

- Don Unger: Hello and welcome. I'm Don Unger, a *Spark* Editorial Collective member and an Assistant Professor at the University of Mississippi. In this episode of *Creating Coalitional Gestures*, Iris Ruiz interviews Alexandria Lockett. Dr. Lockett is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Her research and pedagogy explore the relationships among new media technologies, emergence, and expression. In Dr. Lockett's words, she focuses on "how humans make meaning in the complex context of big data and Big Brother."
- Iris Ruiz: Hello and welcome to the second episode of *Creating Coalitional Gestures*. Welcome Dr. Alexandria Lockett, she's an Assistant Professor of English at Spelman College. Currently, her research interests circulate around various issues involving the racial gender politics of technology and information systems, particularly the problem of knowledge equity. Welcome Alex to our *Creating Coalitional Gestures* podcast, and I'm so happy that you are our second episode for this new podcast series.
- Alexandria Lockett: Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it. It's great to be here. Thank you to the listeners for taking the time to hear our conversation.
- Iris Ruiz: We know that we're in some interesting times right now, so I really appreciate your time to do this. And it's just brilliant and important contribution. But, I know we have a lot to say and a lot to cover, so we're going to go ahead and just get right into the questions and-
- Alexandria Lockett: Sure.
- Iris Ruiz: Thank you. All right. So first question, there's a couple of different elements here, so go ahead and answer as you please. What is the tenor of your research right now? What informs your research and what theoretical frameworks are you interested in?
- Alexandria Lockett: Well, when you say tenor of your research, are you asking me what projects I'm working on right now or kind of like how the research has, the pulse of it? That word tenor is beautiful but I want to make sure I answer your question accurately.
- Iris Ruiz: No, yeah. That's great. The tenor of your research, I guess it would be yes, the tone of your research. Our research is always evolving, so what point do you feel like you are at right now in your research?
- Alexandria Lockett: So that's an interesting question for me because I started off my research as an undergraduate researcher with the Ronald E. McNair post-baccalaureate program, which for your listeners, this is a federal program that is designed to help both underrepresented minorities and economic minorities. So this can include poor white people. It's a program designed to enable us to go to graduate school and pursue a PhD. And this program was very instrumental in

my direction of life, becoming an assistant professor and being interested in research as an undergraduate student led me to my first sort of realization about my particular, very particular interest in race, gender, and technology.

So the very first thing that I ever published in my life was a very ambitious project. And I call it an ambitious because I had to fight for it because it was about depictions of Black women in 21st century interracial pornography. The project was called "Sexualizing Oppression"?

Certainly, back then my interest was because everybody was talking about images of women and depictions of women and portrayals of women in the media: Is the media causing eating disorders? Is the media causing racism? Because we were still operating on this consciousness of centralized media. And I wondered, "Well, what about internet depictions of women? And who's researching that?" because at the time, not only is pornography massively under-researched across disciplines, but it was still very much looking at the VHS tape. And this was in 2004.

So actually, it was a group project in a course called race class and gender. And we tackled the issue of pornography in particular internet pornography. So in that sense my research has always been this edgy thing where what I want to investigate is so understudied that I have to develop interdisciplinary frameworks in order to do it, or I have to defend myself against censorship. It was a very, very hard project, but a very rewarding project. And I took a break from it. And my next big project was my thesis on Blues women, looking at the phonograph as a quote unquote new technology that Black women, particularly working class Black women were able to utilize post reconstruction as a really kind of the earliest most impactful way that they could have access to a public platform and a mass audience.

We hear a lot about 19th century Black club women and the Club Women Movement and people like Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, who of course founded the first Black woman's newspaper in America, the woman's era and the respectability politics of those women trying to really quote unquote uplift the race. But the early 20th century with the formation of the musical and the minstrel show and bottle circuits and performing arts and emerging careers in entertainment, and Black women began to travel for the first time with the development of transportation technologies, railroad, time zones. And that period intrigued me so much that I wanted to delve into that.

And I had been influenced by Angela Davis whose legacy is in Black feminism. And I started to think about the influence of the quote unquote non-respectable women on speech, on culture, on literacy, on literacy practices that we don't see, that we don't acknowledge, but that are incredibly impactful. So I became interested in information leaks, which is what I wrote my dissertation on at the same time as I was actually writing my thesis because WikiLeaks came on the scene, we're talking about between 2006-2008, in terms of its early formations.

I was in a visual rhetoric class with my professor at the time Christopher Carter, who is now my co-author which is wonderful. We'll talk about that project soon.

And we were talking about surveillance and leaks because the Abu Ghraib photo leaks were going on at the time and this organization, this weird organization, WikiLeaks was showing up on the scene and people were trying to make sense of it. And I was trying to make sense of it. But at the time I was very interested in open source and open technologies and what those were doing to transform consciousness and give people more access to the public forum. And so I went down that path and that path led me to learn a lot more about information warfare and really situating the question of information leaks as a metaphorical exploration of system failure that could point toward the emergence of data practices that are particularly racialized. So suddenly studying information leaks is leading me to learn about early hacking discourses, which point for the Telegraph and the telephone and the wire. And then I start learning about global contact and the transcendent slave trade and early statistical practices and how they were tracking the bodies and transport.

And I start really becoming so aware of these layered, layered, layered issues involving race and gender and technology and work and labor and human beings and the way they're being converted into data as more and more emerging technologies for mass information communication are coming into fruition all over the world. And so that leads me to my current place, which is I'm currently working on a research project that's being funded by CCCCs Research Initiative Grant, and it's about Wikipedia editing.

So if all of those projects could culminate into a place of where do you go once you learn about all of this inequity involving technology or data or how people are trying to claim those technologies, use those technologies, the place I'm at is really looking at, "Okay, well, what do we do once we have access to a mass accessible platform with potential for more inclusive representations of human intelligence and notable participation in society."

And that's where we started looking at Wikipedia editing, and its editorship is homogeneous. And so by teaching Wikipedia editing and exploring how we're actually engaging Wikipedia as a media, as a field, I start to begin to really look at these issues of knowledge equity. And so we talk about equity and inclusion in terms of race, but we're still slow to bring that conversation to very viable, measurable, impactful ways that we could be both studying and engaging and improving knowledge and information by looking at something like Wikipedia, which we all use, but very few people edit. I know there's a lot more there and I'm sure we'll explore it, but I hope that I've given you a sense that the research is interdisciplinary, it is edgy, it is controversial because I'm always dealing with controversial subjects and in an effort to try to unveil some harsh truths about human potential and human limits.

Iris Ruiz:

Wow. That's fascinating. There's just so much there to unpack and to continue to expand upon. And I'm just really excited about the direction of your research.

And I have to say that I actually had been working with you on a project recently, but we are always learning from one another and a lot of this I hadn't known, but I have that historical connection with you there. And I was actually going to ask you, but I think you answered it very well, was your definition of leaks. And when you say leaks, what does that mean? Because I think we might not necessarily associate it with some of the older technologies, so thank you for making that connection as well. Do you have an idea of how, if you were to identify or to define the term leaks, might you approach that?

Alexandria Lockett: Yes, that's what my whole project was about is looking at what an information leak is because leaks is a very rhetorical term, and by that I don't mean everything's rhetorical in the way we use that term in the field. That bothers me when people think of that as a revelation, but in this case, it's critical to think about the term rhetorically because of its both explanatory and literal meaning. So leaks is a term that tends to be used for the purposes of warfare. So if I call something an information leak, there's an implication that some cover up has happened that is concealed the information and the very fact of that cover up is revealed by calling it a leak. Otherwise, it would just be information, right? Just be a piece of information. So the leak points towards some action involving that information, but all leaks are not necessarily sinister because if you accidentally carbon copy somebody on an email and you didn't intend to, you leaked information to them, but you weren't doing it maliciously. It might've been an accident.

But then there's Watergate leaks and the Pentagon Papers and when a person is in a whistleblower position—where they're in a position to where they have to articulate corruption in some way and the risk of articulating that corruption could lead to job loss and a host of other consequences. So the term leak, when we start to try to define it, now we're entering again, this rhetorically complex domain where we start to notice that leaks are a literal phenomenon like if your pipe burst right now, you'll have a leak. So that's a physical phenomenon. Leaks happen because we can't contain the water, but we try to.

Just like, you can't contain information, but you try to, and if you look at the hydrospheric characteristic of information right now where, look at the way we even have to refer to information, flows of information. We'll talk about surfing the web for information, talk about... We talk about information being fluid, we talk about it in all these kinds of ways that I explore in my dissertation project that will be revised into a single author project in 2021.

I did submit that book proposal, but it was in a little bit of manuscript, but it was a revise and resubmit. So yes, your work can get rejected, and when it does, you have to go back to the drawing board, clarify what you're doing but in the case of the leak and defining the leak, the leak then for me because again, once you start to define it, you start to have to ask all these questions about what information even is and how is that produced and who controls it and what are the mechanisms that affect the discovery of information.

And that's why I really started to get really invested in the leak as a metaphor too that could really describe what our culture is dealing with. Because there's all this dancing and playing and weaponizing of information that is having very real consequences on the credibility of individuals and organizations. Suddenly, everyday people are worried about being leaked on. It's not just a government thing where we associate a leak with a big corrupt organization or a mass event like something like what's going on with all these huge data leaks at places like for innocuous is Macy's too, the huge Equifax leaks that affected over half of Americans and those things can be connected to. Again, like I was saying earlier hacking. Because when system failure is realized in the data that accompanies the failure, the reasons for the failure is revealed that's when we start to have to deal with the legal and the social consequences of leaks.

But see my interest in the leak is the magnitude problem. Because now if you just call something a leak, it could be enough to make people just think that the information is provocative or revealing, but that may not be true. Like people can make up leaks in this data environment. I was thinking about an elementary school teacher. She was unceremoniously fired because it was leaked that she was a stripper by quote unquote several parents. But it turned out that there was no verification of that, but because so many people had claimed that they had this leaked information it was a really, really challenging story because it was like, what was just the idea of that she had concealed that information, but she was like, "I didn't conceal that information. It was at one time. I took a part time job as an exotic dancer."

But this was not just one teacher. We're talking about a couple of teachers who have had this particular experience of having a quote unquote shady past, not to me but to somebody else. And again, the information quote unquote leaks and because it leaks, it appears to be more of a problem than it potentially is. So leaks are not just something that can be easily defined as the point, but point toward all kinds of other conceptual apparatuses for structural control that deserve much more critical analysis in our field.

Iris Ruiz: Wow. Thank you for that. Excellent. Very-

Alexandria Lockett: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Iris Ruiz: I'm going to definitely looking forward to your single-author book coming forward in 2020...

Alexandria Lockett: 2021 maybe. To the listeners out there, I truly have to say you'd be shocked at how your project evolves when you have that distance in that time. So hopefully 2021 but it'll probably be 2022, if things returned back to normal since we are podcasting in a pandemic.

Iris Ruiz: Oh, yes.

Alexandria Lockett: Which I know we're going to talk about the end of the thing, but yeah. It could be later but yes, it's expected within a few years for sure. Hopefully.

Iris Ruiz: Excellent. Okay. Thank you so much for your reflection on your research and your interest going forward. Thank you so much for sharing that with us. I know that a lot of people will want to read your work and connect with you and so just continuing forward is maybe bringing it to... Yeah. So moving right along with the next question then, what do you have to say about the relationship between your research and the current political climate. It might considering, what way do you see or not see your research being implicated in your perspective on current politics in the United States?

Alexandria Lockett: My research is inclusive of the American political climate since 400 plus years ago because my research is primarily concerned as I mentioned before with when we began to scale the counting of human beings in the labor force. So if we're to think about the fugitive slave ad for example. Simone Brown does work on this in her award-winning book on surveillance, *Dark Matters*, but I am interested also in the fugitive slave ad not just because of what it tells about surveillance, but quite frankly about what it tells us about the scale of it. The University of North Carolina-Greensboro has a wonderful digital collection of fugitive slave ads as if we could call them wonderful. But you know what I mean? I mean, wonderful in its coverage. And there are thousands of these ads that date back to the 18th century. They're asking for shillings in those ads that span the entire state alone. That got me thinking. That's just one state.

So if that's just one state, how many of these ads existed? And so I start thinking about the quantity of the slave ads. And I start thinking about what would happen if we could really create a digital humanities resource where we could really put all of these ads in one searchable place. I know Cornell is working on something like that. But the point is is that it destroys this narrative of the "happy ducky during slavery," because suddenly if you're to count up all those ads again, like I said, the one in North Carolina alone shows that people were clearly running away in a mass fashion. So I'm interested in how analyzing something like a fugitive slave ad, which not only can give you a glimpse of slavery in all kinds of really intriguing ways. Like I'm pretty sure there's a scholar who's written a book on, I can't think of her name right now, top of my head.

She wrote a book on a slave fashion. Like how reading these ads can help you learn about what people were wearing in that time period, or if you analyze how often color is mentioned or certain kinds of bruises or certain locations or whether or not the person was literate, you can get a whole different perception of literacy through these fugitive slave ads because they often mentioned like if the person could read or write often said speaks good English. So think about how something like a fugitive slave ad, which is not particularly perceived as something technological maybe. But we're talking about early media, the history of advertising in America from 1750-ish to, I guess like they would have stopped publishing these ads around like 1840-ish. Maybe even a little later than that. That's a rich, rich, rich, rich data source.

And it helps us learn about the current political climate entirely because now we have a different perception of what was fugitive consciousness? How does having evidence of all this running away, quote unquote help us better understand the social movements of the time. We're constantly narrating race relations through this prism of the 60s in the United States but as we get back to leaks, as this data leaks to us or as we collect this data, open up this data about representations of black people and particularly the enslaved and their enslavers, we can start to develop much more accurate narratives of human movement through this information. So we're both politicized by that information but we can also see how that information can help us have a much greater sense of what was going on with human movement at that time.

And like I said, that's just one state alone. So I'm interested in this mapping. And so I'm very intrigued by his quote unquote when old technologies were new, that's actually a book by a really brilliant woman, Carolyn Marvin, and she writes about the history of electrical engineering profession. But through this examination of women connecting people through the phone line, early histories of the phone. So I think that that's why my research is connected to the current political climate, because not only is it historical dimension to it, but it's all about trying to understand what is going on with knowledge production and the politics of knowledge production. Who owns it, how widespread is it, how participatory is it?

And I think all political movements are really about that freedom, that information freedom more so than even... Even if you're talking about something like recognizing me as a human being, that's a taxonomical demand. It's about shifting people's way of looking at a particular type of information even if that information is what we are or who we are. And so that way of talking about it, I think is a little bit more nuanced and novel than the current conversations that we see, but it's changing slowly. We've got great scholars like Luha Benjamin's *Race After Technology*, you got Sophia Noble, and you've got great programmers like Tina Debrew and Joy Bella Mani who are drawing attention algorithmic bias in their research. So it's certainly connected to my work in all kinds of ways because we are realizing that it's not just information. You know what I'm saying?

We're not just producing these technologies for progress, but they are mediating meaning making in all kinds of ways that need to be wrestled with more critically especially from rhetorical and composition scholars who need to really better work with this information politics for the purposes of teaching, the purposes of teaching about ethics and what kinds of ways we should be even interacting right now and working with this data and systems. So yes, very, very invested in perceptions of information and the freedom we have to produce knowledge and information right now. And that we have had in the past as well.

Iris Ruiz:

Okay.

Alexandria Lockett: And we could connect that to like obvious stuff like misinformation, Facebook leaking, Zoom bombing...there's all kinds of ways we can talk about how people are fighting for that power. And we can definitely delve into in specific issue you want to but I think what I'm trying to demonstrate is that there's just a whole conceptual apparatus that we need to engage before we even begin to start imagining our work as relevant politically, as researchers.

Iris Ruiz: Great. Thank you so much. Yeah. Get to be Zoom bombed, hopefully I won't be but yeah, I've heard about that people hacking into the Zoom meetings and-

Alexandria Lockett: Well that's because people aren't thinking twice before they're sharing their links publicly. They're not exploring the settings at all to know that that's something that could happen, but this switch to this remote learning that is happening through the COVID 19 crisis is revealing this lack of literacy and my work points toward having a kind of hacker literacy.

Do you understand how these systems work enough to protect yourself and your students from having your data manipulated or retrieved? And that's what my work has taught me. My work has taught me to be very mindful of how data can be used and I tell my students all the time. Especially being in my location is Spelman College of HBCU for women. Their data is the most valuable thing you own right now, more than money, because it's literally used as money. If you look at signing up on an Instagram or Facebook or Twitter, that's what you pay in, you pay in data.

So my work underlies the political climate if you will in terms of the applications of the work and the way the work really puts into focus, the way we need to be engaging right now because the vulnerabilities, when you're dealing with these scaled global information infrastructures, like the internet are vast, vast. And right now everybody's using it in this way. So Zoom bombing will definitely happen because hate speech is real, hateful people are real, and it's a system failure that someone's exploiting. Zoom was never meant for MOOC (massively open online course) type of action. They didn't develop that software to deliver mass education. So that's another thing we're confronting with that too, but anyway.

Iris Ruiz: Yeah, definitely. I think a lot of us are feeling a sense of vulnerability right now especially if we have not engaged in hybrid teaching or online teaching. And I imagine that your expertise is being really helpful to your individual institution. And I myself was put on a committee to inform the ways to move forward and in transitioning to online communication and teaching and yeah, the software definitely I feel like what you said needs to catch up and-

Alexandria Lockett: Or people need to realize that our educational software are insufficient. So for example, everybody's relying on Zoom as a conference software, right?

Iris Ruiz: Yeah.

Alexandria Lockett: But nobody's talking about any open source versions of conferencing software that could be like modified or adapted for use to be improved upon is Zoom, this huge corporation, which is becoming huge because of our usage, of course. Now they're just now because again their vulnerabilities being split they are selling all this data to Facebook and you agreed to it in your terms and conditions. And the thing about it is, like I said, they're a company. They were never supposed to be the recipients of our student information. So one of the things that I asked my students to do is I said, we need to establish how we want to document our classes.

I said because you've got all these professors recording their lectures and things like that and they don't realize they're recording them to the cloud. And what if you have a student discussion and it's a particularly sensitive discussion. You have some of these right wing organizations out there threatening to intercept this information to exploit the indoctrination of the youth through the colleges and universities. And when you got those kinds of sinister forces available in your society, and you got the kind of leadership that we have in Washington right now, you would think that administrations of colleges and universities would be far more interested in helping instructors learn a little bit about cyber security before using something like a Zoom. Or even choosing Zoom as a major provider for its institution.

So you see how Zoom bombing isn't just like with the leaks. Zoom bombing isn't just... The critical question in my research is what does Zoom bombing leak? Not just what is it, but what does it leak? It covers up or conceals through itself, which is a powerful example in itself that there's much greater system failure here that creates the condition for something like a Zoom bombing that we could control if we actually bothered to deal with technological politics at the higher administrative level in any college and university and the lack of continuity among institutions that further reveals of failure.

Why is there not more of a centralized approach to crises among these colleges and universities? We have the technology for them to do it. Wikis it open systems but everybody's trying to control the knowledge and compete in this economic structure we're in which doesn't enable the knowledge equity we need in order to actually deliver quality education right.

Iris Ruiz: Yes. Yeah. I think that there is an issue with our vulnerability and I'm sure that other issues are some that come up as well in terms of academic freedom, copyright issues and things like that. I'm thinking about intellectual property and that's probably a whole different other topic.

Alexandria Lockett: But as part of my research, for sure these are issues that I definitely deal with.

Iris Ruiz: Yeah. And so you actually answered the final question in terms of giving a suggestion to our audience during this uncertainty, I think a lot of us are feeling definitely uncertain and vulnerable. I don't know if you want to end off our first

podcast. I feel like there's so much for us to continue to talk about and so hopefully-

Alexandria Lockett: Oh, sure. Well, I'm happy to follow up on anything or even if there's a Q&A like if the listeners, if you guys have like some specific questions for me I'm happy to do a follow up podcast or even answer some of these questions through like a Twitter Chat or anything like that you want.

Iris Ruiz: Oh, awesome.

Alexandria Lockett: Yeah. So let's not feel like we have to pack everything in. I know people's attention spans are going to get even... It seems like they would get longer because we're at home, but I think actually they get shorter because of the demands that people are under right now. They're extraordinary. So if anybody's listening at all, I'm like, "Thank you for your time, because I know how valuable it is and precious as so many people are unnecessarily losing their lives right now."

Iris Ruiz: Yes. Yes.

Alexandria Lockett: So you were asking me what suggestion I had for the audience in terms of this uncertain time period?

Iris Ruiz: Yeah. One suggestion you might think of going forward especially given your research interests, but also your expertise in this particular area in technological discourse and also learning.

Alexandria Lockett: We really have to ask ourselves, what does this term equity mean to us? When we talk about things like anti-racism and feminism, Black feminism and womanism, all these terms that they're supposed to signify equality or equity or inclusion or diversity. I think there's a tendency because those terms, again like leaks, they are rhetorically provocative. They're intended to persuade people to believe something about a goal or mission or an objective but more often than not those terms they conceal more than they show. And so for me, I think that if instructors are truly interested in equality and equity, they have to start really paying attention to what is happening with knowledge production and the mechanisms of knowledge production, because those affect the delivery of education.

Are we actually going to agree the education should be free and accessible to everyone in the world. Because if we do believe that at the core of our core, then we could acknowledge that we certainly have developed technological systems of delivery. Look at what's going on right now with our remote instruction that are capable, capable of being accessible to people with internet access. But then that raises the question of who has that because there's still issues... The digital divide isn't over. It's certainly less than in the United States, but it's not over.

So the time has come for instructors to realize that it has long been in time for everyone in education to be prepared or to be engaged in teaching with technology and teaching online and distance education as a reality. We have an overabundance of information. No one should be paying for this through their private monies.

These systems need investment from federal entities, state entities, and we all need to start investing in open educational resources and open access scholarship. Until we begin to do that, we're going to continue to have all these different streams of data and accuracy and inequity going on because quite simply people's ability to afford this education, especially after this global pandemic whose economic uncertainties are rocking everybody every which way right now. We were going to have to be adaptive and the systems that are most adaptive to scale data sharing are open source systems. Wikipedia is powered by an open source technology, MediaWiki.

Imagine being able to have massive collaboration among institutions as opposed to all this distributed sharing that you see going on. Let's see we don't have that kind of consciousness. So instructors want best practices, they want to see research compilations. And I get that because pedagogy is creative and it needs to be compensated but what kind of education it takes to survive this world of leadership that's just literally causing people to die every single day unnecessarily. Even look at what's going on with the testing problems with COVID-19. Think about how open access has been accelerated by COVID-19 because sites got to share information and more importantly, how do you get massive testing done if you don't share data systems in some kind of way?

And yet you got to keep those data systems confidential because you got to abide by certain kinds of privacy laws. So the ways in which research is regulated, now the whole public is interested in that. Like, whereas we might've been shadowy and visible before suddenly everybody's wanting to know where's the vaccine where is the cure. So that puts a spotlight on who's regulating this knowledge production and exchange. So I urge educators to start being a lot more interested in internet politics and the openness of these systems and whether or not we can sustain the openness of these systems through some kind of educational investment in not just learning them but having the ability to learn them for free.

This is something that deserves to be a public good. The internet should be a public good, education should be a public good. The fact that people are paying for this clearly being brought into relief with COVID-19 two ways. Students asking for refunds suddenly we feel like we feel the need to be customer service representatives we are like, "Yeah. All right" Ensuring people that their product is sound and repackaging the delivery of something that has been promised to someone through a contract. Is that really how we want education to be in this environment?

It's a cataclysm of clashing systems being exposed by this pandemic. So practical advice being, yes, these are huge issues and everything like that but people like myself and many, many other scholars who are very deeply invested in radical digital pedagogy and information literacy we also say, "Mind your labor because all of this will turn you into a 24/7 resource." So you need to be very aware of your time, very aware of how many hours you're working, not just on the traditional stuff, but your email, how much time do you spend emailing, conferencing, meetings, all these things.

And we need to start establishing clear boundaries as teachers. Yes, we should be compassionate to everybody because that's a big thing that you see especially in online teaching communities is this passion, passion, but what about compassion for ourselves? We need to be compassionate towards students. And just as we're compassionate towards students, we need to also say, if you're going to expect me to deliver this online education, here's what you need to reasonably expect instead of just, "Oh, okay, well, let's get on board." I see people just mindlessly just, "Let's get on board. Let's do what the institution says."

Well, hold on. You kind of have all the power because you are the teacher here and you're delivering that system and the institution is supporting you how? So I urge people to really pay attention to this moment because as much as I'd like to give practical advice for teaching or something like that, I'd say you need to start deciding what movement you're going to join because there's going to be a lot of activity surrounding people's rights after this pandemic. It's already happening. Workers are realizing they have all the power now. Plain and simple, plain and simple. So I think we're going to have a mass class revolution after this-

Iris Ruiz: Amazon workers were going to be walking out and actually really-

Alexandria Lockett: Instacart workers too. And for them to strike they want hazard pay. And as they should, I'll not use Instacart but I would happily pay more money for the fact that they're putting themselves at this kind of risk.

Iris Ruiz: Yeah. And we think we can transition to online buying, online shopping, to create more or to be safe with our social distancing practices. That's not necessarily the case either. The other people are putting themselves at risk of exactly how you're saying. We're thinking about revolutionary times, we're thinking about shifts, we're thinking about the ways that knowledge production is continuing to transform in different ways in which way. And how do we contribute to it as you're saying and-

Alexandria Lockett: And how will we survive as a field if we don't adapt to certain kinds of ways of doing it.

Iris Ruiz: Yeah. Public policy going forward and of course we're all thinking about each other and how we are subsisting through this time and [inaudible 00:48:57] for individual personal circumstances and lack of experience and also wanting to be a resource for other people and thinking about how we can be helpful. And also how we can help each other heal through this process. We're right in the midst of the process, it's definitely a time of intense anxiety, things like that. So I really like I said, appreciate your time during this moment in history that-

Alexandria Lockett: Sure, I appreciate this opportunity because this is a moment and everybody is just... I don't have the words for it because it's just so unprecedented. The fact that we've been in our houses, if we're lucky to have a house and if we're lucky to have a house where we're not living with someone abusing us or we're lucky enough to live in a house that has free of pests and has electricity and food in it. I think about that. I think about the basic, basic, basic, basics and I'm saying you cannot have knowledge equity or any kind of equity if people are hungry, thirsty, unhealthy. And by unhealthy I mean literally in an ICU struggling to breathe because of a respiratory illness or other illnesses. Education has to focus on getting us to some kind of agreement about what those basic goods need to be.

That stimulus bill, I've read through major parts of it and it's necessary. I'm not going to deny that it's not going to help people because it will, but it's just like a band-aid on a gushing wound. Like there was such an opportunity to really strengthen federal design for crisis and preparedness in that. But these are short term fixes for what are glaring issues like unemployment, childcare, student loans, healthcare access. What the pandemic reveals is just how incredibly cruel our systems are set up to kill you if you are not a certain kind of person and that it's brutally clear, brutally clear. We're going to lose at least 200,000 people and that's doing everything, their quote unquote telling us to do. And I say, quote unquote, because Trump's position changes every day with this, one minute we're going to be back to normal by Easter Sunday and the next minute, "Nope, Nope, Nope. I saw that..."

He actually said, I... When he's talking about seeing all the bodies in the refrigerated trucks, he's like, "I've heard about it on television in faraway lands," You are commander in chief. You oversee military. If you're that terrified or scared or seeing dead bodies is that new to you, that's frightening. Like you get paid to deal with life and death. That's the job. That's what you signed up for. But the teachers are the ones having to, just to really quick just to conclude and then I swear I'm off my soap box, but the teachers are the ones having to eat the emotional debt, the spiritual debt, the literacy deficits. It's more than I think a lot of us can bear. So I would say we really need a moment to pause and recollect and develop some kind of vision here because we're not going to make it. Sorry for that kind of ending but I have deep, deep fear.

Iris Ruiz: This has definitely revealed a lot. And I definitely want to invite you back for a second episode here, but I think I'll just end with in terms of the purpose of our podcast I feel like this was a perfect way to be at the beginning, at the front

lines of this podcast in terms of what we're wanting to do because we definitely wanted to be a source of healing for each other and creating connectedness among each other. And I'm sure that the listeners are empathizing with you and the things that you're saying. And in terms of the struggle and also in terms of the sudden demands that we've had to meet.

So, I thank you again so much for your time, and we'll continue to reflect on what you have said and ponder and meditate on what you've said and going forward and just like you I wish everybody to take care of themselves and minding their labor for sure, as you said and thank you again for your time.

Alexandria Lockett:

Thank you so much. I would just like to say everybody who wants to know any more about my work, you feel free to visit alexanderlockett.com. I am updating my website right now with some of my more recent publications and progress on my projects, which include *Race Rhetoric and Research Ethics*, which we hope will be forthcoming in 2020 coauthored by myself, Erie Sarees, James Chase Sanchez, and Christopher Carter. So please look out for that.

I also want to plug my other book that it is forthcoming, but is available for pre-order right now. It's called *Learning From the Lived Experiences of Graduate Writers*. And it is a phenomenal collection that is all about the understudied but very important issue of graduate writers, student writers and the resources and support that they need. I am one of the co-editors of that book, but the lead editor is Shannon Madden and also Kiersten Edwards and Michelle Hudijai. It is a book that is for practitioners of all kinds of teaching of writing, whether you're in a writing center or a WPA or a faculty member or a mentor. Please get it immediately. You can get it for 40% off using the code MADD40. Thank you so much for allowing me to plug those. And I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today.

Sherri Craig:

Thank you for listening to the CCG BIWOC podcast. I'm Sherri Craig an Assistant Professor of English at Westchester University of Pennsylvania and co-editor of the *Spark* 2020 special issue on Black Studies in which we celebrate the relationship between Black Studies and rhetoric, writing, and literacy expected in late spring 2020. We hope you'll read. As a member of the Editorial Collective, I invite you to stay tuned for our next podcast. You can find us at sparkactivism.com/ccgpodcast.