harming me every day.

And so, it took me, you know, an opening of my consciousness to recognize that, wait, this is so much greater than someone just being safe on the road. This is much bigger, and I have a much bigger role to play in this. And so, it's amazing to see young people really open up and have the opportunity to learn the history of this work. We're all still learning. I'm definitely still learning. Every day, I learn about something, and I'm like, wow, transportation had a role in that.

ANTIONETTE: I want to ask you because you brought up a lot of different identities, which I love, right? You're Black, queer, disabled, right? Like, you speak around many of the identities that are really important to you. And when you think about the work you're doing in mobility justice, the transportation sector with disability justice, right? Like, all of that work is made up of people that are on multiple sides and in the spectrum of the work, right?

One of the biggest conversation points that we see in almost every industry is the lack of representation of folks that are usually Black, Brown, or disabled, right? And so, I'm curious: when you think of just the mobility industry, the transportation industry, what would it look like if your sector actually reflected your different cultures? What would be different about your sector if it reflected your different cultures?

JACOB: I believe that what we experience on a daily basis will be completely different in terms of how we move. There is so much power that is being held systemically in terms of our access to mobility that communities don't even recognize that there could be something greater and something better for each of us. First of all, I wouldn't even be in my position right now. I think that I would be probably traveling the world [laughs], traveling, feeling liberated in so many other ways than I feel right now, which is very bound to, like, a locality.

Like I mentioned at the beginning, I put it in two different areas: a transportation safety sector and an injury prevention, getting people to stay safe. Period. Which is great, but it has extreme lack of representation. There's folks who look at safety, and that's it. But I would say that the field of urban planning and the field of Black, queer feminism planning is growing dramatically.

And people are recognizing that, hey, I can have a role in shaping the way my city is built by focusing on my identity. And that's what I love, that there's this growing number of people who are like, yes, this is for me. I need to shape the way my community is built. And I love that. So, I'm not going to negate and say, you know, we don't have work to do, but we got some good things happening.

ANTIONETTE: For sure, for sure. And I want to hear more about the good things happening, right? Because sometimes we only focus on the oppressive systems. And if we only focus on the oppressive systems, literally, it will continue to drain us, right? Like thinking about the emotional labor. And what does it look like to reimagine and redesign through the lens of joy and liberation?

But before we go into kind of that deeper imagination space, I love how, in your last answer, you talked about you feeling the need to be liberated and being able to travel across the globe. You were like, look if it reflected, I wouldn't even be here, right? [laughter] Like, I feel bound. Like, I would be liberated through the lens of travel and cultural exploration, et cetera.

And so, I'm going to bring in what I call the liberation pause at this point, right?

JACOB: [laughs]

ANTIONETTE: We talk about the heavy work, but I always want to provide space for joy and for...honestly, sometimes these are just resources for people to hear like, hey, I never thought about dance as a form of liberation, or I've never heard of this song. Let me listen to it, right? And so, what I'm going to do is I'm going to give you a variety of categories, and I am going to ask you to just come up with what's the first-second thing that comes to mind for you when I name this as it relates to liberation for you, right?

So, with that, I'm going to start with a category of film. When you think of a film or a movie, what brings you joy? What centers liberation for you?

JACOB: Moonlight.

ANTIONETTE: Moonlight, oh, such a [laughs] good film.

JACOB: [laughs].

ANTIONETTE: That's good. That's good. Moonlight was a beautifully shot film. Such a strong story. Just wonderful. That's a good one. How about color?

JACOB: Definitely Maroon.

ANTIONETTE: Oh, you got to give me a little bit more than that because maroon is a sexy color.

[laughter]

JACOB: It's just a bold but powerful and confidence. I feel very confident when I'm around maroon, but it also gives, like, you know, it has a little secret, and the secret is still a little, you

know, shy and careful with who you connect with, careful with the energy. I will say that, careful with the energy.

ANTIONETTE: Careful with the energy. Look, y'all, listen, we all need to find ways to be careful with our energies, or what we are giving and what we are receiving, right? [laughs]

JACOB: Yes.

ANTIONETTE: What about plant?

JACOB: Not too much into plants, but a lily is where I'm headed.

ANTIONETTE: Okay. I am a tree girl. I love trees. I hug trees. When people start telling me...I had the privilege of being in Vancouver and having indigenous tribe leaders like giving us a tour of a community and a space. And they were talking historically about this tree that was rooted there. It had been a part of their history. And I just wanted to live with the tree. I just --

JACOB: Oh.

[laughter]

ANTIONETTE: Like, to stay with the tree. I can't give you specific names of plants. But give me a tree, and I will personally...I literally buy books of just trees, like -- [laughs]

JACOB: That's amazing. That's amazing.

[laughter]

ANTIONETTE: What about season?

JACOB: Spring. And I love me some Colorado. People have a misconception about Colorado, and they say that, "Oh, it's the winter. It's the winter all the time." But it's majority spring, actually [laughs].

ANTIONETTE: It actually is.

JACOB: Denver is majority spring.

[laughter]

ANTIONETTE: I remember going to Denver once and was, like, "Whoo, it's hot here." And people are like, "You think Denver is hot?"

JACOB: [laughs]

ANTIONETTE: I'm like, "I'm hot. Like, I don't know what --"

JACOB: It's hot. It gets hot.

[laughter]

ANTIONETTE: A couple more. What about animal?

JACOB: I will go with my miniature schnauzer that passed away. But my miniature schnauzer, like Chase. Forever Chase.

ANTIONETTE: Rest in peace. Rest in peace.

JACOB: Thank you. Thank you.

ANTIONETTE: This next one I'm going to give you because I think you fell into it so lovely. So, like you said, you would be boundless. You would travel the world. What geographic location would bring you liberation?

JACOB: You know, I'm going to say something about that. That question makes me think I need to be rooted somewhere, and I don't know where my identity feels rooted yet. And so, I want to explore, and I will say everywhere [laughs] that I can that makes me feel safe, but that makes me feel comfortable and safe, and feel like I can explore. But I don't know if I feel rooted anywhere. And that's something to unpack one day.

ANTIONETTE: And I love when you said yet. What I think we forget about liberation is that it's ever-evolving. It's constantly changing. Something that maybe could have been liberatory for me five years ago may be completely different now. And as someone that likes to call herself

a nomad herself like, technically, I live in St. Louis. But as much as I travel at this point, I'm a nomad [inaudible 26:28] [laughter]. To me, sometimes even the act of travel is liberating.

JACOB: Yes.

ANTIONETTE: Last one is your own category, anything that comes up for you. What's liberatory?

JACOB: Wearing heels.

ANTIONETTE: Okay, tell me more because I'm a heel girl.

JACOB: [laughs] Wearing heels. I love a good pump. It's recently become something that's extremely liberatory for me and brings a lot of joy.

ANTIONETTE: We should go heel shopping together.

JACOB: We should. Yes.

ANTIONETTE: I love that. Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, so that gave us a good cleanse, right?

JACOB: Yes. I loved that. I loved that.

ANTIONETTE: It gave us a good cleanse. So, let's jump in a bit. Moving from theory to action in equity, right? Like, for some folks, this is still a utopian mindset. We talk about equity and mission statements. They are in organization values, especially after 2020, George Floyd being murdered. Everyone wanted to throw it in. They didn't even understand the definition of equity, right? Like, [laughter] the whole thing.

And so, you know, many people, when they understand equity, they do think about it in a very theoretical way, but they struggle to take it to action. And we know action is different in each scenario, right? Tangibility is different in every community and for every individual, every context, right? What does equity in action look like, in your opinion, in your sectors?

JACOB: Equity in action is, first, centering young people that have the lived experience and the expertise and shifting away from the current power dynamics that we have around mobility

justice and transportation safety. Equity is allowing there to be spaces where people have the option to move based off of their own identity.

So, for example, having open streets, just having open streets where folks could have parties, can play, can be who they are in a neighborhood. It looks like Black children. You know, I say that because I grew up in a neighborhood where every time a Black child would be dancing and playing in the park, someone would say something, but then another race, another race, would have the ability to do whatever they want to do in their community.

And so, just having that joy in mobility justice is a part of equity because so much of our spaces are just bound by, you need to be this, and you need to do that. And there's a term that we use, quick build projects, in our work, and really looks at, okay, what is the issue that this community is facing in regards to transportation in their built environment and how can we work with them? And how can we allow them to be at the center of creating their own space for the next two years?

And building out that entire space, putting funding into this space. You know, whether that's painting, building a rainbow-colored intersection and cutting it off, you know, or rather that saying that, hey, young people ride scooters in this area a ton. So, how do we need to make sure that scooters are accessible in this community? And then, from there, we already have it built by community members, and we put that funding in. And so, let's make that permanent if that's what it needs to be. And then that funding comes from a different power.

So, I think those are what equity looks like. But so much of the conversation is having to remove so much of what's happened before. Like, having to look at the highways, like, that's just one topic of, like, reconnecting communities and removing these highways that have built pollution and created so much segregation. And so, equity really looks like, let's fix what we messed up [laughter]. Let's fix what we messed up first. Like, let's look at the books and fix what we messed up first, based off of the thoughts and visions of our communities that we need to support.

ANTIONETTE: I love that. What would you say is, like, one or two of different projects or initiatives that you've worked on, and you're like, we need to see more of this, or I want to highlight it a bit in this space? And it could be highlighting through the lens of, you know, I'm very proud of this. It could be highlighting in the lens of vulnerability. Like, look, we tried this and, whoo, let's not do that again [laughs], and it was a learning opportunity for us. So, kind of what's coming up for you? Let's share a little bit of that with the listeners.

JACOB: So, I think some of the good is decriminalizing fare evasion around transit access. First of all, I'm offered free public transportation, regardless. [laughs] Like, I think that is something that should be public. It's public transportation, so let's make it that way [laughter]. But we worked in D.C. for many years to decriminalize fare evasion. Like, just looking at young people getting ticketed and being criminalized for the fact that they can't afford a ticket, and that was a part of our equity work and recognizing that not everyone can pay the same price either.

And if you have a majority of communities in D.C. that are communities of color, it takes them two hours to get to the nearest hospital through transit. And so, like, clearly, there's an inequity socially, economically, and our transportation system is deeply interconnected with that. And so, by providing free transportation to folks, that is a focus.

Now, what's happened is we had a great vision. Things were great for a few years. And now that it was decriminalized, there still was the fare that people needed to pay. And so, now there's been increased enforcement because they still want folks to pay. There's increased enforcement increased gate entry to where folks, you know, are now being reprimanded for the fact that they cannot pay, although it is decriminalized. So, there's still, I think, a lot of work to be done around how we address fines and fees in transportation.

Another one, back in the day when I first got into this work, I was like, yes, speed cameras, speed cameras. We need speed cameras because I was like, yes, safety. I was in a bad car crash, and I want people to be safe. And so, I was a lobbyist for speed cameras for many years as a young person. Now I look back, and I'm like, wow. You look at Chicago, you look at Atlanta, you look at D.C. and how pervasive these speed cameras are. And communities, particularly people of color, and we're being surveilled [laughs] through these speed cameras in the name of safety, in the, quote, unquote, "name of safety."

And so, when you look at equity, like, it's a little bit deeper than saying, okay, let's make sure the speed cameras are in every community [laughs] because that's not equity when they're using those speed cameras to target communities of color as well [laughs].

ANTIONETTE: Yeah, thank you. I'm saying thank you because you just showed so much vulnerability by saying, look, this is what I was advocating for, and look at some of the unintended consequences that came from that. And too many times, like, I've worked with communities, clients, young leaders all over. One of the biggest things...there's multiple things,

right? [laughter] But one of the biggest things I get is that people have a fear to start this work because they haven't figured it out yet. They're still trying to get it right. And it's like, you can't get it right if we don't try.

And for you, especially in that second example, that living expertise, as you said, I actually was impacted by an actual accident, you know, I was in a coma for three months. So, yes, I very much was advocating for speed cameras because I do believe in safety. I am not also saying then use that to exploit and harm communities of color, which also then happens when we have, to be honest, folks in decision-making positions that can even take the greatest ideas and find a way to gain a greater profit further their own agenda. And, you know, sometimes [inaudible 34:40] looking like [vocalization] [crosstalk 34:42] [laughter]

JACOB: Hold up.

ANTIONETTE: Wait a minute. [laughter] That's not what I said, right? Like, no, no, no, right? But that doesn't mean the work stops. You're still in mobility justice work. You now are leading a movement, an organization, to still do that work. So, yes, it was something you started in the very beginning, but it wasn't, like, you stopped. You understand it was a journey.

JACOB: 100%.

ANTIONETTE: And I think we need to share more of that publicly with each other, saying, "This is what I tried. And here's where I went, ooh, maybe, maybe we need to go back [laughs], okay? And change that." But there's still, like, in some cases, those actual cameras were probably saving lives.

JACOB: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah.

ANTIONETTE: And there is a balance.

JACOB: There is a balance.

ANTIONETTE: And I do think we talk about equity as if it's either or, which I want to name either-or thinking is a White supremacy tenet, people, okay? [laughs]

JACOB: Yes, yes. [laughs]

ANTIONETTE: [inaudible 35:42] Yes, and a balance of it all, right?

JACOB: Yes. So true. So true. Yeah, everything does not have to be either or, and, in fact, it should not be. And that's one of the values of this work that I appreciate so much is to be able to grapple and have conversations and to think through what can we reimagine in this work? And what's not working, and what can work?

ANTIONETTE: So, we're getting towards the end of the conversation, and what I've learned about this is how you just keep pulling to my question, like, you just flow it so well. [laughter] Because, like you said, we have to reimagine. That's why I named this podcast what I named it, right?

I think we forget that because we've never had an equitable society because we haven't had a collectively liberatory society, right? That it is, in a sense, going to need imagination. It is going to need redesigning. And we actively can play a role in that, right? So, let's go to the imagination part. I like to do this part because, you know, you ever heard the saying, "You gotta see it to believe it?" You know -- [laughs]

JACOB: Yes. Yes [laughs]. I grew up hearing that.

ANTIONETTE: Like that little, you know, that's a cultural thing, y'all.

JACOB: Yes.

[laughter]

ANTIONETTE: But I will also name that when we talk about equity, a lot of us, because we're so deep trying to redesign, that it's hard for us to imagine what the outcome is, right? It's hard to see it. We believe it, but sometimes we ask the question on, what am I believing again? Like, am I believing for more training? Like, am I believing for [laughs]...or am I believing beyond that, right?

So, let's go to the imagination part to kind of start to see what is Jacob's equitable, inclusive world, right? So, first, let's start with your sector. Imagine you could wave a magic wand. You have no limitations. You have no boundaries, right? You have no restrictions. What is one way you will transform your sectors to be more inclusive and equitable?

JACOB: You know, inclusive is just putting my people at the forefront of the decision-making process, the different identities that hold at the forefront of the process in mobility justice. Like, I think that if we can get to a point where community members are actually planning what they see and planning what their community looks like, that being a...I don't want to say construct, if that's the correct word, but it being something that is very concrete that, like, this is normal for us to be doing, like humans, humans, yeah, [laughs] actually being a part of designing [laughs], you know, a very inclusive community, designing what their community looks like, and that is from built environment. I'd say from built environment first.

Yeah, I think I go back to young people. I really believe that young people start off with that imagination and have that imagination to dream. And so, I'd want them to be at the forefront of what their built environment looks like. I will say that that question is extremely powerful and will make me think for a very [laughs] long time. Because I agree with you, you get so wrapped up in, you know, redesigning and breaking down things. And, you know, just, like, reinvigorating what you see, an opportunity to really take a step back and be like, okay, what does it actually look like? And what does this actually look like many, many years from now when everything has the opportunity to actually be?

And I truly will say, from a perspective of being Black and queer and disabled, I want a journey where criminalization there's no need for that, specifically regarding mobility. Because if we can build environments and spaces where people have the ability to move freely and have safe environments, then, like, we wouldn't need to be criminalizing someone in the way that we're criminalizing because we have the systems in place. But right now, we're really relying to criminalize folks for lack of access to transit, lack of access to sidewalks. And I think that needs to change from a transportation safety perspective.

ANTIONETTE: Thank you. Thank you for that. And, you know, you speak a lot around the intersection also of industries in the work that you're doing. Like, you were just talking about decriminalization, right? We know how the criminal justice system also have deep, deep, deep [laughs] exploitation disparities. Like, the list goes on and on.

You talked about economics, you know, a bit earlier. And so, when you look at other sectors beyond like...and granted, it could very much intersect with mobility justice work, transportation work, right? Urban planning. But what other sectors do you believe need to be reimagined and redesigned?

JACOB: Yeah. So, I think, of course, the criminal justice system. I don't even want to say criminal justice. The carceral system maybe [laughs] is probably the better word to say there [laughter]. Yeah, so the carceral system, for sure. And I don't necessarily know, you know, we're going to...I'm just going to say maybe it's the food, food industry, or the food...The whole...

ANTIONETTE: Like needing more food sovereignty and addressing food [inaudible 41:06] and all that, yeah, yeah.

JACOB: You know, I think it's just so, like, deeply ingrained where I go to the grocery store, and I'm like, why am I sitting here? Beyond the price, beyond me getting annoyed at the price, why am I sitting here having to be a consumer in this way with food? And really, like, dealing with the inequities that people face having to go to the grocery store. And not being able to have the soil that they deserve in their community to grow, not having the resources, not having the lifestyle that they deserve to be able to grow their own food and reap the benefits of that. And, of course, that ties directly into mobility justice as well. [laughs]

ANTIONETTE: Yeah. Well, first of all, I think everything you [inaudible 41:48], especially going back to your definition in the beginning, everything intersects with mobility justice. And I hope the listeners of this conversation see that intersection and start to be more mindful of how mobility impacts them, their communities, their employees, their families, right? And how can we be greater advocates of mobility justice and, honestly, join you in that fight and that movement?

So, with that, you know, I just want to thank you for opening our eyes and, hopefully, kind of inspiring a good amount of us to join you in this work of really designing a world and imagining a world that is centering mobility justice, young leaders, people of color, queer individuals, folks that are approximate. And also, being mindful that built environment, there's power in the people that are building these spaces, and not passively just walking by a building, walking by a park, and really questioning, who was able to decide to build that up, and how do I get more involved? And how do I also decenter the power structure so we can all be more involved with that decision-making?

Thank you for that, and I appreciate you taking the time. And I'm excited to continue to see what you do, Jacob. So, thank you for joining us today.

JACOB: Thank you so much, Antionette.

