

INTRO: This is part three of my interview with Dr. Javier Wallace. If you have not yet heard the first two episodes, I highly recommend you go back and listen to those first because they provide some really important context for this episode. If you have already heard [part one](#) and [part two](#), then please enjoy the conclusion of my interview with Dr. Javier Wallace.

Matt Bowles: Javier, I also have to ask about your current role as the Race and Sports Postdoc Associate at Duke and the amazing and really important work that you are doing there. I feel like a good place to start would be with the story of Dr. Claudius B. Claiborne. And can you talk a little bit about your experience arriving at Duke and then learning of about Dr. Claiborne and then how your relationship with him has evolved?

Javier Wallace: One thing about growing up in Texas is we love Texas. We love everything about Texas. We love football. Cause football is Texas. Texas is football. I play football from Texas because I am a Texan. And so, this whole basketball thing they be talking about. Cause I knew, I was like, I'm going to do, like, it's a basketball school. I'm like, it's great for basketball trafficking research. Like, what better place to do it? But I wasn't expecting the tobacco thing. All I know, this tobacco thing is completely crazy. I got the job during the pandemic, so I didn't visit during before. I just showed up ready to work in 2021, and I'm just seeing tobacco everywhere. I'm like, what the hell is this? All this tobacco? And then of course, you hear about tobacco road and basketball.

But since I don't know about tobacco, I don't make any connections to tobacco road and, like, actual tobacco. And so, I'm just like, this is interesting. And then so I'm just learning about Duke. I'm like, oh, it is a Southern University. I'm like, oh, this is, you know, this is North Carolina. It is a south. I'm like, oh, shit. I'm like, well, there's Black players on the team, but I know this is the South. Like, you, Duke is like, UT. Like, there has to be an integration story somewhere. I'm like, who is this person? And I was like, so I just started googling. I'm like, C.B. Claiborne.

And so, then I'm just asking people around the university about this person. My supervisor, Dr. Mark Anthony Neal, is a very well renowned scholar in Black studies. So many people know him. He was like, yeah, CB. I got his number. I'll give it to you. I'm like, really? He's like, yeah, he gave me his number. I'm like, I'm going to call this dude. And he had a Houston number. I'm like, he got a Houston number. He is from Virginia. Why he got a Houston number? So, I called him up. I'm like, hey, how you doing? My name is Javier Wallace. I'm blah blah blah, Duke, how you are doing? I'm like, cool. And he's like, I'm a professor at Texas Southern University. I'm like, oh, wow, I didn't know that.

And then we just started talking, and he was just sharing with me all of these things and these stories about his time at Duke and growing up in Danville, Virginia, and all the things he was doing. I was like, what? Are you serious? This big old basketball school as it is now, I'm like, all these Black players on Duke's team, even though we know that people say coach K had the young Republicans for the longest, later. And now you talk about later, but it's still. I'm like, there's a lot of Black players in this contemporary moment when I came. Black players on the team, and ain't nobody talking about this. I'm like, nah, bro, not me. I'm the master of stories. I didn't say that out loud. I was like, that ain't no, no, no. That's not going to happen.

So, I'm just foolishly researching, and I can't get rid of this tobacco thing. Cause Claiborne, he's talking about tobacco. He's talking about growing up in Danville. Danville is on Tobacco Road, if you will, this big tobacco manufacturing place, and I just can't shake it. And I'm like, oh, no.

And so, Duke, it has a plethora of resources. Like, that's one of the best things about being at Duke University, are the resources that are available. And so, Duke just had a program over the summer called Story Plus, where I was able to collaborate with undergraduates, and we took on a research project to learn more about whatever topic the faculty member wants to bring. And I brought this one about CV Claiborne, his connection to tobacco and CB Claiborne, he agreed to participate because nothing had happened on a major level with him since.

And so, he's 76, and he's just full of life, full of stories still, and he's willing to talk. And I'm like, this is a story that needs to be told. And so, we do the research, and I'm just, what do I do? What do I do? What can I do? What can I do? What can I do? And I'm just finding any way to put his story in front of people. And one of the most pivotal moments that I realized and opportunities that I had with this story and making people care, at least the same way he made me care about what he went through and what he did for us to have the program that we have now was my teaching.

Because I teach about sport, I am a former athlete, I think it positioned me well with some of the people in Duke men's basketball program as a class for Duke men's basketball players to take when they come to campus. I'm teaching class. I have my first year, it's a black Latin American sport class, and I have five all-star, some of these NBA players now all-star basketball players in my class.

And I'm like, you know what? No. I love black Latin American sport, that's my thing. but I was like, no. These dudes, I don't think they know why they here, how they got here. I know why they think they're here, and what they're doing while they're here, but I refuse if I'm standing up in front of them. And the things I talk about, the tour company that I built, the research that I be doing to let them walk away from here thinking they just showed up because they were just damn good, and because they were good, that's how they got to Duke. No, it didn't happen that way.

Because there was a time when this university refused to let people like you be here, and somebody had to do it. Somebody had to be ridiculed. Somebody had to ride the bench to wear their afro so you could do whatever you want with your hair, and don't nobody say nothing to you, and you create trends that mow around the whole world. Somebody had to take all that. And so, I just, you know what, Dr. Claiborne? Get on Zoom. I'm like, man, can you come on zoom? And I just put him on. He's like, yeah, no problem.

And I put him in my class on Zoom, and I encouraged the basketball players to ask him questions. And I told him, I said, in my mind, I said, I promise, because I'm an athlete, something that they hear in here, I promise they're going to go back to the locker room and they're going to talk about this with somebody. Somebody's going to start asking questions. And that's what happened. Other people just started asking questions from the program, and I'm like, yeah, let's do something.

And Martin Smith, did I tell you Martin, who I met in Panama, he works here at Duke as well, too. So, Martin Smith went to UT, he works at Duke, he helped me come to Duke, and he was really loving this scene because his dad played for the warriors and the championship team, Phil Smith in 76, one of the first ambassadors for Nike. And so, he is a dean here at Duke. He studies sport. He played basketball. And so, he's, like, just being supportive of this whole CB thing. And we bring him to campus, and I'm just talking to the people who I know at the men's basketball program, and they are very receptive.

They're like, why haven't we done anything? We want to support. If you bring him, tell him to come and talk to us. That's when they do all the shooting shirts, and they honor him on campus. And we're working on a

documentary now, and it's amazing, but that's how it starts. It just started from me coming to Durham, getting slapped in the face with all this tobacco, and, like, this is the south. Like, Duke ain't always been like this. And it just turned into that.

Matt Bowles: Can you take us back to the 1960s, to CB Claiborne's experience as the first Black player on the Duke men's basketball team, and what else he was doing at the time on campus in terms of social justice activism and how all of that played into his experience at Duke?

Javier Wallace: Duke is a very new integrated space. The first Black students come to Duke in 1963. I think there's five of them. I think when he comes in '65, there's maybe like less than 20 Black students on campus, period. Duke is emerging as what we now know Duke is now. It's emerging to become this big, elite, world renowned university, very selective on who they're hiring and who they're bringing in.

But in '65, Duke is sitting in the middle of Dixie, and Duke students are whistling Dixie in the stands, literally, they're whistling Dixie, and the band is playing Dixie in Cameron. This is where Duke is situated. Duke does not have a Black person working on campus in any position higher than janitor, housekeeping, cafeteria. Duke is a tense place. The housekeeping staff is already fighting with the university to have better working conditions. They are being forced to do things that they have been forced to do since its post emancipation.

They're pushing back. Claiborne comes in. Duke refuses to offer him an athletic scholarship. He's one of the best players in the country, and he's super smart. He meets the president of the United States because he scores the highest on this national achievement test, and he has funding to go anywhere in the country. But in Danville, he is, like one of the best players in the state. And so, basketball player, captain basketball team, captain of the baseball team, president of the National Honor Society, like, he is the all-American kid, good at every damn thing he does, can go almost anywhere he wants.

But there's a people influencing him to think about what it would mean to break a barrier at Duke University by becoming the first. So, in spite of Duke refusing to give him an athletic scholarship, because they've never given a Black person an athletic scholarship, they hold this thing in high regard. They don't want to give it to him. His Coach brokers for him to get a full scholarship. He comes and, like he says, it was a hostile environment. He couldn't get haircuts in the union because the barbershops were segregated at that time, and the union, Black students couldn't go in there.

But oddly enough, he says Durham is pretty cosmopolitan for him because he's from Danville, Virginia, that prides himself on being the last capital of the Confederacy. So, he's like, Durham is racist, it's segregated, but it's like, it ain't Danville, you know? That's what he said. That blows me away all the time. He was like, man, I wasn't fazed by Durham. I'm from Danville. He's like, it was cosmopolitan. I'm like, Durham is cosmopolitan. Like, this case was cosmopolitan when I got down here.

But it's not perfect. It's obviously not perfect for him. And so, he's a basketball player, he's the only Black basketball player. But he's starting to confront all these issues with being a Black basketball player. They are saying everything in the world under the sun, racial slurs to him. Anytime he travels, I'll let him tell this story. But some of the biggest names in Duke athletic history, he believes, don't even want him to be there and are limiting the times that he plays. He feels like he plays more on the road than he does in Durham because the powers of being Durham don't even want to see him at Duke.

It's a bad environment for him. He's great at basketball, but like he says, he feels like he's just playing with one arm behind his back the entire time. And then I think, important about his story, like he says, is his

identity as a young Black man is in development in the 1960s. This is the black power movement. He said he's reading all of the books coming out about black power. He is listening to Stokely Carmichael. These Afro-American student associations happening at Duke. He says they go to UCLA in LA, I think in '67, Kareem is playing on UCLA. He's like, all the Black dudes on the UCLA team have Afros. He's like, I wanted an Afro. That's an expression of my identity.

So, he says I come back to Durham, and I grow my Afro. And the coach was not on this team. You can't have that type of hairstyle on this team because of what that symbol meant in the south for these Black men to have Afros and shades. So, when you see him see the documentary, you're going to see a lot of his old pictures with Afro and shades, which at that time, in 1966, 67 for white America, these young Black men with afros, shades in the Panthers wielding guns, talking about protecting themselves. Hell no. These brothers are out of control.

And so, he symbolizes, represents that. And they're pushing him to the bench, and he refuses to conform to what they want him to be. And as an effect of that, as a Black basketball player, he sacrifices his opportunity to be the best basketball player he can be. Instead, he's like, I wanted to be a member of my community and my comrades. That's the word he used. That's how I know he from 67, he's saying, my comrades, we're out here. We were sitting. We were doing sit ins. He said, when they took over the administration building and protest of how the university was treating Black students, he said, of course I missed practice. Of course, I missed the game because I was a Black student on campus. I wasn't a basketball player at first. I was a member of my community, and I did so.

He's just active. He's an activist. Important thing about him, when we talk about some of these first blacks that go to these ACC schools to play basketball, oftentimes, and I have to be mindful how I say it. It's not that their presence isn't enough. Thinking of it as activism, because what they went through and showing up to go to those places should have been enough. In addition to that, many of them didn't get involved in actual acts of deliberate activism and protest. They did what they were supposed to do. They went to class, they studied, they played, they received the insults, they found ways to deal with it, and they did it. Very few engaged in actual acts of activism.

Claiborne, he's literally leading rallies, walking down the street downtown Durham, and he's talking about fight to power, bring him down and he's in the protest. And so that's one thing to note about him is he is in the protests and while he's at Duke, and it fundamentally changes the university.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk about his role in the Allen building takeover of 1969 for people that are not familiar with that event on the Duke University campus as one example of this? And then overall, what was the fallout and the impact that he experienced as a result of his activism?

Javier Wallace: So the Allen Benton takeover is a pivotal moment in Duke University's history, where in 1969, as a result of continual refusal from Duke administration to pay attention to the requests and the grievances of Black students and Black staff on Duke University's campus, the students of the Afro American Student association was CB Claiborne was a part of decide that they wanted to stage a sit in or protest in the administration building where the president's office is located.

Some people say Dick Gregory encourages this because he speaks like a week before on Duke's campus and he talks about taking over the administration building. And so, these students do that. They do it in protests. And it's important to note that this is not just a sporadic event that they have been requesting

staging sit ins in 67. They have a sit in the Allen building. So, February 1969 doesn't disappear out of thin air. It has been long coming. And so, they go into the administration building because they were forcing the university. They hear their demands, which are now demands, and they lock themselves in.

President Knight has already taken an adverse approach to this type of picketing, protesting. And they decide that today they're calling the National Guard to get these kids out, which escalates the situation quite drastically. And these young people get word from an activist that they're sending in the National Guard, you better get out. And so, what is supposed to be a peaceful protest where they lock themselves in escalates when the university calls the National Guard on them to remove them from the building, where they remove themselves.

So, CB Claiborne, he has an active role in the takeover. He has a job to secure the building, to impede anybody from getting in. He does that. His soon to be wife is in there with him. She types a letter to her mother saying CB is going to protect her and just letting her mother know how serious the situation actually becoming from a typewriter. And he says, like, you know, he, once it starts to escalate and they know the National Guard is coming, he escapes through a window from the second floor. And then he proceeds to watch what ends up happening. The National Guard coming in, tear gassing, breaking all the things in the building that they later blame on the kids, on the students, but they bring their books and they're studying in this protest.

But the National Guard is coming in. It's extremely violent. Tear gas is going on. So, he misses practice, and he misses a game to participate in this whole act, or this act of protest. And so, what ends up happening legally from the university, the university not only wants to kick them out from the university, but they want to press legal charges against everybody who participates. And of course, the basketball team is not happy about the athletic program, isn't happy. Coach Bubus is willing to stand up for him to a degree, but he is not going to play anymore. But they're not going to kick him off the team. But the legal ramifications are, he really believes he's going to be kicked out the university, and they're going to take legal action.

But they have a very savvy lawyer who is a student at Duke, who's one of the first Black law students at Duke, who puts together this amazing argument that if the university wants to kick them out, the university has to recognize and admit that they have been negligent in attending to these issues and grievances that have been brought to them over the series of years by these students. And of course, the university doesn't want to admit that. They don't want to admit that they have heard about these things, these grievances over the course of years, and they have intentionally, negligently dismiss these things.

And so, the university ends up just saying, like, y'all can come back to school, and we will create a Black studies department. So, Duke black studies department, it begins in 1969, will hire some Black professors. Actually, we'll give somewhat of living, working wages to Black staff, the janitors. And so, the university complies with a number of these demands. And they kind of like, we're not going to kick y'all out, because with this legal argument that our students have brought in front of us, we will have some consequences ourselves.

And so, he participates in that way, the media, Durham media, white Durham media, is, I mean, dogging him out on what he does. Cause he's on the basketball team. So white media, they hear about what's going on, so they write these stories about him. How dare CB do any of these things? He should be lucky to even be on the team, to be the first Negro to even be there. So how dare him do anything, to do anything against the program? His responsibility, his everything belongs to the program. And so, they dog him out, but they

don't kick him off the team. I think because they understand it probably could have got worse if they would have kicked him off the team.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk about your work in honoring his legacy and the lead up to the 2023 Duke basketball game where he was officially honored at Cameron indoor, and the players were wearing his jersey and describe that night.

Javier Wallace: My whole thing has been Matt, and it still is, and I learned this through [Black Austin Tours](#), if you talk loud enough and you don't stop, somebody's going to hear. As long as you aren't somebody that people consider to be off the hinges, somebody's going to end up listening. So, I have just been consistent. My spirit won't let me stop talking about this guy. My spirit won't allow me to stop putting energy and effort and telling everybody who I can about him.

And so, I just kept doing it. And again, gratefully, so many people were supportive. Tracie Canada, Marc Anthony Neal, Martin Smith has been instrumental. He's just been so supportive. And anything that I've told him, he's like, bro, let's do it. He was like, I love this story. Thank you. I love it. And so, he's been, let's do it. Rachel Baker, the GM special shouted out. I don't name anybody from over there on that side, but Rachel Baker, the GM for Duke men's basketball, Monty Montgomery, the academic coordinator at Duke men's basketball, for always being intentional and putting those guys in my class, knowing that they're going to learn about CB Claiborne.

Coach Jon Scheyer. Coach Scheyer has been extremely supportive. Jon Scheyer is like, whatever you need, cool, bring him. I want him to come. I want him to talk. I want him to do that. And so, I was like, well, shoot. Well, let's do it. Let's do it. We brought him in. It was beautiful, man. I ain't going to hold you. I'm not going to lie. Seeing all those people in Cameron indoor stadium stand up and applaud this man, it was great. And I know he felt good that people saw him. And because athletics let us put some of the work we did in the hall of fame, the critical exhibit that we put together, that we weren't holding back, athletics allowed that night for us to put that up in the hall of fame.

And just the people who stopped by and read all about him and was just so forthcoming about their ignorance of not knowing about him and how much they wanted to learn more, let me know that we were doing something right, that he has a story that's worth telling, and he has done something for this university, that the least they can do are the things that they had done. Because what would Duke men's basketball be without Black players?

Even when Black America thought of Duke, basketball is ruining our dreams and our hopes and desires for the future, killing the Fab Five, you can't tell me one national championship that Duke has won that hasn't featured Black players. Not one. You can't do it. You can't tell me the majority of the basketball players on NBA rosters from Duke University right now are not Black men. And the same thing, like I said when I saw those young men come in my class, I refused to let them think that the only reason that they got into Duke men's basketball was because of their talent.

Somebody had to be the first. Somebody had to endure everything that Claiborne endured. For them to literally jump out of the gym, you know, literally. Claiborne sat so they could literally jump out the gym and get paid millions of dollars to do it. And many of them have fundamentally changed their lives, the generational trajectory of their families, because of basketball, because of Duke university.

It's not perfect. It's not a perfect program. But I refuse to let, as long as I'm here, people believe that. And this is Black and non-Black players, because none of these white players have been able to achieve on their own, either. None of them. None of them. All of them have to do it together and realize that you don't just show up somewhere and think that you made it because you are here. Somebody had to do something.

And I just always just pull from my ancestors' stories that I talk so much about in black auction tours and later lead the way here and I'm going to make you care. That's what I feel like. I'm going to make you care. You can say you don't care, but I'm going to sit down and I'm going to sit in my chair, and I'm going to sit there and think about, how can I make you care today? Because I got time.

Matt Bowles: You are teaching a class on the history of Duke men's basketball at Duke. Can you talk about that class and that curriculum and what the experience is like for students that are able to take that class?

Javier Wallace: I love it. This is week number three, and we're having the time of our lives! I wouldn't be doing anything else on Monday or Wednesday, from 10:05 to 11:20 a.m. except be in that class because we get after it. I mean, most of the students who take the class, they are Duke basketball junkies. They can tell you everything about the program. They are Cameron crazies. They are the people who tent. They are the people who live, die, and cry behind Duke men's basketball.

And of course, we have players in there, too. So, they are the players in there. But we get after it. We will talk stats. Cause I like stats. Our opening introduction to the class was who was the most overrated player in Duke men's basketball history? That was one of the best debates yet, because the way they went after it and they went after each other and like, man, you ain't got no stats. Like, that ain't true. It was amazing. It's just beautiful. It's a beautiful thing. The most beautiful thing about it is, for me, is taking these super everyday topics and diving deep into them at a critical way, like tobacco road.

We talk about, how does tobacco road even come into existence as a thing. Like, who is Washington Duke? One of the students. His biggest takeaway was, dang, I didn't know Duke was an enslaver. At least he wasn't in the confederacy. I was like, are you sure about that? Cause he was. I'm like, he was. He was like, oh, he was. I like, yeah, he was, oh, wow, man, this is crazy. And so, we do that today, our biggest topic, because we're connecting to the us presidential debates and we're talking about, like, class. And so, our biggest topic today was about tenting in Krzyzewskiville, and who can tent?

So, one student was like, tenting is the most meritocratic thing we have at Duke University. It's a meritocracy. And some students are like, are you out your mind? You have to have money for a tent. Like, how many students can spend six weeks out of a year sleeping outside? Some of us have to work part time jobs to pay for ourselves to be here. Not everybody gets our school paid for. And they're like, what? Really? Even something that's so simple, which I think is ridiculous, as kids sleeping outside for six weeks, can make us think about race, can make us think about class, can make us think about these topics that are so integral to our everyday living in society, because we're talking about the us presidential debates and the middle class, the working class, and we're thinking about how, at Duke University, young people sleeping in tents outside can give us an insight into the social economic diversity of our campus and the way that different kids experience this campus based on their racial and social economic statuses that they bring with them to campus in the ways that you don't even recognize how your everyday experiences don't even allow you to see that happening, and that you aren't just lucky. You aren't just there.

I know students who go to the UNC do game who don't tent at all. Like, what are you talking about? They really bought their tickets and yeah, they probably pay \$5,000, but they can do it. Your meritocracy, what are you talking about? It doesn't exist. And so, I mean, it's dope. The last thing I'll say on the class, like, we talk. I'm talking about everything. Jalen Rose's comment about calling Black players Uncle Toms, we talked about that last week, where we talk about the story of enslaved Black men being relegated and thought of as Uncle Toms, and then we talk about CB Claiborne, and we're like, he's the antithesis of Uncle Tom, stereotypically, if we think about what he did on campus.

And so, Jalen didn't know about that. And why do Black people like Grant Hill that come from nuclear two parent households, why is that something bad? Nobody cares if this young Black kid comes from an unstable home. Single parent household has the worst origin story in the world. We love it. We applaud it. But why is it a problem? Why do we have to have a white player that we have to hate? We have to have a white Duke player to hate. It just has to happen. And one of these players is in my class, and he is trying to understand that, literally, because he's a teenager, and people are saying all these things about him. He gets this endorsement deal. They say this thing about him. They call him this, and he's like, what did this mean?

He takes a picture on his visit to campus, and all of his other freshman buddies take the same picture, but the Internet goes crazy when it's him and everybody else is doing it, and he's like, why are they coming for me like that? And I'm like, this is deeply rooted, my man. Unfortunately, you are inheriting that, and I want to help you understand what you're inheriting, and I want everybody in here to understand what we're talking about. And so, students in that class, we just have a good time, and sport is one of the few things that we can openly talk about race, and people don't get super defensive.

The first day of class, one student was talking about the overrated player. And they're like, well, JJ Reddick, you know, for a white guard, he....I'm like, what do you mean by that? Why he gotta be a white guard? Why he can't just be a regular guard? Like, why he got. He like, you know. You know what I. And it's a white kid talking like, you know what I mean? He's like, well, maybe I shouldn't have said that. I'm like, no, no, no. You said it. I'm like, what do you mean?

But I mean. But you know what I mean. I said, I don't know what you mean. He's like, so you mean, like, white man can't jump? I don't know. Can they all jump? And he was like. And then he points to the white men on the basketball team in the class. He's like, I mean, they can, but can they jump higher than the black ones? You know? So, these are, like, conversations that you can't have about race in mixed company, largely because of how we get about it in these spaces, but somehow in sport, they're always just there.

And so that class is just cool because, like, we can let our guards down and we can talk about race and class and gender in a way that we just can't do in normal discourse because it's not PC. Like, we get canceled. But we can call JJ Reddick a good white guard and be like, that's cool, because Black men might be better. We have movies about it. So, yeah, I love the class. It's amazing.

Matt Bowles: I want to ask you about the legacy and lessons, particularly from CB Claiborne and his colleagues' activist work on campus. It strikes me in general, broadly speaking, that when students are doing activist work on campus against entrenched power structures, they are systematically demonized and repressed at the time. And then many decades later, they're often honored and commemorated for the work that they did. And we see this decade after decade after decade. We're talking about the Vietnam War. We're talking about south African apartheid. We're talking about all these different campus

mobilizations. And today, of course, we have students that are occupying buildings and doing encampments and protesting against the genocide being committed against the Palestinians and trying to demand that the universities divest from Israeli apartheid and so forth. And they, of course, are being repressed and demonized and suspended and all of those types of things. And I'm wondering, just for the students today who are activists, who are struggling for justice who are trying to take a stand, be disruptive, and trying to contribute to making the world a better place. What lessons and inspiration can today's students take from C.B. Claiborne and folks from that generation?

Javier Wallace: You know, youth are just a very special group of people, like you mentioned, always on the forefront of effect and change, even though people don't understand it or see it as they're doing it. I encourage young people, like on the basketball team or athletes in general, like a Duke is like you, CB Claiborne's story, to express yourself the way you want to express yourself. I always want them to know that story, to know that there are options.

And people have taken this role before, even though the university has tried to suppress that story for a long time because of what it meant to say. Athletes should not shut up and dribble. They should do something different. And it's not a different environment. Cause there's always something at stake. Claiborne, he knew what was at stake. Of course, LeBron level contracts didn't exist in 69 when he graduated, but opportunities were taken away from him that he could have explored if he would have gone with the flow.

And so, for me, like, in my work with athletes, I'm like, just allow this story to permeate in your mind, to let you know about what's going on, to make an educated decision. And I tell these young people this all the time, especially the ones that have potentials to be like these one and dons. I know why you here. I would love for you to be an active member in this class. And they are. What I try to encourage them to think about in this moment is you're going to have a camera in your face often, and people are going to put a mic in front of you and ask you to speak on these social issues that are going on. At the very least, have a position, have an informed position.

And if you do nothing else in here, in this class, at least develop a position. So, when you say something, you can speak from a position. Don't push it to the side but speak from a position. And people have paved the way, like Claiborne, for you to do that. I mean, it kind of stumps me, too, because I'll never encourage them to do something they don't feel comfortable doing or jeopardize their careers, but I'm just hopeful CB Claiborne is going to make them say hold on, I want to say something this time. And of course we've seen it happen, and we've seen consequences. We've seen some who are like, Eff it, I'm going to do it anyway, and some who just don't want to do it, but I'm hopeful that the story will push them to do it.

Matt Bowles: I also want to ask you about meeting Duke Professor Steven Hayes and your role in his sculpture project at the equal justice site in Montgomery, Alabama, if you can explain that context as well.

Javier Wallace: Yeah. Stephen Hayes, my guy, again, Martin Smith connection. Martin introduced us here in Durham. I had actually engaged with Steven's work before meeting him and learning that he was a professor at Duke. I saw some of his stuff at the North Carolina Art Museum down in Raleigh, and I was just so impacted by it. I was like, wow, this guy is deep. And he's just is a talent.

I just got to know him through Martin. He lives up the street from me. Literally up the street, so when I'm going on these extravagant long trips, he'll come check on the house, make sure nobody's breaking in, bring

the mail inside. He learned about what I do with, like, [Black Austin Tours](#). And so, he was looking for this project he was commissioned on, which resembles one of his famous pieces, cash crop. When this one is named Cash Crop as well, and he was looking for bigger bodies. I got a big one, and he was like, man, I know what you do anyway. And would you like to participate in Cash Crop and the remaking of cash crop in a bronze casting, because the original one is made from concrete.

Steven Hayes is a sculptor, and he focuses on a lot of different things, focused on the black experience in U.S. enslavement, commodification of blackness and Black people through the transatlantic slave trade and how that impacts modern day exploitation. And so, cash crop is a representation of the potential at the very least, I think, 14 or 15 million African people stolen from the African continent to be used as enslaved laborers in the United States or what becomes the U.S. and the Americas. And he wanted different people to serve as these people because he often uses descendants of whatever project he's working on to serve as models. And so, I was deeply honored when he asked me to be a model, even though it hurt, it was horrible as an experience to be plastered and a hairy person to have that stuff ripped off of you. I'm never going to forgive him for that, and he knows that.

But seeing myself, seeing ourselves in that condition attached to that boat in the way that we know people that we descend from is something that is still impactful to me to this day. And knowing that as long as that institution continues to exist, and that structure bears the elements, a part of me is always going to be in this country, and a part of me is always going to be in the South because that's where my family is from. I told my wife this jokingly. I've been trying, literally, to leave the south for the longest over the course of my life, and I never been able to leave. And I told her, I think my ancestors will never let me, if I live in this country, they will never let me leave this part of this country because of what happened to them here, what they built here in this part of the country, and what they did for us as a community here.

And all the things I talk about is always through them. I think they give me some of the best stories possible. I think it was destined for me to be a participant in Steven Hayes Cash crop, and I wouldn't have it any other way. And I'm just so happy that a part of me will always be here in this part of the United States because I have people that were enslaved in Alabama that were. My great grandfather, Calvin Allen, born in 1833, was born in Alabama. He was trafficked to Texas as an enslaved person. He was born in Alabama. It was amazing. It was. He's beautiful. He's a beautiful being and a great artist, and I'm just so excited to see the projects that he'll work on in the future. But this one is very great for me in a great way. It's where I'm supposed to be.

Matt Bowles: Well, if people that are listening would like to meet you in person and hear you speak in person, you and I are both going to be hanging out at the [Black Travel Summit](#) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, coming up in October 2024. Can you share a little bit about your connection with [Black Travel Summit](#) and what you're going to be speaking about?

Javier Wallace: Yeah, so I'm super excited to be at the [Black Travel Summit](#). A lot of the people who will be speaking I have been in connection with for a long time because the conversation we had about Panama being the destination. So many of those people have been through Panama, and we've met, like Jabril. I mean, we have gone back. I remember when he was first starting that big video he did in Panama. I helped him set that up. We were on the party bus that was in Panama, and then that was my homeboys. We're having a party, and I was like, Bray's coming to the party. So, I'm excited to connect with these people that I've been connected with over this decade plus now of being in this whole black travel thing, which is crazy to think about. And specifically, I'll be on a panel talking about storytelling and black heritage tourism,

which has been my niche, if you will, since getting into travel is curating black stories and black travel experiences.

So, I'm super excited to be talking about the challenges of being in heritage travel. What does it mean to go from a guide to a business owner? The challenges of going to be a business owner and being a guide, trying to create a brand that's bigger than just your person. Because believe it or not, tour guides get tired of being tour guides. Some days you just want to chill, but people are coming.

So, like, how do you build? I mean, this is what I want to talk about. How do you build a company larger than your brand, that's sustainable, that provides opportunities to other potential storytellers in our communities to do the work, and you can grow your business? I hope to talk about grants. We get a lot of grants now. So how I told you, like, [Black Austin Tours](#) is no longer just leisure travel that comes in, but we have now expanded to do reinterpretation, historical research that we turn into tours, we turn into experiences for ourselves and on behalf of other institutions.

So, yeah, the travel site, I would love to talk about all those things just to hopefully help people that want to get into this industry and not just be a guide in how to create a business around what you're passionate about, so you don't get burned out doing it. And it doesn't cease to exist when you're tired, because that often happens. Black travel tour guides often do it until they can't no more. And then it doesn't exist until somebody else comes along and decides to do it.

Matt Bowles: Javier, let me ask you one more final question, and then we'll wrap this up and move into the lightning round. When you think back about all of the travel that you have done up to this point in your life, how do you think all of that travel has impacted you as a person? And at this point, why do you continue to travel? What does travel mean to you today?

Javier Wallace: Travel has given me literally everything. It has allowed me to explore myself and my identity in ways that just being at home or in one space couldn't. I was sharing this with my wife, and my immediate family knows this intimately about me. I used to collect atlases, travel atlases. My mom would go to Walmart, like those big ones that people used to keep in their car, and I literally would just study these things.

And so, something in me has always wanted to go beyond my borders or beyond what was presented to me. And so, the best thing about travel for me and the way I travel is I always look for ways that I'm connected to the places that I go. And that has given me language to talk about myself a bit better. It gave me even the understanding of, like, basketball trafficking, because you can't understand basketball trafficking without understanding migration and movement and why people move and the experiences that people have when they move to different places, even if it is only temporarily for vacation or if it is for life or living. Because I traveled back to Panama, where my dad is from, and he traveled from there to live in the U.S., but I had to go see what that was like for myself.

So, travel has given me a way to think about myself better and to connect dots on all the projects that I do. And the storytelling that I intend to do is learning from other people. I always try to go talk to black tour guides, but doing something related to the black experience, because you learn literally, it's professional development for me when I travel, and I love it, I go to a museum I like, I was just in Las Vegas two days ago, and I love going to the west coast of the United States because I mentioned, I don't think my ancestors will

ever let me leave the south. But I do know some of my family had. And the great migration went westward, and they went to California, they went to Nevada, they went to Seattle.

And in Seattle, this dude was trying to sell me CDs on this. Walking, I don't know, somewhere in Seattle, along the water. And he was like, bro buy a CD. I'm like, dog, I don't support homeboy records today. Like, I'm past that, bro. I hope you blow up, but I ain't got it. And he was like, where are you from? I'm from Austin, Texas. He's like, for real? He said, man, my grandma from Austin. He like, man, he started pulling out his phone. He showed me all of these places. His grandma's house in Austin and East Austin. I know these places intimately, and I love that moment. I even bought his CD at that point in time. About CD I haven't listened to. I don't even know where it is. I'm like, bro, you send me a CD in 2024. Let's stop. Let's have a discussion. Like, who listens to CDs in 2024? I know this is a hustle at this point, but I'm going to support the hustle now.

Matt Bowles: Can't knock the hustle, man.

Javier Wallace: You're from Austin. We literally connected in how travel for leisure connected me to that history of travel for freedom, because what were they leaving Austin to go find in the Pacific Northwest that they couldn't get in central Texas?

It happened to me in Phoenix. I went to a famous soul food restaurant, misses white golden Cafe in Phoenix, Arizona. And I'm ordering, and the young lady, here's my accent, and she's like, where you from? You're not from around here? I'm like, duh. Like, I'm from Austin, Texas. She's like, oh, my God, really? Miss White is from Austin. She came here and opened this restaurant. And I just really loved that because I was like, what made her leave Austin? What was so bad about it? And many times, it was bad. Unlimited opportunities for Black people. And so, I'm like, what did they find in those places?

So, travel just gives me all that. Travel gives me a sense of self. It helps me with research, and it helps me connect with people, and I love finding the ways that we're connected in Panama. This happens, too, because I mentioned the history of Panama and West Indians when I went to Barbados. Like, Barbados is amazing because I got family in Barbados. We have been disconnected for over 120 years. But there's that sense of kinship when you say you talk to them, they're like, oh, Panama. You know, my great grandfather went to Panama. I'm like, yeah. My great grandmother went, that's why I'm coming back. And, like, the way people like, what's your last name? What's your title? My title is Clark. My title is Broadway. Like, oh, I know that family. They might be your family. And so, it's been beautiful, man. Travel has given me a sense of purpose, man, because I just find myself everywhere I go. It's purpose.

Matt Bowles: Well, I think that is a perfect place to end the main portion of this interview. And at this point, Javier, are you ready to move in to the lightning round?

Javier Wallace: We'll see. Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it. All right, what is one book that you would recommend that people should read?

Javier Wallace: [The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women by Stephanie Camp](#).

Matt Bowles: All right, who is one person currently alive today that you've never met that you'd most love to have dinner with just you and that person for an evening of dinner and conversation?

Javier Wallace: Maverick Carter.

Matt Bowles: All right, what is one piece of advice? Knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time that you would give to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Javier?

Javier Wallace: Be patient.

Matt Bowles: All right. Of all the places that you have now traveled, what are three of your favorite destinations you would most recommend other people should definitely check out?

Javier Wallace: Panama, Senegal, and London.

Matt Bowles: Great picks. All right, what are three of your bucket list destinations? These are places you have not yet been highest on your list you'd most love to see.

Javier Wallace: Tanzania, Benin, and Martinique.

Matt Bowles: All right, Javier, we've now come to the most important question of this interview. I'm about to ask you to name your top five hip-hop emcees of all time. But before I do that, can you just share a little bit about what hip-hop music means to you and why you love hip-hop?

Javier Wallace: Yeah. Hip-hop, for me, is an expression of Black people. It is connected to all of the musical traditions that have come out of the black experience in different places. And it's just been amazing. And so, it's amazing. It's a soundtrack to my youth. It's a soundtrack to so many things. The people who I'll name, I can tell you the time, the place, when I heard that and how it made me feel, how it influenced my identity. So, it's an art form that I'm like, yeah, we got to recognize it.

Matt Bowles: All right, Javier, who is your top five?

Javier Wallace: No particular order. DJ Screw, Big Moe, Z-Ro, Lil' Keke and Kafu Banton. You have the Panamanian some.

Matt Bowles: Love that. All right, Javier, I want you to let people know at this point how they can find you, how they can follow you on social media, how they can learn more about all of the stuff that you are up to. How do you want people to come into your world?

Javier Wallace: Yes. For the people who are looking for me, you can come to javierwallace.com. You can find access to all of the projects that I work on, entities that I work on through javierwallas.com, including my IG page [javierwallace512](https://www.instagram.com/javierwallace512). Of course, you can come through [Black Austin Tours](http://BlackAustinTours.com) on the website and on IG and [Afro Latinx Travel](http://AfroLatinxTravel.com) as a co-founder. But if you're looking for me directly, come to javierwallace.com. I'll be sure to get back with you if you send the email, hit the contact button, or on social medias. Again, the IG.

Matt Bowles: All right, we are going to link all of that up in one place in the show notes. So just go to themverickshow.com. go to the show notes for this episode. There you will find direct links to everything we have discussed in this episode and all of the ways to find and contact Javier, as well as how to join us at the [Black Travel Summit](http://BlackTravelSummit.com) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and get a 10% discount when you use the code; *Maverick*. If you want to go directly to buy that ticket, you can just go to themaverickshow.com/bts, that stands for *Black Travel Summit*, and then just enter the code *Maverick*, and you can get 10% off your ticket and hang out with me and Javier in person. We would love to see you.

Javier, this was absolutely amazing, brother. A truly special conversation. Thank you for coming on the show.

Javier Wallace: Thank you for having me. Thank you for having me. It was a pleasure.

Matt Bowles: All right, good night, everybody.