KELLIE CARTER JACKSON
LINCOLN'S DILEMMA
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Kellie Carter Jackson Interview
11-10-2020
Interviewed by Jackie Olive & Barak Goodman
Total Running Time: 01:18:25

START TC: 00:00:00:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Kellie Carter Jackson

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Slavery was deeply entrenched into the economic, political, and religious life of the United States

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Slavery economically is deeply entrenched within the fabric of the country. And so by the time you're in the 1840s, you have millions of Black people that are enslaved in the United States that have been born into the United States. You've experienced or enslaved people are experiencing, what would we call a "second migration." So the migration from the South to the Deep South. During this time, one out of every three enslaved families are being separated by the auction block. So you could lose your mother, your father, your brother, your sister, separated from you, sold away, sent further South. Cotton is King during this time. And so it's interesting to think of the fact that your life expectancy would

be tied to the market as an enslaved person. So when the price of cotton is high, your life expectancy as an enslaved person is shorter. And when the price of cotton drops, you might live a little longer. But everything that we know about this movement is, you know, surrounding- is entrenched in the institution of slavery. So politically, socially, economically, everything.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Slavery is incredibly violent and needs to be in order for the institution to work. And so in order for slavery to be incredibly profitable, to drive those profit margins up, violence is the number one tool used to get people to produce more cotton, to pick more cotton, to work longer hours. And so when the prices of cotton are high, you're going to be in the field much longer. You're going to be experiencing much more violence. And the threat of violence is always around you. And so when cotton prices are lower, there's less of an incentive to drive you, to produce cotton at this exponential rate.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Slaves are cash, slaves are currency. And so if you were a planter and you were down on your luck, you sold a slave. In the same way that we think of accruing property or homes or cars. And in the same way, we might sell a house or sell a car or invest in a home or invest in a property. It's the same way that people are thinking about enslaved people. They are property, they are cash, they are commodities. They are worth quite a bit. Even as children, you could be accruing interest as a child, even in your mother's womb, you're accruing interest for your planter. So the idea that your lifespan as an enslaved person never operates outside of the market, never operates outside of some sort of economic commodity – it's really gripping when you think about it in that way;

that you're worth something. And you're worth something when you're really healthy. And you're devalued when you're really sick or when you're disabled, that everything about your livelihood is tied to your price.

The genesis of anti-Black ideology is in slavery

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I think that scholars have had this debate going in terms of what came first, like slavery or racism. And how do we understand the rationale for chattel slavery? And I think that in order to do this incredible amount of violence and chattel slavery is nothing but violence, you have to be able to justify that, not just economically, but morally, right? You have to be able to say, this is God mandated, that you are supposed to be enslaved, that you are not biologically a human. And I think if you can do these sort of, you know, mental, emotional, political gymnastics in terms of how you rationalize, not just the utility of slavery, but the inhumanity of Black people. I mean, you can do all kinds of damage with that sort of rationale. And I think it makes it easy for you to do harm. It makes it easy for you to think, not just that you were doing harm, but that the institution of slavery is so necessary, that what you are doing to Black people is actually good, right?

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

That you are, that you are taking people who are less than people and you are civilizing them and you're providing them with shelter and care. So there's this very twisted, backward idea of that. What planters are doing in the institution of slavery is godly. I mean, think about that. Think about how you go from like this

is not just bad or problematic, but this is the Lord's work. That is what planters believed. So you would have a really hard time separating, not just the moral issues, but the very church itself is complicit because there's so much money being made.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And I think that's something that I'm always trying to tell my students is that we don't realize how, how economically profitable slavery was. So much so that even the church itself is sanctioning this institution because they benefit from this institution and how difficult it is to relinquish that kind of wealth, that kind of prosperity from, you know, from enslaved people. So it's, it's really deep. It's really, really deep. And I think these same ideas are playing out today, obviously in terms of anti-Blackness and how we think about Black people, but they get their genesis – this anti-Blackness ideology has its genesis in slavery.

Dismantling the myth of white supremacy

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I think the myth of American history is this idea that white people get to be both the villain and the hero. And so they create this chattel slavery that is quintessentially violence. Every aspect of it is violent. It's insidious. It's egregious. It is, you know, painful, and backbreaking, and psychologically traumatic. It is all of these things. And yet they're able ... I mean, I think this is really the trick of, like, white supremacy or how it dupes people into thinking that Black people deserved this: that they have not earned their humanity. That they are supposed to be subordinate. They're supposed to be in this position. And look at how kind and good and great we are, for taking them in under our

wing, for housing them, for feeding them. You know, there's this idea that slavery has some sort of benefit. That it makes the country prosperous. No question there. But that it's a benefit to the enslaved people themselves.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And nothing, nothing could be further from the truth. But I think the shaping of that narrative of "I know what's best for you," that patriarchal, paternalistic idea of how white people get to determine who deserves humanity, as though it's something that can be earned or won or accomplished, is absurd. It's absurd. It makes no sense. But these ideas still, they still have weight to this very day. This idea that Black people may or may not feel pain is a concept that has played out in the medical field up until recently. You know? And so there's not a single aspect of, you know, Black lived experiences that's not somehow curated by white violence, or oppression, or white supremacy. And I think that is the great deceit, is that slaveholders can be both good and bad. Or that it's possible to be a good slaveholder.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
The idea, I think, of a good slave holder is actually more damaging than a violent one. Right? Because if you can accept the idea of a "good slave holder," it will keep you from questioning the system in and of itself. Because your aspiration will not be to dismantle the institution. Your aspiration will, just be a good planter. Just be a good master. Right? And I think that's what a lot of Americans want. It's like, we don't really want to get rid of white supremacy. Just be kind. Just be nice. As though all of racism is inculcated in the inward and impolite behavior.

"You can be damaged but not wronged" - the reality of being enslaved

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

So there's a great abolitionist Theodore Parker who talks about what it means to be enslaved. And he basically says, and I'm paraphrasing him, but he basically says that "you are a thing. That you are not a person, you are a thing, and you can be damaged, but not wronged." Damaged, but not wronged. So every morning you wake up when the sun rises and you wake up knowing that you will have to do your master's bidding, be it working in the field, be it picking cotton, preparing meals, dressing your master or your mistress, preparing them for the day, taking them where they need to go. There's not a single aspect of life for planters that is not being, what's the word, that's not being enacted on by the slaves. So you wouldn't go to lift a cup without having your enslaved person do it for you. You wouldn't tie your shoe without having your enslaved person do it for you. And you're working from sun up to sun down. Not only is your body not your own, your children are not your own, your sexuality is not your own. Rape is not something that exists. Meaning you can be sexually violated and have no recourse. You can be murdered and have no recourse. The only consequences that your master is now out $200 or $2,000 or however much it is that you cost. And it did not matter when the sun went down, you could still be called into service. You could be called to sleep at the foot of your master's bed. It didn't matter if you were a child or an adult or an elderly person. There was no part of your life that was not in service to white supremacy and to masters from the moment you're born to the moment you die, everything is put forth for the benefit of slavery.

The cruelty of slavery

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I don't think we realize how devastating it is to be separated from your loved ones. That the auction block was a place of violence. It was a place that literally tore you from everything and everyone that you know. And so there's countless stories after stories of Black people being separated from their families, being separated from their loved ones. You know, I like to tell my students the story of Frederick Douglass' mother, who would walk 12 miles to the next plantation that he was on. So that she could sleep with him for a couple of hours, snuggle him, smell his hair, and then wake herself up and walk 12 miles back to the plantation to start work.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
You know, I think about someone like Henry Box Brown, who gets separated from his wife and as the trader has his wife in shackles, and he's walking behind her until he can't follow her anymore, because he doesn't want to leave her and he doesn't want to be separated from her. I think about all of the people that, you know, fought and lost their lives, and knew that they would never see their family again. I think of John Copeland, who is a Black man that fought with John Brown and wrote to his family, like, what I'm doing is more important. It's more important that I be here, and face execution in the fight for freedom, than it is that I live in sort of the comfort of my own freedom and home and be with you. They understood the deep, like, gravity of slavery, and how it had to be, you know, overthrown, dismantled.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
You know, I think I want to, you know- we don't call the abolitionists reformers. They weren't trying to reform slavery. They were trying to *abolish* slavery. And I think that's so important because so much about white supremacy, we try to

reform it. We try to, like, make amends or make it better, or make it work. And it doesn't work. It has to be overthrown. Because of the violence that it does to Black humanity, but even more importantly, the violence that it does to white people. I don't think we realize how much violence strips white people of their humanity, makes them inhuman. These are actions that people should never take against another person. So, you know, I push back on these ideas of Black people as property and Black people as slaves. It's so important for us to use the term enslaved, to talk about who's doing that work. And then to really ask the questions of, you know, who's human in this scenario. Who's acting human, and who's not. There are a lot of stories that could be told about the suffering of, of black people or black women that are too numerous to numerous to put in a book, to put in volumes of books to be honest.

The abolitionist and anti-slavery movements

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

The North is certainly not a bunch of abolitionists. There's a big difference between being anti-slavery and an abolitionist. And you could be- being anti-slavery meant that you were against the institution of slavery, that you believed in free labor, and that you abhorred the institution of slavery because it undercut free labor. So if you're, you know, someone in the North who's working for $5 an hour, no one's going to pay you that wage if they can get an enslaved person to do it for free. And so there's a lot of economic and political resentment around slavery because of the way it undercuts free labor in the North. But that did not mean that you are an abolitionist. A lot of northerners were anti-slavery, but they also still hated Black people. They also still saw them as less than

human beings. The abolitionists have a unique agenda to abolish the institution of slavery, wholesale and Black abolitionists in particular are not just engaged in the abolition of slavery, but also full equality for Black people. Those things had to go hand in hand, emancipation and equality, because they understood that being anti-slavery was not sufficient. It was not enough to say that slavery was wrong. You had to actually overturn the system and then go about creating institutional enfranchisement for Black people. And that's something that a lot of northerners were not willing to do.

Northern investment and complicity in slavery

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

A lot of northerners are heavily invested in the institution of slavery. If you think about here in Massachusetts where I live, all of the factories and the mill towns that were, you know, partnered with cotton institutions, they produced all of the textiles that come out of the North. All of the insurance companies that are located in New York City. There is not a big wave we think of as the North having this moral authority or being abolitionists, that's actually not true. And if you think about even the Civil War, New York City actually wanted to secede with the South. They wanted to say “all right, maybe we can just take this pocket of the North and, and actually be a part of the Confederacy.” And Lincoln's like “no way.” But that's because economically the North has a huge hand within the institution of slavery, northerners are completely complicit, even if they don't like it. They also understand how they benefit from it. And if they're not

benefiting from slavery, they're certainly benefiting from their whiteness. And that's a part of the institution of slavery as well, white supremacy.

The expansion of slavery

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Geographically, the United States is expanding westward. And with each new territory that comes into statehood in the United States, there is an intense political battle over whether this state will be a free state or a slave state. And this is important because at this moment, the United States is sort of split in terms of its representation with free States in the North and slave holding States in the South. And whoever will have control of the House of Representatives and the Congress really will have a large say in determining what the country looks like going forward and who will benefit the most. And so this battle that's enraging really comes to a pinnacle in the 1850s. We think about the Kansas-Nebraska Act. We think about the creation of this Mason Dixon line, which basically says “okay, these are the parameters. These are the boundaries for how we understand the institution of slavery.” But also that statehood could be predicated upon how many slaves were in that territory.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
So there's a mad rush to send people to Kansas to determine whether or not Kansas will be a slave state or a free state. These become really not just political battles, but bloody battles. You lnow, when we think about John Brown, who's a radical abolitionist who is intensely invested in making sure that slavery does

not come to Kansas and that slavery stays out of the state. These become really big moments. So I think about the Compromise of 1850, I think about how politicians came together and basically said, all right, the country is going to explode. We need to come up with some sort of compromise. And they do; the Compromise of 1850 basically says "all right, California, you will come in as a free state. We will not ban slavery within Washington D.C. because Southern, you know, senators are coming with their slaves, but we will make it illegal to sell slaves, to trade slaves within the nation's capital. So you could be brought to Washington DC, but you couldn't be sold or purchased in Washington DC. But one of the biggest aspects of the Compromise of 1850 is the Fugitive Slave Law.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
This law that was old, had been on the books for a long time. George Washington actually employs it when he has slaves that are running away from him during the American revolution. 1793 is when the original Fugitive Slave Law is on the books, but the law really has no teeth. So the 1850s in a way to appease the South says "okay, now slaveholders, if your slave ran away from you, you can go into the North and you can retrieve them. And it doesn't matter if they ran away, you know, five days ago, five years ago, if they'd been living longer in freedom than they had in slavery, you can now retrieve them. And even on top of that: Northerners, you have to be complicit in bringing those fugitives back to the South." So U.S. marshals could deputize Northerners and say "Hey, that looks at Bob, help me go get Bob." And you would have to comply.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Or if not, you would have to face a thousand dollar fine or six months in jail. These were steep penalties for ensuring that the institution of slavery would be

upheld and strengthened. So all throughout the 1840s and fifties, there's no new legislation that favors the abolitionist movement, actually every single piece of legal action or law that is created throughout the 1840s and fifties favors the slaveholder.

The historical significance of the Kansas-Nebraska Act

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I think the Kansas-Nebraska act is so significant because for the first time it's forcing United States citizens to choose what kind of country they want to have, or what do they want to be the driver politically and economically within the United States. And that - when we think about the introduction of new territory with Kansas, with Nebraska - this really is a stalemate, a political stalemate in a lot of ways in determining "are we going to be a country of slaves or are we going to be a slave country," right? That's a country that is, you know, the foundation is slavery. And so I think for a lot of northerners and Lincoln being included, he's intensely uncomfortable with this idea that the United States will now be driven by this slavery economy and driven, not just financially, but driven politically in terms of what the United States looks like for the next 50, 100 years.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And so this becomes a really big deal for Republicans. This radicalizes a lot of people who may not have thought that politics should have played a role in slavery. Now they are politically incentivized to look at Kansas and Nebraska as this is a pivotal moment, this is a political moment. Where this territory goes, is

going to determine the fate of the nation. And so becomes- Kansas-Nebraska becomes really bloody after that, really bloody.

The anti-slavery quandry: "What to do with four million enslaved people?"

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I think that Lincoln is representative of a lot of white Northerners that are not really sure about what they want, but they're very clear about what they don't want. And so, you know, Lincoln does not want slavery, but that does not necessarily mean that he wants Black people to be free, or that he wants Black people to be enfranchised, or that he wants Black people to be seen as equal. And I think that's really important. There are a lot of discussions about "well, what do we do with the enslaved? Should we send them somewhere else? Should we tell them to leave?" You know, colonization becomes a real discussion point for a lot of anti-slavery people. "Where do we go from here? I know I don't want slavery because it undermines free labor, but what to do with the enslaved?" And I think that's the question that Lincoln grapples with not just in the forties and the fifties, but all throughout the Civil War "what do we do with these 4 million people who are going to now have to be in some way, either a part of the United States or sent elsewhere?" And I think the- you know, sending them elsewhere is kind of impractical if you think about colonization in and of itself, but I don't think he was very clear or sure about what should happen. I think he just knew what he didn't want. And that's how a lot of Northerners felt.

The historical significance of the Dred Scott decision in 1857

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Dred Scott is an enslaved person living in Missouri and his master takes him to the North, to free territory, to I believe Illinois and I think also to Minnesota. And in this moment, he says "well, listen, because you brought me to free territory. I am now effectively free." His master was like "no, you're not." And you know, he winds up suing for his freedom in court saying "no, I was taken, you know, to free territory, and by Northern law or Illinois law, I am considered free." He takes his case all the way up to the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court says "no, you are not free. Furthermore, you are not a citizen of the United States. Black people are not citizens. They have no rights, which a white man is bound to respect." And this Supreme court case is a death blow to Black people because it means that they have effectively no legal recourse, not just as an enslaved person, but also as a free Black person.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

So, you know, Harriet Tubman is living in Canada at the time of the Supreme Court case. And it's this case that she says, I have to come back. I have to come back to America. This is not right. We need to do everything that we can to make sure that the slave finds, you know, freedom. And so this case is probably one of the greatest, I would say top five greatest Supreme Court cases in the history of the United States next to maybe *Plessy v. Ferguson* and *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Dred Scott* does a lot of damage. And what it reveals is that white people cannot imagine a world in which Black people are free. One of the dissenting justices says "can you imagine Black people walking around with guns? Can you imagine black people being able to own arms? Absolutely not."

And so it gets struck down because it is trying to solidify the idea of white supremacy and also solidify the fact that slavery will be with us for years to come, if not forever.

John Brown and Abolitionism

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

So first off I just want to say, I love John Brown. I love John Brown because he's so ahead of his time, he is such a model for abolitionism and taking something that seems really radical and actually making it rational. Like "no, people should not be enslaved. No, slavery starts in violence. It's sustained by violence. And therefore it should only be overthrown by violence." And what I often, you know, try to get people to understand is that John Brown is not actually a leader. He's a fan, he's a follower of Black abolitionists. And so John Brown is very much aware of the Haitian Revolution. He's very much aware of Toussaint Louverture. He is a huge fan of Frederick Douglass of Harriet Tubman, of Louis Hayden, of Black leadership that he sees as sort of setting a precedent and a pace for where freedom should go and how it should come about. And so he's taking these ideas from Black leaders and saying "listen, we need to do something about this." Now I think you can, you know, people were always sort of dismiss John Brown as crazy. But I think that the thing that to me is most troubling is that we never considered the institution of slavery as crazy, something like chattel slavery as insane. We can rationalize that away, but what John Brown is doing, I think he's trying to get us to understand "no, America is on the wrong path." So what he basically does is he goes on this, you know, fundraising campaign to get Black

people and white people who are sympathetic to support him, to contribute funds so that he can go to Harper's Ferry, start a slave rebellion, get all of the slaves in the surrounding area to run away, to flee, arm them, and then get them as North as possible, even to Canada, if necessary. And it's interesting. There are a lot of Black people that are like “Oh this is crazy, but here's $5,” right? So they support, you know, they support the effort. They won't go.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Some of them do, but you know, the most prominent ones, Frederick Douglass is like “this is not going to work, John Brown.” He still gives him money though. He still supports him. He still houses him when he comes to visit, but he won't participate. But I think, you know, Harriet Tubman was willing to go. She says, "I will join you, John Brown." And there's a lot that goes into that. You know, Brown changes the date and that throws off a lot of things. One of the things that I'm always fascinated with is what would have happened if John Brown had committed the raid on the day that everyone had been committed to? What would it have looked like? But I think that John Brown, you know, the raid happens and it's over quickly, it's considered a failure. But I think in some ways it's a short-term failure and a long-term success because what happens after that is the Civil War, the first shots on Fort Sumter. The South is enraged at the fact that this could happen. And I don't think that the South is particularly upset with John Brown so much as they are upset of the ripple effect that could have happened throughout the South. They were never afraid of, you know, 26, 27 people, you know, two dozen people with guns, but they are deathly afraid of millions of enslaved people rising up. And so, you know, the idea of a slave rebellion is a very, very real threat. The fact that slave masters can live virtually outnumbered by their property was something that kept them awake every single night. And John Brown is a manifestation of this fear.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

And so, yeah, the raid is not successful, but I think if we consider the raid a battle, John Brown lost that battle, but John Brown wins the war. And I think he wins the war in such a powerful way that, when Black soldiers are fighting in the Civil War, they go into Confederate territory singing *John Brown's Body* as a reminder that like, this is not over, this ends with us. And Black soldiers, I think emulate everything that John Brown was trying to show us. I mean, Southerners are like, you know, they go on a gun buying spree, they're purchasing up guns left and right. You know, Baltimore gun sellers can't keep guns on the shelf. They can't keep ammunition on the shelf. Even after John Brown's raid is over, they're still terrified that "no, something is going to happen. Something else is going to jump off." And they took this fear with them all the way into the Civil War.

John Brown and his kinships within the abolitionist movement

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Oftentimes we don't realize the friendships, the kinship that takes place within the abolitionist community. That when people are traveling all over the country, they're not staying in hotels, they're staying in people's homes. And they're breaking bread with them. And they're sitting down at the table, and they're talking about their ideas, and they're creating kinship. And so John Brown stayed at Douglass' house, sometimes when Douglass is not there, which means Anna is entertaining him. She's making meals for him. She's engaging him in conversation. Other people are coming by the house, and they're talking about these ideas and these concepts, and they're raising money, and they're speaking about it everywhere they go. So in some ways, John Brown's raid is actually not

that big of a secret. At least not among those who were in circles who knew. But I think Brown really prided himself on cultivating relationships, intimate, deep relationships, so that he could build trust, so that he could establish with his Black comrades. “No, I believe in your humanity, I believe in your God-given humanity. And I believe in the utility of force. And the ability to prove to someone your manhood through the use of violence and through the use of force.” You know, he sympathized greatly with them. And, you know, I tell stories in my own work about Mary Ellen Pleasant, who believed so much in John Brown she donated $30,000 of her own wealth to his cause. The fact that we think of the greatest sort of financier to John Brown is a Black woman from California is remarkable to me. The fact that Harriet Tubman was on board and she didn't write him off as crazy. I mean, Harriet Tubman is also a person who hears from God and is guided by God. And she believed John Brown when he said “I believe that God has told me to do this.” She didn't write him off.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And then other Black leaders, like, you know, Lewis Hayden, and, you know, Henry Highland Garnet, and Jermain Loguen, and, you know, Shields Green, and John Anderson. These are all Black leaders who either go with him or support him. And they believe in what he's trying to accomplish. Even if it fails. And that, to me, is so, it's just so important in understanding that when we think about activism, kinship is really at the core of that. Camaraderie is at the core of that. That you can't make a movement without making friends. And so John Brown really cultivated friendship above all else. And admiration for Black people. He's the ultimate fan.

Lincoln and the Republican Party

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Republicans, I mean, this is the first time that you have anything like a Republican, you know. Lincoln is the first person to be a Republican president. And I think it's fascinating to me that the South attached Republicanism with not just anti-slavery ideas, but abolitionists ideas. They believed that they wanted nothing more than to dismantle the institution of slavery. Not just undermine it, not just sort of, you know, like, contain it, but completely overthrow it. And so because of that, Southerners cannot trust someone like Lincoln. As much as Lincoln tries to distance himself, you know, from abolitionists and even distance himself from John Brown, he calls John Brown crazy. He says even Black people knew he was crazy. That's why they didn't join him. You know, he's trying to do all of these different things to show people like "I'm rational, I'm reasonable, I'll work with you" but the Southerners and the Confederacy will not have it. And so I think politically, this is the first time that Lincoln realizes his presidency will not be separated from these ideas.

Lincoln's early presidential priorities

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Lincoln's number one priority is to keep the Union together. He wants nothing more than the United States to be just that, the *United* States of America. And so his number one agenda is unification. It is not the abolition of slavery. In his first inaugural address, he talks about the Fugitive Slave Law and says it should be

upheld. Like- and during the Civil War, you should know the Fugitive Slave Law is still being enacted. That slaveholders are still going into the North and trying to retrieve their property. And so he is not embarking on this war with the intent to dismantle the institution of slavery. Now, that changes over time, but I think it's important to understand he did not start his presidency to be the "Great Emancipator" that we all know him. He wanted to be, you know, the great sort of unifier, the person that brought the country back together again.

The hypocrisy of American ideals and the ideology of white supremacy

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I don't think Lincoln is alone in this idea that the United States of America is deemed as this exceptional, special, almost spiritual Christian place that is like, chosen by God. That the United States is somehow like deity or divine, and the Constitution is like scripture. You know, like, there is this understanding that the United States is exceptional and above this kind of – what some people might consider petty, but was way more than that – idea of division and slavery. And so I don't think he can get his head around the fact that this country was not founded on liberty and equality and justice for all, that this country was founded on slavery. It was sustained by slavery. That when the founding fathers are writing the Declaration of Independence, they're being tended to, Thomas Jefferson is being tended to by his slaves. That, while George Washington is fighting the American Revolution, he's sending slave catchers out to get his slaves. Like, this hypocrisy, this duality, the split dichotomy of the United States

being, on one hand, the land of liberty and justice for all, and on the other hand, chattel slavery and the institution of violence.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
We haven't been able to reconcile them because we haven't been honest with the fact that, no, really America is not the land of liberty and justice and freedom for all. America is this entrenched slavocracy, and that is its identity, and that is its core. And I don't think Americans in general have been willing to accept the fact that this country that we live in, its identity is White supremacy. Its identity is violence. It's identity is slavery, because there's this desire to see us as just, as godly, as, I don't know, moral, I suppose. And that's just not how it plays out.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Certainly not for Indigenous people, certainly not for Black people, certainly not for women, certainly not for any group of color during this time. No one is benefiting from the United States other than White men. And until Lincoln can have an honest conversation with himself and the country about that, he'll never be able to grapple with the gravity of why the war was and is.

Frederick Douglass's deep influence on Lincoln

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I think Lincoln is both leading and being led. I think that people are complicated and that, certainly at the end of the day, he's the decider, right? He's the one who's making these decisions. But I think the fact that he allowed himself to be influenced, to hear outside opinion, is what makes him a great leader, is what

really makes him a great leader. And I think that in a lot of ways, you know, people want to give tons of praise to Lincoln for the decisions that he's making.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
But I personally think we have Frederick Douglass to thank for that. Frederick Douglass is constantly in Lincoln's ear and he's constantly keeping his feet to the fire and pushing him on Black humanity and Black people's ability to fight in the war and not to serve in the war, but also be paid equally and treated equally in that war. That, everything that we sort of credit Lincoln for, I think we need to step back a little bit and see the ways that Black abolitionists and Black leadership and the radical Republicans really pushed him into these ideas and into these decisions, these pivotal decisions that changed the course of the war.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Lincoln and Douglass have an interesting relationship and so it's always funny to me to think about the fact that a formerly enslaved person could have a conversation with the president of the united states to have his ear could be able to influence him and in some ways could be able to dispel the myth of black inferiority. Douglass does this for Lincoln. So while many people look at black people as this degraded race or this race in you know -incapable of citizenship, incapable of humanity. Douglass refutes that over and over and over again and reminds Lincoln of the ways that Black people are not inferior or possibly equal, but even in the ways that Black people might be superior, right? And thinking about these big ideas of freedom and liberation and what this country is supposed to be built upon. So Douglass challenges Lincoln and I think they have a very healthy respect for each other. Now, I wouldn't call them like BFFs, they're not besties, but they respect one another; and the fact that Lincoln is willing to listen to him, to engage him, to consider him and take his suggestions into play

speaks volumes not just about Lincoln but about Douglass himself. And how he's able to wield the ear of the highest position in all of America.

Self-emancipation and its political power

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

The fact that the South had a fighting chance should not be underestimated. I think that there is this idea or this stereotype to believe that the North is not just morally superior, but they have all of the factories and they have all of, you know, the schools and they have all of the infrastructure and the big cities and the populace. And there is this superiority complex that I think the North had over the South, that it also had to relinquish when it was getting its butt kicked. And so I think that a lot of people are like "oh my gosh, we could actually lose." And so I think the idea, the real threat of losing was something that shook Lincoln to his core. But I also think that Black people on the ground, enslaved people on the ground, shifted the narrative of the war and really the outcome of the war. That no one's needing really to tell Black people "hey, you might want to get out of Dodge," but like, enslaved people are leaving by the tens of thousands.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
They are packing up and leaving and they are forcing Lincoln to have to reckon with the fact that like, enslaved people are unwilling to stay on their plantations. They're unwilling to wait for the North to liberate them, that they're going to liberate themselves. And so that groundswell among enslaved people determining for themselves what this war is going to be about, I think also changed and influenced the way that he needed to proceed forward.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Thavolia Glymph has this great article called *Rose's War*, and she talks about the enslaved woman, this enslaved woman named Rose, who was the leader of this group of rebel enslaved people that was basically going from plantation to plantation wreaking havoc on the masters and their mistresses. And the funny thing about Rose is that, you know, her mistress is not surprised that she is at the head of this and that she is, like, the thorn in her side. And I think it's remarkable on a couple of fronts. One, I think it shows that violence is not gendered, that Black women were just as empowered as Black men to take up arms and to fight and to lead the cause in their own emancipation. I think in some ways Black women are even more empowered to do this work because slavery has not only robbed them physically of their labor, but stripped them from their children, stripped them from the reproductive rights.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And so that to me is always fascinating, but I also think that the fact that Black people are very spiritual people and believed that what was happening was divine. Like, believed that retribution was coming, they predicted it, that a lot of the Black abolitionists prophesied about this. They knew it was going to be bloody. And the moment they start to see, you know, this political shifting, the first thing they do is run. And I think we have seen this not just play out in the Civil War, but in the American Revolution. You know, if we think of the idea of flight versus fight, the South is always paranoid that, you know, Southerners are going to be Haiti, that they're going to rise up and they're going to, you know, attack their masters. But the number one tool of the enslaved was flight. That was their greatest weapon. And so in the American Revolution, they leave in droves, whether it's to the patriotic cause or whether it's to, you know, the loyalists stance of Great Britain who will grant them their freedom. In the War

of 1812, they leave in the thousands, knowing that Great Britain will also guarantee them their freedom.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And the same thing happens in the Civil War. Flight is force; and so they literally leave, forcing the hand of the South and also the North to reconcile with this newly emancipated population. But flight cannot be underestimated, and it was the greatest thing that enslaved people could do was leave, take their labor and leave. The exact numbers of like, how many people leave, I think are really hard to get at, but I would say hundreds of thousands of enslaved people leave the plantation. You can look in certain states and see where tens of thousands of people have left Maryland, have left Virginia, have left Georgia. They try to get to Union lines as much as they possibly can. And this is the other thing, enslaved people are running to Union lines saying like "hey, we're here" and generals are freeing them and basically saying "okay, come on. You're free. You're free" And Lincoln's saying "No, don't do that. Don't free them." And this is because Lincoln has not, like, pivoted yet into thinking about the Emancipation Proclamation.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
But he's undermining his generals, saying "no, send them back to the plantation." And you know, the general's hands are kind of tied. They're like, well "send them back? They're not going. They're not going back to the plantation." So I think in a lot of ways we can credit the enslaved for their own freedom, as we should. What Lincoln does is effectively the coroner's report. He uses the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment to announce the time of death, the official time of death of slavery, but slavery has already died on the ground.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

Lincoln believed that, if he confiscated the property of slaveholders, that he would never be able to bring them back into the Union, that they would never want to come back and be a part of the United States if they could not maintain slavery and their property. And so he believes that by, you know, confiscating this property, you're not going to win hearts and minds, certainly not of former masters, or current masters, I should say. And so he wants his generals to send the enslaved back to the plantation as really like, a show of good faith, as to say "I told you I'm not trying to dismantle slavery. I will ensure that you keep your slaves. Just come back into the Union." Now, no one believes that. No one in the Confederacy believes that. And whether they believed it or not really didn't matter because slaves had determined for themselves what they were going to do in that moment. And they essentially closed the door on slavery and did not allow anyone to open it on them again, even when generals were called to send them back to their plantations.

"Contraband" camps

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
"Contraband" camps are basically places which enslaved people would flee to. Usually they're, you know, sort of military bases for the North, for the Union. And because generals weren't quite sure what to do with them, they were seen as confiscated property. So if you think about taking over a plantation and you confiscate the horses and the guns. Well, because slaves were considered property, they were considered "contraband." So it was another aspect of the, you know, slaveholders property that was being confiscated, but they weren't quite sure what to do with these people. They had to feed them. A lot of free people died of starvation. They did not have, you know, proper care, proper

supplies in order to take care of all of these thousands of people that are coming, you know, to their military bases. And so it became a real problem. These people were also not trained to fight, so it wasn't as though you could throw a uniform on them and then, you know, sign them up or enlist them into the war. A lot of these people are the elderly, they're women, they're children, there are people who are seeking refuge. And so they weren't just called "contraband," they were also called refugees because they were escaping the South. But they're in this sort of, you know, quasi space that's hard to determine. Well, *Dred Scott* says you're not even a citizen. You know, right? *Dred Scott* says, you know, the Supreme Court decision says, you have no rights which a white man is bound to respect. So how do we codify what place you should have? And that was a real concern for a lot of generals and Lincoln himself, what to do with these enslaved people.

Black abolitionists campaigning for Black enlistment

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Frederick Douglass is really at the helm of this. Martin Delaney is another famous Black abolitionist that helps recruit Black men to fight. Mary Ann Shadd Cary, who was a Black woman who immigrates to Canada, starts the first Black newspaper, and then at the start of the Civil War comes back to the United States to help recruit Black troops and Black soldiers to fight. But it is really the leadership of Black abolitionists. People like Louis Hayden, people like Frederick Douglass, people like Henry Highland Garnet, and Harriet Tubman, who serves as a spy in the war. All of these well-known and even lesser known Black abolitionists are constantly pushing to get into the war. And when they do, man, they change the tide of the war. Over 250,000 Black men, and I'm going to

say women because women participated as well as nurses and as cooks and as spies, serve in the military. Officially and unofficially, I should say. And that becomes a game changer, but it's through the leadership of Black abolitionists and people like Douglass that really push Lincoln to incorporate Black troops and to make sure that Black troops are serving and being paid fairly and being promoted fairly, and allowing them to have their own political response to the Confederacy's secession.

Black enlistment in the Union Army

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
I think Lincoln resisted the enlistment of Black troops because in trying to win the South back, Black troops are the ultimate offense. They are the ultimate symbol that your institution is bankrupt, right? The fact that enslaved people and free men of color could take up arms against white people, against their former slaveholders, was so egregious in the minds of the South. But their response to Black troops is to treat them, is to kill them or to enslave them or re-enslave them, if they were former slaves. And Lincoln does not want this, but he cannot get white men to fight in the numbers that he needed and to be committed to this war in the way that Black people could. Black people had the utmost reason to fight, to fight for their freedom. Free Black men, because when we think about, you know, the Massachusetts 54th and 55th regiment, that's made so popular in the film *Glory*, those were mostly free men. I mean, they're from Massachusetts, right? Like, these are free men that are fighting for their lives, not just because they were enslaved. Some of them had never seen slavery, but because the Supreme Court decision, like *Dred Scott* says, "You're not a citizen. You're not worthy of respect." So the ultimate way of showing that is

through force and through violence and through the enlistment of these troops. I can't think of a greater, more powerful gesture than using Black troops to fight for their own freedom and really allowing them to make this a war that is about slavery, that is really only about slavery and control over their bodies and their destinies and their futures and their freedom.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
I think in the beginning, you know, a lot of enslaved troops are used for menial jobs. They're grave diggers, they are working as cooks or hospitals or working as, you know, sailors on boats. They don't initially have this swell of a force that you would think about in a typical battle. But when Black men do fight and begin to fight in large numbers and are put really on the front lines of the war, everyone's opinion of Black troops changes, because of their courage, because of their ability to push back the South and to maintain strongholds. I think about, you know, and I'm forgetting his name, oh, it's Robert Smalls. I think it's Robert Smalls that like single-handedly is able to like take over a Confederate ship and sail it into a Northern Harbor. I think about, you know, the Black troops that died at Fort Pillow and then going and fighting again, even stronger saying "remember Fort Pillow" when they were, you know, decimated by Southern troops. And they're able to go in and fight valiantly and pretty much win the battle.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Fort Wagner, when military troops are fighting and they essentially lose that battle, but it wasn't because they weren't courageous or it wasn't because they weren't skilled. They were under supplied and Frederick Douglass' son, Lewis Douglass writes about this. He said, "Had we been fully equipped, we could have taken that fort. We could have won." So if you think about what Black soldiers

are having do with less, what Black soldiers are having to do when they're not being compensated the same as their white counterparts, when they're not being fed and cared for the same as their white counterparts, and the fact that they're still able to find pockets of success, that's remarkable.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
I think Lincoln has to eat his words. I think Lincoln has to really come to grips with the fact that he was wrong and that he should have enlisted Black troops much sooner, and the war could have been over quicker had he done that. I think he has to have a real, you know, *mea culpa* moment, but I'm appreciative of Lincoln because he sees sort of the error of his ways. He sees, through military necessity, how much Black troops can change the tide of the war. And he realizes, and this, you know, leads him to the Emancipation Proclamation, that like these things have to go hand in hand. If we are going to win the war, the only way we can do it is by letting Black men fight and freeing the enslaved wholesale.

The prominence and influence of Frederick Douglass

01:57:27:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
Frederick Douglass is perhaps the most famous person in all of the 19th century. I would dare to say, he's America's like greatest celebrity at this time. And he comes into fame as a fugitive slave. He escapes slavery in the state of Maryland. He makes his way to Philadelphia and New York, and then Boston. He comes into the abolitionist party meeting William Lloyd Garrison, and they become friends and really Garrison mentors him. He considers Douglass to be his

protégé. I believe it's 1846, I think, that Frederick Douglass gives his first anti-slavery speech in Nantucket, Massachusetts. And from then, he goes on this speaking tour, not just all over the United States, but really all over the world. He manages to travel to Scotland, and to Europe, talking about the evils of slavery, telling his story. He writes a narrative that becomes a bestseller. He sells tens of thousands of copies. Americans have an insatiable appetite for not just literacy, but slave narratives. They want to know what's it like, they want to know how do you speak so well, why are you so articulate? Were you really a slave? People questioned his identity because he's so brilliant and he's so engaging and charismatic. And he is pivotal in leading and really being the face of not just the anti-slavery movement or the abolitionist movement, but really he is a force in terms of Black leadership that people are going to Douglass and seeking his counsel sometimes over William Lloyd Garrison.

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KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
He really outshines his mentor in a lot of ways. That's because he was enslaved himself. He lived that violent experience. He was separated from his mother. His mother was basically a stranger to him because of the institution of slavery. He saw people get whipped. He witnessed, you know, this violent separation. And so when he speaks, people want to listen. And he gives some of the most prolific speeches in all of American history. “What to the slave is the 4th of July?” is timeless. You know, here in Boston, it's read on the steps of the state house every single 4th of July. It always shocks me how relevant that speech is to understanding race relations in America today.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
So Frederick Douglass is everything. He's the whole ball game. In some ways, I do think that, you know, he over shines a lot of other Black activists that are doing equally important work. I always like to talk about Louis Hayden and

Henry Highland Garnet who really calls Douglass, you know, calls out Douglass' celebrity and basically says, "Listen, you're so obsessed with fame that you're forgetting about people that are still enslaved." And so I like to talk about Jermain Loguen and other people and William Parker, I think of Robert Purvis. These are all leaders that are Douglass' friends and comrades in the movement, and they're all talking to each other. They're all in conversation. And they're all pitching Douglass as well and saying, "Listen, when you talk to Lincoln next time, you tell him this, you tell him ..." You know, so this is not just a sole project that Douglass is engaging him in all on his own. Douglass is representative of a collective. But because Americans are obsessed with his celebrity, you know, we sort of dwindle him down to this one great man. But there are so many others that are doing this work.

Lincoln's empathy

01:01:19:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
So it's funny you asked this, because I'm writing a new book about violence and I distinguish the concepts of tragedy versus suffering. I think that in the Black community, suffering is almost inseparable. That Black people have suffered the institution of slavery. They've suffered the loss of their lives, the loss of their loved ones. And that suffering is something that is chronic. It stays with you continually. Whereas tragedy, I think oftentimes, is a one-time event. It is not this long term engagement with something horrific and what Lincoln experiences with the death of his two sons that precede him in death is tragedy. And that tragedy is transformational. I think it shapes who he is as a husband, who he is as a father. And it allows him to generate empathy, something that I think is a great strength. Something that allows you to look at the tragedy or

suffering of someone else and put yourself in that place, put yourself in that position.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And so I like to distinguish the difference between tragedy and suffering, because I think that suffering is systemic. I think that suffering is long-standing. I think that suffering is enduring, but I also think that tragedy is interesting because it allows people to pause and to stop and think about what it might be like to suffer and what it might be like to suffer from womb to tomb. And so I don't think we can look at Lincoln's life and say that he suffered his entire life, but he does experience tragedy. But I think we can look at someone like Black Americans, even like Douglass, and see how suffering, long sustained tragedy after tragedy after tragedy has undermined or underpinned Black identity. And that's something that I think is really, really important in Douglass and Lincoln's relationship, these concepts of suffering and tragedy and how they're able to find a mutual agreement, mutual experiences through grief and grievances.

01:03:48:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
And so that's what makes- I don't think Lincoln is the same without the loss of his children. I don't think that Lincoln can empathize with an enslaved mother, with someone who has had their child taken away from them. And Louis Hayden, who's a famous Black abolitionist, he's from Boston, and he said something to me that was really powerful. He says that he lost one child. One of his sons died around the age of three as a toddler. And then he was sold away from his other son. That son he never heard from again, they were gone. He didn't know what state they were in, who bought them, who sold them, where they were. And he said the grief of his son that was sold in slavery was greater than the grief of his son who had died, because he could look at his son who had

died and know for a fact where they were, how it happened, and the terms of it. He could sort of, you know, understand it. But it's really hard to understand and to reconcile the separation and death that slavery gave him. So yeah, this is a really long answer, but I say all this to say that Lincoln loses his son and is able to have empathy in a way that makes him a better leader.

Lincoln's work to reunite and redeem America after slavery ends

01:05:23:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
I think the simple answer for why Lincoln pivots is military necessity. He needs to end the war. He needs to end it quickly. And he needs to bring the country back together again. And, you know, because slavery dies on the ground, there's no resuscitating that after that. There are there, I believe it's Louisiana, Tennessee, Missouri, I'm going to miss out on some states, but there are Southern states that have already gone about the work of abolishing slavery. When he issues the Emancipation Proclamation, you know, he's freeing the slaves in the States that are in rebellion, but there are so many states that have already taken those steps. So the death of slavery is the writing on the wall, it's there. And the South can no longer sustain itself anymore without enslaved people. They're the bedrock of their institution. And so, you know, I think for Lincoln, towards the end of the war, the bigger question for him is how do we reunite a country where slavery doesn't exist anymore? And what does that look like for the North and the South? And how do we reconcile with that? I think that's the greatest challenge that he has. And that's something that, you know, his legacy is still, we're still trying to make sense of how or what direction he wanted to take the country in after slavery ends.

01:07:02:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I believe that Lincoln had a conviction, a deep conviction about how to deal with this question of slavery. And I felt like, you know, he's thinking about repentance from a spiritual perspective, how as a country do we repent of the sins of slavery? How do we make sense of this? How do we right ourselves again? How do we become righteous again? And I think Lincoln is deeply invested in the idea of making America righteous and really having to, sort of, I don't know what I would say… I mean, maybe I think it's spiritual, it's political, it's economic, it's every single facet of life that slavery touched. Lincoln wants to right that wrong. He really wants to right that wrong. And you can't simply do it by saying, "Hey enslaved people, you're now free." It required more than that. It required him to really define what does freedom look like? What does it really look like? What should it entail? What does citizenship entail? What's required? These are really the big questions that he's having to address, not just in the second, you know, second inaugural address, but also in the moment of Reconstruction, how do we reconstruct an American identity that is based off the principles of liberty and justice and equality for all?

Lincoln grappling with the aftermath of the Civil War

01:08:56:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

So we know that the American Civil War is the bloodiest war out of all wars that America has ever fought. More than, you know, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, 9/11, no other war comes close to the amount of casualties and death that is experienced in the American Civil War. 2% of America's population dies. You know, some scholars say 6 million people, some people say more than that. I

think that Lincoln is trying to find a way to understand all of that death. It has to mean something. It can't be for naught. The women, the mothers who've lost their sons, all their sons. How do we reconcile that? How do we find meaning in that? For enslaved people who for the first time will be, you know, able to experience freedom?

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
What did we say about the institution of slavery and what it's left them? What should their future hold? These are really big, sort of existential questions about who we are, and who do we want to be, and who do we want to become, that Lincoln is trying to get, not just himself, but the entire country to grapple with, who are we as Americans? And what do we want to be? And what do we want to stand for? And what do we want to be known by. And these are questions we ask ourselves to this very day. You know, every time we see some different reiteration of Black suppression or Black oppression, we have to ask ourselves, is this America? Is this who we are? Is this who we really want to be? And what I can appreciate about Lincoln is that he's having these questions, and it's grievous to him to try to figure out the meaning of it all. I think we all think about that when we lose someone close to us, like he did a child, or when we have tragedy or suffering in our life. We want to know that it mattered. We want to know that it meant something, or that there was some greater good accomplished. And if we can't ascertain that, then it makes it very difficult for us to understand how we go forward. Because why? For what? And I think that's what Lincoln is dealing with. The morality of it all.

Lincoln's evolution

01:11:32:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

It's absolutely fair to say that Lincoln was willing to maintain slavery, to preserve slavery, to undermine abolitionist efforts, to keep the Union intact. He is not someone who is thinking about Black equality, certainly not Black emancipation. These ideas come later, but I think, you know, Frederick Douglass says this pretty perfectly. He says- He's giving a speech, this is after Lincoln has died, and Frederick Douglass says, "Lincoln was a white man. He was preeminently the white man's president." And so to think of him as being this sort of John Brown type or this very forward thinking progressive, you know, legislator, that was not who Lincoln was. Lincoln believed in expediency. He wanted this war to be over quickly. He did not want to give the South another reason or any motivation to believe that he was going to, you know, relinquish them of their enslaved property.

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

So Lincoln, I think- you know, the great thing about Lincoln is that he's a thinker. He evolves, he changes, he can be persuaded. He believes in rationale. And I think that becomes the turning point in a lot of ways in which, you know, when the Civil War will not be over quickly, when it's not just a month or a couple months skirmish, when this is a full out war, Lincoln has to reconsider everything that he thought that would be appropriate, or that would be, you know, possible in keeping the Union together. And I think that he has to reckon with the fact that the South was unwilling, like, unwilling to relinquish its enslaved property, to relinquish white supremacy, to relinquish its political power or its economic power. And I think to be honest, Lincoln underestimated the allegiance that Southerners had to the institution of slavery. More so than the allegiance they had to the United States, which is why they seceded.

01:13:52:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

I think Lincoln is so human. And he's so complicated. And there is nothing very simplistic about who he is, or how he's evolved or come to this place. And everything is so contingent. You know, like, what if he hadn't have won the election? What if his son hadn't died? What if this hadn't happened, or that hadn't happened, or he never talked to Douglass or, you know, there's so many different, like, ways that you can change or alter his entire trajectory, just with one small tweak. But what I appreciate about Lincoln is that he never stops striving to be better, and to make the country better, and to make the world a place that we want to raise our children in, both Black and white. And I think that's really powerful. And in some ways, unprecedented for an American president. There are very few presidents that we can pinpoint to that have a real conviction about how everyone is treated. And even though Lincoln doesn't start out in that way, the force of events compels him, compels him to see things differently. War changes him. Death changes him. And that, to me, is really sobering, but also really encouraging. That someone could evolve to a place of deep humanity, be gripped by that humanity, and want it for every single American.

The sacrifices so many made to end slavery

01:15:42:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:

You know, nothing's inevitable in history. Historians are always like, nothing's inevitable. You know, like, the end of slavery is not inevitable. The end of segregation is not inevitable. Like, women's right to vote, that's not inevitable. I

think he reminds us how much struggle, how much activism is required, how much leadership is required to make these monumental transformative changes that we all live in right now. You don't just stumble upon emancipation. People fought for that. People actively gave their lives for that. And people who never experienced slavery actively gave their lives and fought for that. And that to me is tremendous.

"I didn't give you freedom, God did"

01:16:33:00

KELLIE CARTER JACKSON:
This is like one month before Lincoln is assassinated. I think it's in April of 1865 and he's talking about Black people and he says, "In reference to you, colored people, let me say God has made you free. Although you have been deprived of your God-given rights by your so-called masters, you are now as free as I am, and if those that claim to be your superiors do not know that you are free, take the sword and the bayonet and teach them that you are; for God created all men free, giving to each the same rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And when I read this quote, I was just really moved because, you know, my book is called *Force and Freedom*, and it's about really forcing freedom. And the fact that Lincoln's saying two things: "I didn't give you freedom, God gave it to you. You were born with it. But equally important, if someone tries to rob you of that God-given right, you take up the sword and you take up the bayonet, and you fight for your freedom." And that to me is just, is so powerful. It's so powerful. Because I think, you know, maybe we're not always taking up the sword and the bayonet, but ever since Black people have been enslaved, they have fought for their freedom, through force or through violent force. And that to me is just

really encouraging. Lincoln's not saying something that Black people don't know, but I think he's affirming an idea that we should all uphold. And that is, we are all given freedom by God, and we should all use whatever we have in our disposal to maintain it.

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