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Interview with Lisa Brock

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00:00:11:20 - 00:00:34:18

Interviewer

Hello, Lisa Brock, welcome to the Chicago Anti-Apartheid movement oral history project at Columbia College Chicago. We're going to start with some follow up questions to your last interview. So what do you remember about being a part of the 2009 2010 Chicago Anti-Apartheid movement Oral History Project?

00:00:34:21 - 00:01:03:08

Lisa Brock

Well, what I remember, is it it actually started with me because I was the chairperson of the Department of Liberal Education. That's what it was called then. And now it's, I think, humanities, history and social sciences. And I was the chairperson of that, department. And Aaron McCarthy, actually taught a course on oral history in my department.

00:01:03:10 - 00:01:26:21

Lisa Brock

And I knew that every year she picked a cohort, for her students to interview. And so I asked her if she would be willing to, have Chicago anti-apartheid movement, folks, be the cohort. Initially, it was just supposed to be for one semester, and it ended up being, I think, three semesters in order to get everybody.

00:01:26:23 - 00:01:49:20

Lisa Brock

So that was one. The other part was I had approached Heidi Marshall, the archivist here at Columbia College, about taking my materials for, from my days and the movement and the anti-apartheid movement. And when I approached Heidi about it, she said, well, why don't we do this big, you know, why? Why just your materials.

00:01:49:23 - 00:02:26:00

Lisa Brock

And so it all started kind of around those coming together of those two aspects. And, so we started doing the oral history projects, as well as people coming in. We had a huge intake dinner where I invited, about 100 people, Reverend Jeremiah Wright from Trinity United Church, who was Obama's minister. He came in, because his church had been a site of anti-apartheid activism, and we had a huge event and people brought things, from their basements and their garages.

00:02:26:03 - 00:02:55:03

Lisa Brock

I'll share. One funny story is, because I kept all my materials because for 20, 25 years, this was my major political work. And I knew a lot of people like that here in Chicago who had done the same thing. So I knew they kept their things because it was important to us. And, I remember when I wrote them, I wrote a letter of kind of form a letter and I said, you know, we'd like you to donate your materials to the Columbia College Archives so we can start a collection.

00:02:55:06 - 00:03:15:18

Lisa Brock

And, I remember many people like, oh, I don't know. And I was like, I know your children. And when you die, this stuff may not be preserved. It may go in the dumpster. It's important to you, but it's not important to them necessarily. So if you want it to be preserved, you should donate it. And so all of those things came together.

00:03:15:20 - 00:03:20:23

Lisa Brock

And we started this project, of which oral histories were a part.

00:03:20:25 - 00:03:35:11

Interviewer

That's awesome. I'll go with who initially educated you about apartheid.

00:03:35:13 - 00:04:03:25

Lisa Brock

It was not one person. Of course, I, I was an activist. In Washington, D.C., when I was at Howard University around issues of police brutality and anti-racism. I was a member of the, National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, the DC chapter, and there was anti-apartheid activity happening. So we're talking about 1975 76.

00:04:03:27 - 00:04:29:27

Lisa Brock

And I was aware of it, and it connected with African independence movements, too. And when I came to go to northwestern University in 1980, I met Dennis Brutus, at northwestern, and he he took me to a meeting here. Around the Springboks, the rugby team coming to Chicago. And that's what got me more involved here in Chicago.

00:04:30:00 - 00:04:34:01

Interviewer

So what was your role in the Springbok protests?

00:04:34:04 - 00:04:57:03

Lisa Brock

I was a co-chair of the the, the Stop the Apartheid rugby tour. And, it was the summer of 1981. We I had just finished one year of graduate school. I mean, it was wild because I had just come to Chicago and I didn't know a whole lot of people. And Dennis takes me to this meeting downtown, and there were other people there.

00:04:57:03 - 00:05:17:08

Lisa Brock

And somehow I left that meeting as a co-chair and the other two co-chairs worked at. I was a grad student, so I had the summer to really focus on this. And, so it was a lot of it was, it was it got me ensconced in the in the movement here. I got to meet a lot of people, know a lot of people.

00:05:17:15 - 00:05:44:07

Lisa Brock

We organize, organize, organize. It's a long story. I won't tell you the whole story. Now, we have this a lot of. Unless you want to. After you

finish some other questions, maybe we can go back because it was really exciting, and moving and, we were, connected with the New York group and LA group because they were going to New York, then coming to Chicago and then going to Los Angeles.

00:05:44:10 - 00:06:10:29

Lisa Brock

And, you know, they kept claiming, oh, it's just sport. We're like rugby in 1980. Very few people were playing rugby in the United States. And this is the best team in the world from South Africa. Come on. Who you got to play in Chicago? You know. And so it was political and, you know, they wanted to break the sports boycott, because there was a boycott against culture in sport.

00:06:11:02 - 00:06:33:13

Lisa Brock

That Dennis was a big part of Dennis Brutus. I mean, he had been a big part of that sports boycott internationally. And Ronald Reagan was elected and they made a decision. You know, Ronald Reagan was a friend of the apartheid regime, and they made a decision. This is our time to break that boycott. And so it was a very political gesture, and we responded politically as well.

00:06:33:16 - 00:06:40:28

Lisa Brock

So, yeah, I was a co-chair of that movement.

00:06:41:01 - 00:06:48:03

Interviewer

Why did you change majors from Oberlin College to Howard College, if you did at all?

00:06:48:05 - 00:06:52:00

Lisa Brock

I don't even know if I had a major at Auburn. Did you read that I had a major.

00:06:52:03 - 00:06:56:14

Interviewer

No, I didn't, I was just wondering what your major was in.

00:06:56:16 - 00:07:26:18

Lisa Brock

I'm not sure I. I liked music theory. I actually liked music a lot. And I played the piano and the flute and, I thought about, composition as a possible major, but I was too much of an activist to be, that quiet, because it took a lot of quiet practice and a lot of sort of, I, you know, social isolation in some ways to be really good in concentration.

00:07:26:18 - 00:07:50:13

Lisa Brock

And I was much more outward going. But I always loved history. And so when I got to, even in high school, everybody else would be asleep and I'd be like, wow, wow, wow. So, even the bad teachers I liked, but when I

went to Howard University, I majored in history. And, I had really great teachers there, and that's why I ended up at Northwestern University.

00:07:50:13 - 00:07:55:04

Lisa Brock

Has to do, pursue history as a, at a at a graduate level.

00:07:55:06 - 00:08:04:29

Interviewer

Not so awesome. What about leadership positions and organizations did you enjoy?

00:08:05:02 - 00:08:11:01

Lisa Brock

That's a very interesting question.

00:08:11:03 - 00:08:46:14

Lisa Brock

People probably would say that I must have. I must enjoy it because I did it, but I didn't do it because I enjoyed it. I did it because for some reason I was good at it. And I think people I would just rise to the occasion. And I felt like people trusted me to do it. And it was a kind of skill set I had, and I could contribute to the movement and the struggle with that skill set.

00:08:46:16 - 00:09:10:08

Lisa Brock

So it wasn't that I enjoyed it. I mean, it was it's a hard work, you know, it's a lot of work. But, I did it because it needed to be done. And I guess in some ways I was a natural born leader in that way. I didn't think about it. I just did it. And, and people seemed to think I was good at it.

00:09:10:08 - 00:09:18:29

Lisa Brock

And so you learn along the way through making errors and mistakes. What's good? Leadership and what's not? I'm still learning. I'm still.

00:09:18:29 - 00:09:27:29

Interviewer

Learning. It's very interesting. What was it like working at the National Archives or going to school at Howard?

00:09:28:01 - 00:09:57:14

Lisa Brock

That was great. Howard was great. For that reason, because we're, you know, living in D.C. and being in the history department of what people often think of as the best black university in the country, they if you wanted a black person, you wanted a black student intern. You called Howard, right? And, I thought about that because when I was at Oberlin, they didn't come to Oberlin looking for black people, you know?

00:09:57:14 - 00:10:19:23

Lisa Brock

So you might get some something, but you might not. It just depended. But at Howard, if you were a star, if you were a good student, a star student, they came looking for you. And I felt that. So working at the National Archives was great. I worked in the genealogy section, and, I, it was actually two of us from the history department.

00:10:19:25 - 00:10:59:11

Lisa Brock

I would say there were three students. We were the three top students in the history department, and we loved history. We hang out together a lot, and that was our thing. You know, we were historians, and, the two of them are now lawyers. They became lawyers. But, in the genealogy section, very often, probably the most memorable, memorable thing where Native Americans, Indians coming to dig up treaties and to dig up various kinds of their legacies, and their people, and I remember helping some of them find documents and and that was great.

00:10:59:13 - 00:11:21:12

Lisa Brock

I also decided to look up my grandparents, birth records in this area and realized that the that, because I grew up with my grandparents in the same neighborhood, I grew up in a small town, so I found three of their birth records, the counties they were born in and the census data, I guess it was census data.

00:11:21:14 - 00:11:41:21

Lisa Brock

And, one I couldn't find my grandfather, I couldn't find, and I was like, you know, he didn't know exactly when he was born, because a lot of times they didn't have access to records born in the South, sharecroppers. And, but I looked for like, years around when he would have been born and couldn't find him. Went home.

00:11:41:21 - 00:12:00:11

Lisa Brock

That's that, Christmas and interviewed all my grandparents. I decided I had to do oral interviews of all my grandparents, and, I did. Each one of them learned a lot. I grew up with them, but learned a lot because you asked, you know, you have to ask questions sometimes to get an answer. They're not going to just share.

00:12:00:13 - 00:12:31:24

Lisa Brock

And found out that my grandfather had changed his name when he came to Chicago from, Sharkey County, Mississippi, Clarksdale, Mississippi, because, he had been in a he had been in a shootout with some drunk racist who had tried to kill him, and he pulled out a gun and shot back. Luckily they were drunk. And, what they first said to him, he says, is they told him, nigger, dance for us.

00:12:31:24 - 00:12:51:28

Lisa Brock

Dance, nigger dance. And he said, he's like 16. It's like, I'm not dancing. They start shooting at him and he started running and they were

chasing him. And he. Then he turned around and fired back, at one of them with a little pistol he had in his sock. And, he thinks he hit one of them, but they didn't hit him.

00:12:52:00 - 00:13:16:11

Lisa Brock

So he. This is the South. They they lynched people. Kill people for looking at white people the wrong way. So the and these kind of incidents led to a lot of people fleeing. If you've read the, the, the first Isabel Wilkerson, the warmth of Other Suns, a lot of stories like this. But, he ran back to where he was living.

00:13:16:14 - 00:13:39:13

Lisa Brock

He was living with a white man who had given him a room in his garage, because my grandfather had left the sharecropping plantation, he says when he was 12, because he was hungry and he left and went to the city on his own at 12, if you can imagine, and met this man and was living up in his, his, garage.

00:13:39:16 - 00:14:08:04

Lisa Brock

And the man he, he, he worked for the man and he told the man what happened. And the man said, boy, you got to get out of here. They're going to lynch you. And he gave him some money and put him on a train. And he got off here in Chicago. I learned all that because I was working at the archives, because I was trying to decided to look up my own family and, and then decided to do my own oral history of my family.

00:14:08:06 - 00:14:16:00

Lisa Brock

So I know so working at the archives was very, impactful for me.

00:14:16:03 - 00:14:19:28

Interviewer

Yeah. That's great. And I'm glad you got to know your grandma.

00:14:19:28 - 00:14:21:00

Lisa Brock

Can you imagine?

00:14:21:02 - 00:14:33:20

Interviewer

Yeah. How did you feel about anti-apartheid organizations that weren't integrated or refused white participation?

00:14:33:22 - 00:14:38:14

Lisa Brock

It's a good question.

00:14:38:16 - 00:15:11:24

Lisa Brock

I understand that just like with women's organizations, or with trans or or, gay organizations that sometimes you need organizations to be only

those people because you can do things in a certain way without being distracted. So I, I believe in the formation of all black or all Indian or all Latino or all gay or all trans organizations, when necessary.

00:15:11:27 - 00:15:39:21

Lisa Brock

I did not think the anti-apartheid movement was one of those. I thought that we needed every single person we could get in the struggle, against, apartheid. And, so I did not agree with that in this particular movement and actually don't agree with it in most big movements, because I feel if we're going to change the world, you actually change the world through movements.

00:15:39:24 - 00:16:03:23

Lisa Brock

So you can't expect people to understand things. If they hadn't been involved in the creation of those things. So if you want to create an anti-racist movement, you have to have white people in it as well. Not all the time. Sometimes people need pressure from an organization like Black Lives Matter, right? Sometimes that pressure force jolts people into, oh, I better learn something.

00:16:03:23 - 00:16:33:05

Lisa Brock

I better get involved. But other times, and maybe simultaneously, you need organizations with all kinds of people in it, because you've got to learn how to work together as you're moving towards something, because it's harder if you win something and people have not been involved. Right. So in the South Africa and the South African struggle was multiracial, they had made a decision very early, that they were going to be an organization of everybody in South Africa.

00:16:33:05 - 00:17:01:23

Lisa Brock

Of course, it was majority black, but they had, you know, Indians, Indian, South Africans, white South Africans, black South Africans and those who had a heritage of mixed race which were who were called colored at the time in South Africa. So they were all involved in the same struggle to end apartheid. So I, I yeah. So I, I didn't think it was very useful or fruitful to have an all black organization internationally in the struggle against apartheid.

00:17:01:25 - 00:17:14:00

Interviewer

Thank you. That was really insightful. Moving on to life and activism since last time. How was it during your time at Kalamazoo College?

00:17:14:02 - 00:17:57:27

Lisa Brock

Kalamazoo College was both, tricky. It's a smaller. It's a small college in a smaller city. And, I was invited there to be the academic director of a brand new in doubt center. So I was new. It was new. And, the college was pretty tightly closed, and, not everybody at the college,

wanted the center because it was different, because our, vision and our, our mission was to both work within the college and to work in the world.

00:17:57:29 - 00:18:19:06

Lisa Brock

And it had a \$25 million endowment to do it with, which is why I went. I was like, whoa, I can be leader of a social justice center, and I don't have to raise money. Oh. We go have some fun. We go have lots of fun. And, and it was fun. It was it. We we did a lot of great work there.

00:18:19:08 - 00:18:46:24

Lisa Brock

We brought people from all over the world, both to, introduce them to our campus, but also to introduce them to each other. And the best ideas out here for movement activism. So we had, we had international conferences every other year while I was there before the pandemic. So we had what was called a Without Borders conferences.

00:18:46:26 - 00:19:18:04

Lisa Brock

And we brought we, we, we brought people from Palestine and the South Salt's, Solomon Islands people do an environmental work. Brazil. Africa, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, we we, we it was just fascinating. And they, they loved it because they got to literally spend time with each other and basically it was like a, a laboratory for them and for us, to learn best practices.

00:19:18:06 - 00:19:46:21

Lisa Brock

What are people doing in the world around social justice activism. Then we also had a social justice prize for two years. And we did this initially because the president of the college who got this endowment, she hired me. I was academic director, and then there was an executive director. And so we had a co leadership model. Mine was mainly to work with academics and to try to introduce social justice into the curriculum and liberal arts more broadly.

00:19:46:24 - 00:20:17:23

Lisa Brock

And by broadly, I mean going to conferences, inviting academics who are doing social justice work within their research budget, within their writing, and then also so, and within their disciplines. And then the executive directors role was more community. So to work with the local community, the national community, the global community. And so we were cooking, we were cooking, and they they hired us because one of the questions they asked us when they hired us was, who do you know?

00:20:17:25 - 00:20:35:26

Lisa Brock

Who do you know? Who can you bring here? They want to know who we knew. So they, they, they they brought national people there. So I was seen as a national person who knew Angela Davis and, bell hooks and people like that. And, because I had worked with them. And so I said, I told them who I knew.

00:20:35:29 - 00:20:55:06

Lisa Brock

So that helped me get the job because because the goal was to we don't want to wait five years for this to be big. It's got to be big now. So when we had the social justice leadership prizes, we did that to get known in the world and also to bring people to us that we could know. Right?

00:20:55:08 - 00:21:26:20

Lisa Brock

So what we did is we had a \$25,000 prize. And we with social media, we advertised all over the world. And so people applied. The very first year we did it, we had 188 applications, and the goal was we were going to bring the ten best, the ones we want it to campus. And it was a great opportunity because we also had, we, the campus because one of the things we tried to do is not just to.

00:21:26:22 - 00:21:54:09

Lisa Brock

Think of social justice as something that's a goal. It's also something you practice. So collective decision making was something we practice. So one of the things we did is that we would invite the entire faculty, staff and students who wanted to participate. We would give them ten applications, and the applications were videos with subtitles like Ted talks, because a lot of people could write and write English.

00:21:54:09 - 00:22:21:26

Lisa Brock

I mean, there are people in the Honduras and in Mexico who speak indigenous languages. They don't write them. And so we wanted it to be open. So we thought if we did these little, little ten minute, eight minute videos, they could send in an eight minute video. So we we would take the, we would give a faculty member, a staff member, a student, ten, eight minute videos, and we give them a rubric and they would rate them and tell us what they liked and didn't like about them.

00:22:21:28 - 00:22:42:19

Lisa Brock

And then we would take all this data together. The staff at the Arcus Center, and then we would end up bringing ten people, to campus, and they would spend a few days with us. And then we had jurors that would come and make the decision. We didn't make the decision as to who would win the prize. So we've had Medea Benjamin come.

00:22:42:22 - 00:23:09:09

Lisa Brock

She's a, international anti-war activist. If you ever watch Congress or C-Span and you see a little woman yelling no war, that's Madea. She's been nominated for a, Nobel Prize. She came one year, Angela Davis came. So we went and they were jurors. So, the restaurant workers won one year, and, the,

00:23:09:11 - 00:23:31:21

Lisa Brock

So it was great. It was just that was that was great. And it put us on the map for people and, and, you know, people would be like that Arcus center. I mean, I mean, the people we met and the people we got to know. One man came for the prize. He was from Bogota, Colombia, and they were a part of a GM workers.

00:23:31:24 - 00:23:53:09

Lisa Brock

GM workers in Bogota. There's a General Motors plant in Bogota. And the ergonomics in the in the facility are so bad that people can only work 2 or 3 years, and when they leave, they have their back is out of whack, their hips are out of whack. This man came. He was only 30. He's on a cane and they just kick.

00:23:53:09 - 00:24:17:06

Lisa Brock

When? When you can't work anymore, they just kick you out. No compensation or anything. And they had been protesting in front of the U.S. Embassy in Bogota for years. And you know what they did? I kid you not. This is just one example of what's happening in the world. They they had a tent city out in front of the U.S. embassy, and they sold their lips together with needle and thread.

00:24:17:08 - 00:24:48:00

Lisa Brock

The protest. And this gentleman came to our center. And then the UAW auto workers rank and file, not the leadership from Detroit and GM workers from Detroit, Oregon, and somewhere else. Maybe South Carolina came to greet him, to meet him, to be with him because they they knew what was going on and its workers. They wanted to show solidarity.

00:24:48:02 - 00:25:21:29

Lisa Brock

And, so those are the kind of people we met yesterday. I mean, so working at Arc is, was very, very, important and moving for me. And, now the administrative stuff, the backlash, not so much. We have Patrisse Cullors, one of the Black Lives Matters founder. She came she was one of the her organization in LA before Black Lives Matter was one of our finalist.

00:25:22:01 - 00:25:39:04

Lisa Brock

So we saw her early. That was the other thing. Part of what we did was developmental. And she she thanks us for for helping her develop, and, so yeah, it was great. It was great. It was great.

00:25:39:07 - 00:25:42:24

Interviewer

What was some of the backlash she received?

00:25:42:27 - 00:26:04:25

Lisa Brock

Oh, Lord. Well, of course, whenever you deal with the Palestinian question, you know, you're going to have some small Jewish lady from outside of Detroit call you up, or we had a day in. Oh, and they wouldn't just call me. They would call the president of the college. What are you doing? How come you're bringing Palestinians? What about the other side?

00:26:04:25 - 00:26:27:28

Lisa Brock

The Israeli side? And I you know, we had a, panel called Critical Solidarities of our time. And one of them was with, with around Palestine and, and, so then the president would call me what was called call the provost, and the provost would call me because I report it to the provost. So he said, Lisa, what's going on?

00:26:27:28 - 00:26:48:07

Lisa Brock

Was it because we didn't ask permission? We just we've been working, you know, and, we had autonomy, which was great. I love that. And, I would say we're doing a panel on critical solidarity of our time. The Palestinian question is a critical solidarity of our time. That's it. And she says, well, this woman says you were rude to her.

00:26:48:09 - 00:27:10:02

Lisa Brock

I don't even know who she is. I mean, how dare some woman from nowhere call me up and expect me to explain myself to her? Who is she? How she connected to the car? You know, I mean, so I just asked her, who are you? Why are you calling me? And, you know, she thought she had some right to call me and and expect me to do something, I don't know.

00:27:10:07 - 00:27:34:15

Lisa Brock

And usually that would be enough for the provost. I would just answer that. Or one time we got a call and this young woman, because this was Patrice, came and spent a semester. So she came as a finalist for the prize, and we had invited her back for a quarter to be a, a visiting, activist in residence.

00:27:34:15 - 00:28:02:10

Lisa Brock

We we had all kinds of programs to not just the big things we had, albeit we had, regional, activists, things we had. I mean, we had money we could help people to, you know, do their work. So she came for a quarter. And while she was there, the whole Ferguson thing blew up. 2014 Mike Brown and, some of our students went and she went, but they didn't necessarily go together.

00:28:02:12 - 00:28:18:20

Lisa Brock

But the college was so concerned. How could these students, what does it have to do with these students? Why are they going to Ferguson? You know, it's like these black students didn't just drop out of nowhere in the college. So we got a lot of calls about that, like, why are you sending. So I said they didn't ask permission.

00:28:18:22 - 00:28:45:13

Lisa Brock

They they asked us. I said, you know, but we were like seen as the, you know, and then the dean of students at the time got a call from a parent that said that Patrice had brainwashed her daughter into believing she was black. This was a black girl, but she had a white mother, and she she was biracial and she had come to college.

00:28:45:16 - 00:29:09:05

Lisa Brock

And all of a sudden she's discovering herself like, so the dean of students, you know, so my my response is, this is the era of developmental stage. It's developmental stage for young people. You know, that students come here and discover themselves. I said, Georgie has come here and discovered that, you know, she you know, she's black. She is black now.

00:29:09:05 - 00:29:17:03

Lisa Brock

I'm sorry. I don't know if her mother wants to, you know, but they had the nerve to call us about it. That was my thing. I'm like.

00:29:17:06 - 00:29:21:00

Interviewer

It seems like a personal problem, but see.

00:29:21:02 - 00:29:26:07

Lisa Brock

But it shows you the kind of racism that was kind of embedded in the college as well.

00:29:26:10 - 00:29:27:29

Interviewer

So it's just insane.

00:29:28:01 - 00:29:53:16

Lisa Brock

So, yeah, there was a lot of different kinds of, or when we did a Di in downtown, we decided nobody in Kalamazoo, the city had done a day. And you remember, you may be too young, but after Mike, after, Mike Brown, there were a lot of die ins where people just laid out in the middle of the street because they, the police let him lay out and bleed out for four hours in the middle of the street, in his own community.

00:29:53:19 - 00:30:20:04

Lisa Brock

I don't know where you from, but the people who saw you grew up. They were incensed. And the police had guns on them. They wouldn't let them help him. And so it and it was on video. People were videotaping it and put it up on the internet. So we we said, okay, Kalamazoo got to do it. And so we took charge and we, we coordinated one get a call from the provost.

00:30:20:06 - 00:30:40:15

Lisa Brock

The provost says, Lisa, I got a call from the police. The police say there's word on the street that you all are planning a in. So yeah, we are. And he said, well, the police wants to know where, when, but to talk to you, so. Okay, give me his number. So I called the police chief. That's it.

00:30:40:17 - 00:31:02:06

Lisa Brock

Hello, I'm Lisa Brock, aka center, and he says, yeah, I hear you all are plenty. So here we are for this Friday during art, they have art hop where the whole downtown. There's art. Nice art corridor. And downtown that that street is open to ten the first Friday of every month. All of those shops. And that's where we were going to do it at that night.

00:31:02:08 - 00:31:27:02

Lisa Brock

So he said, well, you know, what are you going to do? So I said, well, there's two jails we're going to meet at both jails, two different I'm going to be one. The executive director is going to lead the other, and we're going to meet downtown at the courthouse. We're going to have some speeches. Then we're going to walk over to the mall, Art mall, and we're going to lay down, do or die, he said, you can't do that.

00:31:27:04 - 00:31:46:03

Lisa Brock

I said, we're going to do it. And he said, well, you can't you can't block off streets. You know? I said, well, what do you suggest? And he said, you can't do it. I said, okay, I'll tell you, I'll give you a compromise. We'll walk on the sidewalks to the courthouse, but we're going to be in the middle of street at Art at Art mall.

00:31:46:06 - 00:32:06:27

Lisa Brock

He said, well, that's a cars go down there. You can't do that. I said, we're going to do it. And so I said, you know, basically, what are you going to do? And he said, well, I don't know, I don't know. I'll call you back. So he did not call me back. But when we got to the mall, he had they had blocked off the street.

00:32:06:29 - 00:32:24:21

Lisa Brock

And so we did do our in. And the mayor I was standing right next to the mayor of the of the city, Bobby Hopewell. Kalamazoo was a small city. So you get to know the leadership. I said, Bobby, you got to you're going to drop is black, gay, black mayor. I said, Bobby, are you going to drop with us?

00:32:24:24 - 00:32:46:29

Lisa Brock

He said, I wish I could work. So that was really cool. So yeah, we we caused a lot of trouble. We sent people to, where was the place in South Dakota, the Pine Ridge, where they were fighting for the water and land

rights against the pipeline. I can't think of the name right now, you know.

00:32:47:00 - 00:32:59:02

Lisa Brock

Yeah. But anyway, we sent people there, so. Yeah. So Arkansas was great. I'm long winded. I know, I'm sorry.

00:32:59:04 - 00:33:03:20

Interviewer

How has retirement affected your activism? Are you retired?

00:33:03:22 - 00:33:07:19

Lisa Brock

Who built other?

00:33:07:22 - 00:33:38:02

Lisa Brock

I learned who be lava when? You know, a recent visit to Cuba. Because I do research on Africa and Cuba. And I was there in June of 22. Yeah. Just. Yeah. Last June, I was there and, I kept telling I was there for a conference and I was presenting at an academic conference. And, I was telling them, everybody, people, my friends, everyone, how are you doing, Lisa?

00:33:38:02 - 00:33:56:20

Lisa Brock

And I'd say, I'm retired. And they say, no, you're not. I said, yes, I am. I said, no, you're not. I mean, this happened more than once and I was so confused. So I said, okay, if I'm not retired, what am I? You know. And they said, you're who will be lava? Who'll be lava is a conjugation of jubilate.

00:33:56:20 - 00:34:33:20

Lisa Brock

It. And it means that you are retired but still active. So you must be happy because you don't have to go to work every day, but you're still active, so it has its own meaning. And I realized most people in Latin America, or most people that speak Spanish, no. That term, I just didn't know it. But I've stayed active, and part of it has been, you know, once the George Floyd situation happened in summer of 2020, I started getting calls about doing work with people.

00:34:33:20 - 00:35:12:00

Lisa Brock

People wanted work. They wanted me to help them understand what's going on. And, so I'm basically a contractor now. I'm a consultant for various organizations. I've consulted with businesses. I've, you know, I did zooms. I, I did a thing for the Department of Agriculture the other day because the Black Caucus in the Department of Agriculture saw something that I did on, on the internet and called me up for Black History Month, or, my first big contract interesting was with Biggby Coffee, which is a coffee company in Michigan.

00:35:12:02 - 00:35:31:00

Lisa Brock

And, the two owners or CEOs called me. One of them went to Kalamazoo, is an alum, and he had seen what we had done with Argus. And, so he called me up and he said, you know, we we just too white rich. We he said, we just do rich white guys and we need to know what's going on.

00:35:31:03 - 00:35:55:27

Lisa Brock

Can you help us? So I was like, hey, okay. Do you pay? Yeah. So, so I worked with them for about a year and a half, and their senior staff, my latest kind of ongoing contracts have been with, the University of Wisconsin. They have a faculty, study or faculty retreat every year called faculty college.

00:35:56:00 - 00:36:23:18

Lisa Brock

And for two years I go up, I've gone up and I've facilitated how to integrate social justice into your teaching, learning, research. And, so I've done that with them. And I'm currently working with, for three years with the Association for the Study of African American Life in History and Howard University jointly. They got a mellon grant, to bring more social justice into their practice.

00:36:23:20 - 00:36:46:09

Lisa Brock

And so, this is the third year of the contract. I've been working with them. And just so you know, we are on our way to Florida because the conference this year is in Jacksonville. And of course, once I knew that, I was like, you want a social justice, analysis of going to Florida. And, I said, don't go.

00:36:46:10 - 00:37:02:19

Lisa Brock

You gotta we gotta boycott Florida. I mean, that's so you don't give them any money. And they said, you know, like a lot of conferences, we can't do that because we've, you know, these organizations, they pay for conferences five years ahead of time. They're like 4 or 5 years out. So they didn't want to lose the money at the hotel and all that.

00:37:02:21 - 00:37:25:00

Lisa Brock

So I said, okay, if we go to if we go to Florida, we have it has to be a protest conference. We have to, you know, so there are a lot of panels and discussions on black resistance. They're doing a community forum the day before with local folks and I propose that we we have to do something public, like a public protest.

00:37:25:03 - 00:37:52:20

Lisa Brock

So we're going to do they agreed. Finally, they were a little nervous at first. But we are going to the conference is going to nothing's going to happen for two hours on the Thursday, 5 to 7 of the conference, and we are going to march out of the hotel and we're working with people. I'm

working with people from all over the state of Florida, the Dream Defenders, gay organizations, those students from, the high schools.

00:37:52:20 - 00:38:12:22

Lisa Brock

And, and there's a lot of activism going on down there. But our media is not covenant. It's not covenant. I mean, there's been sit ins at the statehouse and arrest and all kinds of stuff. And so, faculty members, I'm in touch with University of Florida. And so, we're they're they're going to be they're part of this.

00:38:12:22 - 00:38:37:18

Lisa Brock

And so we're they're going to meet us. So we're going to march from the hotel to a part named after James Weldon Johnson. I'm not sure if you know who he is, but he wrote the lyrics for Lift Every Voice and Sing, and we're sitting in the center for Black Music Research and Lift Every Voice and Sing is the song that is often considered the black national anthem in the United States.

00:38:37:21 - 00:39:00:09

Lisa Brock

And so James Weldon Johnson is from Jacksonville, and we're going to it's a park named after him. So we're going to march to his park. And we we're going to have speakers and we're going to have whatever, and we're going to read very loudly from banned books. Yes, we're going to read from banned books. And and so that's the protest.

00:39:00:09 - 00:39:20:16

Lisa Brock

And we're hoping there will be we can get some media there to, because this is likely going to be a thousand people there. So, and I'm the lead coordinator of that. So that's what I'm doing right now. So retirement's been good because I can choose to do it or not. I don't have to go to work.

00:39:20:19 - 00:39:40:22

Lisa Brock

So no meetings. That's that's like the worst part of work is meetings. Meetings, meetings, meetings that seem useless. Not meetings that you're doing something, but it's just checking a box. So retirement's been great.

00:39:40:24 - 00:40:01:13

Interviewer

I want to kind of go back to your work with other colleges that you haven't necessarily been faculty at, but the contracts you had, what have been some responses from faculty after being told that they have to include all the social justice in their curriculum, like, has it been mainly positive?

00:40:01:15 - 00:40:28:05

Lisa Brock

Well, first of all, they don't have to do anything. Of course. It's all based on if they want to. And so it's interesting that you say that because, you know, I know a lot of faculty and I have former students who are now deans and, you know, I mean, they're running stuff, you know? So, they often will invite me sometimes, to do things.

00:40:28:07 - 00:41:01:16

Lisa Brock

So I had one friend, and I'm not going to name the place. She's no longer there anymore. She's a dean somewhere else now. But, she used to work here at Columbia College with me, and, she, she invited me to work with the the the biologic, the biology division of her big state university. And this was when we were still doing zoom, and, because the students had complained about, you know, microaggressions and biases and sexism and just a lot of things in that science area.

00:41:01:18 - 00:41:31:06

Lisa Brock

And, I met with them on zoom, and you can see all their faces, maybe two people of color, maybe two women and spouses. A lot of them. And most of them had scars on their face. They were frowning, you know. So I told them. I told my friend, I said, you know what? I'm not going to work with you.

00:41:31:08 - 00:41:52:12

Lisa Brock

I don't have to. I don't want to. I retired, I'm not I don't want to work with people who don't want to. Do you don't want to work with with me. And so that I canceled that contract, and she was a friend. She was okay. I she said, what am I going to tell them? I said, I don't know, maybe tell them I got busy, you know, I don't know.

00:41:52:15 - 00:42:19:28

Lisa Brock

But I was like. And so the chair of the department, who had been very nice. So what happened? I was like, oh, I said, oh, I'm sorry, I just can't do it. But it was, it was the ugly faces. I was like, I don't have to, you know, sometimes when you work and you have to look at ugly faces, and you have to deal with people who often, you know, in this world, in this country, you know, I've dealt with races, I've dealt with sexism, I've dealt with homophobes.

00:42:19:28 - 00:42:44:13

Lisa Brock

I was like, you know what? I'm retired. I don't have to do that anymore. So that's what I canceled. But then, like, so I only work with people who really want to work with me. I'm just not I'm not doing that. And so the folks at University of Wisconsin have just been great. I mean, they invited me back for a second year, and these are all they're teaching and learning centers at all the 13 campuses.

00:42:44:15 - 00:43:11:12

Lisa Brock

And so now what's happened the second year, there was a core from last year that actually did a lot of preparatory work to, and I've been invited to different campuses because of that work. So someone from a campus that was at the faculty College did invited me to their campus and, in Wisconsin. Yeah, that's that's another story, because some of them are these are rural campuses.

00:43:11:12 - 00:43:34:03

Lisa Brock

Some of them, they're really struggling, some faculty of color in some of these places. But, but no, I mean, I, I so I've made a decision. I only work with people who want to learn and, do this work. I feel like I'm a kind of person that's very open. And most of the faculty in Wisconsin, of course, are white.

00:43:34:06 - 00:43:56:15

Lisa Brock

Most of them are white. But they get it. They're they're they get it. They're smart. They want to do this work. They ask me some, difficult questions and some interesting personal questions. Not personal, but questions that they've had. So when I go to faculty college in Wisconsin, it's really nice. Is three days. Is that a resort?

00:43:56:18 - 00:44:16:01

Lisa Brock

I'm hanging with them. It's like a hundred and some faculty. I'm hanging with them the whole time. So we're, like, eating together. We're swimming together. You know, we're having a drink together, and so they will ask me questions or they'll ask, can I meet with you quietly to to talk to you? So it's not just me presenting.

00:44:16:01 - 00:44:42:13

Lisa Brock

I'm also kind of helping them. And so I'll give you one example that was so interesting. One art historian asked me, she was confused because she had presented a bunch of images, historic images in a class, and she had. I don't know if you've ever seen this image, but there's an image of the the best way to transport, captives.

00:44:42:20 - 00:45:06:19

Lisa Brock

There's actually an image of the of the ship, and they're all laid down like in a very neatly in a row. Right. And that's a classic image. It was kind of a prototype for the for transportation of the slave ship. And she showed that picture and talked about it, and there was a black student in the class that got angry about it and got up and left.

00:45:06:21 - 00:45:27:11

Lisa Brock

So she wanted to know why that student is a white professor, why that student got up and left because she thought she was she was integrating, you know, she was trying to bring in the issue of enslavement into her class so that they could talk about it. And she she talked about it in a way I don't think it was offputting or anything.

00:45:27:11 - 00:45:53:08

Lisa Brock

The way she talked about it. And so one of my strategies of, introducing or one of my strategies for teaching with the social justice lens as kind of the way I see it, is that if you're going to talk about oppression, you have to talk about resistance. I said, did you have an image of the Haitian Revolution when you know the resistance there?

00:45:53:08 - 00:46:12:02

Lisa Brock

Or did you have an image of a of Amistad, a revolt or something like that? And she said, no, I said, so I said, that's what you have to have. I said, because nobody wants to be a victim. People don't like that. It hurts. You don't want to get up. You don't want to talk about that. But resistance.

00:46:12:02 - 00:46:28:05

Lisa Brock

Now, you can talk about that. If you're going to talk about how people fought back, that empowers people. And so that's one of my strategies, when I because I give them a bunch of strategies, and that's one of them. I said, if you're going to talk about oppression, you have to talk about resistance. So she said, wow.

00:46:28:08 - 00:46:50:00

Lisa Brock

I said, there's so many images of the Haitian Revolution kicking differences, but I said, use one of those image and their classic paintings and stuff. Use one of those images. And so she said, okay. And so then you can talk about the Haitian Revolution, which was a very important moment in black history. So, so those kind of things happened there.

00:46:50:03 - 00:47:12:16

Lisa Brock

Or I talked about the Palestinian question and I had a Palestinian woman come up. I just mentioned stuff in in passing. I don't because I'm talking about my strategies, but sometimes I'll weave things in. And, a Palestinian woman came up very quietly. She said, thank you, thank you, thank you. Nobody ever mentions us because they're afraid.

00:47:12:18 - 00:47:32:06

Lisa Brock

And then a young Jewish woman came up and said, I want to talk to you about that because I'm struggling, because I came from a strong Jewish family. I've been to Israel. They're all Israel supporters, and I'm struggling with how to.

00:47:32:09 - 00:47:53:17

Lisa Brock

How to balance the Palestinian question with my family, who are pretty Zionist. And so I said, let's talk. So we talked. We talked. So I, I like

that kind of engagement. And I think they do too. So yeah. So that's what I've been doing. Those are some of the things I've been doing.

00:47:53:20 - 00:47:57:15

Interviewer

Just a little just a little. Nothing too impressive.

00:47:57:18 - 00:48:07:07

Lisa Brock

Well I don't know. It's fun, I like that I really I like teaching, I love teaching and so this is a way that I can still teach.

00:48:07:07 - 00:48:09:29

Interviewer

It's amazing. It's literally so amazing.

00:48:10:02 - 00:48:20:06

Lisa Brock

It's is a way I can still teach it. I really, really and I can, I can now with this organization, I can still be an activist planning the demonstration.

00:48:20:08 - 00:48:21:20

Interviewer

Do you ever go to sleep?

00:48:21:22 - 00:48:43:29

Lisa Brock

Of course. Well, these days, you know, again, with contracts, you know, I only have two I had one is over with Wisconsin. I'm just working on this one now. It'll be over in September. I hope I get more I don't know, I've, you know, I'm on Social Security and my to a craft, which ain't a lot of money.

00:48:44:02 - 00:48:48:04

Lisa Brock

So these contracts kind of help.

00:48:48:06 - 00:48:57:18

Interviewer

All right. Let's talk about the next thing. How did you react to Nelson Mandela's death in 2013?

00:48:57:20 - 00:49:30:21

Lisa Brock

You know, I saw that question. I wrote an article, I published an article, and, it was called something like the world is not Flat because, the way he's remembered is similar to King, the way he's remembered is has been flattened out. You know, people say, oh, they he changed the country without violence. Apartheid was violent.

00:49:30:24 - 00:50:00:02

Lisa Brock

What they're talking about. See these little sunny, subtle, excuse me? Subtle white supremacist comments. What they mean is white people didn't die in the struggle. Thousands, thousands of people were tortured and killed in South Africa in that long struggle. You know, it was not officially a war, but it was violent. The state violence. They even killed people outside of South Africa.

00:50:00:04 - 00:50:32:03

Lisa Brock

So when Mandela died, I was well, I did a couple interviews on Kalamazoo TV and then, I, I wrote this article that I did kind of critiqued the analysis of Nelson Mandela's life, that I was hearing. That was one. But when I saw that question on when you sent the questions, I think the question should be, what do we do when he was released, when he was released from prison?

00:50:32:05 - 00:51:03:05

Lisa Brock

I mean, you're talking about a party, oh, Lord, all over the world, because, you know, we're fighting to end apartheid. We're fighting for his release, but we don't know if it's going to happen. We don't know. You know, you fight because it's right. You think it can happen. You do it because it's right. And then it happens. We were like, I was teaching at Lake Forest at the time in 1990, actually, and, my first full time teaching job.

00:51:03:08 - 00:51:23:09

Lisa Brock

And I told the students up there, if he gets Mandela ever gets released, you find me, I will have champagne. I'm sure enough, when he got released the next day, I went to campus with bottles of champagne. Not in the morning. We're drinking champagne with my students. Everybody. Everybody's coming to my office because, you know, I was the one who taught that.

00:51:23:09 - 00:51:49:04

Lisa Brock

I taught courses, I've taught, always taught a course on South Africa. So, and then the other thing is, we were hoping he was as great as we we said he was, you see, because nobody no word from Mandela for years. For 28 years, it was illegal to print in South Africa, was illegal to print anything. He said.

00:51:49:06 - 00:52:10:17

Lisa Brock

Nobody, nobody could see him. Nobody could hear him. Nobody knew what was going on in prison. Nothing. And we were like, God, please let him be. Be as wonderful as we've made him out to be. And, after 28 years, you don't know, he could come out. He could be, you know, prison stuff. You know, he could be in trouble mentally.

00:52:10:24 - 00:52:31:02

Lisa Brock

You know, we just didn't know. And then when he was as wonderful as we thought, oh, my God, we were like in heaven. We danced in front of the South African embassy here in Chicago. The consulate here in Chicago. We danced, we danced, and, and we had parties all over the city, different apartments, different people at parties.

00:52:31:02 - 00:52:54:24

Lisa Brock

I had a party, and he was supposed to get out at the time. He was supposed to get out of the middle of the night here. So people were up, you know, we had the TV on, people were up watching, and I got calls. I got a call from London and a and a call from Lisbon, and I called somebody in Sweden because when I traveled around and, and the movement was international.

00:52:54:24 - 00:53:23:00

Lisa Brock

So you met people. I knew everybody was at this. We were all at the same at that moment, at the same place and time. Watching this event all over the world. Activists, because, you know, there were anti-apartheid movements in almost every major city, from Tokyo to Stockholm, Brussels, all the African, cities. I mean, it was truly an international struggle.

00:53:23:00 - 00:53:46:15

Lisa Brock

And, there were when I traveled to London, Lisbon and Mozambique, all I had to do is look up, look for the anti-apartheid office and find my people. They were there. So. So I would say more is what? What did we do when he was released? And how did we feel? I mean, we were ecstatic just standing.

00:53:46:17 - 00:53:58:10

Interviewer

Thank you. All right. Now we'll move into talking about, some current events. Okay. What was your reaction to the 1619 project by Nikole Hannah-Jones?

00:53:58:13 - 00:54:31:12

Lisa Brock

Oh, it's great. It's it's wonderful. You know, I mean, what's been happening lately, and now we've got this fascist backlash. It's a fascist backlash that I'm going to call it. What it is, is the country has been moving slowly but in a direction of being, multi centered in its history and much more geared towards a social justice analysis of the past.

00:54:31:15 - 00:54:55:07

Lisa Brock

Right. So some of the, some of the monuments and honoring and all of that of the past of the United States is actually an insult to a lot of black people and other people of color. And, so how do you wrestle with that? And I think the 1619 project was one way to say, well, you know, you say history started this moment.

00:54:55:09 - 00:55:31:24

Lisa Brock

Let's let's think about the 1619 is the starting point of another kind of American history. You know, you could also start it was Native Americans. You know, you could started with Asians coming to Angel Island in California. So I like the idea of multiple narratives. And these narratives are centering the struggle for justice. Right. And, as opposed to a kind of uplift of certain people at the expense of others.

00:55:31:26 - 00:56:04:04

Lisa Brock

I've often said that, you know, Italians and Welsh and Scottish and, Irish and British came here and became white. You have people, you had people from, you had the your and the house and the Kong people from the Congo and Angola. And they came here and became black. And that construction has meant a whole lot in this country and in the world because of the colonialism as well.

00:56:04:06 - 00:56:30:12

Lisa Brock

And I think to only teach about the construction of whiteness without saying it, has been, the way most of the history has been taught here. And I think over the years there's been a challenge to that. And so, of course, you've got a backlash. And of course, 1619 is one of those books that is banned in some states now.

00:56:30:15 - 00:56:51:19

Lisa Brock

But one of the things is so interesting is, you know, only a few people can, can cause a whole bunch of books to be banned. It's not a majority. It's not a majority. That's what we have to keep in mind. You know, DeSantis does not represent a majority that gov that Abbott in Texas does not represent a majority.

00:56:51:21 - 00:57:11:17

Lisa Brock

If we listen to the media, they represent, power, but not a majority of people. And so I think we just have to keep our eyes on the prize and understand that. And I think over the last few years. So what's happened is my teaching people like me teaching all of this, you know, all these young people are out here now like we ain't going back.

00:57:11:20 - 00:57:27:08

Lisa Brock

And that's everybody. That's not just black people. We're not going backwards. And, so I think, we just got to keep pushing as hard as we can, to keep books like 1619 in circulation.

00:57:27:10 - 00:57:33:14

Interviewer

Awesome.

00:57:33:17 - 00:57:34:08

Interviewer

Let's talk.

00:57:34:08 - 00:57:36:06

Lisa Brock

About.

00:57:36:09 - 00:57:46:18

Interviewer

Your opinion on the significance of the results of the US 2016 presidential election.

00:57:46:20 - 00:58:13:05

Lisa Brock

Oh, you know, I'm of a generation when when Ronald Reagan was elected, we said he was too dumb. And it happened to George Bush. The second George Bush won. Wasn't that dumb? George Bush the second. You know, C student who got into Yale because his dad went to Yale. You know, they don't talk about that legacy, affirmative action, right?

00:58:13:10 - 00:58:43:14

Lisa Brock

Money, affirmative action. I thought that that couldn't happen. He's too dumb. And then with 2016, we get we get this guy, you know, TV hustler, business hustler, a criminal. He doesn't pay. You know, he has never paid his bills. You know, there's there's, like, tons of information. When he was doing the the, the the stuff out there in new Jersey and Atlantic City, he would hire Polish immigrant workers.

00:58:43:16 - 00:59:00:02

Lisa Brock

They'd have a contract. And then when it was over, he's like, oh, I don't like this, bill. You didn't do it like I like. I'm not going to pay you. Then they have to take this. This is actually the way he works. This wasn't one instance. So they say you have to pay us. We have a contract. He say, take me to court.

00:59:00:04 - 00:59:29:11

Lisa Brock

When you go to court, they settle and they get about half of what he promised. You know, it's his best business methodology. So Donald Trump is, when he was elected, it was, scary. And it it proved to be scary, because he ends up becoming the signifier for all those people who don't like the social justice movements in this country.

00:59:29:13 - 01:00:00:09

Lisa Brock

He became the person that let them say, it's okay to ban books. It's okay to steal big businesses, to steal from people. It's okay to do toxic waste dumps in poor neighborhoods. It's okay to rape women. He gave them license. All those people like that, they start coming up, coming out, you know? And, if the president can do it, I'll tell you a funny story.

01:00:00:09 - 01:00:23:18

Lisa Brock

I was in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2020, right before the pandemic. We didn't know it was coming. And we, my husband and I, we had been there on a kind of retreat thing with an organization, and we stayed. We stayed a couple extra days in a hotel, and in this hotel there was a shop, and in the shop with the man running.

01:00:23:18 - 01:00:49:05

Lisa Brock

The shop was a Kenyan of Indian descent. And he was sitting there with a little TV and he was watching TV and I said, oh, what do you have? Oh, and he said, It's Indian Independence Day. Oh that's nice. And I said, what do you think of, your president Moti? Now, Moti, I had heard had been, oppressing and literally rounding up muslims.

01:00:49:07 - 01:01:08:00

Lisa Brock

You know, he's a Hindu nationalist and attacking, Islam and Muslims in the country in a way that had not been done before. And so and so I said, well, what do you think of your president, Moti? He's. Oh, I liking I said, you like him. I said, he's doing horrible things to, to the Muslims in your country.

01:01:08:03 - 01:01:13:19

Lisa Brock

He said, well, if Donald Trump can do it, we can do it to.

01:01:13:22 - 01:01:41:02

Lisa Brock

If the president of the United States can do it. So not only has he had an impact here, like minded people, dictators, wannabes, fascist wannabes have come up in all these countries now. And white supremacy, I mean, Sweden of all places. I love our families. We. You've got a Nazi party that won more in this recent election than ever before.

01:01:41:04 - 01:02:09:13

Lisa Brock

And so you end up with these, so he has led, a fascist tilt in the world. It's very dangerous. And the sad thing about it is that he is not bright and, So the scary thing is he has his supporters. I don't think they're I think the media gives him more attention than they should.

01:02:09:16 - 01:02:44:23

Lisa Brock

When he was, arraigned recently down there in Florida, there was about 50 people out there, but they made it look like it was like a lot of people, you know, Trump supporters. So in 2016, I gave a talk after the election, and I use the theory of intersectionality to analyze the election. And what I did was because when you looked at the data you saw about race and gender, you saw everybody kept saying 54% of white women voted for Trump, you know, a known sexual predator.

01:02:44:25 - 01:03:15:21

Lisa Brock

How is that possible? 54% of white women voted for Trump. How is that possible? And, and then you look to the black community and the black community. 97 I'm paraphrasing because I don't have the data in front of me, but 97% of black women voted against Trump, but only about 87% of black men voted against Trump. Okay, so what does this data possibly tell us?

01:03:15:23 - 01:03:59:01

Lisa Brock

And how can you use intersectionality to analyze it? So when you think about intersectionality, you know, intersectionality is we all have multiple identities, identity markers. So I'm an African American. I am, educated. I am a woman, I am cisgendered. Those are all my markers, right? For and I'm not rich right now for white women, you could say some are rich, some are poor, some are educated, some aren't.

01:03:59:03 - 01:04:24:19

Lisa Brock

But they're all white. They're white. Okay. Now, if they had voted gender, they probably would have voted against you. But they use their whiteness. They voted their race rate. Their racial identity was more important in this election than their gender identity. Right. And for black women, I think it was race and gender that got them to vote.

01:04:24:27 - 01:04:58:06

Lisa Brock

So much for Hillary and against Trump, for black men, their gender had them lean in a little bit more to Trump. And what's so interesting about these things, especially with black men and with white women, is that people tend to lean in to the thing that gives them, that they feel, gives them the most power. So for black men, being men in their minds, gives them more power in some ways in this election than being black.

01:04:58:08 - 01:05:21:05

Lisa Brock

Because being black, you just black being a man. And for white women, being white gives you a little more power than being a white woman, a woman. And so we kind of played around with that. I gave a talk in a workshop and had people think about these things. With the election. So I've often responded to these events either writing or speaking.

01:05:21:08 - 01:05:25:05

Interviewer

Yeah, I really like that idea. The intersectionality.

01:05:25:10 - 01:05:26:10

Lisa Brock

Isn't it interesting?

01:05:26:10 - 01:05:43:03

Interviewer

Yeah, it just makes a lot more sense. Sheryl was talking about it too. Yeah, yeah. So how do you think the approach to anti-racism in the United States has changed since the death of George Floyd in 2020?

01:05:43:06 - 01:06:10:01

Lisa Brock

I don't think it's just George Floyd. I mean, when you think about it, actually, Patrice and Opal and Alicia, the three women that founded the moniker Black Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter, they started after Trayvon Martin was killed in 2012. And so I think there's been a build up built up over time. And what we had with with Mike Brown.

01:06:10:01 - 01:06:44:10

Lisa Brock

So you have Trayvon in 2012, you have Mike Brown in 2014, and then you have George Floyd in 2020. And then, of course, all the thousands in between. Let's be let's be realistic. There's a lot of people killed every year by cops. And, So I think, George, the fact that Mike Brown and George Floyd were you could see it nowadays meant that everybody in the country, in the world could see him being killed.

01:06:44:12 - 01:07:11:24

Lisa Brock

It's like live TV, you know? It's like murder porn or something. It's horrible. And so, I think that catalyst made people think because they could see it. This is crazy. This is crazy. And that young girl that stood there to film it, you know, she's traumatized when she when she went to that, when she went to court for those those cops, she's not.

01:07:11:24 - 01:07:39:11

Lisa Brock

Well because she she knew her historic purpose at that moment. Think about that. She's seeing it in live time and she's, she's she said, I'm going to capture this. She's like 17. So I it back to your question, I think that it was a catalyst for a lot of people who had not thought about it before, like the big B coffee people calling me right.

01:07:39:13 - 01:08:08:09

Lisa Brock

And a lot of institutions putting in diversity, programs, you know, they had started that before, but they began to put it put them in. Of course, part of the challenge with that is a lot of them don't work because a lot of people don't want to hear the truth. And, I wrote an article about that, about, there's a guy at University of Pennsylvania who runs a diversity equity center, and he gets hired.

01:08:08:12 - 01:08:33:15

Lisa Brock

He was being I don't know where he is now. His name is Harper. Last name Harper. He was being hired by a lot of D-I by universities to come in and do an an analysis and then make a recommendation. He wrote an article, stop paying me \$25,000 to do nothing. He wrote an article because he said, he goes in, he does focus groups.

01:08:33:15 - 01:08:36:23

Lisa Brock

He gives them the truth and they say, can't you just change a.

01:08:36:23 - 01:08:37:21

Interviewer

Little bit here, change.

01:08:37:23 - 01:09:00:09

Lisa Brock

It? So on the one hand, we got it's led to these, programs, which is good. But then even within those liberal sectors, they really don't want to do the work. And, because racism is so much a part of our country, it's really difficult for a lot of people to not be racist. In this country. You have to work, you know?

01:09:00:09 - 01:09:20:06

Lisa Brock

Beverly Tatum says, like you're born on a treadmill. You born on it was. And whether you wanted to or not. And you can end up, you know, just on it all your life. Unless you decide to step off and become an anti-racist. Right. And so I think, I think there's been a lot of movement since George Floyd.

01:09:20:09 - 01:09:47:24

Lisa Brock

And we have to keep going because there's the other side is coming after us right now, and Trump represents the other side, and not him personally, but his, his ilk. Represents the other side. And so I just think we have to keep keep working and there will be another George Floyd. There will be another eruption. I just we just don't know when or what the context will be.

01:09:47:26 - 01:09:55:24

Interviewer

One more Trump question, how did you react to the January 6th storming of the Capitol?

01:09:55:26 - 01:10:01:02

Lisa Brock

You don't want me to curse on my interview, do.

01:10:01:04 - 01:10:27:10

Lisa Brock

I, I was like, I'm not going to do it. That, I'm sensitive to history. But, I was like, look at those fools. I mean, I, I, you know, I, And I knew and I knew who who was behind it. I knew the Trump folks were behind it. The lie that he lost the election.

01:10:27:10 - 01:10:51:03

Lisa Brock

He's such a liar. Everything bad? Liar, rapist. Doesn't pay his bills. Just everything he represents, you know, he'll support anybody that supports him. You know, it was a pedophile. That pedophile guy that was a senator. He supported him from Alabama. I think it was.

01:10:51:06 - 01:10:54:17

Interviewer

I pedophile Senator. I'm like, which one?

01:10:54:17 - 01:11:24:12

Lisa Brock

Yeah. Which one? Okay. And especially, you know, you know, what it is to they have no shame. He represents a kind of narcissism that is shameless. And at least we used to have the element of shame to use. You know, people would be, you remember back in the day, if a president candidate was caught having an affair outside of his marriage that caused him to drop out of the election?

01:11:24:14 - 01:12:03:21

Lisa Brock

Not anymore. And that's lightweight. I mean, least that's consensual. It's like, oh my God. So I just I think when that happened, it was, frightening. Scary. And I knew that the Trump forces were behind it. And some of those policemen from DC and the fact that they did not call out the National Guard to stop. Can you imagine if those had been black people or Native Americans, they would have been gunned down, literally gunned down.

01:12:03:24 - 01:12:23:20

Lisa Brock

And, the fact that that didn't happen was a clear sign that there was a big conspiracy involved in this, and, so that's all I can say about that. Yeah.

01:12:23:22 - 01:12:39:02

Interviewer

And now after that, we'll talk about some reflections. We talked a little bit about intersectional ism. So how did being a black woman affect your activism?

01:12:39:04 - 01:13:18:02

Lisa Brock

Everything. It's everything. Yeah. I was both a girl and black in the United States. Coming up, and, so very aware of injustices along both lines. As a girl, although I wouldn't come, I, you know, I didn't kind of come into my feminism as a kind of real concept about intersectionality. Right? I didn't come into it as a my sense of being a feminist until in terms of claiming it and it later than being, a black woman.

01:13:18:04 - 01:13:34:05

Lisa Brock

So it affected everything, really. I mean, it's hard to think of myself, in any other way, really. You know, it just,

01:13:34:07 - 01:13:37:26

Lisa Brock

It just is. And was, I don't know how you know, so.

01:13:37:26 - 01:13:53:15

Interviewer

It's it's just like people kind of who were either other women or other people of color who kind of, like, found conflict with you because of these things where they conflicting at all during the time.

01:13:53:17 - 01:14:21:00

Lisa Brock

Oh, yeah. I mean, you know, also especially as a girl, you know, you're supposed to act a certain way, you're supposed to dress a certain way, you're supposed to do this or do that. And I've never fit that category even as a, as a girl. As it's funny, I tell the story when I was in, I think probably in my other interview when I was in junior high school and we were organizing for girls to wear pants, we had to wear dresses.

01:14:21:00 - 01:14:43:13

Lisa Brock

In 1968, 69, 70, we had to. And, so I was, you know, the women's movement was happening kind of in the ether, and so was the civil rights movement and Black Panthers and all that. And I was I was young, but I, you know, I was aware of it. And somehow I got in my mind that we should wear pants.

01:14:43:19 - 01:15:10:22

Lisa Brock

So we we got the knee and other other girls we got together. We seventh grade and we, we just started wearing pants to protest. And then we'd get expelled like they, they kick us out. And, my mother and father were. They weren't having me being expelled. Basically, my parents supported me. They weren't raging activists, but they actually thought what I, what we were doing made sense to them.

01:15:10:24 - 01:15:27:28

Lisa Brock

My mother basically told them that I couldn't be expelled if if because she works, she says she can't be at home by herself. She got to be here in school. So if you want to sit somewhere in office, she's not going home. So anyway, we won that, you know. So. And there were people who didn't support it, of course.

01:15:27:28 - 01:15:52:05

Lisa Brock

And, Boys and teachers and they, they generally didn't like the agitation. That was the main thing. They don't like they wanted to just go alone. And when you don't go along, that's what they get mad about. Not some of it was the issue. Some of it was the agitation. And the story. I was going to say my dad was a teacher.

01:15:52:06 - 01:16:15:04

Lisa Brock

He was the first black teacher at the school district. We were in, and, we were a minority until they fused with the largely black school district some years later. But he was teaching in the high school. And before I came to the high school, because we had a middle school, seventh, eighth and ninth. And then we went to the high school at 10th grade.

01:16:15:07 - 01:16:37:16

Lisa Brock

And, and when I went to the school, he got another job and he was working at a different school. And the joke was, he left because I was coming. And, I had always heard that, and I thought it was because he was embarrassed. It would be embarrassed because I was kind of an agitator already. And, I asked him later, you know what?

01:16:37:16 - 01:16:54:28

Lisa Brock

He got older. And I said, daddy, you remember when you left, Princeton and went to Hughes High School and he left because of me? He said he said, yeah, really? You know, he said, you know, I got a better job. I said, yeah, I do know you got a better job. So it wasn't just because of me, he said, but also you already had a reputation as an agitator.

01:16:54:28 - 01:17:24:21

Lisa Brock

And I thought that somebody would say something bad about you and I'd have to not defend you, you know, I might have to punch you, and then I lose my job. So I said, oh, daddy, I was really, you know, I was really sweet. So, it wasn't that he was embarrassed is that he didn't want people talking about me.

01:17:24:24 - 01:17:50:00

Lisa Brock

You know, he's proud he was. But they he was proud of me. I think my parents were proud of me. So, But not everybody in the communities, and, you know, so, yeah, I remember here in Chicago when we were running the Springbok thing and we had a multiracial committee, and there was a the half of a group was formed on the south side.

01:17:50:00 - 01:18:15:07

Lisa Brock

There was all black led by Conrad World and Conrad Worrell. I had never really met. And one day we met downtown here. And, he was very tall and I'm looking up to him. He said, oh, you're Lisa Brown, you're running the white group. And I said, do I look white? You know? And he said, we walked away.

01:18:15:09 - 01:18:41:22

Lisa Brock

So, so there are there are men who don't want or respect women's leadership. I mean, in all races, of course. And the same thing recently with Black Lives Matter, there were a there were a lot of tension between older black male activists and young queer black women.

01:18:41:24 - 01:19:09:14

Lisa Brock

And I mean, it it makes perfect sense that queer black women would be in the leadership, because one of the things we say in social justice is the most oppressed will lead because they know what it means to be in the crosshairs of all kinds of oppressions, you know? And so but I I've seen

it for myself and argue some of the older folks that I've known, you know, they're like, why is this thing be around?

01:19:09:14 - 01:19:28:23

Lisa Brock

I'm like, why not? Why not? What's it got to do with you anyway? These are brilliant young, young people. Let's follow them. You know, your time's over. That's what I'm like. Okay, so these old guys, I'm like, get out the way.

01:19:28:25 - 01:19:33:03

Interviewer

How is activism affected your marriage?

01:19:33:05 - 01:20:27:12

Lisa Brock

Is the glue. It's been a big it's really the glue. Me and Otis, you know, married to Otis Cunningham. So, I mean, that's what this is what brought us together and is probably what keeps us together after 30 some years reading and talking about politics and, and and, you know, so it's been good. It's important, I think, to marry somebody that's like minded and in practice, I used to in those, those rare moments when young women would ask me my advice on relationships, I would say, I'm not an expert, I'm not Doctor Ruth or anybody, but, I used to think, in fact, I do a little Venn diagram and they've taken pictures

01:20:27:12 - 01:20:46:24

Lisa Brock

when I put it, because sometimes they'd be talking when I go into class, they'd be talking about relationships, and they say, what doctor Brock or Lisa, what do you think? You know, so but I would do I used to think that it's too certain. It was two circles that overlapped. And you all are both individuals and you, you know, you know, you know, a Venn diagram, two circles.

01:20:47:00 - 01:21:11:28

Lisa Brock

And that middle part is where you all are together, you know, I mean, that's the common interest. And I don't believe that anymore. I believe it's two separate circles. And the two nuclei of those circles are are what connection. So you have to have a similar orientation in life. It's not personality because oldest is much quieter than me.

01:21:12:05 - 01:21:49:06

Lisa Brock

It's in some instances not many. So but most people think it's quieter. And but we bond because we both know it's important to be involved in struggle and it's who we are. And it's so interesting because when I left Oberlin and went to Washington, D.C., and within three weeks went to a demonstration downtown, and signed a clipboard to to join the Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression and then got a call.

01:21:49:08 - 01:22:14:06

Lisa Brock

I was like, this is my tribe. I'm from a small town. I was always kind of a, like people knew, oh, that's Lisa, you know, she's going to agitate this. That's Lisa, but they weren't of that ilk necessarily. You know, people I grew up with when I got to DC and met people like me who had that fire, you know, you see something that happened in this unjust, you got to fight to change that.

01:22:14:09 - 01:22:40:27

Lisa Brock

And and it, it. So I was like, oh God, my tribe. I got my tribe. So the movement is my tribe and the movement is Odysseus tribe. And, so there's no conflict around that, you know, because it's funny, you know, you date different kinds of people coming up, nice sweet folks, but they didn't know why I had to go to so many meetings.

01:22:41:00 - 01:22:59:01

Lisa Brock

They didn't know why I got so agit. You know why you like. Why are you why do you why are you the one that has to do this? They didn't understand because it wasn't their. So I ultimately knew I couldn't marry somebody who didn't understand that. And I think Otis probably feels the same way.

01:22:59:03 - 01:23:13:05

Interviewer

Yeah, that's, Were there any costs of your involvement in the anti-apartheid movement? And what were they?

01:23:13:07 - 01:23:45:23

Lisa Brock

Well, I never got fired, but I but that's pretty good because often you can be fired because you are doing things that the institutions you work for it to like. So for most of my, my academic career, I kept the two pretty separate as much as I could, because I was nervous. About people knowing who I really was.

01:23:45:26 - 01:24:23:15

Lisa Brock

Kind of fighter. I was, and, and a leftist. I'm a leftist. You know, I believe that there are aspects of socialism that we need and, you know, and, now with my, you know, in my classes, I would teach the way I wanted. I was never I never self centered. And I, and I always had a student following because they like that they, you know, students, the young people, they want to hear about how to fight, these most of the ones I had, I only had a few who didn't, who wondered in my class and didn't know what they were getting, what they came.

01:24:23:17 - 01:25:00:08

Lisa Brock

But for most of the years I've had really great students. I will say though, my very first class I think I gave this to Haiti is a document, this group called Accuracy and Academia, a right wing group that monitors progressive and so-called liberal faculty. My very first class at northwestern, a student there, reported me to them because I took the

class to the anti-apartheid Chanty and, they wrote a newspaper article on me and called the chair of the department, and, but the chair.

01:25:00:10 - 01:25:24:05

Lisa Brock

I was a celebrity in the department. It's like I'm doing something worth the right, actually challenging. So at that time, you know, we're talking about 1986. They, I didn't even know they had called it the chair. He didn't even tell me, you know, and he he what he said was he told them if they if a student has trouble with a teacher, professor, they should just come.

01:25:24:05 - 01:25:49:13

Lisa Brock

And he should just come and talk to me about their their processes with which you can do that, you know, and I'm not talking to you. A national organization. Okay. Street in Washington, DC. So that happened once. I mean, it's happened, before in movement stuff where, you know, I've been outed of a sort, but it hasn't been a lot of calls.

01:25:49:14 - 01:26:12:27

Lisa Brock

I have friends who've lost jobs. My friend, Doctor Linda Murray, who's a progressive, doctor, medical doctor who tried to start an all in union along with Otis when they worked at Cook County Hospital in the 70s. By all in, they mean doctors down to janitors all in the same union. Can you imagine? You know, and, this was a national movement at the time.

01:26:13:03 - 01:26:33:11

Lisa Brock

Hospital workers, they were called and, she got fired and could not get a job as a as a medical doctor. She could not get a job anywhere in the US. So she went to Montreal and lived for a few years until Harold Washington was elected here. And he brought her back and hired her in Chicago. So she's been interviewed and she's funny.

01:26:33:18 - 01:27:04:14

Lisa Brock

She says, well, you know what? If you only get fired every ten years, that's a victory. If you are, a radical activist in this country. So, I, I've always worried about it. I've left jobs. This job. Because I did not get along with the dean that took Cheryl's job.

01:27:04:16 - 01:27:34:17

Lisa Brock

And, because a lot of people of color under that leadership were being demoted and were leaving, Latino, Asian, black. She's no longer Dean, but, I was like, I got I'm I'm not going to let her demote me. So because I had tenure. So when you got tenure, they. Because I was chair of the department.

01:27:34:19 - 01:27:43:26

Lisa Brock

And for some reason, this person did not like chairs of color.

01:27:43:28 - 01:27:45:16

Lisa Brock

And it's something.

01:27:45:18 - 01:27:46:09

Interviewer

That is so great.

01:27:46:12 - 01:28:10:27

Lisa Brock

And. And the Latina that had been Sheryl's assistant was so fed up, the Asian woman that Sheryl had hired as a community. I don't know if Charlotte hired them. Cheryl Johnson. No, them. But she had come in as a communications specialist. She she was like, she got fired. Part of it was the ethnic jokes. Yeah, part of it was the ethnic jokes.

01:28:11:00 - 01:28:25:20

Lisa Brock

And if you didn't laugh, then you are a problem. And of course, I never laugh and none of us laugh. We'd be like.

01:28:25:23 - 01:28:28:18

Lisa Brock

So I'll leave it there. I'll leave it there.

01:28:28:21 - 01:28:43:11

Interviewer

You know, we'll talk more about that later. But, in the previous interview, when discussing Mr. Washington's passing, you believe Chicago never recovered. How do you feel now?

01:28:43:14 - 01:29:08:09

Lisa Brock

Well, Brandon is hopeful. Yeah. What do you feel about him? I'm so excited. And, I didn't think it was possible. And on my, I. I was just getting ready to have knee surgeries. My leg, my knee was really bad, but I worked my block as best I could do. And I live in Beverley neighborhood, which has a lot of cops and firemen, so there were a lot of valid signs around.

01:29:08:12 - 01:29:31:22

Lisa Brock

But on my block there were three valid signs and three Brandon signs, and then the rest of the block, there were nothing, which I thought was a positive sign for Beverley because it's a predominantly white block. So all the houses that had no signs I would knock on the door and I told them I was for Brandon. I mean, I know most of the people on the block, we've been there long.

01:29:31:24 - 01:29:56:13

Lisa Brock

And so they said, oh, we're not we're not putting out any signs. I said, you don't have to put a sign. I said, just vote for Brandon. And I

explained why. And so his his vote in our ward went from, I think, 7% to 26%. And, and we had a 19th ward, organization for Brandon was multiracial.

01:29:56:15 - 01:30:16:25

Lisa Brock

It was great. So I think, I think it was great. I think it represents in some ways the legacy and is more advanced than Harold could have ever been. And he's got a city council that's with him. You know, Harold, they those old guys, they were black and left and right. Everything Harold tried to do, but that I mean, that was for us.

01:30:16:25 - 01:30:39:23

Lisa Brock

That was like a moment we, we cried. We were in the streets, Lakeshore Drive. They had to, like, block it off because so many people were in the streets. But we worked that election. We worked really hard to bring out the vote. And Obama used that strategy, which was back then you'd get the see who's registered.

01:30:39:25 - 01:30:57:09

Lisa Brock

You could you could get the voter registration for different wards and precincts and for people who weren't registered to vote, you'd go knock on their doors, especially in the black community. It was like, you know, you know, you got Harold Harold to run. If you give, you register to vote because Harold had said that people wanted him to run.

01:30:57:17 - 01:31:28:28

Lisa Brock

And he said, I can't run unless we get more black people register to vote because I can't win. So we said, how many do you need? Said, 50,000. We got 150,000 registered voters. And then we then we knocked on doors all over the city. I was at northwestern at the time, and I went to Rogers Park, church up on Morse Avenue, 500 people on a Sunday morning, all being dispatched, just dispatched to different neighborhoods.

01:31:28:28 - 01:31:54:10

Lisa Brock

We had maps, church, and then, I was a poll watcher on the south side and a poll watch. What you'd have a list of all the. Because we had surveyed everybody by knocking on doors or phone everybody in that precinct. We had a list of their names on a clipboard, and we had a plus or minus plus.

01:31:54:10 - 01:32:12:00

Lisa Brock

If they said they were going to vote for Harold, minus if they said they weren't, we would here, sit right up in the front and we'd hear when people said their name when they came in, they had to say their name. And, we would see them if they and if they were a plus, we check them off.

01:32:12:02 - 01:32:37:23

Lisa Brock

They were plus we check them off. And as the day went on, if we still had pluses and those people hadn't come, we had runners. We'd send people to their house. Knock on the door. Are you going to vote? You're going to vote today all the way to a vote closed to maximize turnout. I mean, it was miraculous election because the work we did and then we had the math.

01:32:37:25 - 01:33:06:12

Lisa Brock

The math was is 80% of the registered voters vote for black voters vote for Harold, 50% of the Latinx voters vote for Harold, and 10% of whites vote for Harold. We can win. And so that's what we work towards, because we weren't trying to get all the ways to vote for Harold. That wasn't gonna happen. That was wasted time.

01:33:06:15 - 01:33:29:17

Lisa Brock

And so that's it worked. And we had you know, Rudy Lozano was a big part of that. And he was killed mainly because of the black Latino solidarity at the time he was assassinated. So, it was that was a great moment. And Brandon's a great moment, too. It's just not it's it wasn't technically my moment, you know, in terms of how I felt about it being so involved.

01:33:29:17 - 01:33:42:10

Lisa Brock

I wasn't as involved in Brandon's election. But, but I'm really happy, and I think there's a lot of potential if we can garner resources, you know, you know, we can garner resources.

01:33:42:10 - 01:33:52:14

Interviewer

So back to anti-apartheid, what have been the successes of post-apartheid South Africa?

01:33:52:16 - 01:34:29:11

Lisa Brock

Successes and not successes and failures? Well, the successes have been that they don't have a political apartheid anymore. They don't have police locking up people and killing people, you know, for their political activities. And that's great. But I was very disappointed that they didn't create more of a mixed economy. I thought that they should have, like, you know, the beers, diamond mines started in South Africa.

01:34:29:11 - 01:34:57:21

Lisa Brock

It's South African mining, and they're the world diamond leaders. But it was De Beers in South Africa that started the diamond industry. All those people who died in those mines, all that hard ass work I did curse. I, I thought they should have made De Beers pay reparations. And over time, and maybe 50% of all profits for the next hundred years, I would say 100%.

01:34:57:21 - 01:35:25:20

Lisa Brock

But, you know, this is this is 2020, whatever, 1994, at least 50%. And they didn't do that for how they said 50% for housing. They could have taken the Anglo American gold mines. Same thing. You know, I remember my friend Abby Sacks came to Chicago and he was partly raising money for the Constitutional Court. They were going to build in South Africa.

01:35:25:23 - 01:35:57:18

Lisa Brock

And I remember saying, I said, I'll be South Africa's a rich country. Why are you here raising money? Just take the money is yours. And they they basically didn't do that. And I know now that they were blackmailed by the U.S. and other Western countries. If you do this, we will sanction you like we did Cuba.

01:35:57:20 - 01:36:21:06

Lisa Brock

But I also don't know if the will and I know Mandela and the negotiating folks were tired as heck, you know, and they may also have just said, we will fight this battle later. Let's just get this over. Because, you know, those talks took four years. Can you imagine? Poor Mandela? I think it was. Who was? It was the Dick Gregory, the comedian.

01:36:21:06 - 01:36:44:24

Lisa Brock

When Mandela came to the U.S., he said, here, this man has been in jail 28 years. And he comes out, he says. Where did I leave off? So Mandela literally gets out of jail and is put at a table to negotiate change. I mean, it's like, wow. So they were all tired. You know, some of them at that table have been tortured.

01:36:44:27 - 01:37:05:19

Lisa Brock

Luckily, the Mandela Eight did not get tortured in prison. And that's wonderful that that didn't happen to them. But a lot of the ones later that were picked up and they were all tortured. It's terrible. And so they're negotiating, you know, with the apartheid leadership. And they might have at some point just said, let's just do this now and do this later.

01:37:05:19 - 01:37:42:01

Lisa Brock

But what that's led to when you have capitalism, like you got what they did, is they hired certain leaders, the mining companies hired leaders in their companies, and now they're millionaires. And the economics of South Africa, while the political system has changed, the economic system has not changed a whole lot. And, and especially when you think about neoliberalism in the world, I mean, I mentioned Ronald Reagan in the the dumbing down of American presidential leadership.

01:37:42:03 - 01:38:09:25

Lisa Brock

But neoliberalism began with Ronald Reagan in this country to not tax the rich individual greed. All that stuff really began. I mean, it's always been there, but it it went on steroids at that time. The, the, starving

of the public sector, all of that. And so, you know, South Africa comes into being when this is, this is also evolving.

01:38:09:27 - 01:38:31:22

Lisa Brock

And so, people just started working and it's very similar to the civil rights movement here. You know, black people did not fight to just use the toilets that white people use. I mean, it wasn't that it wasn't that is that we wanted to have access to a toilet when we need it, when downtown talked about segregation. So I grew up downtown Cincinnati was segregated.

01:38:31:22 - 01:39:00:08

Lisa Brock

So I would go we'd go downtown and, you know, lucky I got to pee. And my grandmother said, hold it, hold it, because you can't go into any place to use the bathroom. So the civil rights movement was about access. It was about resources. Right? It was the. But what we ended up with is we have access. We don't have resources, and we have new types of segregation that are based on class and race.

01:39:00:10 - 01:39:25:28

Lisa Brock

And subtle ways of discrimination, not frontal ways. And, I think in South Africa it's still very similar. I mean, crime, you know, crime has risen all the kind of things that we have here. And it's because people don't have anything. And then when you lose hope to, you know, you got to have crime. I mean, it's not it's not rocket science.

01:39:26:01 - 01:39:59:15

Lisa Brock

So, so successes where apartheid is over. Some people may think successes are having black millionaires. That's not my line of thought. I think you should have a society that has access to everything that the country, you know, resources. So schools, university, all that, you know, students have been protesting in South Africa. They finally won free education. So the young people post-apartheid have been keeping the struggle going.

01:39:59:18 - 01:40:07:00

Lisa Brock

Yeah, I met some of those young people in 2016 when I was there.

01:40:07:03 - 01:40:18:06

Interviewer

And a final question what challenges remain for not just South Africa, but Chicago as well?

01:40:18:09 - 01:40:43:26

Lisa Brock

We have to fight to get the money, you know, like I mean for everybody, you know, they are the reason there's poverty is because there's hoarding of money. There's a relationship. People act like people are poor because, oh, well, I just I can't get it together. They can't get it

together. They can't, you know. No, we have billionaires, multi billionaires in this country.

01:40:43:28 - 01:41:13:24

Lisa Brock

And we have people who can't afford health care. That's a crime to me. And I don't care if Bezos made his money, his money on Amazon. He made it from people paying him. And he should give some back. A lot of it. You don't need \$1 billion to live, you know. And it's just so I think, you know, we have to figure out a way to get the money, treat the world.

01:41:13:24 - 01:41:53:24

Lisa Brock

You know, the U.S. treats the world horribly. We're not friendly. We're not friendly. You know, I don't know if you've ever been to a U.S. embassy in another country. Do it one day. It's a fortress. And they're not nice people. At least that's been my experience. And also when, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, all those Central American countries that people are fleeing because of violence and gangs in Haiti and Haiti, the U.S. has been a part of creating that situation.

01:41:53:24 - 01:42:23:14

Lisa Brock

Our government, through helping coups and assassinations and putting in a leadership because basically the U.S. government operates. They wanted leadership in these countries that they can manipulate to get their resources. And if you have someone or a leadership that says no, they send in the gunboats, they're trying it and they've tried it in Venezuela about three times. They just had some success in Peru.

01:42:23:16 - 01:42:47:22

Lisa Brock

I'm so happy about Colombia. And Franzia is the first black vice president of a Latin American country who we invited to the Arc center in 2012. So we we could see the people coming. And, and then Brazil went back to Lula, Bolsonaro, the former. I mean, these are fascists that they want in place because they don't care what they do to the people.

01:42:47:22 - 01:43:14:26

Lisa Brock

They really don't. They just want the money. And, so it's not just here, is there? So if we could change this country, we could change the world. And we need a revolution here. But it's not. I think we used to think a revolution is, you know, somehow people, you know, everything turns over at once. I don't think that's going to happen here.

01:43:14:29 - 01:43:44:12

Lisa Brock

We're moving to raise the consciousness of Americans about a lot of things. And that's part of what we do with social justice leaders. Right? We work with people to try to get them to see the world as it is and want to make change. So you move on the inside, and then you also challenge from the outside. And my hope is that one day the two will meet and we

will not be able to go back like we can't go back from an Obama to a Trump.

01:43:44:12 - 01:44:07:16

Lisa Brock

I mean, that's my hope because the country is divided, but I think a majority are moving in the right direction. The minority right now has power. That's why we see more of them on TV and stuff. You know, Gil Scott-Heron had a song back in the 70s that said The Revolution Will Not Be Televised.

01:44:07:18 - 01:44:32:04

Lisa Brock

And I think we need to keep that in mind because, Brandon, I think the one of the reasons Brandon one is because they didn't see us coming. They didn't see us coming because they think, oh, a little black school teacher. And then they thought he could actually, you know, he got those black leaders to come out, so-called leaders to come out for it.

01:44:32:06 - 01:44:48:03

Lisa Brock

They lead anybody, they just black. So it didn't work. Didn't work. So the people make history, and we're going to make a revolution in this country one way or another.

01:44:48:06 - 01:44:48:19

Interviewer

Thanks so.

01:44:48:19 - 01:44:50:21

Lisa Brock

Much. Thank you.