



HANDOUT THREE: **LAWYER THREAD, INTERVIEW ARCHIVE**

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

SIA SANNEH

Bryan is an incredibly disciplined and hard working person, almost to such an extraordinary level it's hard to put it into words. I think it comes back to a central idea, which is he truly feels that it is the greatest gift of his life to do this work. It's not a sacrifice, it's not martyrdom, it is a privilege and a gift to do this. And he passes that along to all of us. And I think what that means is he's excited to do it. He's excited to have time to devote to the clients. I'd been working at EJI for a couple of years before I even knew that on Sundays he quietly went to the prison by himself and was just doing a social justice reading group with some of the clients there who didn't have any hope for release at the moment.

But he wanted to keep them engaged and had built relationships with them. And that's an expression of just joy in the work, not somebody who feels like they just have to clock a few more hours. That really comes from a deep place, and I think that's encapsulates Bryan's spirit. He's incredibly hard working. He has incredibly high standards for the work, and his attention to detail is sobering because I've had experiences with him where I know for a fact he's only slept for a couple of hours the night before. We're talking about something and it is laser-like, his ability to find the one thing on the page that's out of place. Or when we were doing the museum, he would look at something and say, 'didn't we change the color on that?' It's incredible how many things he can hold kind of side-by-side in his head at the same time.

The other skill that I think allows him to do that is he's very present in every moment, even as there's so much swirling around. He can hold 12 meetings in a day, and one is about the budget for something, and another is about a highly technical issue, and another is about a theory of art and how we're going to use art for story telling. He just kind of floats between these things because he stays very present in each moment. And I think that's a skill but also a discipline; it takes discipline to not be sitting there tapping your foot thinking about the next thing you have to do. I personally struggle with that, and I watch him just stay really even and engaged. And I think structurally that allows us to do so many things simultaneously. . .

But, again, I think that Bryan is impossible to separate from the choices that he's made, and he's made remarkable choices as a person and as a lawyer. He's gone on a path that almost nobody else would have chosen, and he's done it at times that have been incredibly lonely, I'm sure. Because what I see most differently from when I started is the weight on him and the things that kind of sit on his shoulders, both the decisions that he makes and the obligations, the expectations, I think that is really challenging. We try to share that with him as much as we can and take some of that off of his shoulders, but I think it's a lot to carry and yeah, he does it sort of cheerfully and gracefully and with a lot of self-deprecating humor, so. We are obviously, but especially the clients, lucky to have him in this cause.

RANDY SUSSKIND

Just being able to see the kind of person he is just generally makes you a better person when you're around people like that. I know that he'll go on a Sunday morning, when most of us are taking a break, he'll call me from the road, he'll be driving to a prison to see an old client. The client doesn't need a legal visit, it's just basically, he's just, as a friend, going to visit somebody just so they can get a visit. And if you visit someone in prison, you can buy them a soda or you can buy them a cupcake or something from the vending machine, and for some people, they don't get visits ever, and just watching Bryan do stuff offline just as part of his normal life just makes it so that you appreciate those kind of things in ways that you otherwise wouldn't. It just makes you a better person being around that kind of compassion.

ANTHONY RAY HINTON

In Alabama, they rule every Friday on death row appeal, either the Alabama Criminal Court appeal or the Alabama Supreme Court, and I got word to call my attorney. And I called Bryan Stevenson on a Friday evening about, I would say, three or four o'clock, and I could tell in his voice that it wasn't good news. But I went on to ask him, "Mr. Stevenson, how are you doing today?" And he said, "Oh, not good, Ray." I said, "Well, what's the problem?" He said, "Well, Alabama Supreme Court ruled, and they ruled against us." And at that time, I could tell this was a man that was disappointed in the ruling.

I could tell this was a man that needed lifting up, and so I went into character and I told Mr. Stevenson, I said, "Mr. Stevenson, this is Anthony. Ray ain't here today." And he played along with me, and he said, "Okay." And I said, "Ray wanted me to tell you that he wants you to go home and enjoy a book, enjoy a movie, enjoy a great dinner, or a glass of wine, but he wants you to go home and have a great weekend." And he said, "Don't worry about this case." "He's told me to tell you that he will call you back Monday." And Mr. Stevenson said, "Okay." We hung up, and I said before I hung up, I said, "Ray said, if they allowed him to, he going to go outside and shoot some basketball for the weekend. He definitely ain't going to think about the case." Hung up. Monday morning came, and I had told him that I would call him exactly at nine o'clock. And I called him at nine, and I said, "Mr. Stevenson, this is Ray." I said, "How you feeling this morning?" I could tell from his voice that he was alive and well, and somehow he had a voice that was singing, "I'm free, I'm happy." And I said, "Mr. Stevenson, how was your weekend?" And he said, "Ray, I had best weekend. Thank you so much." And I said, "Well, it's Monday morning. Get back on that case." And he said, "I will." I never met a lawyer, never heard nobody on the road that talks about a lawyer that cared so much he was depressed, and I never had a lawyer that would ask the likes of me. Without asking me, he said, "Okay," then go enjoy my weekend. This told me a whole lot about the man that I was entrusting to try and prove my innocence, and I never had a lawyer that seemed to care and cared as much about my case and me as a person as this man did. We could be seen in the visiting yard with our head bowed down from laughter, and I just got to know him as this great lawyer, then I got to know him as a human being, as a person. We formed this bond of lawyer, friend, brother, and I always felt, and I used to try to prepare myself, what would I say to him if this didn't work out the way it should?

