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## Interview with Kristina Arnold (FA 1293)

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Interviewer: Chloe Brown  
Interviewee: Kristina Arnold  
Date: March 26<sup>th</sup> 2017  
Topic: Women's March

#### Kristina Arnold Interview

CB: Is it recording? Yeah, okay. Great!

KA: Yay!

CB: It is March 26<sup>th</sup>?

KA: Yeah.

CB: Around.. It's Monday!

KA: It is Monday.

CB: And I'm interviewing Kristina Arnold about her Women's March experience. So can you give me some background information about yourself?

KA: Sure. My name is Kristina. I grew up in Arlington, Virginia. I've been teaching at Western Kentucky University since 2005. I teach in the art department and I'm Art Gallery Director. I went to—goodness what kind of background would you like?

CB: Little bit of educational but just kinda orienting yourself towards political issues and involvement.

KA: I grew up in the D.C. area and that was something that I think, from blood, you know, you kinda absorb politics. And politics not necessarily from voting and who's one The Hill way, actually, from, yes, from that way. Because I think I was 18 before I realized there was such a thing as local news and national news. Because to me it all had the Capitol as the backdrop. So I just thought everybody cared about local D.C. stuff and that was what kind of the world was like. And my parents were both interested in social change and so I think that I got the politics from where I was and then the idea of making the world a better place from both of my parents. And my dad was a prof and in International Development. So he worked with international students, third world, and, again, not a top down kind of government going in way but a grassroots philosophy. My mom was a physical therapist and worked at the schools with special needs kids. And just they kind of from an early age, instilled in us to stand up for what we believed in and, to them, what was right. I remember it was—South Africa was still under a partied and there was an ongoing—it must have been, wait I do remember. I was in 8<sup>th</sup>? 7<sup>th</sup> grade? So it would have been '83? Yeah. So like the early mid 80s and there was an ongoing demonstration, like an anti-a partied demonstration, and every day people would knock on the door of South Africa embassy and demand to be seen and were told to go away and arrested. So it this was choreographed thing but every day people were arrested. It was, ya know, and people would sign up. It would be your

group's turn to go and demonstrate. So my parents were involved in that. I remember being so angry that they didn't take me. So that was kind of seeing how social justice works and non-violent resistance. So then I went to college in New England. I went to Brown. I loved the school but then again it was super liberal, it was the most liberal campus probably in the states. And that was eye opening and so I sort of hadn't been exposed to lots of people who think differently from me on the right, I think. And, but I love New England, but it was dark and rainy and so I decided to come further back, ya know, further south than I had been because I wanted, and I wanted to be somewhere that I had never been before and I didn't know people. Because I graduated from college; I wanted to do something new. So I picked Nashville because it was—it sounded romantic and it had—it had the sight of the Student Health Coalition which was started by-- oh gosh I'm forgetting my history, that's terrible—it had been around doing work in Appalachia for decades and was something, seemed like something that I wanted to be involved in. So I came back for that. Then thinking that I would be here for a year and I haven't left. That was like '95. I went—so this is kind of deep back story, sorry.

CB: No, it's fine!

KA: Oh and in '89, so I graduated in '90 and '89 was the big march to support Planned Parenthood and it was the Webster decision I think. It was kind of marching to protest the Webster decision. And a lot of my friends in high school and I marched and, it's funny because with the Women's March those photos started coming back, so my friends who I haven't seen in 20 years were posting pictures of us at the march in '89. So then the number of those people went to the Women's March then this year and I had a list of like 20 people who I was looking for, actually the list is right here! I was writing—these are the people who I am going to try and find and, of course, I saw zero of them because there was a million people there. So I went to grad school in art and then, so, kind of conflating two things together—I was back in Nashville working, I did AmeriCorps for a year. I then went back and then I started working in public health which was what my undergraduate was in. I always wanted to also be an artist so after 5 years I went back to art school. And part of choosing not to do art in undergrad was I didn't feel like it was relevant to this idea of being able to change the world. It felt like it was too introspective, too self-serving. And I definitely don't think all—it wasn't that I didn't think all artists are bad—it wasn't how I thought I could use my voice. And then fast forward five years, I realized for me I need to go back to art school; I'm not sure how I'm going to use it. And then it became—it conflated my, I added my public kind of health stuff to my art and realized, "Okay this is the way I can start speaking." And then I became a teacher. So I was like, "This kind of does the whole "changing the world" thing too." And I haven't been, I would say, I haven't been super politically active on this campus. I've been engaged in causes that I feel like are important and just the fact of being an art professor at this university, like our students are part of a population that is not exactly supported other places. And just being—so I feel like being a den mother. This is—you are in the wings of support just by the nature of caring about your students. And I think the campus has gotten better but certainly ten years ago there were stories of our students walking across the lawn, the various denominations of student unions, and getting harassed and that kind of stuff. It's just not okay. And then there was the "Condoms on Crosses" issue. So that was in 2011 when a student of mine—so these are things that are kind of propelled me into but at the same time caused me to hesitate from becoming politically active. I think back to what you said at the very beginning before we were taping, this

wish to be kind and I don't want to call people out. Which is ironic because then with the Fairness, ya know, the photos of me literally calling people out in the paper with a megaphone. I'm not in one who believes in public shaming as a general rule. But I think, sometimes, I guess the world just gets so difficult to make sense of and people in positions of power have so little, seemingly, regard for a huge swath of other people who are also human beings. Ya know, it's also like this insistence in denying their ability to see how what they do affects others. Like I just—sometimes I just sort of like, the world needs a good tantrum. The world, sometimes standing out on the public fair with a megaphone and shaming people, even though it's like I—I don't know, it's embarrassing, I think, to me in some senses to see those photographs because—I mean sometimes it's powerful but I don't like the anger being directed at other people but I also don't like other people making me so angry. So this is sort of a twisting story but the two—so there have been a couple places where I feel I've been sort of forced to step up and speak publicly. And one was around the “Condoms on Crosses” when a student of mine interacted with what was posing as a piece of public art in a way that they were allegedly asking, ya know, it being interacted with in a way that was appropriate, I thought and the police thought and kind of followed all the rules and ended up getting on Fox News nationwide anyway. And the university was really leaning on her to, the student, to apologize and leaning on me to lean on her and kind of all the way up—it was my student who is female, myself who is female, and every other person up the power chain was male. And at that point in 2011 when I was saying, “This is part of a coordinated war on women. Like we are responding to this with our voices.” It's sort of like when you see the megaphone to shout “shame.” That's how that's connected and that there is no other way for her to use her voice here. And, you know, it's like how can I understand that both sides here are being—are saying that they're the victim? Saying well you have a woman who is using her voice and you have an institution of religion who is saying that they are being taken advantage of and it's like there is a church on every corner in this town. Like the closest women's center isn't even in this state. So you can't tell me that that's equality of voice right there. And then, so it's like we are shut down, shut down, shut down. She's shut down. I'm shut down. And all that's left is to grab the megaphone and shout like a crazy person in the middle of the public square and then people tell you you're crazy. It's like I don't understand why you don't just be nicer and it's just like I've been nice since 2005. And now I'm really pissed off but at the same time, we had students on both sides of that issue. And so, it does—I feel like you can't be on every side of every issue every time. And sometimes, whatever I feel like is right, it's like I come down on a side and it makes me—I don't ever want to hurt other people and I guess it's the part of that that made me sad. I feel like when you are in public office it's a little different. I feel less bad for calling out four people who should know better than shutting down someone's project, you know who did this because she was told to by a national Christian organization and kind of got caught in the middle. Although, honestly, I say she but it was dudes, mostly who did that project. And so then, you want to know why I went to the Women's March, is that the question?

CB: Well, so yeah! Yeah, why did you go?

KA: And I think it's interesting because I talked to a number of colleagues before I went. And, I guess, the march was maybe kind of—I'm remembering it's kind of the end of the semester so it would have been middle of December that I was having these conversations with people. And it's this idea of as a professor we represent not just ourselves, you know? We represent—do we

represent our institution? Do we—how are we viewed by our institution and by our students? And what is fair? What is—can you have both public and a personal life, essentially? And I think a scary thing universities around the country were already starting to shut down people and have been but around this issue more shut down people's ability to have a personal life and a personal voice. And with social media and with every, ya know, instantaneity of connection and stuff online, even your ability to have any kind of like personal anonymity, being anonymous, to the—because even if you don't post, someone else might post something with you in it or tag you in it or whatever. And I've sort of given up the idea of being able to hide on facebook anyway, and in part, I feel like being an artist actually, I'm "allowed" to do more kind of wacky things than people in other disciplines and that I'm—because, in part, people don't take artists very seriously and I mean I talk about that being a Trojan horse. You know, you can kind of ride your Trojan horse of silliness in and then deploy. So that's something that I'm kind of thinking about. And not for evil, you know, for good. And so I've been—a lot of different colleagues kind of talked about if they would go and I talked about it with a friend who said, and this kind of kicked me into being more serious about going, she said, "I would like to go but I only have a green card." And so, and I was like, "Oh my god, I didn't even think about that." First of all, I forget that she has a green card and she's Australian so it's not like, you know, don't think about hunting down the Australians. But she was like things are so crazy like I don't feel comfortable going because I wouldn't want anything, at this point, to jeopardize my ability to stay here. And so that made me even more—and I was kind of sort of on the fence, like how am I going to go, like it's a long way, do I rent a van and take other people? And then, the bus, you know there is a bus that you could go on, and I was like that's just easy. I would like to be the kind of hero and rent a van and stuff people on it and drive and then I was just like: where am I going to park the van?, I hate driving in D.C., and I was like I'm just going to ride on the bus. But the idea that other people couldn't go and couldn't use their voices made me realize that this was something that I felt like I had the responsibility to do. And my sister was marching in Nashville. She wanted to go to D.C. but she has two little kids. And she was like I can't— you don't take children to a march, well some people did and it was fine and it was totally safe, but she didn't feel comfortable. And my mom was marching in Olympia, Washington. And so..

CB: Why did you feel that you needed to be present in Washington versus, maybe, Louisville or Nashville?

KA: That's a good question. Part of is, Malia and I, Malia is my sister, and I've talked about this—we are just so repulsed by the idea of this person being in our home. You know, on some level it's still our home. And I was—I felt like I needed to go back home and show him that this is not okay and show the rest of the country! And I felt like it was in a weird sense—I mean I had done it before, you know, and I—in a lot of senses I couldn't believe, I mean I can't believe I'm back here again for the same thing. I mean and lots of other things too but it's decades later. And I think being able to, you know. I think that having all of the allied marches across the world were hugely important and that helped sort of shore up the cause. But having a huge outpouring of people showing up in the capitol city, I think, was amazingly important. And I wanted to be there from a personal level. I wanted to see what that was and I didn't have any concept about how affirming and positive it would be. I didn't think it wouldn't be positive but it was so, everybody was so kind. And it was fun and it was a lot of positive energy of, you know, a lot of angry people coming together and sort of a positive outpouring of change. Like this is what needs to

happen. Even the cops were, I mean the ones that I saw were—I wouldn't say partying, not at all, but like just friendly. The weird thing was at night. We were walking from the mall back to where the buses were and we passed by what we found out to later was probably the, it was probably an anarchist's and Black Lives Matter group. Did you see them?

CB: Uhm..

KA: They were drumming on the corner

CB: No.

Ka: It was across from the D.C. courthouse and two of the people who were with us were young African American women and so it's like all of sudden—oh! And the only reason we thought about what that —we heard the drumming and was like that sounds like fun. I wonder what that is and we were like we have to get back; let's go. And so we passed somebody who was a reporter and he said, "Have you seen anarchists?" And we were like, "What??" He's like, "Oh, anarchists and the Black Lives Matter group are suppose to have a march." "Well there's a bunch of drumming over there. Like if they are suppose to be here like maybe they're marching from there to here." And then we started realizing all the cops. Like all of a sudden all the cops changed from the friendly to like riot gear. And the—and that just felt bad. You know, that felt like okay so you have the Women's March which is, was definitely criticized for being very white, it was definitely—it was integrated but not to the level of that it could have been. And then all of sudden you're walking with, two African American young women and then that just felt, that just felt embarrassing to me. And it felt—it needs—one of them was a former student and, again, the den mother thing comes out and like this isn't, you realize that this isn't fair. And I don't know that that's what was happening but it definitely looked like that's what was happening. I mean like 15 vans of cops in riot gear getting ready for the Black Lives Matter and Anarchists.

CB: Yeah, and that's something that was pointed out a lot after how positive the cops were. Could you speak a little bit more about the criticisms of the march and whether or not you think that they were founded, like were they fair? Did the march do a good enough job about...?

KA: Intersectionality?

CB: Yes!

KA: Yeah and I think that—I think lots of things about that. I think that criticisms, while well intentioned, is always important. And I feel like the Women's March heard the criticism which was true at that point and I mean it just sort of started but it just fledged and the leadership was very white and the march kind of very intentionally seemed to draft women from different areas, women of color, and women who had different areas of expertise, and who were pros at this. Oh goodness this might get bigger than we can plan in a kitchen table so let's get the pros involved. And then there was a lot of talk around intersectionality and I think that, from my perspective, just looking online, it looked like the outreach was attempted. I don't think—we're not there yet. And I think—someone asked me at the international women's parade that we did about what I

thought about intersectionality. And I said that I think that we still have a long way to go. As white women, I think it is our responsibility to kind of realize that things haven't always been diverse. And, I mean, the women's movement has—was racist at its start, at its core. And the civil rights movement was sexist at its core. And so it's like how do you understand what was happening in the turn of the century, in the 20s, in the 60s, and take that as a beginning point and move forward. I also—I'm frustrated too though by criticism, by the sort of constant criticism. And it's like that—and I feel like there was some kind of reforming the narrative, post march. And I mean it was really interesting because, you know, you walk from the bus to the march and you're walking through northwest or—I'm horribly with directions, anyway—and you're walking by tons of people saying, "Thank you for being here." And so it's—I think it's a tough question. I think we need to keep working and I think to acknowledge that we made some headway and acknowledge the people who tried hard to make that happen and then, but, and then just keep—it's tough to work in a diverse community. And when I say diverse, I mean people who think differently from you. It's easier and faster to just do it yourself but then it's a lot more work. And you've lost out on the plurality of voices. That was sort of long and hedged. I don't mean to—I don't feel that it's hedged because I do think and this may be again, age like I'm getting crusty but it's a lot easier to criticize than it is to throw your shit in with everybody else and figure out how to get this thing to move forward.

CB: Do you think that—if you look at the board of people who were involved in the march, it was extremely diverse. Do you think that this narrative of it not being inclusive enough was damaged by the mainstream media's coverage— or the media's coverage of the march, you know Madonna all over television—do you think it was accurately portrayed in the media? Or do you think that they missed what it was really about?

KA: That's an interesting question because I actually have no idea how it was portrayed in the media. In part, because I think because we were there, so we-and there were so many people that your phone didn't work, right? So you couldn't-and that's real time. And then I wasn't looking at media portrayals of it. I was looking at, like, my friends' Facebook posts, and listening to Ashley Judd's speech. And, you know, like-I do think that it's so easy to spin, that's the other thing. I think that, kind of, some of the real criticisms were at maybe the state level of the organization, not the national level, where state folks were sort of predominantly white, or local areas, and you know, there was definitely-I did hear one media report where somebody, I don't know, "random white lady, aged 50, in North Carolina, isn't going to go anymore because she's told she's not wanted because she's white," or you know, whatever that was. And it's like oh sheesh. And I think that-there's the other, the idea that if people of color are speaking up in anger because their voices aren't being heard, and maybe they're speaking directly against white women, but it's also like-that doesn't mean you're not invited. That means you show up and figure out how to make this thing work, and yeah, so that-I mean I just sort of roll my eyes at that, too. So, spin is easy. The media finds a story that it wants to hear, which is something that's going to sell. And it's so interesting to hear-hear the idea that the liberal media-the idea of a liberal media? Because growing up, the media never seemed liberal. You know, it always seemed to just try to find the bad story, whatever that was.

CB: How—what is your take on pussyhats?

KA: I love pussyhats! Because, again, it's this—it's a small action that went viral and it was two friends who couldn't be there and they wanted to—part of it I react to as an artist and I react to it as someone who can only imagine one of their ideas gets taken on board like this. Cities were selling out of pink yarn. And I think that—and weirdly I still wear mine around town here like it's quite an act of resistance to where a pussyhat in Bowling Green, Kentucky. I get some dirty looks. And, you know, it's like wearing my Fairness shirt. I guess people are finally figuring out what that means. And I don't know what are the criticisms of the pussyhats?

CB: That they're not trans inclusive.

KA: That they're essentialist.

CB: Yeah.

KA: I think the whole movement was titled a women's movement. I think that pussyhats are looking at—I mean, I don't know that they were sold as just for women. And because I mean my sister—she's funny-- She's—wear the criticisms are coming from. I mean she hates the word 'pussy.' She thinks it's so degrading. And, I mean, it's just like one of those things. I don't particularly like it either but now I'm kind of—yeah, I think that the pussyhat is the symbol of the march and it didn't start out as being the symbol of the march but it got connected to it. Whatever your feelings are about the march, being a women's march, that's sort of an essentialist idea. But I don't know-- listening to This American Life this weekend and it was a show from maybe fifteen years ago about testosterone and they were interviewing a transman and he was talking about his transition. You know, he was asked, "What do you miss about being a woman essentially?" And he said, "My close female friendships." It's like—it was a very essentialist answer for that question from someone who had transitioned. And I think that the idea of inclusion is very complicated and that it's easy to shut conversation down by saying you are not including this person or you are not including this person or you're not including me because of x. That symbols are powerful and so how we choose to activate or use or whatever, is important to consider but I, also, don't think that because something is deemed a march for women that—or no, it wasn't even deemed a march for women, it was deemed a women's march, which is for everybody. Yeah.

CB: And the website made it very clear that it was for everyone.

KA: Right.

CB: So..

KA: And I think it's like what you state and what people understand can often diverge and what ends up being important is what people understand and not what you state. And so figuring out how to control your own spin is important. And I do think the Women's March really tried to be proactive and intentional about—it's not just spin with them—it was saying, "No, really Everybody is invited and everybody is involved." And post-march, their actions have been reflective of that.



CB: Yeah. In terms of the driving purpose of the march, it seemed like there was kind of a repudiations of Trump's treatment of women and the comments that he made to women and also just kind of this symbolic these are the things we believe in and we are going to march for these causes. Which narrative do you think was most represented in the march? Was it just a march against Trump or was it a march for progressive ideas?

KA: I think it may have started out, and I don't mean on the day, I mean in the organizing against Trump, but then it very quickly rolled into something much bigger than that. And I think that that would have—some of the things that I've been reading maybe Trump's, ya know, his biggest accidental gift, you know, is to get people realize that he—it's not him. It's what he symbolizes and that we need to—he's sort of like the worst case example. It's like, "Oh my god if that can happen, we've got a lot of work to do." And I think that there's a lot of anti-Trump, specifically, anger but that wasn't the powerful part. The powerful part was the pro- everything else. I loved seeing Canada show up although some of Canada was, apparently, not allowed to come in. But they are walking in and there's a whole bunch of people in red. And I was like, "Ugh what are all those people in red?" Then you're like red is not the right color and I was like, "Oh, it's the Canadians." And it was Montreal or something. And that felt awesome.

CB: Yeah. Do you have any lasting memories of the march? Maybe a couple of experiences that encapsulated the whole thing for you?

KA: I think just, again, being with that many people and I've been in large crowds before and it's—I think that the '89 march which I don't remember totally well but that was like a million people also. But the way the march—it got too big for itself and it sort of dissolved. So kind of great but also disorienting and, I mean, there was one part of the march where there was a cross—it wasn't a counter march, it was an additional march. We all stopped, and we were kind of a mob anyway, at the point we weren't like going in a line. And we were like oh wait there's a bunch of giant puppets and things and so we stopped and waited and the other march went through us and we're like, "Are they us? Is it the green party? Like who are they?" We all waved and so that march went on and then we kept going. So it was this kind of loosely choreographed bunch of people and when Madonna started singing and I didn't know that Madonna was going to sing and this young man to my left like I think he might have started crying, about peeing his pants because he was like, "Madonnaaaa!" And we were like, "Is this really Madonna?" and so we—the one phone that was working like my friend texted her husband and he was like no it's really Madonna! Because we couldn't see anything and so just sort of—and the old ladies (the women older than me because I'm going to one of them sooner than later but) who were really pissed off and had signs with lots of profanity on them. I was like—and women who looked like my mom so not mean which is to say she swears but not in public. And that was like—generations like little kids—there was one little girl who might've been two on her dad's shoulders and like people were chanting and then stopped and then she started the chant again and everyone was like, "Yayyyyy!"

CB: So can you just briefly walk me through your day? I know it was very long.

KA: Right. The day started the night before at 8 p.m. and we got on the bus and drove and I guess we got there at like 10 in the morning and then all piled out in RFK stadium and we could

have taken the metro but that was the one thing that I was not going to do because I'm claustrophobic so I was like, "Y'all can take the metro. I'm walking. I don't care if it's ten miles." And we had already looked at the map. We knew it was less than two. And so we—and pretty much everyone just walked and so it was kind of like the little trickle except it was never a little trickle. It's like tons and tons and tons of busses at RFK stadium which is like a giant football stadium funneling in the direction that everyone else is going. And the vendors, that was another thing, the vendors were super nice and they were like, "Y'all are so much better than the inauguration people yesterday." And they were directing traffic and like, "Y'all need to go here," and, "What are you looking for? The metro is this way and the march is that way." And then just walking through neighborhoods and we were not shutting down traffic. We weren't shutting down traffic on purpose ever but it was just that there were so many people and I think traffic – we were sort of like not so many people that we weren't shutting down traffic, we were like waiting and cars would go, and people were saying thank you—it was a predominately African American neighborhood and they were saying, "Thank you for being here," Martin Luther King signs (yard signs because MLK Day had just happened). And there was an armored tank on corner and is that for us or is that for the inauguration? And then—oh my god then I had a two-pound bag of carrots. Why did I carry that thing the whole way? So I was like feeding people carrots. Brain food! This is what you need. Sometimes you turn into your mother, you know? And we missed, all the Kentucky busses were suppose to meet up, did you go to that site?

CB: Yes, and no one was there.

KA: No one was there because we were all late and so that didn't happen. We just kept—and somebody had a sign from Kentucky. It was the "Don't tread on me" snake, I think. And it said something about don't tread on this pussy. I can't remember—so we're trying to find bright yellow and follow that. And we had a big group and, finally, everything just sort of dissolved. There were so many people. Some people went this way and so I think there was six of us that ended up staying together. And we tried to get to the corner where the big jumbotron was and, again, me claustrophobic, so it became clear to me that more and more people were packing in but no one was going anywhere. And I was like I can't do this. This is—we're just sort of like shoving—and blaugh. So I was like I'm going back so I convinced sort of my group to like go back and around a different way. And then, I mean, other people had started doing that too and, I mean, this is when you are walking and this stream became bigger and this river—you look behind us and I don't know, twenty—just tons of people across the whole street which was full of people kind of walking towards the stage which was cool until I realized: Shit, it's not moving in the front.

CB: Yes!

KA: I'm getting out of here. And then we waited for the march to start—oh! And then we had to go pee. So we were like look at all of those port-o-johns over by the Capitol. There's nobody—why is there nobody in line? Because they were inauguration port-o-johns. They weren't for us and so I was like that would be a—I don't want to get arrested—but that would be a perfect civil disobedience action, to take over the port-o-johns. And I was like that is such a symbol, you know? This fence in between the—this is all the people. This is public space. This is the mall and like Trump's port-o-johns behind a wall. Again, if I'd been a dude, you just pee on the side of a

port-o-john and run away. But women, it's just more complicated. So, anyway, we waited an hour for the other port-o-johns to go to the bathroom and like talk to people in line. We couldn't see the screen and we wouldn't have been able to so somebody could get it streaming. And then we went to sort of the blob of where everyone else was and there was a giant—I can't remember if it was a giant penis or vagina. I think it was a giant penis because we were sort of congregating—"Just go next to the giant penis!"—we met back up and then waited and waited and waited for anything to start moving. And then it did and I think we were part of the march for just a couple blocks and things kind of dissolved and then—I mean, a couple times—I mean, time, I have no sense of time. Did I eat anything? I don't think we ate. We just sort of had snacks with us. Oh I had Snickers bars! That's right. And then we found you guys. We sort of did the march and wandered and then we found ourselves at the Washington Monument, essentially, and found you all.

CB: And then you went back pretty much right after..

KA: We did!

CB: By that time it was like six.

KA: Or maybe it was five? Our buses were leaving at eight so we found you all, we tried to find food but that was a joke because, right? And then I guess it was after we split with you, we walked by the anarchists and the riot cops and we found a food truck. And then we realized we were kind of late so then we busted a serious move back to the bus. I think we were the last set. And then we rode the bus all night, got back to campus at like 9 in the morning. And then! Okay so it was on the bus, maybe as soon as we got back on? And there were 54 people on the bus and I realized nobody has a list of all these people. And I was like, I was like nobody is doing this, I've got to do it. So and there were two women who sat at the very front who were very much like, so talked to them about it? I don't know, anyway, so the point was I found a notebook and I was like, "Okay," so I stood at the—there was a loose microphone at the front. I was like, "Okay this is what we're doing. I don't know what we are going to do with it but we need a list and everybody write down your name and email address and if you're on FaceBook." And so that's what—then the next—so everybody, I think 50 out of 54 people did. And that's what I started the Social Justice Clearinghouse FaceBook group with. It was that list. It was the Women's Bowling Green Bus to the Women's March list.

CB: So that transitions really nicely. Can you—so you have started this FaceBook group and it quickly grew into its own activist movement. So can you talk about how that happened, what your future plans are for this group, all of that?

KA: Yeah, that's a really good question. So fifty people but not all of them are in Bowling Green. Like a lot of people actually came from-- like there were a couple people came from Cadiz, so maybe thirty of that core was Bowling Green. And I thought part of it started out of sort of FaceBook ineptitude because I thought I had set the settings to like you can invite somebody but they have to be approved, but I didn't. It was like anybody who's a member can invite anyone else. And so I went to sleep one night and there were fifty people except there weren't fifty because maybe thirty people actually I could like find them or whatever. And all of

a sudden over a couple days it had grown to like from forty people to 250 people and then to 400 people. An I was like huh. Didn't figure that. Didn't see that coming! I think because so many people were so desperate to find something to do, a group to do it with. And I realized—so that group—and then a part of—actually, the group was another friend, another couple friends said, “Hey, let's do all of the Women's March actions together because the Women's March is promoting 10 actions in 100 days.” And so it was kind of two things came together and so the group was formed and then we had an instant action to do. Because the first march action was postcards. So we did—that was fairly easy. And so we had postcards printed and we had some new people show up to the postcard writing party at the library. And then we realized later that another group that looks very similar to ours had also formed back in November, Organized Front, and so the idea of kind of trying clearinghouse in our name and we were trying to like get people to understand what other groups needed and we didn't want to be another group, we just wanted to amplify actions, and share information. But, yeah, we're still in that fact finding mission, discussion, conversation. At this point, it's been interesting is I've been trying to go to every group that I have time to go to and see what they're doing. I think other people are doing that too. You know, you're seeing the same people. So we are trying to create an umbrella, I wouldn't say group, I would say meeting. Like how do we—somebody else came up and said the social justice league and we were like yep. Can we have capes? So that's—so we're trying to do a big tent meeting with organizers and community leaders which will then turn into a—and what I'm hoping for from that meeting is to just okay who are the groups? What are the needs? Who are the contact people? How do we keep in touch? Because we're trying to think generationally, so we've got folks who are digital natives and we've got people like my mom, actually, people even less digitally friendly or excited than my mom. Generationally and financially, what you have access to, people with little kids. So it's like how do we—yeah. Ideally, create some sort of information sharing uber whatever: like a calendar that can people can tap into and say what are my areas of interest? What's my availability? What can I go to? What can I do? How am I needed? That. That thing. So if you have ideas on how to make that work!

CB: Okay. So that is where you are now. Do you have any plans to maybe—how do you predict your political engagement in the next five years?

KA: Yeah. And it's interesting because I feel like I got reactivated. It's like a robot that someone turned on again. I don't like that analogy but.. And it's always been there. My work has been kind of socially engaged but not necessarily explicitly so. I'm starting a new project called the Social Change Museum which it has its first test run at IU April 21<sup>st</sup>. So I think my own work and research and activism might get more explicitly connected. A former student invited me to come and do a project and she's a grad student there now. You know, your student throws down the gauntlet and she was like well I'm sure you have—you could bring your drawings but if you have a project you're curious about or want to experiment with and I was like okay it's time to do this thing. I think, personally, if you're not from here, it doesn't make sense to run here. But I've definitely plugged into a couple organizations that are—everybody is looking for people to run right now. So if you're interested, you're from here! But I imagine—the other part is family. My family is sort of like hello we don't see you anymore. And part of that I did give them a warning. I was like this can't be because this happened this is how I feel I have to react. And I could see—I don't know. Politically, I'm not particularly—I mean, I feel like I'm intuitive but I

don't certainly have training. But I would love to get rid of some of the horrible people we have in office right now.

CB: So did you—what message do you, were you hoping to communicate by attending the march?

KA: I honestly thing that I did attend more for myself than-- I mean I think that—well that's not true, I guess. But definitely, a chunk of it was for myself. And another message like I wanted to be there for people who wanted to be there but couldn't. So maybe the message that your voice matters and it counts and I'll be proxy if that is necessary. My sister has a two year old daughter and a four year old son and it's like she said too, a lot of people, woke up the next day and said what will I tell my daughter? And so part of it was to just go for Izzy. And I think to show up. The idea that a million people were there like can't—people are trying really hard to ignore it but—the message is that we're here and we're going to show up and we're going to keep showing up.

CB: Did you wear any—I know you wore a pussy hat—how did you, like did you carry a sign? Did you wear any particular t-shirt that was meaningful?

KA: I had layers. I marched in 1989 planned parenthood shirt which I still own underneath—under or over—I had a Women's March t-shirt too. I had, another friend who couldn't be there made me a scarf, so I had that although I couldn't wear it for very long because it was very hot. And I think I had my pink pants on and we had a banner that said Kentucky Women March for Freedom, Justice, Equality for All.

CB: Did you make the banner with a group before attending the march?

KA: I made the banner in my back yard like an hour before attending the march. And I had another banner, actually, that we carried for a bit that said Blue Dots From A Red State Kentucky Women.

CB: How do you—how important is community in terms of the march and ongoing activism, having a group of people that feel the same way as you do?

KA: I think community is super important. I think that people who feel the same way that you do is super important and I think that sometimes we don't find each other as easily in a red state. I think we need to also be careful that sometimes we don't feel the same way about everything. And so, again, plurality isn't even just what we think about but how we choose to act. And so there's room for different types of actions and if I'm uncomfortable with a type of action like I'm not particularly—I'm not super aggressive, well I think people would argue that. But yeah, I like conversation and communication. I also don't like physical violence so you know if a group's believe in smashing windows and I'm not. I mean I may be angry enough to feel like that but that's not me. So, rats, what was the question?

CB: How important is community?

KA: Community! Thank you. How did I get to breaking windows? One of the great parts about this is connecting and reconnecting people and I think that having—I mean it's a horrible reason to be kind of reconnecting, it's a horrible thing to have to do but to be able to join together and do that feels much more powerful than to just be angry or sad or scared by yourself.

CB: Yeah. And so I guess I really just have one last question. I was going to ask—oh, actually, this might be just for me but can you talk a little bit more about the project you're doing at IU?

KA: Sure. Yeah. And it's funny because I just actually apart of—sorry if this has been like scattered—but this is sort of a hard like I think because it's so important and it's also so currently core but also buried. Like all of these questions it's hard to come up with kind of quick glib answers. Last weekend I was presenting at a leadership conference on my topic. I did like three breakout sessions back to back was find your own path. So this is part pep talk and part like pants wetting like come to Jesus goal setting. So that's where I've just been. But one of the questions that the leader, the plannery sessions guy, asked what have you done recently that you've never done before? And I went to Nashville to sell this idea to somebody in Nashville because I want to do this project again and then I went to talk to a curator in Nashville. But it's called the Museum of Social Change. And it's an interactive—ooo it's April 21<sup>st</sup> and I'm looking for community collaborators. So anyway, the point is that meaning, I need people to help because it's sort of like the director, that's me who facilitates, and I'm getting community collaborators are going to be the curators and then the object experts. And so the call is everybody come to this and bring an object that speaks to you about social change. And then from all of those objects we are going to create a pop up museum. And so people are going to come and the curators will help the object experts interpret their piece. So part of it is about—are you in the museums class this semester?

CB: Mhm.

KA: Okay. So part of it is about museums and about object authority and about the cultural relevance we place on all of that. And museums redefining themselves in the twenty-first century. Can a museum be a community center, essentially? And how can we use institutions like how can we kind of return the power of the institution back to the community? At the same time using the authority that we've granted it as the institution in order to make this project powerful. So people will show up with their objects and then the curators will help interpret and install and then it's all going to go online too, in real time, this is the plan. And then we'll have like each object will be put into a section that the curators will kind of determine on the fly. And we'll do a walk through-a discussion and you have to—the way you interpret your object is: what is this object, how does it speak about social change, and what social change action does it ask us to do? And so from those questions and from the sections, we will hopefully come up with some specific ideas of what that community can do to make their community better.

CB: That sounds great.

KA: Thanks.

CB: That's really exciting. Yeah.

KA: And the Nashville folks, I was like, am I just crazy? They're like no, this is interesting! I was like great! Because part of it, too, is—and some folks and I sort of floated this a couple of-to kind of bounce the idea off other people. And the question is well, do you—am I going to give people ideas of what they can bring or am I going to give parameters? And for the IU one, no. Like this is an art-it's an art space. This is a bunch of art students. If anybody can like just, you know, come and do the thing, it's them. Although, honestly, five year olds. That would be the real group. I mean they're like "oh, great idea! Let's do this!" But if I do it again, I think I will probably—like the parameter will be a science museum of social change or a children's museum of social change. Those are the two that I'm most—or maybe-or an art museum of social change. Potentially finding community curators like that are scientists or like I was thinking my sister's moms group would be great but then how do you—it's like you're doing a children's museum, all of a sudden your parameters are completely different. Like this isn't a 6 to 8 with wine. This is like, I don't know, from 10-probably from 9:00 AM to 11, with things that don't break.

CB: Alright. I've been asking people to kind of, if you could, maybe in a couple of sentences, summarize the takeaways from this experience. What were your lasting impressions?

KA: Of the Women's March, specifically?

CB: Yeah.

KA: It definitely feels like a beginning. I would-I would like to believe that it's a paradigm shift, that the revolution is real. And I'm going to choose to act as if that's true, and going forward, make it happen.

CB: Alright. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you feel is important to say, or did we cover everything?

KA: I don't think so. I mean, I'm super excited to see if something-I don't know, what's your plan for the project?

CB: I'm still not sure. I'm trying to find some themes, maybe a new insight that isn't-I feel like a lot of people kind of know what the Women's March meant to other people, but I'm just trying to find a good way to condense it.

KA: Right. Yeah. That's what I'm curious about. To see what comes out of this.