

## That's All Folx Insecure Episode Transcript

Erin:

That's all folx.

Noelle:

That's all folx.

Katy:

That's all folxs.

Erin:

In 'That's All Folx', we're looking at our latest TV binges as a test lab for identifying and examining problematic social interactions.

Katy:

I'm Katy.

Erin:

I'm Erin.

Noelle:

I'm Noelle.

Erin:

And we are three graduate assistants at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, a project under the Great Lakes Equity Assistance Center. Welcome to 'That's All Folx'.

Katy:

Okay, the clip that I want to show you is from Insecure season one, episode three. I love the show. It's definitely been my pandemic show. I just thought it was absolutely brilliant from the very first episode. So a little bit of background information for this. Issa Rae, the main character, writer, et cetera of the show...she works for a company called We Got Y'all and their logo is a white hand. On top of that white hand are Black silhouettes of children. The company appears to serve a purpose of going into schools and tutoring kids, providing activities for kids, kind of like a community organization. She works with an entirely, all white people and she's the only person

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A PROJECT OF The logo for the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center, featuring a stylized 'E' with three horizontal bars and the text 'MIDWEST & PLAINS EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER' around it.

of Color. And for this episode, she has planned a beach volunteer outing where they were going to clean up the beaches. So here you go...

TV character 1:

Why don't more of them swim?

TV character 2:

Slavery.

TV character 3:

Oh my god, how can we be out?

TV character 4:

Because you only brought one bottle of sunscreen.

TV character 3:

I didn't think they'd even need any.

TV character 2:

Hey, do you need this?

TV character 3:

Yes!

TV character 2:

Yeah, I brought extra. Look at her burns... your face...

TV character 3:

Oh no...

Katy:

So, I have one question. I want you to, I guess it's going to be three parts, relate the scene to education being in the classroom, what microaggressions happen there and why are they important to address?

Noelle:

What stuck out to me more in that was you had this white female group leader who just didn't think to bring sunblock to protect... She's wearing this shirt about how she's going to be this white savior and protect these kids of color, but then doesn't bring sunblock because of an assumption she has that their skin doesn't need to be protected in the same way because it's darker.

Erin:

So she's actually creating harm and that's what happens in schools all the time. I'm operating based on my lens and my assumptions of how things should be, and because of that and because of the fogginess of my lens, I'm actually caught causing harm and violence.

Katy:

Exactly. That's just one small way that we saw in this clip that happens in the classroom all the time, things like that. Making assumptions about someone's race, someone's class, someone's background and not knowing the harm that you're actually... and trauma that you're causing and reinforcing.

Noelle:

That reminds me of the whole excuse of, well, that wasn't my intention. My intentions were good. And it's kind of like, yes, I understand that. You didn't mean to do this, or you didn't mean to do harm, but the outcome is that you did. So how do we reconcile that and how do we prevent it, especially in a classroom with kids that are impressionable? But I was also thinking about student behavior. I have this belief system that people don't act irrationally out of nowhere. It's usually almost always caused by something. And so, I think teachers, a lot of the time, will get frustrated. And this is, I guess, an assumption of mine. But I feel like teachers would get frustrated with students because of certain behavior when maybe critically thinking about the root cause of that behavior is a bit more important. Like what microaggressions did they experience today and what harm have I done to them because of my assumptions as a white person.

Erin:

I think what you just said there, Noelle, was so important because...the getting at the root cause of the behavior, because right now and historically, what teachers have done is they do think they're getting at the root cause of the behavior by making assumptions about what students experience. By labeling them as having trauma, as needing social-emotional support. So they do think that they're getting at the root cause of the behavior. They're just situating the root cause of the behavior back in the students, communities and families as problematic...and the

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EQUITY  
CENTER

school is not. Instead of doing what you're asking, which is asking teachers and educators... and I think this is a key takeaway, is asking teachers and educators, how can you do it differently? How can you say, "No, the kids aren't broken, the system's broken."

Noelle:  
Right?

Erin:  
I wish Kanye wasn't so problematic in 2021...because he says, "The system's broken. The schools are closed and the prisons are open."

Noelle:  
And not to give weight to Kanye, because I understand that he's problematic, but he's a great example of how people are nuanced.

Erin:  
Oh my gosh.

Noelle:  
People are layered and it's complicated, understanding that and giving people a little bit of grace in thinking about things a little bit more critically as important.

Erin:  
I mean, first, if you want to include a whole episode about Kanye, I would go there all day because I love Kanye. I love Kanye so much and I have said repeatedly that he is an example of how our country problematically treats mental health and trauma.

Noelle:  
Yes.

Erin:  
Because I dare any person to experience what he has experienced in terms of his career, the racism, the loss of his mother, all of it and keep themselves together in a way that is consumable by mainstream audiences.

Noelle:  
I agree.

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Erin:

So yeah, I would go there all day, but...

Katy:

Well, I think that... I really like a couple of things from this discussion that I think could be our key teacher takeaways for this and that's the fact that the assumptions that white teachers may make in their classrooms and the harm and trauma that's caused by those assumptions. Another key takeaway would be, think what Erin said there at the end with the system is broken, not the child. And so really recognizing that the system is problematic and as a participant in the system, you need to be aware of your responsibility to be aware and to do your part.

Noelle:

Yeah. So I think that wraps it up.

Noelle:

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