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## SPEAKERS

Dr. Cheryl Ingram, Dr. Rema, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Fowles, DeNeatria Robinson

- D** Dr. Fowles 00:15  
Welcome, welcome, everybody, we're kicking off Black History Month and I'm excited.
- D** Dr. Thomas 00:19  
Yes.
- D** Dr. Fowles 00:21  
My favorite time of the year, the fewest days in the month, but the most melanin. Gotta love it. We're excited to kick off today's show with a couple of different things. We're gonna do this or that. A little bit of a throwback to our very first episode where you got to know us a little bit more. So Dr. Jaqui, museums or libraries?
- D** Dr. Thomas 00:44  
Oh, that's a rough question. I'm gonna go with libraries. My first job was in a library, great experience. It was a lot, but it was a great experience. I love the library. I love reading. I would be sad to not have museums, but I guess you didn't say I couldn't have them anymore. So I'll go a library slightly over museums.

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Dr. Fowles 01:10

What do you do for your first job with the library?

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Dr. Thomas 01:14

I was a library page. So originally, I was hired to help put the books back on the shelves via the Dewey Decimal System and all of that. But eventually, they realized I was in high school at the time, they realized that I knew just kind of all the stuff that you teach people in K through 12. So I ended up being a homework center helper. And I ran the homework center for a couple hours a day after school every day, it was a lot of fun. And I did story time, and like the little first and second graders would come and like Miss Jaqui read me this book. And I would- they would all crowd around. It was so cute. I loved that job.

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Dr. Fowles 01:54

Well, now that we got that this or that out of the way, let's get it down to the business today. All right. So like I said earlier, we're gonna kick things off for Black History Month, this month. Again, my favorite time of the year, the Blackity, the Blackity, the Blackest part of the year. And as always, you probably would expect us to do this. But I'm gonna give a little bit of history about Black History Month, and we're gonna talk about our favorite parts of celebrating Black History Month, and what we normally do during this time. So just to kick things off, for those of you that don't know. In 1915, Carter G. Woodson and Minister Jesse E. Morlin, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. And it was an organization that was dedicated to the research and promoting African American achievements and peoples of African descent. In 1926, the group sponsored a National Negro History Week, in the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln, and Frederick Douglass. So, Carter G. Woodson, is known as the father of Black History Month. And he said that history shows that it does not matter who is in power, or what revolutionary forces take over the government, those who have not learned to do for themselves and have to depend solely on others never obtain any more rights or privileges in the end than they had at the beginning. So power and privilege is what we talk about constantly, as part of our show, you know, capitalizing on on the knowledge and the networks that we have, building our Black Social Capital. So that's really my focus every time Black History Month comes around.

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Dr. Thomas 03:51

So I love Black History Month. I love the Black unity, the camaraderie, the pride that we show, I know in a lot of Black people's context, they don't feel comfortable being like yeah,

like I'm really proud to be Black right in maybe professional settings and other places but Black History Month is kind of that time where in I would say probably more in the past on that that's been more socially acceptable, or just it felt safe to do that. So definitely appreciate Black History Month for all of that. Also, it just feels like a great time for us all be on the same page, shop at Black businesses, and support each other. So I remember in college, the Black history month program was just so amazing from the music, to the dancing, to the educational pieces about the different historical figures. You know, the appreciation that was shown to our you know, current Black living greats, right? Whether they were like famous people, or they were just the people on our campus who were just dope, right? So I just remember those celebrations just being so amazing for me. And then last year in 2020, I was able to go to the Black Joy Parade in Oakland. And that was amazing. From you know, the bands playing, you know, all the instruments and the little kids dancing and the vendors and it was just, it was just amazing. So much fun, bought so much cute stuff. And ate some really good food. So looking forward to doing that, again, when the Rona is gone, gone. Also, I will say Black History Month has been a time for me to like refocus on Black history facts and things, I guess, contemporary Black history, like, you know, our living greats that are, you know, celebrities and non celebrities, and just really focus on them. So I've expanded my book list, often during Black history, because I'm just, you know, on social media or talking to people or I'm reading things in, you know, different public places that are honoring people. So I remember last year, I ended up reading Eloquent Rage by Brittany Cooper, because I found out about, I found out about her around that time. And that book really opened my eyes to a lot of things. Yeah, so just expanding my reading list. Also, our investment club was founded in February. So always look forward to that. So Ujamaa Investment Club is gonna be five years old this month. Super excited about that. That's right. Cooperative economics in real time, doing real things real time thing. Founded in the month of February, just to be a little bit extra, just because, right. And of course, just the very last thing, but not the least by any stretch of the imagination. Another reason Black History Month is lit is because it's February and it's your birthday.

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Dr. Fowles 07:15

Hey, Pisces, let's go.

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Dr. Thomas 07:19

Yes, we always have fun. So yeah, we get to celebrate you, we get to celebrate us. It's a good time.

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Dr. Fowles 07:26

Yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes, I'm excited. You know, I'm, you know, thinking about just some of the reason I always get excited about Black History Month, too. Is that, just like you were mentioning a little bit. You know, our living legends are living greats. I think that a lot of times as we're going through our day to day, there's two perspectives, right? Some people are like, you know, Black History of every day of the year, which Yes, you're correct, right. And there's other people that are like, you know, we really need to focus on Black history, you know, during this time, you know, put an extra emphasis on this right, which I think is also a great perspective. But I think one thing that I would say is that history is more recent than we realize, right? You know, a lot of times when we're looking at photos, even of MLK, right. That's a lot of people's go to have, like, if I had to choose a historical figure, you know, I choose MLK. But if you really look at photos of MLK online, you know, a lot of photos are, are black and white. Right? And that, and when you see a photo on black and white, you know, that says, Oh, that's a long time ago. And you know, 1968, you know, some of our parents were just being born, or they're living their teenage years, right. So there are color photos of these people that we think are a long, long time ago. And then there is, you know, current 2020 history, current 2021 history happening right now as well. So, you know, I looked up that, you know, in 2020, you know, we had our first Black student body president of Harvard, you know, Noah Harris, we had our first Black astronaut to live on the International Space Station in Victor Glover. Right. So, you know, we have our first Black VP in Vice President Kamala Harris, right. These are things that are currently happening right now. So I think that you know, a lot of the times when I'm, you know, in spaces and places, and I feel some pressure to represent, you know, greatness and Black excellence and all of that, I think I come from it from a perspective of like, things are things are happening today and tomorrow that that are first, you know, still in our space, which is exciting, but also like, really, we're still having firsts? So I think that that's something I think about as well. You know, the last thing I'll say is I want to give a shout out to, you know, one of my favorite historical figures, I would say. And in August Wilson, if, if you haven't heard of August Wilson, amazing playwright who wrote 20th century plays, one for each decade. In the 20th century, they called the century collection. But he said that you should have a belief in yourself that is bigger than anyone's disbelief. So I think that Black History Month, in essence gives us opportunity to see ourselves and others to dream a little bit bigger, think a little bit bigger, and, you know, move forward for the next coming year. So I think I take some of that into our next conversation, which I know is our perfect professional and personal moves. Yeah.

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Dr. Thomas 10:56

So we are going to move into that, but I actually have a little this or that for you.

D Dr. Fowles 11:02  
Oh, dun dun dunnn...

D Dr. Thomas 11:05  
You ready?

D Dr. Fowles 11:06  
I'm ret

D Dr. Thomas 11:07  
So books or film?

D Dr. Fowles 11:10  
See.

D Dr. Thomas 11:14  
I know.

D Dr. Fowles 11:14  
You knew this was gonna be my downfall. All right. So I would say that, I think film for me, is an amazing medium. So I will probably choose film. Because it's the most digestible, right? I think that, you know, in a space in place where things happen quickly, a lot of people can't read really fast. So they don't listen to an audio book really fast. They can spend, you know, an hour and 20 minutes to watch a movie or start a series. And so I think that although books get things started, film has definitely become that thing that has allowed people to learn about things that they might not necessarily read about.

D Dr. Thomas 12:07  
Alright. Okay, so yeah, let's go ahead and give our personal, professional updates. What have you been up to, since we, since we started this show?

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Dr. Fowles 12:18

One, it's amazing that we've had so many amazing episodes of the Black Social Capital podcast, so far, been able to highlight so many of our peers. If you missed a couple episodes, go back and listen, truly some amazing individuals a great way to network as well. But for me, I think the most interesting thing that happened last last, last year or two round out, 2020 was just, you know, dealing with the Rona like everyone else. But I think in the organization that I work with, spearheading some of the leadership behind our transition to our online community in support of students. And so it was interesting, because there was a transition on to two fronts, one, of course, the platforms that we were using, but then the other transition was, you know, not only getting our staff acclimated to those platforms, but really having an engaging platform for our students as well. And so, you know, helping folks navigate the apprehension around technology, learning more about the digital divide, and sharing a little bit of what I know, around how to engage, you know, successfully on various platforms was really great. It was definitely one of those opportunities to be like flexible, but it was also a little bit stressful, right? A lot of things changing and shifting all at once. Right. And so, but I thrive in that I think, you know, not knowing what's going to happen in the next 48 hours is a place where I'm like, Oh, this is exciting, right. And so I think that that was fun. For me. And I think the other the other thing that that I've been up to, of course, is, is just continuing to work on, you know, our projects together, and taking Black Social Capital to the next level, and introducing it to a wider audience and community and people enjoying some of our merchandise, all that so if you haven't gotten some of that merch, go ahead and get it. Oh, yeah. Right. But, uh, but yeah, I think that that's been that's been a couple of the things that I've been up to that work, really thinking about, you know, what, what the new normal is going to look like in the space that supports students. So I think that that's something that bridges the gap between, you know, my nonprofit experience now and my former roles within the higher ed space. So it's a interesting place to be. Now for you, you've been doing a lot of different things, you know, working with with senior leaders and your Chancellor's your, your, your VPS, your Dean's all the folks that are supposed to be in the know, you're keeping them in the know with assessment. So, but let us know what you've been up to as well.

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Dr. Thomas 15:23

Yeah. So I would say, I'm gonna start personally, right? Ah, because you mentioned the Rona, earlier, and I just am so grateful that I am, I'm grateful for two things. One, I'm an introvert. So being at home is, is good. I like it. And then the other part is, over the last few years, I've really made a conscious effort to build a life that I never felt like I needed a break or vacation from as far as my personal life outside of work. And that has paid off a lot, considering the fact that I've worked from home, most of 2020. Right. And I think that the, the stay at home order because of the virus has made me even more conscientious

about who I spend my time with and how I spend my time. So in spite of all of the heartbreaking things happening outside of you know, my home, I definitely have been able to thrive in some ways, and deal with stress that comes from, you know, what's going on in the world more effectively than I imagined I would have if I hadn't have taken those steps to build my life in the way that I did. And also, if I wasn't an introvert, shout out to all the introverts out there.

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Dr. Fowles 16:59

So that's you personally. What about the professional because I know you making the moves.

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Dr. Thomas 17:08

You know, stepping into this fall semester, as I you know, do assessment for a student housing department at a university, I wanted to be really conscientious about being connected to what was going on with the student experience, as well as with the staff experience, right, and making sure that, you know, the people just above them, and maybe even beyond knew what was going on. So, in addition to my planned assessments that I had for the fall, I did some ad hoc assessments to really connect the, you know, connect our leadership to the students and even try to create a little bit of a dialogue. So that students could ask questions of leadership and leadership could respond back. So I tried to facilitate that. And that ended up being pretty successful on a lot of their questions that weren't answered at the beginning of the semester, because, you know, leadership can't plan for everything. And students absolutely Come up with questions that you never thought of, even when you are trying to plan for everything. So it's just great to be able to take a part of that, and I appreciate being you know, in the room, so that I can know what's going on. In some of those leadership meetings.

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Dr. Fowles 18:30

I'm gonna stop you right there, because you're not just in the room. You are You are an essential participant making the things happen in the room.

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Dr. Thomas 18:41

Oh, I thank you. I mean, I won't disagree with you at all. I feel I feel good about my contributions I do.

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Dr. Fowles 18:47

It's Black History Month. So go ahead. Give yourself some juice.

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Dr. Thomas 18:51

Okay. Well, yeah, I'm up in there, right. I'm in the room, I'm saying the things I'm you know, giving my ideas and speaking from my expertise, I say that partially, not minimizing myself because my contribution is, is solid, right? My contribution is great. But I just know that my predecessor in this particular position, didn't you didn't serve in that role quite as often. And I'm, I'm in there, I'm in there often. And, you know, I'm speaking up in trying to advise from what the data says and advising because I am the person most connected to the data of what the students and staff are saying and asking for. Other things happening. It's looking like I'm probably going to be taking on more responsibility with Student Affairs assessment work at my institution. And that's actually really exciting. I think there are going to be some opportunities within the division for me to help other departments get their assessment stuff going. So that's exciting. Definitely a direction I want to be in my career is like helping others with assessment. Because I love it. And it's effective. And, yeah, assessment is fun, even though some people like qualitative and not quantitative and vice versa, if you are going to be a if you're going to be an assessment person that serves all of the all of the needs of the people that are making decisions, because there will always be people that just want to see the numbers, and then they'll want to see the numbers move from upcoming assessments or you know, subsequent assessments. And then there are going to be those leaders who also who want to know the story more than anything, and they'll want those testimonials. They'll want you to pull from your open ended data or your interviews. And of course, there's a method for doing that you shouldn't just cherry pick and pick your stellar quotes that show that your program is great, if that's not what most of them say, right. But yeah, you definitely do need both. And the other thing that's happening for me professionally is not necessarily something I'm doing at work, but it is something I'm doing to develop myself professionally, outside of work, I am going to be an Emerging Scholar Practitioner Reviewer with a peer reviewed journal, and I am so excited about that. So essentially, what that is I am assisting for the first year or so I'm assisting a full reviewer of a peer reviewed journal in reviewing journal articles to determine what will be published in the journal and then what needs to happen so that the articles can be published. And that is something that I've been interested in doing for a long time. And to apply for this opportunity, to be selected in a very competitive pool of individuals who want it this experience. And I just feel really comfortable in the space. And I'm learning a lot and I'm just really excited. So yeah, that's what's going on for me and good things in these last few months.



D Dr. Fowles 22:18  
You know, not not too much on the plate, everything. It's cool. A little bit of this, and a little bit of that. A little bit of main dish, lots of sides

D Dr. Thomas 22:30  
You got to you got to

D Dr. Fowles 22:32  
You know, I think one of the things that I'll say, though, right, is that, no, for both of us, you know, we have taken a look at you know, being excellent in our workspace. But our workspace isn't the only space that we operate in, right, we're doing things for our own business. We're doing some things personally as well. Right. And I think that that has helped, especially in this pandemic time, right? What's up, just being able to have different parts of yourself step to the forefront is something that is super huge. So I think there's only a couple of things that that I wanted to talk about, before we wrapped up today. And that that was really talking about, you know, what we learned in this process of having a podcast, being a platform that that people can look to, to to learn about others' journeys. So I wanted to take some time to talk about our takeaways, you know, what we've learned from the guests that we've had, and then talk about a little bit about what's next for us overall.

D Dr. Thomas 23:46  
So I've listened to other podcasters talk about Oh, you just got to be consistent. You got to be consistent. It's like, oh, okay, well, I'm a consistent person, right? I get stuff in the schedule. I knock it out no problem. But I didn't know exactly what that meant, in terms of what it means to produce a podcast, especially in the way that we do it, right. We're very hands on with all this stuff. So we just we work really well together. And I think that really helps with the consistency. I could imagine this going a whole lot of different ways. If it was you know, not you and I working together. And listening to past episodes as we've been, you know, working on the production pieces, definitely got to hear my voice a whole so much more than I've probably ever heard my voice. I think I've done a lot of growing in how I express myself more clearly in the settings and I think this is carried over to a few other settings as well. So I would say this experience has been really great

D Dr. Fowles 24:59

For me I've always been a big thinker, right? Big Picture. You know, the details are really small and really far away. Right? So for me, in putting the podcast together, you know, looking at creativity from a planning point of view, which has been, has been interesting, right? Because I think before, it was really hard for me to put both of those things in the same space, right? If I was planning, I wasn't being as creative, right? In my mind. So I think that is something that I've learned is that planning is a part of creativity and vice versa. I think the other thing that I've learned really fast is that, you know, at this time, you know, 2021, if there are things that you want to do a lot of what you are thinking about other people have done, right. And it may, because it's a Black History Month, there may be folks that look like you that have done those things. But I know that we've had some, some, some amazing guests. And I know that you had a couple of guests that really spoke to you. I mean, every single interview, I have had the pleasure of listening to at least about two to three times in the production process. So I feel like I have learned and grown so much. But when we when I started thinking about this particular question, like what have I learned? And what have I actually started using, there were two episodes that really stuck out. So first is Dr. CI's episode. And during that particular episode, that's Dr. Cheryl Ingram, she talked about how it was really important for Black people to be represented on different Board of Directors

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#### Dr. Cheryl Ingram 26:50

Boards of Directors always have very powerful, very connected people on them. And so I was I was actually recruited. But I want to tell you, I'm telling you all this, honestly, right now, finger up and everything. Now is the time to get on a board of directors, or for institutions and get a paid board position. Like if you're gonna work usually for nonprofits, they ain't gonna pay you but enterprise companies, healthcare companies, etc, that are looking for specifically Black people, or people with competencies on Black communities, you can get paid. So go online and Google like executive recruiting firms and things that recruit for board positions, and put your resume in.

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#### Dr. Thomas 27:31

Two things came from that because I was really like, Oh, that sounds like something I want to do. I don't know how to go about it, though. So two things came from that first. I found like this board certification or training program, and they are specifically if I'm remembering correctly, looking for especially people of color to go through their program when they do have the classes available. And another thing that happened was that I actually got asked to be part of a board for a nonprofit. And it's not a paid position like Dr. CI was saying, but I'm ready to get my feet wet. This nonprofit is super dope. I think this is a good first step. If that is something that I am going to be if this is a direction I'm going

to be going. The other episode was DeNeatria Robinson's episode, she talked about basically how important it is to make sure you have something to say if you do not have a poker face.

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DeNeatria Robinson 28:38

Because if you're going to have your face look like how you feel, you're not willing to open your mouth, that is not doing anything for anybody, because people are going to assume and place words in your mouth if you don't open it.

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Dr. Thomas 28:50

And I don't have a poker face you if you say something, and it's funny, you gonna see, you know, the delight in my eyes. If you say something and it's sideways, you are gonna see that on my face, right? You're going to know exactly what I'm thinking, well, you're gonna know a lot about what I'm thinking. But you may not know why. And I have definitely taken that to heart. And I have either went ahead, especially because we're on Zoom now so I can see my face. So I see my face and I go, Oh, all right, I showed the face. Now I need to say the thing. And that's been really beneficial in a lot of situations where I might have just been like, well, they saw the face so they know what that means. No, they don't. So I've been speaking up more, because I don't have the poker face. But there are situations as well where I'm like, I don't feel like saying the thing here. I'm just gonna go ahead and control this face and Whoo. That's not fun. And that is hard, but, you know, growth

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Dr. Fowles 29:55

Very much so very much. All right. I think for me One of my favorite episodes was was Dr. Rema episode I think for me. Dr. Rema is an amazing storyteller. I felt like I was right there with her on the playground. We're gonna take a listen to just a clip of that right now.

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Dr. Rema 30:20

And I thought this kindergarten is the best we had a snack, we had a nap, it was just the best man, Out there with recess, child. I feel so good about myself. I thought you know what i can get on the merry go round now, if I stand up right now and turn around the circle, I'm gonna pass out or throw up or both. And so I can't go on the merry go round. But I thought this is a good day. I could probably go on the merry go round. Down the merry go round. And that dude was like whipping the merry go round like whipping it, whipping it as to Oh, no, no, no, I gotta get off. I said, Please let me off, please. And a guy across the the merry go round said the nigger wants to get off. Oh it's go time, right?

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Dr. Fowles 31:01

So as you can see, she was just a amazing storyteller. But I, what I what I enjoyed was the fact that she is a consistent fighter. Right? That not not only was she, you know, strong in the knowledge, she had of her own history, right. But she was willing to help others stand up and, and be advocates and allies as well. So that was one of my favorite episodes, for sure.

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Dr. Thomas 31:32

Yeah, that was a good episode. I enjoyed listening to that one.

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Dr. Fowles 31:39

So I think, as we wrap up, we do want to give a quick shout out. We've been doing a lot of work behind the scenes. And so we want to let you know that coming up in March, I'll be on the lookout for some dates on our, on our Instagram on our website. So on Instagram, we are @BlackSocialCap. You'll also see some updates on our website, which is [www.staymotivatedandrisetogether.com](http://www.staymotivatedandrisetogether.com) about Smart Digital Workshop. Smart Digital Workshop, it is an amazing opportunity, a platform that we have created to help folks to narrow in on their goals, right. It's the beginning of the year, it's the first quarter of the year. And so we want to be able to be a support system. For those that really want to focus on on goals, right? It could be a big goal for you, it could be a small goal for you. But it's an opportunity for us to create some accountability within a small group and make those goals happen. So if you want to be the first to know, when we're going to be having our first few Smart Digital Workshops, feel free to go to [www.staymotivatedandrisetogether.com/smart-digital-workshops](http://www.staymotivatedandrisetogether.com/smart-digital-workshops).

D

Dr. Thomas 33:09

Yes. The only thing that I would add is that you you mentioned within a small group. And it really is a community building workshop with accountability within accountability structure, like you said, and the whole goal is for everybody in the group to smash their goals right and to support each other and smashing their goals. So I would just stress that it is an opportunity to find community and build community maybe with individuals who you think are you know, already dope if you know you're bringing bringing your friends or individuals you don't know and to just increase your network. And yeah, the Smart Digital Workshop is an amazing, amazing place and amazing space for you to to figure out what that next goal is and what that next step is and to smash it.



Dr. Fowles 34:09

We're taking you to the next level as we as we go to our next level as well. So that's the wrap for our our Black History Month episode. I've been excited to chat. We'll see you in two weeks. We hope you enjoy today's show. Remember, the way we build social capital is to build self and build others. Be sure you got some notes on your tablet, computer, or even using a pen and paper. Leave us review, continue the conversation on social media @BlackSocialCap and share the show with someone you know. Until the next episode, stay motivated and rise together.



Dr. Thomas 34:55

This is Black Social Capital.