

Megan 0:13

Hello, and welcome to season three episode two of Nobody Asked For This: A Diet Culture takedown. I'm Megan.

Kendra 0:22

I'm Kendra, sounds like Megan's really missing some theater.

Megan 0:25

I am!

Kendra 0:27

Very Broadway of you.

Megan 0:28

Oh, thank you, I hope you enjoyed episode one of season three.

Kendra 0:33

And we hope you went and got all the books from Rebecca.

Megan 0:36

Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah. In efforts to be more accessible, we are putting a transcription of the show into our show notes. There will be a link there. So please go there and read that if you so wish to do. This episode was recorded in July of 2020. So we were months into the pandemic so you'll hear that referenced.

Kendra 1:02

Do you remember when we thought we were just going to, everything was going to be shut down for two weeks in March and everything would be back up by April. Remember that? Does anyone remember that? such a weird

Megan 1:13

What sweet summer children we were in that time.

Kendra 1:17

Just precious little babes.

Megan 1:19

Just trusting what people told us.

and

Kendra 1:22

We were cleaning our fruit and our bags with clorox?

Megan 1:26

We were

Kendra 1:29

I mean to be really frank, I did not do that. But I, a lot of people did that.

Megan 1:33

Mm hmm. Yeah,

Kendra 1:34

I get it. Just wanting to do whatever you could do, or, of course

Megan 1:38

It all, you know, makes sense when you think about everything. So just so you kind of know where we're, you know, what the context of this interview was. That's what's going on. We're very excited to have Curry as a guest for this episode. I think you're gonna love their interview. Something that we talked about in snacks is watermelon. Now I know that it's September when this is coming out. And watermelon is more of a summer thing, but it is not a summer thing to Kendra Crabtree. She loves it all year long.

Kendra 2:07

No, ma'am. That would be a correct statement. It is not a summer thing to myself.

Megan 2:14

Tell us about your love of watermelon.

Kendra 2:16

Okay, and I, here's the truth. Yes, I love watermelon. Do not put anything on it. I don't want you to put mustard on it. Like this Tick Tock trend that went around. I don't want you putting salt on it. I want it cut up and I just want to eat it. And it's got to have the seeds in it. None of this seedless nonsense. I discovered and I don't know if these are old or new, like it might be a new flavor. But in the summer, I really like those thick, big fruit bars that you can get. And I discovered a pineapple flavor which is, I can't believe I'm saying this out loud. But like, really close to tying with watermelon.

Megan 3:00

Oh, did you hear that, Watermelon?

Kendra 3:02

Pineapple is coming for ya.

Megan 3:04

Don't get jealous.

Kendra 3:04

But I also found watermelon ones and they are so stinking good. But I think that watermelon was like a big thing, continues to be a big thing for me is because what I remember as a child about it is that my grandmother grew it on their mini farm up in Ohio. And, and so we would just walk out and pick one and come in and clean it up and eat it. And so it was, like the experience of eating the watermelon. But I do really love watermelon.

Megan 3:05

Yes. You know, I can relate to that. Because the past several summers, my mom has helped my grandparents with this big garden. And my grandparents live on a farm like they're retired. So they're renting out what's their land now but they've been doing this big garden every summer. And so it's you know, this summer, it was like eggplants, corn, jalapenos, bell peppers, melons, just lots of stuff. And so I was out there, picking stuff and making strawberry jam and canning it and blackberry jam and canning it. And let me tell you that it was a holistic experience because nourishing your body when you're hungry is an act of resistance. And also nourishing your body with things that were grown with your hands and things that were grown with your family's hands. Feels

Kendra 4:26

Spiritual.

Megan 4:27

Spiritual, yeah, it was great. I really, I really loved it. And I hope that you, our listeners, have a chance to experience that at some point in your life.

Kendra 4:38

Even if it's like growing herbs in your window as kind of one of the smallest easiest things to do. Yeah, yeah. And then also frozen. I'm also here for a bag of frozen peas or whatever, like

Megan 4:53

Oh, yes

Kendra 4:54

Just frozen food. Yeah, I think that sometimes we, I do, sometimes I get into this headspace of all "well let me buy all the fresh, the quote unquote fresh things" like that's somehow better than the stuff in the frozen section. I'm like my life isn't good with fresh things my the way my life works, doesn't really enable me to eat all the fresh things I end up throwing it all away.

Megan 5:21

same Yeah, I do that a lot

Kendra 5:22

and actually the frozen stuff is the better way for me to go and there's no difference.

Megan 5:28

Yeah, listen, it all fits. And let's not forget how much accessibility and other intersections affect what we can and can't do.

Kendra 5:37

Absolutely

Megan 5:38

you do you, boo. You do what works for you.

Kendra 5:42

Yep,

Megan 5:43

enjoy this episode. And let us know what you think. And as always, in this episode, we talked about some things that are very personal and can be triggering, triggering to some folks. So take good care of yourself while you listen.

Kendra 5:57

And as always, this podcast is for information and inspiration purposes only.

Megan 6:04

Enjoy.

Now it's time for Shut the fuck up, where we take a deep dive into fat phobia in pop culture, however, today, it's going to be fat phobia in academia, because I am currently getting my master's in social work. And guess what? Fat phobia comes up all the time. And what I mean by that is stuff is fat phobic. So here's the thing, y'all, I got into this, because and by this, I mean, I decided to get my master's in social work, because I want to be a therapist. So you can go the clinical route in order to do that. And part of the reason that I did that is because I found myself in therapy with counselors that did not understand, while they were amazing, did not understand fatphobia as a social justice issue. And had not gone down that road of body liberation, and all the things that we talk about on this podcast, and did not understand that it intersects with other systems of oppression. So for example, I was in therapy once. And I said, you know, when I'm out in public with my husband, who is straight sized, I feel that people are looking at me and thinking, why is he with her? Because I am fat. And my therapist said, well, has anyone said that to you? Which, yes, they had literally.

Kendra 7:49

But she couldn't believe it. She, he, they? I don't remember

Megan 7:53

She and and also, everyone has told me that through coded language, through movies, TV shows, songs, personal interactions, et cetera. And she was like that as a cognitive distortion.

you're projecting that onto other people. She wasn't entirely wrong. Because I hadn't you know, I'm not checking in with everyone that I walk by, "Hi, excuse me, do you think that I deserve to be with this man who's thinner than me" I wasn't doing that, and I actually have no desire to do that. But her reaction to that was, I felt minimized. I felt like my feelings were very minimized. And I felt like she wasn't taking into account my lived experience in a fat body. And how multiple systems oppress fat people, multiple institutions oppress fat people. And so I thought, I want to be a therapist that gets it. And that can speak to their lived experience. And that can help people through their own body liberation. And instead of saying, well, that's on you, you need to do the work to change your thoughts and beliefs, which may be that's part of it. But also, the responsibility is on culture and on institutions to dismantle the ways that they oppress fat people, right,

Kendra 9:24
yeah.

Megan 9:25
And I think that that is transformational in therapy that's going to build a therapeutic alliance with people. I'm going to enlighten them and say, Oh, this isn't like I haven't failed myself. The world has failed me. And I thought social work really sells itself on understanding things like racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, right? Like they'll get it for sure. I just know they will.

Kendra 9:52
Always the optimist.

Megan 9:55
Yes. And they didn't. They don't

Oh, God. So I just wanted to tell a real quick story that happened recently in one of my classes. I've now taken like around 10 courses, right? Because I've done like, I've done three semesters, a fall, spring and summer. And fat phobic content has come up in seven out of 10 of those. So it's happening a lot. And, and the main place that it's happening, I'll say, is in social work a lot. This aces study is, is quoted and aces stands for adverse childhood experiences. It's fascinating. It's very valuable work. However, it lists, as a negative health outcome to having adverse childhood experiences, it lists obesity. Now, if you have listened to our podcast, you know that words like overweight and obese are pejorative to fat people. Because one, their medical diagnosis, we don't even have time to get into why that's fucked up. But it's devaluing and pathologizing bodies, right? It's dehumanizing. So I have pushed back a lot when I can.

And it keeps happening. And as I am also, in the trauma certification program, I'm learning about trauma, right. And so I don't want to overstate my reaction to when this comes up and reading slides, PowerPoints, lectures, as a trauma response, because I'm not sure that's the right language for it. But it is triggering. And because it keeps happening, my response is

becoming bigger and bigger to it. Because I'm not being seen, I'm not feeling like anyone's listening. And I don't feel like I'm being seen as human right. So.

Kendra 12:03

And you're having to shoulder while taking in all this other information in order to do this work that, you know, you're, I'm going to use the language called to do but you know, this, this work that is in your bones to do, and, and it's coming from, you know, essentially your superiors that are you're having to it's not just the dynamic of Oh, no, hold on, we got to address that information. It's the dynamic of this person kind of like, is in charge of whether I pass this class. And so it's a, it's a totally second level of navigation, and how to address these situations and take care of yourself and make it through the program. You know,

Megan 12:47

yes, Kendra nail on the head. It's so great Kendra, that you can understand power differentials, after listening to me tell the story, whereas it doesn't seem that some of my professors do understand that weirdly enough, even though it's literally part of their slideshows, a lot of times.

So I want to tell you about the last instance that happened because I learned a lot from it. So it was a reading that was assigned. And the reading, it wasn't like a study, it wasn't an article, it was like someone recounting their experience. And this person described someone that they came in contact as morbidly obese, and they don't have any interaction with this person, it's literally one sentence, and then that person is never referenced again, in the whole thing.

And it was definitely done in a derogatory way. I'm not sure what sort of information we were supposed to take away from that, or how that was supposed to inform our understanding of what he wrote. But, you know, as I've said, this is the 106th time that this has come up. So I'm like getting on my email back on my bullshit except it's actually not bullshit like, Hey, I was thrown off by how this was said in the article that you assigned, said everything I just said to you. Those words are considered pejorative, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, I would have liked because I've realized you have to be real direct and what you're expecting or else a lot of times they think that you're actually asking them a question, and they start explaining to you how the thing wasn't fatphobic

Kendra 14:27

yeah, why they said the thing they said

Megan 14:29

Yeah, so I said, I would have liked either a content warning or even better, like full class discussion on this. And to the professor's credit, he did set it up in class, like how did you all take this reading? Did you feel like some of his judgments came out in the way that he wrote about people open it up, and I was like, I have thoughts. And so I said, all those things that I've said a couple times now, and one way that he responded was to say, "You know, in social work throughout this program and in your future careers, there's going to be a lot of upsetting information that you're going to come across. And so if I were to do a content warning for this, I

would have to do a content warning for literally everything I assign." So I start with that a second. And I knew right away

Kendra 15:24

okay. Okay. So do a content warning for everything that you assign. Are you kidding me? Yeah. Like if it could be triggering to your students? Don't you think a heads up might be appropriate, no matter what the content is?

Megan 15:43

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, yeah, that's definitely one way but Kindred than you're asking for someone to take responsibility for the work that they're doing. And sometimes that's hard.

Kendra 15:52

Heaven forbid, they only have to do it once. Because it's not like they're teaching different material the next time they teach that class.

Megan 16:00

Exactly, exactly, exactly. So I knew right away when he said that, that my body didn't feel right, that response didn't feel good to me. It felt like he was very much minimizing my experience. So guess what I did? I hung around after clubs.

Kendra 16:17

love it.

Megan 16:18

Can we talk a little more? And I said, Hey, if this writing had included, maybe it was talking about a gay man, and it had the F word. Or maybe it was talking about a Black person and had the N word, would you have provided a content warning then?

Kendra 16:37

Come on, Megan, come on.

Megan 16:39

Now, I want to be very clear that I do not think that the O words are as triggering to people as those other two words, I want to acknowledge the history and the systems of oppression that make those two words so harmful, right? I am not equating them. But I am saying that all three of those things are pejorative to people.

Kendra 17:01

Yeah.

Megan 17:02

And have lots of intersections, right? Like it's not just privileged people that can, that encounter fat phobia. Also, as I was thinking about it, I was like, hang on, hang the fuck on. I live in this

body every goddamn day. I am not fragile. I come in contact as we all do in bigger bodies, with fat phobia, sizeism and weight bias every fucking day, right? You cannot escape it. I am not going ooooooh I can't see this spooky word when I'm encountering this thing. What I need to know is if you as a professor co-sign this bias, because if you do, then that's fucked up. And that's what's emotionally dysregulating to me and interrupting my learning process, frankly.

Kendra 17:48
right.

Megan 17:49
There's a difference in assigning a fat phobic reading and a reading on fat phobia. And in my opinion, only one of those needs a content warning. Because you're only co-signing one of those.

Kendra 18:00
How did he respond to you, when you said "would you have put a content warning?"

Megan 18:04
He said that's a good point. I'll think about it.

Kendra 18:08
That's something

Megan 18:10
It's something. Let's not forget, this is a program on mental health. These are professors that are often practicing therapists. Yeah, that preached things like empathy, understanding, holding space for things, triggering things, trauma, and a lot of responses is not when I'm looking at they're a little box online to lean in and go, Oh my god, I'm so sorry. It is to back right the fuck up and go, Oh, well, I didn't I didn't.

Like, wow, did you not just practice square breathing? Like, why don't you take a second to do some square breathing, friend that we just talked about in that earlier slide. So that you can take that in and realize I am not trying to call you out. I'm hurting as a human being. And you are acknowledging that this is a real system of oppression.

Kendra 19:04
Yeah, absolutely.

Megan 19:05
I could talk about this for days.

Kendra 19:07
I love a fiery Megan.

Megan 19:09

Yeah, you know how she gets.

Kendra 19:11

Megan gets fiery!

Megan 19:13

So to fatphobia in academia, we say Shut the fuck up.

Kendra 19:27

We are so excited to have Curry on the podcast today.

Why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about you.

Curry 19:38

Sure. I'm super super happy to be here and excited. I am Curry as was stated. I am a hairstylist and I make jewelry and I do some modeling and definitely big into the body positive. My body, my rules. I'm going to do what I want to do, wear what I want to wear when I want to wear it. Got a couple of degrees in theater. I'm in Nashville Tennessee. I've been here off and on. My parents moved here in the late 90s. I was in junior high school, seventh grade. So I've left here but I always managed to come back but yeah I'm just an all around kind of creative person I call myself a Black creative.

Kendra 20:22

So Curry, will you tell us your preferred pronouns and your preferred body size descriptors and just like generally any descriptors or labels that are meaningful to you,

Curry 20:33

so you can preferred pronouns that she or they that either one is fine interchangeable does not bother me. Preferred body pronouns. This is really interesting. I'm really excited for this question. I don't know that I have any preferred ones. I use plus size a lot. I use fat a lot. I use plush a lot, because it's nice and soft. There's something for people to cuddle. Exactly. It's a nice warm feeling. Um, body positive. I do identify as queer or Black queer woman is typically how I describe myself. Yeah, I don't know what else to say. I am polyamorous as well. And I'm pansexual. So there's so few more descriptors, but it just happened to be out there.

Coco.

Kendra 21:24

I love plush. I'm not sure I've heard that one before.

Curry 21:27

Yeah, hashtag that one all the time. I'm sure maybe she put the hashtag on Instagram. I'm sure my stuff would come up because I love that! It's warm and it's lovely and nice.

Megan 21:38

Yeah. It means more than just size. Yeah, it's like, cozy and yeah,

Curry 21:44

There's a lot here. Yeah, exactly. So I love plush. I think those are most of my descriptors. I'm sure I have others that come in and out. But those are the main ones.

Megan 21:54

So as we've been doing these interviews with people, we've realized that most people have, like a moment in their childhood, where they started believing that their body wasn't okay for some reason. And so we're wondering if you had an experience like that? And did it have to do with size or gender expression or race or any other intersection?

Curry 22:21

So this is a really interesting question. I was thinking about this one, and I think it definitely wasn't at home. I was always, while I was always like a bigger kid. It was always like an encouraged thing. Like my grandmother was always pouring into me she had a saying that she used to make me say about being dropped in gorgeous. So it was never anything, it was a good thing at home my size. You know, I was big, big boned. And maybe you might hear that term, but it was never anything that was negative. But I feel like because number one, I matured so quickly, as a young girl and like I had, like, I don't remember not wearing a bra. I don't remember like wearing a training bra, being like, and I'm sure that I know there was a time when that was but those memories don't really exist. So I feel like I really noticed that when I was overdeveloped in comparison to most of the other girls around me so I'm 5'6/5'7 and I was that height in fourth grade like fourth or fifth grade. So when most of my peers were probably a foot shorter than me you know if not even shorter so I think that was when I began to be really kind of like self conscious and like trying to find ways to make myself like smaller or more petite or more for me like more feminine or more dainty because I wasn't dainty because all the girls in my class were half my size. So I feel like that was elementary school you know second third fourth grade when I was really kind of developing ahead of the curve but I became really self conscious about it and then I think once I moved to the south it became a thing just because I grew up in Denver Colorado until you know I was 11 or 12 something somewhere around there and then moving to the south the dynamics just everything changed all of a sudden things were focused in on my race things are focused on on like the classes that I was taking or how smart I was and then being in a bigger body that only like added to that only added fuel to the fire you know for people and so yeah, I think those are the two moments in life when I remember . really being concerned about it. Or like knowing that my body was different and having it affect me and then that of course progressed though you know through high school then talk about you know, going to college. And I think colleges eventually when I did low carb when low carb was super in like Atkins

Kendra 24:58

Yes.

Curry 24:59

But I dropped a ridiculous amount of weight I went from like a size 22 down to like a size eight or 10

Megan 25:05

Whoa.

Curry 25:06

And that was when I saw the huge differences in how people respond to me even though I was the same person I had not changed I was no different my personality was the same but all of a sudden because I was smaller or because I could go and buy things in banana republic now instead of Lane Bryant and how people responded to me because of that, and how good it felt, but also how weird it was to like look at people and be like but I'm not any different than the person who was in the size 22. I just had more weight on my body and now I do not. So I think it's always a funny thing, this is kind of off topic but something even with like, Coronavirus, that I really, with COVID and all this that I've had to realize is that there's always like a time where I'm always like discontent with my body. But there have been times where my body was actually the thing that I thought I needed it to be even though in my mind I was like you need to lose more weight. So I think the main thing or the thing that I'm honing in now especially being over 30 is like being content with where my body is now even if the goal is like yeah I do need to work out more or I do you need to you know be more just health conscious or wellness is like enjoy it now because I don't always want to be looking back and being like well you were good.

Megan 26:20

Yeah

Curry 26:20

So why are you so negative and so ugly to yourself? Like you were fine. There was nothing wrong like do you look great so I think I'm just saying like just to be present in this body and to be thankful for it as it is how it is whether I gained weight in a quarantine or like it's fine. Yeah, it's okay. Um, and I can be happy and still feel good about it and feel good about myself and be content because this is where I am right now and I can't always be thinking about this future body or being concerned with this past body that I want to get back with like this is what I have right now. Um, but yeah, that was I think definitely elementary school was the first time but then I think you just kind of go through this cycle and I'm sure you guys can agree with that where it pops back up and you're reminded about your size in comparison to someone else or being told that you're cute for a big girl or being told that you're cute for a Black girl which is something that I've been told for dark skin so all of those sorts of things kind of playing in and being like why is that even the thing that popped into your mind but I definitely think you go through cycles and I think the people company you keep around you to like you know, the friends I had when I was younger and not the people I would have around me now. Right? Because there were so many ways whether Yeah, they were rude about my body or not just ways that we unhealthily thought about our bodies

Megan 27:41
right

Curry 27:42
How we were eating, the things that we were consuming from the media like it was just all like

Megan 27:47
Was it like a bonding thing? Because I know I would like, bond with friends over like, trashing my body like saying like, "Oh, I hate this, I hate this", and then you know someone else chimes in.

Curry 28:01
Hating it like that sort of thing or even to the point like of like holding yourself in captivity, right, like, not wearing certain things, because certain parts of your body you just can't deal with. Like there was a time when I would not wear a sleeveless shirt. Or I felt a certain way about my arms, but bigger arms just kind of run in my family and it is what it is. But I literally would be like about to pass out in 100 degree weather because I needed to wear sleeves and everyone else's like so I think also kind of coming into that freedom, but also realizing how you talk to yourself, or even talk to other people about your body is really how you perceive yourself. And so if that's what you're saying, that's what you're actually believing. And so then you're setting yourself to be in this whole cycle of like negative thinking.

Megan 28:47
Yes.

Curry 28:48
Which isn't even really worth it at the end of the day. Like why did I even throw myself, like why do I care what somebody thinks about if my arm jiggles or if it like I weighed too much? What, who cares? I was excited to see them and yes, my arm jiggles? Yours probably jiggles too and you're teeny tiny like, right? I think just letting go of all of that. But yeah, I think definitely. I think negative self-talk just for me generally, the recognition, what I had to recognize was like, dude you talk so dirty to yourself, like all the time, like, even when you haven't done anything, or you're just relaxing? Like it's a negative. So I think flipping that script was a big piece of me being like, well, I don't really care if you think I'm fat, or if you're gonna comment on it. It's so so tricky. And then also tricky because I grew up in the 90s. When you think about culture, then just everything that you saw, I think about wearing low rise jeans. I'm like How the hell did I wear low-rise jeans? I still don't know how I did it. Because things have to cover my belly button. Now if my, if I'm real weird. Like if it's sitting on my belly button. I'm like, No, I don't want these.

Megan 29:50
Same. Everything like right under my boobs.

Curry 29:55

But I'm like super short-waisted but I'm like how'd I wear these jeans but when you think about that like the aesthetic like this slim I'm not eating I'm drinking diet cokes and like it was just like what were we doing? But yeah so we were consuming so many things I think that were negative too because like while now plus size is everywhere right or at least we have we can see ourselves reflected yeah I think about them like there wasn't really much of anything aside from like Lane Bryant right Ashley Stewart which wasn't like the best Avenue was I was like that was it Yeah, there definitely weren't like models you couldn't just open up a magazine and see like you know now you can see them with stuff online you know, you can come across all body types but you didn't see any of that so everything that you were consuming was about diet culture. Even when I think about doing Atkins like that was the obsession It was like well I'm gonna I'm gonna do it

And even like the, the quote unquote fat character like sidekick characters in movies or in shows we're still all thin like they were maybe you know what I mean. Yeah, so even the representation was like not representation you know?

Megan 31:17

If anything it was just they were small fats if anything,

Kendra 31:21

if anything they were small bats but

Megan 31:22

It's like America Ferrera was your sidekick friend. Clearly like a 12.

Curry 31:28

She's like a 12 Yeah, like she's at the small petite range of it. Yeah I think that was typically what what you saw but then you still ended up even for me it was like okay, well if I can be that kind of plus size then I'll be okay right like yeah, I can be this specific like if I can be a 12/14 and be sculpted in this way

Megan 31:45

yes

Curry 31:45

then I'll be okay if I'm plus size as opposed to like well I'm in 18/20 and it's not you know, like no one's gonna want to see that or deal with that like dealing with all of that too within like even being plus size all the acceptance that comes for how if your body looks this way and you're this size Okay, great. But if you're not shaped for what is typical or hourglass or big leaves are big but then we don't really want we don't want to feel it's sloppy or we don't want anything to do you know thinking about all of those I think dynamics within the range of being fatter plus size as well.

Megan 32:19

Yeah, it's still such a, such a narrow way that you are allowed to be. So you are a hairstylist. And we know that bodies are politicized especially Black and Brown bodies, and queer bodies and fat bodies and disabled bodies. How have you experienced hair being politicized?

Curry 13:13

Um, I mean, hair is just a microcosm of the bigger, greater world that we live in. So the same way that we're dealing with all of these are not this is new. But now folks are aware of the race issues that exist in this country. It's been the same thing for hair from the moment. And so the reason that I became a hairstylist, hairstylist was second career for me, a few years back after burning out on theater and being in the arts and being like, I just need something completely different. Um, so I grew up kind of always being into hair. My grandmother was a hairstylist, I had all the hairstyles, but for whatever reason, it never clicked for me about going to hair school until you know, six or seven years ago. But one of my main reasons was that my hair experience as far as going to the hair salon, as a young Black girl, was so all over the place and so inconsistent and it was never a moment of pamper. It was always a moment of like panic and anxiety of like, being in the hair salon all day or not knowing if this stylist is going to spin me around and I'm going to look like James Brown or am I going to look like the Halle Berry photo that I showed you? Most likely I was going to look like James Brown. So just having all these improper experiences, not ever getting any consultation, not ever having anyone tell me like okay, these are the products that you can go home and try these are some steps that you can do. So a big piece of my deciding like Okay, I'm gonna go to high school with that I just wanted to provide Black women with an experience to be pampered to like actually come to the salon and be relaxed and not to come and be in a state of like frenzy because literally Black women have like hair PTSD. They literally have like trauma surrounding different experiences being left under the dryer for forever. You know, sitting all day and not being seen even though you booked an appointment at 10 o'clock and the stylist doesn't get to you until you booked at 10am the stylist doesn't get you till 3pm and you sat there the whole time. And no acknowledgement, you know, just all of those pieces were a big piece of was like, Okay, if I'm going to do hair, then I want to do it so that any Black woman, any woman of color that comes and sits in my chair can actually feel relaxed, can actually feel empowered about their hair, but they can actually offload all of this trauma that they have and actually feel kind of secure and great. But I mean, the industry, you name it, I went to Aveda for hair school. I spent most of my time at Aveda teaching the other students about Black hair and how to do Black hair without actually enjoying my hair experience.

Megan 15:50

And probably not getting paid?

Curry 15:53

No, none of my tuition changed. But then also being told on the flip side that I shouldn't do Black hair. And literally having educators tell me that. So yeah. And I think they

Kendra 16:07

Did they say why?

Curry 16:09

And I think the general thinking was that because there's no money in Black hair, or that in order to make money you need to do European hair, or in order to be seen professional, you need to be doing what the standard is in the hair industry, which is European white hair, that that is the standard. So if you're trying to change that standard, right, you're trying to change those levels of beauty, which was the beginning of what I was doing, even if I didn't realize it. Um, my whole goal was kind of to change the aesthetic around Black Beauty because so much of what even what you learn in hair school about Black hair is still from this Eurocentric view. It's from this view of like, well, we want to tame it and we need to control it. And we need to smooth it down, as opposed to like now how do we actually physically work with this hair and look at Black hair and think of it as beautiful from the jump, and then create curriculums and standards of beauty etc from that on its own and not in comparison to this other thing. Because they're like fabric, right? We have all these different fabrics, but you don't treat all fabrics the same. You don't toss your silks in with your wools, like you don't do that. So you have to learn. And then once you learn, you can move in between all of those fabrics, you can wear them, you can do up seasons, all of that. But so much of what you're taught, so much of the education, even the classes that you take it's all surrounding like this one version of what Black hair needs to be. Or if you're going to succeed and get to the top of the top of like a celebrity hairstylist, then you have to be delivering the specific aesthetics. And that's just not how I do hair, number one, but also those aesthetics aren't actually the aesthetics of like, I love lived-in hair, like how women's hair is every day. Yeah, it's great when it leaves the chair. It's always perfect. But like, what does it look like six hours from when it leaves me? What does it look like, two days from when it leaves me? Um, and how do I communicate that to the client to understand that like, it's okay, it's not going to be as pristine. It's not fresh out of the package day one. But just because it's not, that doesn't mean that your hair is no longer good or that you have to damage your hair or that you have to keep doing this one thing over and over again, because you think your hair is not good if it doesn't look a certain way. So yeah, it's, it's everywhere in the hair industry. And it's funny, that's why I just kind of chuckle with all of this because it's funny to me because everyone's like, Oh, we didn't know it's new. And I'm like, this is not new. I went to hair school, like I said almost seven, eight years ago. And that was going on then it's gone on in any career that I've been in really. Where if it has to do with Black culture, Black anything, well, no, that's not we're not going to focus or hone in on that. And that just can't be any more. Like that's not the way that things should be. And honestly, if you're a hairstylist and you're a good hairstylist, you can do it all.

Kendra 19:04
right, that's right.

Curry 19:05

And most of the people that I left hair school with, I can tell you right now, if you put both of us in a room, they cannot do it all whereas I can actually do all of it. Meaning you guys could sit in my chair, anybody can sit in my chair, but the standard needs to just be that you do it all and you do

it well and you learn it but not oh well, Black hair is not our white hair is it shouldn't even be that in the first place.

Kendra 19:27

Yeah, it reminds me of I watched an interview with I believe it was Gabrielle Union talking about this in on sets like going and just knowing she was gonna have to do her own hair, basically, like the assumption was that and that whoever that is, you know, finding out Oh, it's a white person that's gonna do my hair, Okay, then I'll just like take care of it or makeup too.

Curry 19:52

Or bring your own hair person with you like and that's the thing that's very prevalent in the industry. Still, I still have friends who call me that model, people in New York who call, go sit on set, and somebody ruins their hair, like ruins it meaning like, I have to go back to square one and start over. Or onset and the stylist just doesn't know how to do your hair. So your hair is either just left so you either come prepared, and I've definitely done that. I'm like, Okay, let me have things will at least be okay, so if I get there, and no one can do anything. I mean, I always said even now, like, my makeup is always in my bag. So that if I go somewhere, and there's someone who cannot execute my makeup, I can do at least a few things to get myself on the same page as someone else. But no one's talking about that. You're not getting paid for that, right?

Megan 20:39

Right, it's so much extra labor.

Curry 20:41

Yeah, you're not getting credit. I'm not gonna be in the credits as the makeup artist.

Kendra 20:46

That's right.

Curry 20:46

Um, but yeah, that happens a lot. And it's still happening a lot in the industry.

Kendra 20:54

And I'm going to preface, I'm going to disclaim by saying I, this might be an ignorant question I'm about to ask, and I'd love for you to call it out if that's the case. But my question is, well, as someone who wants to be supporting Black business and Black business owners, I've only ever had white people, white women do my hair.

Curry 21:16

Yeah.

Kendra 21:17

And because my ignorant assumption is that Black people, Black women, Black people do Black hair, and white women do white hair. And I would love to support.

Curry 21:28

That's the assumption across the board.

Kendra 21:29

Yeah, and I would love to be able to support a Black hairstylist here. I live in Richmond. So yeah, here in Richmond. And this is just like making me rethink, you know, unlearn that, that I know. I guess I said I had a question. I'm not sure I really do now. But

Curry 21:45

So here's what I'll say, it is definitely not an ignorant question. But here's one thing that I like to tell people all the time about the salon industry. Because it has been so polarizing, white hair world and Black hair world are like night and day. So your experience and and and i'm not saying it's always going to be the case. But your experience going if you go and find the Black hair stylists that you want for your hair, totally fine to do that, but also know that you're stepping into their world. So you should expect to be uncomfortable. It may not exactly line up with your experience that you've had with white stylists. But this is also how we begin to make, close this divide, right? Because it shouldn't be like you said, we shouldn't even have to think. But that's the same thing, even when I went to hair school. So I knew all of the typical things about styling here. But then when we started learning about like highlights and hair color, which is what I love to do now, that world was foreign to me because my mother, me getting highlights at 10 or 11? No! All my white girlfriends, though, that was the standard, like, they were getting highlights doing a round brush. And I'm like, what is the round brush, you know, like all of these different things. But at the end of the day, it was just a skill and a tool, and I learned how to use it. And then it was no longer a Black white thing. So yeah, I think exactly what you're saying. But we also, I think standards have to be changed across the board. Standards even have to be changed in Black salons. Because what's happened for so long, because Black hairstyles haven't really been included in the greater hair world is that they've created this whole kind of, they've had to do their own thing. They've had to create their own curriculums and kind of their own areas for expertise and, but there's also been huge gaps in the knowledge that they have, or huge gaps or huge misunderstandings about Black hair and hair color. Because typically when we go into hair schools, we learn about styling and the final product, we don't actually learn all the scientific bits and pieces that say a white girl might get when she goes to hair school and learns all about hair color. So there's so many different things that we actually have to come together on because it's left gaps on both sides.

Megan 23:50

Right.

Kendra 23:50

Yeah.

So our final question

Curry 23:57

yes

Kendra 23:58

let's talk about these melanin pool poppin events in summers past

Curry 24:06

Well, I have not been in the pool all summer. I'm dying.

Megan 24:13

All I want is to feel weightless I just want to drink and I just want to float and

Curry

I'm always in the pool like when summer comes in the pools open I'm the first person there and this is like it's not really summer I keep that in mind. It's not summer, we're gonna go from spring to fall because I didn't swim at all. I'm like someone's gonna have to spray me with the sprinkler.

Kendra 24:38

Find an indoor pool when the time comes, you know? except not to rub it in and take this out of the podcast but I have been to the pool a few times.

Megan 24:47

I know you have been, you asshole.

Kendra 24:52

I live in an apartment and they opened and all the precautions all the things.

Megan 25:00

Oh, I would absolutely go, I just don't have one to go to.

Curry 25:02

Exactly. That's the point. And I'm just afraid if I go to one where there are public people that I'm like, No, I'm gonna have to cuss somebody out and that's going to ruin my pool experience. And I don't want I don't want to have a memory of the pool with COVID. I just feel like no pools this summer.

Kendra 25:19

And I also don't I also go, like off times. I'll go in the middle of a Wednesday or like, early, so I know there's only like 10 people total. I do get a little nervous like us all just like piling up in the pool. Okay, anyway. So these melanin pool popping events tell us what inspired them.

Curry 25:41

They honestly were inspired just by they're still just such a huge when it comes to Black bodies being in a swimming pool, there's still a huge issue with it, there's still a huge level of segregation. There's also a level of like insecurity on Black people's part about going to the pool and being at the pool, knowing how to swim not knowing how to swim. So for me, my mom did not learn how to swim growing up. So she has always been a bit, a little nervous about getting in the pool. Like she'll go to the short end like three feet four feet. But don't ask her to go any further than that. Like she's not doing it. So when she had both my sister and I, she was very adamant that we were going to have swimming lessons like from the jump, and literally, I think my sister and I had like swim lessons for like six months, like we were the babies in the pool, swimming, that sort of thing. Like, I love the pool, like I'm in the pool. I don't care. I'm getting my hair wet. Like I'm not, don't be that girlfriend to come with me and be like, I can't get my hair wet and be that friend because you don't want to come you don't want to come to the pool with me.

Kendra 26:46

I'm trying to have a tea party under here.

Curry 26:49

Stop it! My sister and I used to have the tea parties under the water all the time. Stop knowing my life! And trying to be a mermaid singing the songs you better stop me right now. I look good. Synchronized swimming. We used to fake synchronized swimming.

Megan 27:11

I used to do like the Martha Washington, like you put your hair back and then also did anybody else do baptisms?

Curry 27:19

Yes!

Kendra 27:20

No.

Curry 27:22

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Megan 27:25

I just like, crossed myself as if I grew up Catholic, and I didn't.

Curry 27:29

Wade in the water. You gotta wade in the water.

Megan 27:31

Sermons. Yeah, yes.

Kendra 27:34

I don't know anything about that.

Curry 27:37

No, I love, I love the pool. So it was just so basically melanin pool poppin came from me going to the pool here in Nashville, and being like, why am I the only person like looking around being like, it's just me like, why? So two summers ago, um, a friend of mine, and I was like, let's just invite some people to the pool. And we did it. And we invited, and it was very small. I really started out it was like 10 people maybe at the most. like me and my best friend, a few other people. And we started just going to a place in Nashville here called Pinewood social, which doesn't really have a pool. They're like little hot tubs is really what they are. But it was a pool. It was some water for us to get in and have a good time. They had drinks, food, all that kind of stuff. So it started with that. And then the next summer that I was getting ready to do it. I had made some flyers and kind of asked my graphic designer to kind of like help me bring it into the event. And I guess word had gotten out about it. But I didn't know that word had gotten out about it. Like I didn't know, I just wanted to go to the pool. And last summer, the first one I had, I think that our biggest pool poppin we had over 100 people show up. So I was like, excited. But my goal was also like just to get Black people to the pool. You don't want to get in the pool, you don't have to, um, but it was just a show of like solidarity and support like we're here and we're allowed to be at this pool. And we are allowed to be in this pool and having fun. But also to just bring together all the cool Black folks, creatives, queer folk, in a space to show that like y'all can all hang out. I mean, I had my corporate friends and my creative friends and just people from every walk of life come into the pool, and realizing that they could all have a good time with each other and they didn't have to, like look at each other funny. So you know, it's an opportunity for people to come together to have a good time to network, but to also be like, we're allowed to be in the space, and we spend money just like anybody else. And it's also not a negative connotation. I think a lot of times when Black people show up at swimming pools, especially if they're in nice hotels and things like that. There's just this negative connotation. And it's like it's a pool. So we can be loud, we can be just like it's a swimming pool. So this expectation that you need to act a certain way and be a certain way, so pool poppin was the opportunity for me to do that. And last summer, it just took off. So my goal is hopefully next summer, it'll be even tighter and I'll be able to brand it even more. I mean, we'll get more people to come out, but I just want to continue to do it here in Nashville. So that people feel safe and come to the pool. I know I had some friends and people who I didn't even know who were like, that was the first time I went to the pool and had a good time but also felt okay. And okay to be naked, because I don't want any clothes in the pool. I mean, I do, I wear bathing suits, but I like the skimpiest of bathing suits a bit like, give it to me, we got a string bikini, let's do it. But I didn't even realize that by my doing that, that I was like empowering other women to be like, oh, like, I can be naked. And I can wear that like laid out. Like I don't care if the string gets caught in my back fat I'm gonna wear the string bikini. I'm gonna be cute, and I'm gonna look good. I'm just as good as the size two person who has on a string bikini and no one's gonna have a problem with it. And no one better not dare say anything to me about it. And who knows, a boob might pop out because that's what happens at the pool sometimes.

Megan 31:13

You're welcome.

Curry 31:14

Right? And you're welcome. Okay, yeah, just empowering that. And there were just so many different folks of all genders that came to me, who were like, I just felt empowered. And I've never taken my shirt off at the pool, or I've never actually gotten in the water and dunked my head. So my thing is, summertime is my favorite time of year and I want to have a good time. But it was also a time for me to create a safe space for Black people to come to be at the pool to loose off or to be there kind of like Sunday church, to meet up with your friends, have some drinks, eat some good food, maybe meet some new people, but you're really just to be able to come together and have a good time. It doesn't have to be about where you're from or what you're doing or what kind of people can go to this party or what because everybody was allowed to be there. You could come in a snowsuit if you wanted to. You are welcome in pool poppin now I'm gonna ask if you're hot and if you're okay, are you gonna pass out? Everyone is welcome.

Kendra

So Curry, how can our listeners find you? Give us all your social plugs.

Curry

Cool, mainly every one of, my main account is bespoke curry. And that's B as in boy, e s p o k e. Like custom and then my last name Curry like the spice. C u r r y.

Megan 32:38

That's a really good handle.

Curry 32:39

Yeah. And it is, that's everywhere. So that's my website is bespokecurry.com. That's my main Instagram. That's my Facebook page. And honestly from that page, you can find all my other info and then my hair Instagram is bead and cowrie like hair beads and cowrie shell and then and spelled out so b e a d a n d c o w r i e. So yeah, those are the places where you can find me.

Megan 33:16

All right, welcome to Let's talk about snacks. It is July of 2020 we've been in quarantine for 14 years.

That's right

forever and forever and the thing that's keeping me going are cherry popsicles

Curry 33:35

you know you know you have a good point I love freeze pops. I take that back. We have freeze pops in the freezer right now.

Megan 33:43
The, like push ones?

Curry 33:44
The push ones just that are purely like Kool Aid. It's just sugar and I don't even think the flavor is really different. And like they all kind of taste cherry they all kind of taste like it's all the same flavor. But yes, cold things, especially in this heat that we're having. It's almost 100 degrees today.

Megan 34:03
Honestly, I think I'm just getting like the Kroger brand like they're real skinny.

Kendra 34:07
Yep.

Megan 34:08
white rapper.

Curry 34:09
Yeah, yep.

Megan 34:10
They come in cherry, orange, and grape.

Curry 34:13
Yeah, classic summertime. That's it.

Kendra 34:15
taking me back to my childhood pool days. getting that dollar and going up to little concessions.

Curry 34:24
Or you eat all the reds and then you go back to the box. It's only like yellow and grape left and you don't want to eat them but your mom's like you're gonna finish those before I buy a new box. Yeah, I guess I'm gonna enjoy these.

Megan 34:36
My tongue is gonna be purple. Cool. Curry, Tell me what you're into right now.

Curry 34:44
So I just made a vegan peach pound cake.

Megan 34:48
Oh, oh oh oh

Curry 34:50

yeah. So I'm like a serious like, I like to cook a lot. And so I'm typically vegan but then when COVID hit I was like, no, not gonna be Vegan not doing it. I'm gonna enjoy some things. So I did for a few months about three months, but then I got back to it and I've been back on for about a month. I really wanted to pound cake.

Megan 35:09

Yeah,

Curry 35:09

and I'm subscribed to like the New York Times all of their things but they have a food section and it really probably should be illegal because they send you like recipes and like updates like what to cook this week. And of course there was a peach pound cake in the "what to cook." So yeah, I cooked it. It was like half a pound cake left but it's delicious. And honestly, it just tastes like a regular pound cake.

Megan 35:35

Yeah?

Curry 35:35

It's the icing that you make which is made out of like confectioner's sugar and peach puree.

Megan 35:40

Ooh,

Curry 35:40

That's like it's my new pound cake. Like that's what I'm making to show off for people. That's what I'm making.

Kendra 35:47

I'm gonna need to get something for my saliva. My summer go-to is watermelon all the time.

Curry 35:58

stop it.

Kendra 36:00

Watermelon is my favorite thing. It's my favorite, one of my favorites, it's definitely one of my top 10 things of all the things.

Curry 36:07

Oh watermelon so can I ask you this, have you had dried watermelon?

Megan 36:11

What?

Kendra 36:12

No!

Curry 36:13

So I have two packs I'll have to show them to you in a bit but it's the best if you are one is it's good and gather at Target makes freeze dried or not so it's just regular dried and it's so good and the seeds and everything are in it the seeds and then I found another one at World Market and that's my addiction for this summer because I also love watermelon, everything.

Kendra 36:34

everything

Megan 36:35

I always forget that World Market has such fun food stuff.

Curry 36:39

The best food stuff. the best.

Megan 36:42

So the texture of this freeze dried watermelon?

Curry 36:47

It's like chewy but the rind is in like you would think watermelon would turn into nothing if it was dried right because you're like there's nothing there.

Megan 36:55

It's water

Curry 36:56

but no it's like chewy , almost like a fruit roll up. But it's watermelon.

Kendra 37:02

Okay definitely have to get some of this. Watermelon is it also harkens me back to my childhood because my grandmother grew watermelon, lived up in Ohio, and she had just like a kind of baby garden wasn't like huge but she kind of a baby fruit and veggie garden so she'd get a few watermelons out of it over the year. So I always look forward to that. But I grew up in a house where people put salt on their watermelon and I was like no.

Curry 37:32

yeah, my grandma both of my grandmother's did that

Kendra 37:36

What's happening? No

Megan 37:37
You don't like it?

Kendra 37:39
Absolutely not.

Curry 37:39
The theory is that it makes it sweeter though the theory is that it makes the watermelon sweeter.

Kendra 37:45
I don't agree. I've had it. I've had it

Curry 37:46
That's what my grandmother used to tell me she's like it actually makes it sweeter and I was like it's just not my, my thing.

Megan 37:52
Have you put lime on it ever, Kendra? somebody told me that recently and I don't remember who it was but they said like squeeze a little lime on there.

Kendra 38:00
I'm just a purist. I want just the watermelon.

Curry 38:05
You're like bougie about it. You're like don't bring me your fancy watermelon. It's that pure watermelon.

Megan 38:09
Where was that grown?

Kendra 38:15
I want it to have seeds, it better have seeds. I'm done with seedless watermelon.

Megan 38:21
Is it vegan?

Curry 38:25
Don't play because somebody would ask that they'd be like I'm looking for vegan watermelon you'd like it's a watermelon stop. It's fruit.

Kendra 38:31
You're like we don't carry that get out of here.

Curry 38:33

They don't have that. We just have regular watermelon here, we just, regular watermelon. I don't know anything about a vegan watermelon.

Kendra 38:40

I love it so much. People don't like it because they think it is too sweet.

Curry 38:46

I'm very suspicious of anyone ever commenting on things that are too sweet and here's why. Because sometimes that's true. Like I'll say like white chocolate might be a little like...

Kendra 38:59

I was about to say with the exception of white chocolate with a conversation we've already had.

Curry 39:05

I was just about to say that it's cocoa butter, see I'm with you guys.

But I feel like a lot of times when people say oh, it's just too sweet for me. It's coded for like healthism and like I'm a little bit better than you because my palate

like I don't have to have sweet things like I just need. Yeah, like this thing with sparkling water and I'm like look, sometimes I don't want it flavored. I want some sugar in my sparkling water like I want to taste the flavor, not just a hint.

Megan 39:34

All this to say in quarantine. All snacks are great.

Kendra 59:24

Thank you so much for listening. Oh, Don't you just love curry. We honestly, we really were obsessed. We were like, Can you just like, stick around? Like we'll stop recording and just like hang out. I'm here for the pool parties. I'm actually thinking there's going to be one in Richmond so if you happen to be in the Richmond area, be sure you go follow RVA which stands for Richmond Virginia, fatties. It is, there's a whole new, whole new community building here of doing some fun fat centric things. So please Join us and we are talking about a pool party at some point. It might be a little too cold right now but we also have the river so we'll see what happens.

Megan

Oh, I love that for you.

Megan 1:00:13

Yeah, so look out for Episode Three coming up in a couple weeks. Follow us on Instagram at underscore nobody asked for this and join our Patreon yall.

Kendra

We'll see you next episode. Bye bye