



## The Lit Review Podcast

## English Transcript

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**Guest/Topic:** Andrea J. Ritchie on *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*

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### Monica Trinidad:

Welcome to the Lit Review, a podcast sparked by a moment of urgency, recognizing mass political education as key for our liberation struggles. Every week, your hosts, Page May and Monica Trinidad will chat with people we love and respect about relevant books for the movement, everything from history to theories around gender, to Sci-Fi and beyond. We know that political study is not accessible for a variety of reasons. The high cost of books, academic jargon, the failures of our underfunded school systems, time barriers, and more. Our hope is that this podcast helps address some of those issues making critical knowledge more accessible to the masses. Think Spark Notes in podcast form. I'm one of your hosts, Monica Trinidad. Thank you for listening.

All right. Hello. Welcome to episode 21. Hey, I'm here with Page May, say hey.

### Page May:

Hi.

### Monica Trinidad:

We're both sick. Page's voice is a little, if you've heard in episode 19.

### Page May:

I sounded beautiful.

### Monica Trinidad:

You sounded great. I was listening to it on the airplane on my way back from New York and all of a sudden-

**Page May:**

It's raw.

**Monica Trinidad:**

... It was your voice and I was like, "Debbie, did you hear Page's voice?" But I'm glad you're feeling better now.

**Page May:**

I am. I'm much better.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Good. So we are here today with the amazing Andrea Ritchie. We're at her place right now, her beautiful, gorgeous place with Joey Mogul, and I see my artwork on the wall. I see the ocean. It's just a great place. I love it. I love recording here. So Andrea Ritchie's going to talk about her book *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*. We are so excited for you to be here. Thank you so much.

Before we get into our big interview with Andrea, I wanted to talk a little bit about the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, which is run by Mia Henry, Lisa Brock over in Kalamazoo College. They do amazing work. They're actually our one and only sponsor that we have for The Lit Review, so we really love them. But I just wanted to talk a little bit about the work that they're doing. So the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership is an initiative out of Kalamazoo College, and their mission is to develop and sustain leaders in human rights and social justice through education and capacity building.

They actually just welcomed aboard, Justin Dantey as their new Program Coordinator, and he's an incredible writer and young activist. He runs Black Diaspora Project. It's an online blog in store that attempts to forge reconnection between millennial members of the African Diaspora. It's run by two groups of friends, one in the Midwest and one in Uganda. So check it out if you get a chance.

The Arcus Center also hosts this amazing online resource center called the Praxis Center, which you can find at [ksu.edu/praxis](http://ksu.edu/praxis). So the Arcus Center also has this amazing activist and residence program, and they host activists from around the world on campus for one or two weeks to bring the Kalamazoo College community new perspectives and approaches to social justice work that are informed by current movement and campaigns for change.

So thank you, Mia Henry, Lisa Brock, and everyone else at the Arcus Center for being The Lit Reviews one and only supporting sponsor, and for sharing our podcast episodes with the world through the Praxis Center.

So here we are with Andrea Ritchie, we ask this to everybody at the beginning of every episode. We want to hear who you are, even though everybody knows who you are, what do you do and why?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Those are big questions. But first of all, I just wanted to thank you both so much for having me on. I feel like this is the media outlet that I most wanted to have a chance to be on and that I'm

most excited about because I have so much respect for you all and the work that you do, but also because I really appreciate the model you have around engaging activists around books and just really going back to reading and thinking about that as we do our work as organizers and activists.

So super honored, dope, excited and nervous. And also want to appreciate the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership because Praxis actually published a couple of blogs of mine on the issues we're talking about today, they're in the book, long before other folks were willing to do it or were as open to doing it. So they really are on the cutting edge in many ways of social justice issues.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Absolutely.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

So I'm grateful for them. So who am I? I'm a Researcher, Writer, Advocate, Activist, Organizer. Currently, my job title is Researcher and Residence on race, gender, sexuality, and criminalization at the Barnard Center for Research on Women. I've been a Soros Justice fellow.

**Monica Trinidad:**

You're being humble like many of our guests, but you are an amazing Activist Organizer, Litigator. You've just been doing some incredible work around Say Her Name. We are honored to have you in Chicago now, and very excited about that and just seeing all of the incredible work you're going to bring to Chicago. And we are really excited about this book. You have a Ford by Angela Davis and Mariame Kaba, and then-

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I am deeply blessed.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Exactly. So I am just so excited about this.

**Page May:**

When is the book actually coming out?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

It's coming out on Tuesday-

**Page May:**

On Tuesday.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... August 1st. So very soon.

**Page May:**

So hopefully you're listening to this and you go and buy the book tomorrow. But just so folks know, so on the cover is our friend Jene Bonsu holding up a sign, it says, "Black women, girls and trans folks get locked up and shot down too." But the title of the book is Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color. So why did you write this book? And I'm curious when you started writing it, because it feels very relevant to write now, but I suspect it took you a very long time to write. And so how long did it take you and why did you have the idea to write this?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

It was actually Jill Petty's idea for me to write the book. Jill Petty was my editor at Beacon Press, but at the time that I first started it, which was back in 2007, 10 years ago, she was an editor at South End Press, and we had just finished *The Color of Violence*, *The Incite Anthology*, which was an anthology of pieces, essays, poems and writings around different forms of violence against women of color. And I wrote a chapter on law enforcement violence against women of color. And I realized at that point that I had a lot of information that I'd gathered over the years, and it was hard to condense it into one essay. And Jill, who was working with us on the editing, said, "Look, this thing is a whole book. You need to write a whole book on this." And so at that point, I entered into a contract with South End Press to write the book and started it in 2007, 2008, originally in slightly different form.

I was actually originally going to write each chapter with an activist who was working on the issues related to the topic. And then I got distracted by doing the work itself and doing the litigation organizing and advocacy and kept working on half-heartedly. I did another chunk of work in 2010 on it, and then unfortunately, South End Press closed. So I lost steam, but then picked it up again in 2015. And Jill by then was at Beacon, and that's how it came to be in its present form. And I do feel like it is probably best that it came out now because actually I feel like it's landing in a different environment than it would've been in 2007.

**Page May:**

Exactly.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I think is going to have more impact. And I feel like I've also learned a tremendous amount over those last 10 years. I had done a lot of work in the preceding 10 years before I started writing it 2007, but I learned so much more in the interim 10 years, not just about these issues, but just my political analysis evolved tremendously during that time. And so I feel like this is the right time and the right place for the book.

**Page May:**

Did you write it with a goal of some kind of intervention? And it sounds like maybe the possibility of an intervention has changed, but what was your goal?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Oh, God. Yes, totally. I was thinking about this earlier today because someone asked me, "Why did you start writing it? Or what started me off working on these issues?" And that came of age as an activist around the time of the Rodney King beating and have very vivid memories of watching that across my TV screen. And then also when the first acquittal came down, being one of 100s of people who poured into streets of Toronto in outrage. And then also obviously seeing much greater or bigger rebellion in many cities across the United States. And at the time with my community of Black women and women of color in Toronto, we were also talking about other incidents that involved Black women and women of color. And in the couple of years that followed, continued to do that, and we talked about those cases, but then I realized this larger conversation that had been sparked by Rodney King and the conversation about driving while Black and police brutality only focused on men, and those men were also only imagined to be straight and not trans.

And I just couldn't understand how that disconnect, well I could understand, but that disconnect was becoming increasingly troubling for me. And so I think at some point I just became obsessed with gathering every story, documenting every snippet in a newspaper or in a testimony or in a city council hearing or something, or every conversation I had with Black women and women of color about police violence they'd experienced and just gathering it up and continued to do that over years. Such that in some ways what prompted me to write the book, *Page*, is I wanted to get rid of the 10 boxes of stuff in my apartment that are the subject matter of this book. Then there's literally little newsletters from an organization that I picked up in 2003 that had mention of one case involving a woman or a clipping of a newspaper, same thing, one mention of a case involving a woman and flyers and books and transcripts and just want to put it all in one place so I could access it.

In some ways, I feel like I write the books that I... Just so I can put everything I know about something in one place and find it and share that with other people, but also the books that I want to read. And just over the years, it continued to be shocking to me that there was no book that talked about police violence against Black women and women of color. And so I felt like I wanted to make the intervention to put it all together in one place so that we could stop talking about it as individual cases. So we could stop being like, "Here's one case that happened here, but now back to the regularly scheduled conversation with the usual focus, the usual narrative, and then another case pops up and we'll go back to the usual conversation."

And I felt like if there was enough in one place that maybe that would actually change, like shift the narrative, hopefully expand it more permanently and more sustainably going forward. And then the last thing I would say, I wrote the book as a gift to amazing young activists like yourself so that you wouldn't have to read through the 10 boxes of crap in my living room and the sisters at Assata's Daughters, so that you could look at it and be like, "We see what's been happening for the last 20 years or so. We'll take this part because we find it useful. We don't find that useful." But I found myself in a lot of rooms of activists where we were doing timelines around police violence against Black women, women of color and resistance. One at the Institute of the Insight Conference that was here in Chicago in 2014, another one at the Allied Media Conference.

And people knew a lot about what had happened to Black women and women of color post-2014, and they maybe knew some stuff from earlier on in history, but there was this period in the middle, like the '80s, the '90s, the 2000s where they were like, "We never heard of all those cases. And we certainly never knew that there was organizing around them." And they'd be like,

"Look at this insight toolkit on police violence against women of color and trans people of color. We never knew this existed." And it's definitely dated and there's some stuff in there that might not be useful anymore. But I feel like people were in some ways really encouraged and excited to learn more about what had come before 2014, what had come before Say Her Name. And so that felt like an important thing to put it together and be like, "Here," toss it out into the world and say, "Take or leave whatever is useful. But this is my contribution to this conversation right now."

**Monica Trinidad:**

So walk us through this book because how did you just categorize and summarize all of these stories? How did you put them chapter by chapter? How did you arrange that?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Basically, the book looks at this issue from as many different angles as I could think about and through as many different lenses as I could think about. So it starts off through a historical lens because I feel like I learned from Black feminist mentors in Toronto and here. People like Angela, Mariame Kaba, but also Beverly Bain who was one of my early Black feminist mentors in Toronto. That obviously the history and the way that Black women's identities have literally been shaped through chattel slavery and colonialism, the way indigenous women's identities have been shaped by colonialism informs present day police interactions still. And so it felt important to start there and look through a historical lens to see how much of that traveled and translated into the present day. I guess over the years, these sort of themes slid into place as I was trying to make sense of what I was amassing in those 10 boxes.

And so I started to think about different ways policing is organized and how they each affect women. So for instance, there's been a lot of conversation about the war on drugs, and particularly as I was coming to the US in the early '90s, the impact of the war on drugs on Black women, women of color was much more central in the conversation. But people weren't talking about the policing interactions as much as they were talking about the sentencing and the long mandatory minimums that Black women and women of color were doing, Black women and indigenous women particularly. But no one was talking about the police interactions that were contributing to that. So I started trying to look into that. And then as broken windows policing was also something that was really prevalent in the early '90s particularly in New York City.

As I moved there in the early 2000s, I kept starting to asking, 'Well, how is this affecting women? And how is this intersecting with the war on drugs? And then immigration enforcement obviously is something that has waxed and waned over time, but definitely over the last two decades or the last decade has been ramping up dramatically. And so wanted to think about how that was happening. And then of course, I was in the US in DC and then in New York Post 911, and really wanted to think about how the war on terror was impacting South Asian and Muslim, and Middle Eastern and Arab women. And so thought I would lead the book off with looking where we're already looking. So we're already looking at the war on drugs, we're already looking at broken windows policing, we're already looking at immigration enforcement, we're already looking at the war on terror, but we're not looking at how women are impacted in those situations as much particularly when it comes to policing interactions. So I wanted to dive in there.

And then there's been a lot of conversation about the school to prison pipeline. Certainly Mariame for instance, has been a huge contributor to that conversation. And Mariame has actually been a huge contributor to centering girls in that conversation, Black girls in that conversation, which is not always where that conversation starts or ends. So definitely. And then drawing a lot on the work of Monique Morris in her latest book, Push Out, wanted to center girls experiences of police in schools. And then police interactions with people who are either labeled as having a disability or are a mental health crisis are actually a significant proportion of police interactions and particularly where women of color are concerned. I spent the day today going through a database that will be on a website that goes with the book and of cases, all the ones that are in the book, plus additional ones that didn't make it in.

And just so many of those cases involve women, particularly the fatal cases, in the midst of a mental health crisis. And then many other cases involve women with physical disabilities or other disabilities. And so it felt really important to look at it through that lens, and that's not a lens that often people examine police violence through. And then it felt also critical to look at how policing is gendered and particularly how it's racially gendered. And then looking at the forms of police violence that take place in racially gendered context that we don't often think about. So police sexual violence is something that we almost never talk about in the context of police violence, but it's according to the right wing Cato Institute, the second most frequently reported form of police misconduct after excessive force. It's not the second most frequently talked about.

And actually that's an area where there's actually more social science research about women's experiences than anywhere else. And a lot of it's done by current and former law enforcement officers. So they know it's a problem. They will tell you that the data that we have will show, it's just the tip of the iceberg. One of the books I read in researching this is Norm Stamper's book, the former Chief of Police from Seattle... I know it was hard. I read the whole thing.

**Page May:**

Thank you.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Thank you for doing that for us.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Yes, exactly. That was my gift also. But he calls police sexual violence law enforcement's dirty little secret and talks openly about how prevalent it is and why. So I felt like talking about that policing gender lines. We think of police as policing the lines of race, the lines of class, that's pretty well understood, but we don't think about them literally policing the lines of gender in our bodies.

I think we think maybe more about that these days when we're talking about these laws like purporting to govern how transgender or nonconforming people use public spaces and particularly public restrooms. We don't think about how the police are the ones enforcing that and whether there's a law or not, the police are the ones enforcing the gender binary in the ways that they interact with people around ID, in the ways they interact with people around bathroom use and the ways they interact with people in terms of just inflicting physical violence on people

that they perceive to be gender-nonconforming and therefore inherently "disorderly." And then how that intersects with broken windows policing and so on. So I felt like taking that angle to it and seeing how police literally police the lines of gender historically and the present day, and then how that's linked also to how they police sex and sexuality.

Gender nonconformity is understood as also sexual deviance, which then produces things like walking while trans, where police officers assume that if you're gender-nonconforming you're automatically sexually nonconforming or sexually "deviant" and assume that you must be engaged in some kind of sexually deviant act. But then also just looking at how women who dress in a particular way, particularly Black women or native women and Latina women and Asian women, are read by police officers as automatically also be engaged in sexually deviant acts, even if they're just standing literally on a corner. So looking at policing sex and gender together felt really critical. And then also looking at motherhood, which is another very gendered site of policing that we don't talk about, whether it's police violence against pregnant women or the ways in which child welfare enforcement is about racial profiling and police violence too. And lastly, looking at the final gendered context of police violence is when police are actually answering calls for help.

And so we've been talking about that a lot recently around the case of Charleena Lyles. But also what I was finding in all this research I was doing was that an alarming number of cases of police violence against women of color were happening when police were responding to calls for help when women were experiencing violence or trans people were experiencing violence. And it felt like that required some of its own attention. And then lastly, I made every effort in writing the book to have every chapter not just describe the problem with the cases and the studies, but also to share some examples of resistance that I had either been a part of or had the opportunity to witness or learn about that centered those experiences. But also felt like it was important for the book to end with that as well, so that it closes the chapter on resistance and then some final thoughts.

#### **Page May:**

So the book hooks you with cover with this language of too, that it happens to us too, and it's tapping into the Black Lives Matter centering of specifically police murdering people with impunity. But then it sounds like the book is actually saying, "Yes, we also are getting shot down and killed, and if we want to understand police violence... But if we center Black women and women of color, we actually see much broader, there's much more different variations of violence that the police are engaged in every day." Is that fair?

#### **Andrea Ritchie:**

Absolutely. It's about starting with, "Let's look where we're already looking. That happens to us too." And it's not a too in a competitive sense, but it's in a sense of you can't leave us out of a conversation about things that are happening to us. You just can't do that. We're not going to allow you to do that. And I feel like post Ferguson, the leadership on the ground like the two of you, the women on the front lines of Ferguson, the women on the front lines of BLM are just saying, "We're just not letting that happen anymore. And we now run shit." So it's just not going to happen anymore. And it's not like Black women and women of color haven't always run movements for police accountability and resistance to police violence. It's just a different



moment in terms of our ability to assert that our experiences are going to be part of the conversation as well.

But then yes, it's saying, "And now I'm going to take you on this journey of looking also where we're not already looking and expanding the lens." Because I do feel like when the standard of what police violence is, is a shooting of an unarmed person, then we're going to not see as much of what's happening to Black women and women of color as if we're looking somewhere else and maybe looking at sexual harassment being a standard of police violence, then we're going to see a whole lot more different composition of people who are targets. And that doesn't mean that Black men and men of color, queer and not queer, trans and not trans aren't also targets of police sexual harassment and violence. And that's actually another thing that happens is that when we start looking where women are, then we start seeing new forms of violence that actually apply across the board that no one's talking about or that people rarely talk about. And so it opens doors for better understanding of what's happening to entire communities.

**Page May:**

Well, so I can think of now dozens of examples of how people have organized in really powerful, inspiring ways around police murders of folks. But I know very few examples of how folks have successfully organized whether or not it leads to a cop going to jail or whatever. By successful, I mean it pushes conversations, it builds power in community. What has successful resistance looked like when we look at these other forms of police violence that are taking place? How have people organized around sexual violence that the police are doing against Black women and women of color?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I think the organizing that Oklahoma City Artists for Justice did around the whole Holtzclaw case is one really prominent example of folks being like, "Wait a minute, we're hearing these stories. We're hearing a defense of this officer. We're hearing no one speaking and standing or being next to these survivors. We have to stand with these survivors because it could have been us if we had driven through that neighborhood at that time of night." And really showing up in court hearings, showing up in media, showing up with anti-violence groups and being like, 'Hey, YWCA, you say you're about violence against women. Here's some cases of violence against women. What are we doing now?' And so really showing up in those ways. I feel like there's other creative examples I've heard of.

Maybe I talked about it in this book, but I definitely talked about it in my article in the Color Violence Anthology of a group in Brooklyn called [inaudible 00:24:47] of young Black and brown women who started video documenting police sexual harassment of young women in their neighborhood. And they had a hard time catching it on film. And that's part of the problem. It happens really fast. You can't really tell it's happening until you see a young woman walk away from an encounter with a police officer with a particular kind of look on her face, but maybe then she doesn't want to talk about it. It's not something you can document as a cop watch very easily. But they did their best. And then they combined that with a public event where they also acted out skits of experiences they'd had with police officers that were sexual harassment.

And they screened the video that they made on the wall opposite the police precinct, actually, at a street fair. And did the skits-

**Monica Trinidad:**

That's so dope.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... At a street fair.

Yes, exactly. And so this is exactly why I wrote this, because I feel like you should know this and you should know them. Even though they're not active at this time, because I feel like it's your siblings in the work or comrades. And so they did this and the community was outraged and it was very embarrassing for the precinct. And it also led to other conversations because then the young women were like-

**Page May:**

We should start projecting-

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly.

**Page May:**

... These videos. That's such [inaudible 00:25:56].

**Monica Trinidad:**

Onto their building.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly. No, this is why I'd say the book is working. It's a success. So they did that. But then also the conversations that sparked was that the community members, the young men in the community were like, "This is fucked up. You just can't be doing this to our sisters." And this is the man. And they were really mad and they were really amped. And then the other women were like, "You know you do this to us too, right? You don't have a gun, you don't have the power to arrest me. So it's a different experience, but can we talk about that?" And then all of a sudden, maybe the conversation wasn't so lit anymore.

It wasn't the hype anymore. And I feel like that's part of the reason that we don't hear about it because sexual violence just generally is hidden and suppressed. People don't report it when it happens, when the perpetrator is anybody, much less the people you're supposed to report it to. But so that's an example of organizing I found that was really amazing because it also led to a whole other conversation about just the spectrum of violence that young women of color were experiencing in their neighborhood.

But I think other than that, it's people organizing for prosecution. And that tends to happen more in cases of police sexual violence. And so people have the illusion that that's the answer to it. But I can guarantee you that the fact that Daniel Holtzclaw is doing 263 years in prison doesn't mean there aren't many more Daniel Holtzclaws running around right now undeterred. So I feel like we need to actually think about different responses. Obviously he should be fired. They should be fired. We should figure out how to hold people accountable in those ways. But we need to start

thinking about also prevention around police sexual violence. And then that's where I think the more interesting conversations are. I feel like I've been having a fight with myself over the last few years where I've been working to try and come up with model policies around police sexual violence because my research as a Soros Justice fellow found that more than half of police departments have no policy at all that says a police officer should not be sexually harassing, extorting sex or raping people while on the job.

So that's my response. I'm like, "That is ridiculous." So I'm like, "At a minimum they should have a policy and they should have things in place that are about prevention and detecting and accountability." But as you look at history, which we do in this chapter, police actually are sexual violence. And so is a policy really going to stop it? Or is it just going to make it harder for Joey and I to sue later? Which is actually I think the outcome. So then what's the answer? Or is it harm reduction? So this is the argument I'm having with myself. Am I doing harm reduction? Am I doing a non-reformist reform, taking power away from the police to enact the sexual violence while we fight for a different world? Or am I just pink washing them in a particular way by being like, "If you adopt this policy, then we will be okay." I still don't know who won that argument. It happens on the regular in my head, but I feel like we need to figure out what... We need to do something.

#### **Page May:**

I'll pass it over to you in a second. So that's been playing in my head a lot. So I organize in Washington Park, and there was a woman who found me a couple of weeks ago and her home had burned down and she just needed a couple bus passes, but she starts opening up to me, so she's a sex worker and there's no shelters there between cottage and Western for women unless you have small children. And so she is put outside and then she's a Black woman on the corner, does engage in sex work, but the cops, that's not even really why they're picking her up and then they give her an ultimatum, they rape her or she goes to jail or sometimes both. But she was demanding a shelter and she was really pissed off at the community. She was clearly pissed at the police.

And then a few weeks after that, I think it's episode 19, we talked to Kathy Cohen and she's talking about the boundaries of Blackness and the HIV/AIDS crisis and both in the interview, but also the reasons why I wish we recorded people after the interview and what they say after... She's talking about how she wants to push the movement to think about the power that we have in our community. And I think you hinted that earlier when you were talking about, it starts with these Black women being like, "We got to protect our sisters. This isn't okay." And then it's like, "Well, you're doing it too." And that there's something about how we might be able to organize in ways that don't center the police actually. And actually be like, "What's happening in our communities? What do we have control over? And how is power playing out?"

And I guess that's not really a question so much as... And it's definitely not an answer, but this is happening in real time. This woman, she was pissed and she was putting it on me and putting it on everyone and I'll never forget that.

#### **Andrea Ritchie:**

No, I feel like that's real. I feel like women like her who are targets every night of being given choice, between giving a blow job and spending a night in a jail cell and probably having to do

both are genuinely like, "I'm not going out for another march around someone else's case when I see no one standing up for me in this situation. You all leaving me out here to have this happen every night. And this is not part of the conversation." So I feel like I hear that rage often too.

And it's what leads me to have the fight about what's going to reduce the harm. And I think the answer, real answer, whether a policy is or not, is about taking away the power that police officers have to extort sex, rape, sexually assault people, and giving people the things they need to stay out their way, to stay away from their clutches.

**Page May:**

Yes, exactly.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Which in this woman's case is housing, employment. And you can't stop being Black women. So I feel like that's where we have to deal the other part, which is taking the power away from police.

**Page May:**

But what she's saying when she's asking for help and people ignore her, and then they see a Black man ask for a dollar and he gets a dollar, she's like, "That's bullshit. And that's on you all." And I'm like, "Right."

**Monica Trinidad:**

And so how does this book affect change on a local and national scale? How does this book move people? Like Page is talking about in the community, how will this book affect change in our minds and our hearts? Because Angela Davis had mentioned in the Forward that this really reminds her of the We Charge Genocide petition of just how it reads, and also the Ida B. Wells Red Record. It's like a litany of all of these story after story of white vigilantes and racist police violence. And so how does something like this affect our communities and how does this move our communities forward?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I think that one thing I was going to say to you earlier when you were saying you hadn't quite read at all, I was going to say, read with care, and I tell all your readers to read with care. It's not something you sit down and just digest in one reading, there's a lot of violence in it. And I really struggled with how much violence to include, how much for it to be a litany of cases, wanting to make sure that with a litany of cases was framed and seated in a broader analysis. So it wasn't just a litany of cases. I don't know how successful I was. But then also asking questions beyond this list of names and cases and really difficult things to read that happen to real people. How does this change the conversation? And so that's what I hope the book accomplishes.

I hope it really presses people to be like, "Wow, now that I'm on page 217,"-

**Page May:**

It's a long book.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... "I'm going to guess that this is not a one-off thing. I've now been reading about this through all these different angles affecting all these different communities, all these different kinds of women and girls and trans folk. I'm going to guess this is not a one-off problem." So now the challenge at the end is really how does this change the way you think about policing when we're having a conversation about body cameras? How does what you just read for 300 pages change how you think about that? Are body cameras recording when people are...? There's always this question about whether they should record people who are victims of crime. And the answer is usually no, because privacy reasons, because it'll intimidate people, because et cetera.

Well, so then body cameras actually wouldn't have helped in Charleena Lyles' case because they would've turned it off because she was reporting a crime. So actually, how does this change how we think about what the answers are? If most of the police violence that happens to women happens in private settings, in homes, in clinics, in hospitals, in welfare offices, in places where cop watchers aren't hanging out, or people aren't able to just pull out a cell phone. And people do record a lot for themselves in those situations, and I really want to lift up and honor that. But then how does that change how we start documenting or where we start looking or how we support people in documenting their own experiences of police violence in settings where maybe they're giving birth or maybe their child is being taken from them, or maybe it's a prostitution sting, or it's the cop coming up to this woman on the corner and offering her those two choices.

How do those realities shift how we document police violence, how we understand police violence, what the solutions are that we advocate for, what kinds of things we demand in our community? That's what I hope the book accomplishes. I don't know yet if it's going to do it, but that's what I really hope it literally shifts something in people's heads so they can no longer think about policing in ways that are exclusive of Black women, women of color, trans and gender-nonconforming folks. And that that opens up a whole field of conversation about what it is that we're asking for, what kinds of demands we need to make, and how we organize too, and where we organize.

**Monica Trinidad:**

And in this book also, so the cover, like we said earlier, it says police violence against Black women and women of color. But you've mentioned that you also talk about gender-nonconforming and trans folks in this book as well. And you specifically mentioned Kai Peterson, a Black trans man who's imprisoned right now for self-defense basically, another example of survived and punished. So can you talk a little bit about Kai's case, where it's at now, and how his story and other stories of trans and gender-nonconforming people fit into this book?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

First of all, I say on page one, when I talk about women that is emphatically and unequivocally and indisputably inclusive of trans women, we're not even having that conversation. So I really want readers, every time they see the word women in the book to visualize and include trans women in that conversation. And then you'll see in the introduction, I had a little fight with myself about what to do about trans men. And so-

**Monica Trinidad:**

I read that.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... I struggled because I feel like in all the work that is centering the experiences of Black men and men of color, as I keep saying it, they never imagined the Black men and men of color to be trans men like Kai Peterson. And no one is writing about the experiences or thinking about the experiences of trans men. And I also shared drafts of the book with my good friend Gabriel Arlis, who also challenged me back and was like, "Hello. It's crushing that there's nothing about men in here." And I also felt like it's a violation of trans men's gender identity. I don't want to do violence to trans men's gender identity by shoehorning them into a book that's about women, because I feel like even though police trans men often as if they are women because they're committing violence to their gender identity. So I wrestled with it back and forth and ended up including some discussion of and some stories of men like Kai Peterson's making a commitment to Gabriel and to myself and to others that I would write something more expansive about trans men's experiences of policing.

But Kai's case felt important to talk about because Kai's life matters period, and also because it was about police responses to violence and how police are just incapable of perceiving trans men as targets of violence in many of the same ways that they are incapable of seeing Black women as legitimate survivors of violence. And then trans and gender identity just accentuates that, deepens that, worsens that. And then what I feel like is so hard about Kai's story is that Kai knew that and tried to then account for it, or work around it, or act in light of the fact that he knew that if he went to the police and said, "I've been raped and I killed this person self-defense," that they wouldn't believe him.

And so tried to figure out some other solution, which led to the same result because the system is set up to police race and gender in that way. So Kai was raped by someone and killed them in self-defense, and then concealed their death. And when the police came, went for a rape kit, and everything sort of lined up with Kai's story of self-defense. And somehow the police instead projected on this story of luring somebody into committing a sexual act and then trying to rob them. Because again, I was saying earlier like gender nonconformity is read as just deviant sexuality and deviant sexual acts, and-

**Monica Trinidad:**

Which connects back to queer injustice.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly. And tricking people into doing things and then robbing them, and then harming them in this deviant way that queers are always about literally killing straight people, because that's what deviant sexuality is supposed to be about. So even though, and obviously folks who are enacting this narrative are not differentiating between gender identity and sexual orientation. Everything is queer and "deviant." So that's what happened in his case, is that they instead projected this story, even though all the scientific evidence, all of his testimony lined up with the truth, his truth of what happened, they projected another story onto it, which led to him taking a plea because he was afraid of doing even more time under the story that they were selling to the criminal legal

system and now fighting for his life and freedom. And it's certainly a fight that I'm supportive of and want to do everything I can to help lift up.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Oh, Pinky Shear, his partner will actually be at the Black and Pink National Gathering next weekend. So, well, this will come out August 7th, so the National Gathering will already be over, but she will be there, and I think she's going to be speaking to Kai's current situation right now and just talking about abolishing prisons.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I was lucky to meet Pinky at the Survived and Punished gathering at the MC also. So yes.

**Page May:**

Briefly then. I think history is really important. And when you were just giving your overview of the book, you briefly summarized that opening chapter, I won't preface this, but just can you go in a little bit more in depth about the roots of this? This isn't just something that... I think this gets at why reform doesn't work, but how are the roots of the tree that is the police and the PIC, the DNA is sexist and homophobic and transphobic and all these things. How is this embedded into the system of policing, all these things that we're seeing today, that we're hearing in Kai's case, in the woman at Washington Park, in [inaudible 00:42:26]? How is that anyone could have guessed this 300 years ago?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Well, because 500 years ago-

**Page May:**

500.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

No, no, I suddenly had to do math for myself. Yes. 500 years ago, the first police forces were, in fact, the colonial armies that showed up here to commit genocide and steal this land, and the vigilante militias that they spawned and acquiesce to. And those forces committed tremendous violence against native women, sexual violence and just really brutal sexualized violence that was about, yes, of course, de-womanizing native women as part of the project of stealing this land and dehumanizing indigenous people and stealing the land that women had a particular role in protecting in some indigenous cultures. And that sexual violence was an integral part of that because you had to erase indigenous people in order to steal their land. And one way to do that was to rape them and have them have children who were mixed and then go forward.

So that's integral to the foundation of this country. Police violence against indigenous women is foundational to this country. And then we saw it last summer. Well, I was in the middle of writing this book and then spending my time on Twitter watching what was happening at Standing Rock. It's like a one thread. I could just see the thread running straight through there. And we all know, police forces in their modern form originated from slave patrols in the south. And so those slave patrols were about rounding up Black and African descended women and

enforcing the same kinds of plantation injustice and sexual violence that were being visited on African descended women under slavery. And then maintaining that system after slavery was abolished through the criminal legal system. And similarly, the ways in which borders have been policed have always been implicitly gendered.

The first immigration law was actually about keeping out people who were framed as "prostitutes." And interestingly, they passed the law to exclude Asian women because in their minds, Asian women and "people engaged in prostitution" were the same. So they thought they could get two birds with one stone to use that terrible expression. And this border has always been enforced on women's bodies, literally through sexual violence, through physical violence, through exclusion, through profiling, et cetera. And so it's no surprise that immigration raids result in police violence against women, that the Muslim ban is being enforced in ways that are about brutal violence against Muslim women at the airports, and then that feed brutal police violence against Muslim women in communities and so on.

And the other concept that ends up being a somewhat central architecture in the book, is the notion of controlling narratives that Patricia Hill Collins articulated in *Black Feminist Thought*, which is that the images that are produced historically about Black women in service of chattel slavery and white supremacy and anti-Blackness of indigenous women that are produced in the service of colonialism and so on, just continue to be deeply entrenched.

And they transform and transmogrify based on conditions, and suddenly it's about welfare mother as opposed to Jezebel. But they're kind of the same. And they're literally how police see behavior and just our very existence. So the woman that you are meeting with in your community, a white woman dressed the same, standing on the corner looking the same, police officer is just going to see different things in those two people. And I'm not saying that to say that it's all about implicit bias and we just have to retrain people. I'm saying that those narratives are so deeply entrenched in our society that there's no way that we can reform our way out of them, that we have to fundamentally transform our society to achieve that. So that's the lesson of history.

**Page May:**

So the next question that I have is around, so at the Lit Review, this is birthed out of a concern around accessibility and loving books and thinking that books are important, but also concerned about accessibility and what that means in a world where you have schools getting shut down, people don't know how to read, people don't have time to read, people can't buy books, all these things. So I'm wondering who you wrote this book for and how you are trying to make it accessible to a wider range of audiences, maybe with things that I might do later as a middle school teacher?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Well, first of all, I wrote it for you and for you, and for all people listening, I really try very hard in my writing to not get bogged down in academic language. I feel like I am incapable of reading Judith Butler, and I really can't. I've tried multiple times.

**Page May:**

I have tried.



**Monica Trinidad:**

They're on my shelf.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

[inaudible 00:47:30] feedback. I've tried reading all of them, I cannot. So I will just confess right now, I have never read Foucault. I have read Critiques of Foucault.

**Monica Trinidad:**

I've read one Foucault book. I don't know remember any of it, though.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I do remember slogging through *Das Kapital* when I was 14, because I felt like it was my revolutionary imperative to do that. And I just can't, so I don't want to write books that I can't read and that others can't read. So I really tried very hard to write it in language that broke concepts down in ways that we can all understand. I hope I was successful. Also, I discovered late in the process that there's going to be an audiobook.

**Page May:**

Oh cool.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

So there's an audio book.

**Monica Trinidad:**

That's awesome.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

And it's being read by, get this, Bonnie Turpin. Have you seen *Daughters?*-

**Monica Trinidad:**

I don't.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

My God. See, I'm old school.

**Monica Trinidad:**

I wanted to be excited for you.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Old school. Bonnie Turpin was in *Daughters of the Dust*.

**Monica Trinidad:**

That I know. That's cool.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Yellow Mary is reading my book.

**Monica Trinidad:**

That's amazing. Congratulations. I know it's a very important movie.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Well, at first it was a little odd to hear someone else reading stuff that is a voice in my head, but I'm just so grateful that she's doing it, and I'm just so in awe of her as a person, actor. And she also started this great food place in Limber Park that I've actually been to that's really delicious. It's really healthy food, and it's a really great community space. And then I'm working with a fantastic advisory group of which you and the young people at [inaudible 00:49:00] daughters are part and other educators, popular educators, activists, survivors of police violence, family members of people who do not survive police violence and activists generally are helping to break the concepts of the book down in a study guide that will be out in December. And that's also to make it readable for middle school students.

Because someone asked me the other day, they were like, "So what do you think about middle school students reading?" I was like, "No. I don't." But then I'm like, "But they're living it as exemplified by chapter four, so why wouldn't they read about how their experiences fit into a larger scheme?" So it's about breaking down some of these concepts like controlling narratives or intersectionality or the criminalizing webs that we were talking about, and the different kinds of ways of policing. It's about sharing tips for self-care. When reading the book, one of the people I'm working on it with saying that she was reading the book on a plane, and she got really nauseous all of a sudden. And I just was like, I don't want people to be able to figure out where and how to read it in a way that will not harm them further. So if anybody has any other suggestions about how I can make the book more accessible, please send them my way, because I feel like the conversation is what's important, not the form, and I just want to support it happening in whatever way it can.

**Monica Trinidad:**

That sounds like a lot more than a lot of other people are doing.

**Page May:**

Exactly.

**Monica Trinidad:**

So I think you're-

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Trying.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Yes.

**Page May:**

Thank you.

**Monica Trinidad:**

I have a question. I think it'll be a quick question, but I just want to ask you. So in Mariame's Forward, she mentions how sharing these stories of police violence against Black women and women of color is a form of resistance and how this needs to be grounded in our communities sharing these stories. So what does it mean when journalists and advocates share these stories? What is the impact versus for that...? I was talking to Debbie earlier thinking about the Laquan McDonald video when that came out. The family did not want that to come out. His mother did not want that out. But thinking about the impact that it actually made and where we're at now with that. And so I'm just interested in what you would say about this third person sharing of these stories.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Those are questions I ask myself too because I don't know all the people whose stories I talk about in the book. And so I also, the other fight, I have lots of fights with myself, as you can tell. So the fight or struggle I had with myself was how graphically to do it. If I'm not in community with someone or in a community, how much am I contributing to sensationalizing something? If I tell a story in a particular way, how much am I reproducing violence as opposed to simply unmasking it or highlighting it or lifting it up? I had a lot of conversations with a lot of people who helped write this book, one of whom was Adrienne Maree Brown, who wrote Emergent Strategy, who you all talked about.

**Monica Trinidad:**

We love Adrienne Maree Brown.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Episode 21. Well, you wouldn't not be looking at this book right now if it weren't for Adrienne Maree Brown. She was a doula of this book. And we talked a lot about, and came down on being radically honest, not shying away from things, not papering over a violence that has already been papered over, but really trying to do it in a way... Sarah Haley also really influenced me in this respect, where she talks about the historical record is really dry, but she tries to find some context around the stories of the women she talks about so that she can breathe some life into them and make them in some way three-dimensional. And so I tried to do that where I did know family members or people who I was talking about, I sent them the descriptions. Some of them came back with lots of corrections, like, no, do not talk about my daughter that way.

No, I don't describe my daughter that way, or it's not how she would describe herself or et cetera. But there were also lots of women who I don't know, and I just did my best to lift up their voices when I could, the voices of their family members, and to just include descriptions of who they were beyond the moment of their violation. So I hope journalists can do the same. I hope they

don't just go to the sensational. This past week, the New York Times published an op-ed that I wrote, which I was shocked that they published and grateful that they published it and really happy about it and-

**Monica Trinidad:**

Has the shocking title, right?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

And really queasy about the title because one, I wanted to make clear, and as soon as it came out, I tweeted and kept tweeting. This is not about privileging having a vagina. A cop can get a warrant to search any body cavity, people who don't have vaginas experience very degrading and violating searches on the daily basis. It was not about that, but that was what they-

**Monica Trinidad:**

They picked it out.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... Picked. Oh, I did not pick that. I suggested something much different. And so I think that that bordered on... I think they were trying to say-

**Monica Trinidad:**

We want clicks.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Well, they wanted clicks, but I think they were also really trying to say, this is some serious stuff here. And I think the women who I was working with were genuinely appalled by what was being described and really wanted attention. At least the women I was working with, I don't think they were doing it to sell papers, I think they wanted attention because they felt like these issues were shocking and they wanted attention and that's the-

**Page May:**

They want people to open it?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Right. And that was the tension. And then thankfully in the print edition, they put a different title on, but it's one that people will likely skip over. It's called, Female Victims of the War on Drugs. People will be like, it's just-

**Page May:**

What is the title online?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I don't want to say that. It's not cool. But you'll find it online. So I feel like that's the tension, what do you say to make people read it versus what do you say in ways that then invisibilize other people's experiences, like people who don't have vaginas but who experience very similar forms of police violence or that just then kind of reproduce a pornography of abuse. I feel like it's also about respecting what families want and didn't want. And people don't want you to talk about it or reference it in a particular way. Then try to do that.

**Page May:**

Where are we at with time? Pause.

**Monica Trinidad:**

We're at 58.

**Page May:**

One of them is because it was on here. But I think you've good in terms of what did you learn from writing this book? Unless you have something you want to say. The other is defining intersectionality and feminism. So I don't know if you even want to answer that because we didn't prepare you and I could not do that on the spot. And you're doing it in the study guide, so.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I think intersectionality-

**Monica Trinidad:**

You can't answer it yet.

**Page May:**

Wait, do you want to answer question those questions?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Yes.

**Page May:**

And do we have time for it?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I'll do it quickly.

**Monica Trinidad:**

I can edit it down.

**Page May:**

Cool. So my last question before, if you have any others, but is, I'm wondering if you can just define as succinctly as you can, these terms that have come up and that I think this book talks through, which are intersectionality and feminism. What do those words mean to you?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I think particularly in the context this book, intersectionality meant recognizing that Black women experience policing as Black people and as women. And that there's a racially gendered experience and often racially gendered, intersecting with other identities, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, poverty, et cetera, have experiences of policing. They're informed by all of those things. So it's not like, "She was mistaken for a Black man and that's why she experienced that police violence." Or, "That's only gender-based violence" because it's actually all of those things. And it felt like applying an intersectional analysis to policing was a really important given the one dimensional look we've had at it for most of the time I've been alive and part of this conversation.

And for me, feminism, the challenge to feminism in this book is the pick and choose approach to violence. We'll only look at certain kinds of violence and we won't look at police violence particularly because we've invested in the police to address this other kind of violence. So we can't look at police violence because that would call into question this other strategy. So to me, Black feminism says, "Oh no, we're going to look at state violence, interpersonal violence, the relationship between the two, and we're not going to go for solutions that increase violence against any person who is female identified or, or gender-nonconforming or anyone, frankly," because I think feminism is far more inclusive in many ways. So I feel like those are what those concepts mean in relation to the book.

**Page May:**

Perfect.

**Monica Trinidad:**

And I know you've touched on it throughout our talk about the things that you have learned from this book and what you're putting out there into the world around these stories. But what did you learn from writing this book? Has your strategy changed around challenging police violence against women of color and Black women? Or is there something that you feel like you missed in this book? Probably a lot I know, but just how has your strategy and thought and theory of changed since writing this book?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

First of all, I just want to say writing books is a really painful thing. Because, you put it out and then at some point it's just done right. And they will not accept any more edits. I feel like I pushed those limits a lot with Beacon and at some point they're just like, No, you're done." And then you're like, "No, but I just had this really brilliant thought actually. And actually I was completely wrong about all this other thing." And they're like, "Sorry. It's gone to the printer." So I almost can't read it now because I'm like afraid I'm going to see another thing. I could also personally write 10 super principled critiques of this book right now that I would wholeheartedly

agree with. And so that's why I want that to be the part of the conversation. This is not the end, it's the beginning.

So I would say I learned new cases, I learned new information. I learned a lot more about policing of people with disabilities or people with perceived disabilities. I really challenged myself to really search for more about the experiences of indigenous women. Because there's very little out there. I feel like this book represents in some ways a culmination of what I knew as of whenever the final version went in. And I hope that I'll continue to learn and grow. So I think that every time I have a conversation, including this one, my knowledge of these issues or my analysis or my thoughts around these issues deepen. But I can't really point to any particular-

**Monica Trinidad:**

That's great.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... Thing. But before we go, I do want to just lift up how much of Chicago is in this book. It's a little bit of love letter to Chicago also. So the cover is Chicago, right?

**Monica Trinidad:**

Yes. Janae Bonsu.

Andrea Ritchie:

Janae Bonsu. Photography by Sarah Jane Rhee, photographer of the movements. There's also-

**Monica Trinidad:**

The people camera.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly. And there's also many several photos that she took in the book also. There's a photo-

**Monica Trinidad:**

Sarah?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

... Spread.

Yes.

So for instance-

**Monica Trinidad:**

Shout out to Sarah.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly. And this is a picture of BYP 100 Chicago shutting down the police services-

**Monica Trinidad:**

And there's-

**Page May:**

It's Rachel.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Exactly. And there's work by Rommi Torico, who is an amazing artist. It's a portrait of Jesse Hernandez.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Work by Micah [Bazant].

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly. See?

**Page May:**

That's really amazing.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

I was really excited about the pictures in the middle because for the accessibility thing, but also because I literally wanted to substitute into the popular imagination, into the images that we already have of police violence. Literally show women in those situations. So this is the Rodney King image, but that's also Marlene Pennick. And this is a picture of a woman being pushed over the hood of a car by two police officers. That's what we think of as policing generally. Well, there's a Black woman in that situation.

And then the resistance chapter. There's a lot about the amazing work that has been done here around the Kia campaign. And I think that was an inspiration. I think what I did learn from the book is just what this organizing can look like in ways that I never imagined possible, to see someone dropping a banner at a White Sox game I never imagined. And whatever we think about that strategy, but just in all the 20 years I'm working on these issues, that's never happened. Do you understand? No one's ever dropped a banner at a game, at a major sports game around a Black woman. It's experience of policing.

**Monica Trinidad:**

And now you're about to see some projections on police precincts. That is about happen.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Consult Joey Mogul before you say that. Just because in some cases-



**Monica Trinidad:**

We'll consult the lawyers.

**Page May:**

We've said it with words.

**Monica Trinidad:**

We've done it with words. The shout-out to Chicago Light Brigade. This happened.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Totally. The police are just getting more creative in how they charge people for light pollution and crap like that.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Oh my God.

**Page May:**

What?

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Yes.

**Page May:**

They're so petty.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Yes.

**Page May:**

Oh my God.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

But anyway, there's lots in here about Chicago. There's lots of Chicago cases. Mariame takes it back in her forward to the civil rights era. But.

**Page May:**

That was something that has been burning in my mind. This reminds me so much of how the birth of the Civil Rights women is rooted in the defense of Black women against sexual violence. Right?

**Monica Trinidad:**

Yes.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly.

**Monica Trinidad:**

And it's the only way that you [inaudible 01:02:14].

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly.

**Page May:**

Just so-

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Exactly.

**Page May:**

We have to do that work. If the Civil Rights Movement is your inspiration, we have to build on the defense of Black women.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Then you have to read chapter one because then you'll see that actually-

**Monica Trinidad:**

All of it.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Totally. So Chicago. It's a book about Chicago and how excited I am by the organizing. It's been happening here too.

**Page May:**

Well, we're close to the time. So this episode, I want to do a few closing mentions on some upcoming events. If you are in Chicago, the most amazing city in the world, on Saturday, August 12th, we will sadly be saying goodbye to a really powerful woman and organizer, a Palestinian freedom fighter and a friend to many, Rasmia Odeh. And so if you don't know, you should look her up and she is being deported after many, many years of struggle. And there's a call to join AAAN for an evening of music and culture and struggle to honor Rasmia Odeh, and there's going to be a keynote address by Angela Davis so the doors are going to open at six and the program will start at seven. There are tickets that are still available online as of, what is it, Friday, 7:15. But for sure, this is going to sell out very, very soon.

And so you should probably get them as soon as possible, and you can get them now via the free Rasmia Odeh Now Facebook page. Also on Thursday, August 17th, if you want to meet the amazing Andrea Ritchie. Which you definitely do. You should go to Women and Children's First bookstore. Andrea will be there doing an author reading for the book that we just discussed. And

again, the title is Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color. And that even is going to be at 7:30 PM at Women and Children First, which is at 5233 North Clark Street in Andersonville. And you should buy books while you're there.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

And we'll have a very special guest because my mom is coming.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Andrea's mom.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Oh my God.

**Page May:**

You've got to be there. I'll be there.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

It's going to be something.

**Monica Trinidad:**

I'll definitely be there. Cool.

**Page May:**

Oh, and then, so we close each episode, as you know, with our guest reading a favorite quote or passage from the book. And I always think it's interesting to see what the author picks and what everyone picks. So if you would close us out with your favorite words.

**Andrea Ritchie:**

Hopefully you can cut parts of it if it's too long, but it's literally from the last two pages of the book. So it's talking about the experiences described in the book and saying that these experiences can also begin to inform our responses to the question of what is necessary to achieve genuine and sustainable safety for women of color as we resist increased policing, surveillance, militarization, criminalization, detention, deportation, and incarceration. For instance, beyond eliminating all collaboration between immigration enforcement and local law enforcement without exception and establishing safe spaces, undocumented immigrants, these stories tell us that true safety for women of color requires an end to the war on drugs, to broken windows policing to the war on terror, to the elimination of gender as a marker of access to public space, to public benefits and protection, the removal of police from schools, hospitals, public housing and healthcare settings, and the repeal of mandatory arrest and other policies that facilitate the criminalization of survivors of violence and support rather than violence and criminalization for pregnant people and mothers of color.

Ultimately, the stats and stories in this book expose the reality of policing in America and the interests in racially gendered and class power relations it's structured to protect. These truths are

especially relevant as the nation's political climate swings towards increased fear-mongering and even more blatant and virulent racism, which will in turn lead to greater surveillance control, criminalization, exclusion, and mass incarceration of women of color. We can no longer be complicit in the notion that we can achieve safety through policing, particularly in this climate. Thus, instead of asking how can we reform policing to keep women safe, we should ask, what do women need to be safe?

How can the billions spent on policing go instead to resources such as safe and affordable housing, healthcare, education, living wage, employment, childcare, and mental health treatment? Our charge is to envision and build a world without police and without the values that produce policing and punishment. It's a world premised on what Angela Y. Davis terms abolition feminism, a world based on radical freedom, mutual accountability, and passionate reciprocity. In this society, safety and security will not be premised on violence or the threat of violence. It'll be based on collective commitment to guaranteeing the survival and care of all peoples. Unfortunately, there's no 10 point plan to get there, but each of us can contribute to the conversation's, dreams and visions. We need to find the way. Let's get free.

**Page May:**

Awesome.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Thanks so much for listening to another episode of The Lit Review, a podcast where we interview people we love and respect about books for the movement.

We are your co-hosts, Monica Trinidad.

**Page May:**

And Page May.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Two Chicago based organizers.

**Page May:**

Special shout out to the Lit Review's very own sponsor, the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership out of Kalamazoo College.

**Monica Trinidad:**

Keep your eyes and ears open for another episode next Monday, same time, same place.

**Page May:**

Want to hear about a specific book? Email us at [thelitreviewchicago@gmail.com](mailto:thelitreviewchicago@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook.

**Monica Trinidad:**

And if you like this episode, give it a shout-out on Twitter or Instagram. Our handle is at Lit Review Shy.

Both Monica and Page:

Keep reading.