

SPEARS: WELCOME BACK TO THE ONE BOOK ONE NORTHWESTERN PODCAST. I'M BAYLOR SPEARS. AND WE'RE CONTINUING OUR CONVERSATION ABOUT THE THEMES OF THIS YEAR'S ONE BOOK -- HIDDEN FIGURES BY MARGOT SHETTERLY. IN THE LAST EPISODE, WE TALKED WITH OUR OWN "HIDDEN FIGURE" ANDREA MOSIE, WHO IS A SENIOR SCIENTIST SPECIALIST IN THE ASTROMATERIALS RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION SCIENCES AT NASA'S JOHNSON SPACE CENTER. SHE GAVE US AN INSIDE LOOK AT HOW SHE ENDED UP AT NASA AND HER WORK WITH APOLLO MOON SAMPLES.

IN TODAY'S EPISODE, WE'LL BE SWITCHING GEARS A LITTLE..

MCNEIL: "Because we are people. We share some strong emotions, some of them hopeless, some of them lonely but because we are people we are connected in a way that says give me your ugliest truths, your dirtiest things, and I will give you the same. Tell me your name. I'll tell you mine."

SPEARS: THAT WAS WEINBERG JUNIOR KOURTNI MCNEIL PERFORMING A POEM SHE WROTE. SHE SAID SHE WROTE IT WITH THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY IN MIND.

MCNEIL : "I was very much inspired by the thought of community and just thinking of people in general and what it means to connect to others and just exist and how inherently we all share some of the same experiences."

SPEARS: YOU'LL GET TO HEAR THE REST OF THE POEM THROUGHOUT THE EPISODE. IT CONNECTS HEAVILY TO WHAT WE'RE DISCUSSING TODAY -- THE METOO MOVEMENT. WE'LL DISCUSS THE MOVEMENT'S ORIGINS AND FOUNDER, AND ITS FOCUS ON CONNECTING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY. WE'LL FINISH BY LOOKING AT HOW THE METOO MOVEMENT IMPACTS NORTHWESTERN'S COMMUNITY..

IN OCTOBER 2017, #METOO BLEW UP NATIONALLY AFTER ALYSSA MILANO AND OTHER HOLLYWOOD ACTRESSES TWEETED USING THE HASHTAG. WITHIN A YEAR, #METOO WAS USED ABOUT 19 MILLION TIMES AND THE HASHTAG MADE A HUGE IMPACT. SOME STATISTICS CAN ILLUSTRATE THIS.

BURKE 1: "The National rape crisis hotline reported a 400% jump in calls after that viral moment. Reports of rape and sexual assault also more than doubled across the country."

SPEARS: BEFORE THIS MOMENT, HOWEVER, #METOO WAS THE WORK OF ONE WOMAN NAMED TARANA BURKE IN SELMA, ALABAMA. THAT'S WHO YOU JUST HEARD.

BURKE RECENTLY VISITED CAMPUS TO DELIVER THE KEYNOTE SPEECH FOR NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DREAM WEEK

COMMEMORATION . IT'S AN ANNUAL EVENT DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING DR. KING'S LIFE AND LEGACY. SO LET'S GET INTO TODAY'S DISCUSSION

****MUSIC****

MCNEIL: "Throw your pain across every landscape yell until you feel you've lost your voice forever and in time someone finds your hurt and catches it for you. And you are not alone. This world is sure to enrage you, so be enraged. When your anger has nowhere left to go, your only option leaves you flinging a closed fist against hard plaster. Someone catches it for you."

SPEARS: TARANA BURKE, A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL ASSAULT HERSELF, SAID ME TOO IS SUPPOSED TO FOCUS ON SURVIVORS AND MAKING SURE THEY ARE SUPPORTED AND KNOW THEY'RE NOT ALONE. EMPOWERING WOMEN, ESPECIALLY IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES HAS OFTEN BEEN THE FOCUS OF BURKE'S WORK EVEN PRIOR TO ME TO.

SHE GOT HER START IN ACTIVISM AT A YOUNG AGE IN A ORGANIZATION CALLED THE 21ST CENTURY YOUTH LEADERSHIP MOVEMENT. SHE SAID THIS ORGANIZATION IS A BIG REASON WHY SHE DOES WHAT SHE DOES NOW.

BURKE : "I am who I am now because a group of adults who were veterans of the Civil Right and Black Power and Labor and various movements of the sixties and seventies told me at fourteen and fifteen years old that I had power now. They said you have a lot to learn and you'll grow and you'll develop, but the change that you want to see in the world you can affect that now."

SPEARS: AFTER GRADUATING FROM AUBURN UNIVERSITY, SHE SAID SHE KNEW SHE WANTED TO CONTINUE PURSUING THAT WORK. SHE RETURNED TO SELMA AND BEGAN WORKING FOR 21ST CENTURY AND THEN...

BURKE: "While living in Selma, it became clear to me that the work that I was doing to support and develop the leadership of black and brown girls had to expand."

SPEARS: BURKE CO-FOUNDED AN ORGANIZATION CALLED JUST BE INC. IT'S DEDICATED TO HELPING YOUNG BLACK GIRLS FIND HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. IT'S WHILE WORKING WITH THESE MIDDLE SCHOOLERS THAT BURKE BECAME AWARE OF AN ISSUE INSIDE HER COMMUNITY.

BURKE: "I had seventh graders running around talking about 21-year-old grown men were their boyfriends, and getting mad at me when I try to disrupt those relationships. I didn't know how to say to them, this is not a relationship, this is a crime. And nobody else had said that to them."

SPEARS: BURKE SAID, BASED ON THE ANECTDOTES SHE HEARD, THAT AROUND 75 PERCENT OF THE GIRLS THEY WERE DEALING WITH HAD ENCOUNTERED SOME TYPE

OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE. BURKES RESPONSE TO THIS REALIZATION WAS TO CREATE A SAFE HAVEN

BURKE: “Just Be was going to create this program to deal with sexual violence. The program was really great. We would define things for the girls, and we had these celebrities to talk about, you know, other people who survived sexual violence.”

SPEARS: BURKE SAID A PROGRAM WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH BECAUSE IT WOULDN'T CHANGE THE COMMUNITY THE GIRLS WERE RETURNING TO.

BURKE: “It doesn't help for me to have a program to empower these girls to give them space to talk about the violence they experience, and then send them back out into a community that's not going to protect them.”

SPEARS: BURKE SAID SHE KNEW A MOVEMENT WAS NECESSARY TO REALLY ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SELMA.

BURKE: “In order for us to make any significant changes, it had to be a movement because movements are made up of people and people forced to change. And it had to be a movement so folks could recognize that we were playing a long game and intended on being thoughtful and strategic because that's what movements are.”

MCNEIL: “Just before it lands and clinches your hand and holds it and you are not alone when someone takes your body for granted. And you're left with 1000 questions and every emotion builds up in your chest forcing you to holding your breath someone catches it for you.”

SPEARS: BURKE SAID THE METOO MOVEMENT IS ABOUT BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY HEALING, AND SHE WAS CLEAR WHEN SHE SAID NO ONE GETS TO DEFINE INDIVIDUAL HEALING.

BURKE: “We all survived differently. And healing looks different. What I need is not going to be exactly what you need. What I can do is tell you about what my survival has looked like and talk to you about what my processes are and, maybe, you'll pull something from that and build on that.”

SPEARS: COMMUNITY HEALING, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS ALL ABOUT A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE SHIFT.

BURKE: “Community healing is what action manifests is the thing that we define collectively. It's concrete things to sometimes when you say healing people make it sort of not something tangible. I'm talking about laws and policy, I'm talking about cultural shift. Those are real things that we can do to heal our communities.”

SPEARS: HER PUSH FOR COMMUNITY HEALING AND ACTION TO FIGHT SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SELMA STARTED OFF SMALL WITH NOT MANY PEOPLE WILLING TO LISTEN.

BURKE: “Until that tweet went out, I was Tarana Burke, who annoyed the hell out of people with her little black t-shirts and her MeToo on it coming, trying to get put on people's agendas.”

SPEARS: BURKE SAID THE VIRAL MOMENT, HOWEVER, IS WHAT TOOK #METOO TO ANOTHER LEVEL

BURKE: “The viral MeToo hashtag was a moment that helped to propel the movement into the mainstream, and to show millions of survivors across the world, that there are no limits to our possibility, the possibility to heal and the possibility to put an end to sexual violence. But it also provided us with an opportunity to show the world that we are more than victims.”

SPEARS: BURKE SAID THIS MOMENT WAS NOT THE BIG CULTURE SHIFT THAT SOME CHARACTERIZE IT TO BE.

BURKE: “Some people characterize it that way and it was maybe a stir in comparison to the pervasiveness of this issue. It was an eye opening moment for some and some closed their eyes back.”

SPEARS: TODAY WITH THE GLOBAL NATURE OF METOO, BURKE’S WORK IS A LOT LARGER IN SCOPE. SHE ...ALONG WITH OTHERS... HAVE WORKED TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR METOO THAT HELPS ESTABLISH THE MOVEMENT AROUND THE U.S. IN ADDITION TO WORK HERE, BURKE HELPS SUPPORT SIMILAR EFFORTS IN COUNTRIES LIKE INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND GHANA. SHE ALSO VISITS COLLEGE CAMPUSES ASKING....

BURKE: What will you do next?

****MUSIC****

MCNEIL: Because no one should bear that burden alone. You are not alone. I will be your sister. I will be your friend. And when and I do mean when you find yourself lost in some darkness, I will catch it for you and help you find your life.

SPEARS: SO WHAT IS NORTHWESTERN DOING?
WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN METOO AND NORTHWESTERN, KOURTNI MCNEIL POINTED TO THE WORK OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS.

MCNEIL: “She was talking about seeing Northwestern community or college campus as a community. And I think there are a lot of people who are working towards bettering that and see the problems here and really do put in tireless, tireless work, to try to improve student

experiences. The experiences of black people on campus, queer people on campus, marginalized voice and I think that's very important."

SPEARS: KYRA JONES IS THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AT CARE or CENTER FOR AWARENESS, RESPONSE AND EDUCATION. IT IS A DEPARTMENT THAT DEALS WITH SEXUAL EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS. SHE SAID THE CREATION OF CARE IN 2014 IS A WAY NORTHWESTERN HAS WORKED TO ADDRESS SEXUAL EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS. JONES SAID SHE'S SEEN CAMPUS CULTURE CHANGE WITH MORE STUDENT GROUPS LOOKING TO PARTNER WITH CARE AND OTHER GROUPS THAT ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE.

JONES: "We have student groups who meet with us who were just like, how can I make sure that we're keeping the other people in a group safe or like how can I better support survivors in our group, that kind of thing."

SPEARS: JONES SAID THERE ARE ALSO SMALL STRUCTURAL CHANGES HAPPENING AT THE UNIVERSITY. FOR EXAMPLE, SHE SAID SHE'S SEEN THE WAY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IS INVESTIGATED CHANGE.

JONES: "Now, students who do report and want to have the misconduct investigated they don't have to be in the same room as their perpetrator or get cross-examined which used to happen. Now, it's a more trauma-informed process."

SPEARS: JONES SAID IMPROVEMENTS CAN STILL BE MADE. SHE SAID DEPARTMENTS DEDICATED TO THIS WORK LIKE CARE STILL NEED MORE RESOURCES. ONE SPECIFIC ISSUE SHE SEES IS IN ABOUT STUDENT SEXUAL EDUCATION. SHE SAID THERE IS STILL ONLY ONE MANDATORY PROGRAM.

JONES: "Everyone meets us and has a big conversation about sexual violence the first week of freshman year and then never again. And your experiences, when you first get to campus around sex and sexuality and sexual violence are going to be very different from when you've been here for a while And they need another opportunity to be able to learn and talk and know what the resources are, so there's still a lot more that needs to be done, but I do see smaller changes happening institutionally"

SPEARS: THAT'S ALL FOR THIS EPISODE OF THE ONE BOOK ONE NORTHWESTERN PODCAST. THANK YOU FOR LISTENING AND BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE NEXT EPISODE. THANK YOU TO MY EDITORIAL ADVISOR, DR. AVA THOMPSON GREENWELL.