



HANDOUT FOUR: **LEADER THREAD, INTERVIEW ARCHIVE**

Directions: Underline key phrases and new details as you watch and listen to the interviews.

ELIZABETH ALEXANDER

I feel literally lucky to be alive and in the same world that Bryan is in. We are of a generation, we have responsibility. And so, I think that my craft is poetry, his craft is the law, we're both trying to do something in bigger public spaces, and extend what that work can do. We're both educators, you know, I'm now working with some of the tools of philanthropy. We are of a generation; the path was laid for us. We had to make our own way, but we have work to do. We have justice work to do, we have so much work to do. So, I am just grateful that he is there shining this particular light, because we have responsibility. And that's not a grandiose thing, that's just the truth, so that's what we're trying to do.

SIA SANNEH

Bryan is an incredibly even keeled, even-tempered person. He's so remarkably well suited to the work that we do because he never gets too high or too low. And I've been in so many extraordinary stressful situations with him and he's just really even. And I think that is quite reassuring when you're taking on the challenges that we're taking on at EJI. I mean, I think about one of the first cases I worked on, Ray Hinton's case, and there was a long period of time that began before I started at EJI, but a long period of time where we really did not know if we would be able to save his life. And I think that that's a tremendous weight to carry as a person, as a lawyer. And Bryan was just dogged but incredibly calm and strategic in the course of that litigation. And he's like that in moment-to-moment stressful situations.

It's really helpful, I think it expands the reach of what we can do, what we can take on, because that has become our organizational culture. We're very even and that's necessary when there's going to be so many extreme challenges. We have developed a sort of tolerance for challenge that, again, I think is part of the culture. Where you're used to extreme situations, to short deadlines, to horrific setbacks after you think you've won a case and then something happens and it turns out you've lost or at least temporarily suffered a setback. There's so much that needs to go into keeping an even keel and measured throughout that, and Bryan's personality really embodies that. I think he's also appropriately celebrated for his extraordinary story telling gifts, for his legal vision.

But, to me, as somebody who works with him everyday, one of his greatest skills, I think, is the fact that he is so dedicated to systems and he is so interested in implementation. He has great ideas, but that's such a small part of achieving a great idea. He has the idea, but then he has the wisdom and the kind of thought process to put that into practice, and he is very involved in that process. And I think that's what really, to me, is his brilliance, is that he can implement and he can oversee an implementation process. And that's how you have an office that represents hundreds of people.

And then that same group of people builds a museum, and builds a memorial, and takes on other projects, and writes reports. It's that implementation in a really systematic, strategic way. And that really comes from him, and it's a culture and a way of thinking and a way of approaching legal challenges, but you really have to kind of stay calm. I think that's something I've learned from him and have watched him do for a decade now. And it is infectious, and it's the reason we can represent so many people, I think.