



## Episode 5: Black Lives Matter: Art Sims and Nakia J. Green

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### Audio commercial: David Prosper

This is David Prosper host of the leadership Revolution. Thanks for listening to the following broadcast from Public House media.

[Upbeat intro music] Disarming Disability

### Nicole:

Nakia Hello!!! It is so good to hear your voice.  
[Happy squeals]

and Art can you still hear us?

### Art:

I can hear you fine

### Nicole:

Yay!

### Nakia:

Good morning Art!

### Art:

Well, hello Nakia, darling. How are you?

### Nakia:

I'm, im good. How are you?

### Art:

Same I'm okay, you know shaken up about a lot of what's going on. I mean, you know, just trying to stay out of Harm's Way, and of course the place that I bought is over in that area, you know that that is re-gentrifying but yet, you know, they show up everything around here. Thank God the complex where I live was unscathed, you know, but what a lot of the grandmothers of this community and so now they're faced with,

you know, no medicine and grocery stores and you know, so emotionally, I'm a wreck but you know, spiritually I'm beautiful. I'm you no. No, you don't

**Nakia:**

Yeah. Yeah. I second that I and you know, I am in Little Village, is I don't know if you know Nikki, but there is practically, I'm sorry is Sarah on the line?

**Nicole:**

Yeah! Meet Sarah,

**Sarah:**

Hi Good morning

**Nakia:**

Good morning and thank you for having me. Yeah, but I live in a little village in it's practically a race war going on over here. And so I today I am heavy, and I am really really heavy. I was up late last night working on putting this presentation together on facilitating a session for Bentley University on Thursday.

So I needed to finish pulling some stuff together and I couldn't work. Yeah, cuz the amount of constant gunshots was unnerving to me. To hear, I mean like seven in a row every 10 to 15 minutes. And I am a city girl-

**Nicole:**

Are these like the rubber bullets out of what we hear from like the police?

**Nakia:**

No no no no it's a gang war, no this is a gang war. No these are gunshot, but I'm a Chicago girl. I'm not afraid of the sound of bullets have never unnerved me. It just is almost a part of the tapestry of the city, when you grow up on the south and the west side.

but but last night was unnerving. because it was consistent and to hear the helicopters and to hear the police rates in down the street consistently all night long.

**Art:**

Well that is the way I feel, that I is the way I felt about Sunday night.

**Nakia:**

Mmm-hmm.

**Art:**

Sunday night was almost, so what I've been through it reminded me of the night my mother died. Just trying to go to sleep was the issue and just like Nakia, I live on a Major

Street and I just as we started this interview police were racing past now give it an hour. They'll race past the other way.

**Nakia:**

Yeah

**Art:**

and finding my street was like the runway at O'Hare Airport of emergency, fire, ambulance. And I can always tell when the Looting was happening because they were coming down my street and throw the boxes and hangers and all that in front of where I live.

**Nicole:**

Wow. How do you have a lot of looting where you've been at Nakia?

**Nakia:**

No. No, there is not. It's pretty. Its pretty residential where I am. So there's not one is pretty residential, I liven in Pilsen. I mean not Pilson, I live in a little village. I'm sorry, and so So it's not there are the main throughfare on 22nd Street.

but I also live behind the police station like directly behind the police station. So interestingly on Sunday. I was actually saying to my godmother that it was it was as we lived in a different place because we didn't see it at all. We didn't see it. We didn't hear it at all, but all and and yesterday we got a fair share of it.

**Art:**

Wow. Wow. Wow.

**Nakia:**

Yeah. Yeah, we got our fair share of in so what is happening right now is we are seeing the change unfold right before eyes and and it's painful and it's spreading like wildfire and our city and it's spreading like wildfire and our country and our world and and it is painful.

**Art:**

It really really is it truly truly is. Ladies. Are you ready to get this interview underway or are we already in the interview?

**Nicole:**

Yeah, that's right. So, I mean I was recording from the beginning there. But of course actually whatever you're interested in sharing are not sharing, you know, we want to make sure yeah, we're being respectful of that that I mean really, you know Art and I talked about this yesterday Nakia, but just so you kind of understand Sarah and I are just In a really looking to give both you and art the floor and just allow you to kind of like talk

through what you think needs to be talked through right now or share what you think needs to be shared. We don't want to be asking you this stupid annoying questions, you know, we do want to ask you like what ways but how actually can we be helpful during this time? And how can we help amplifier or be helpful, but really our goal and like chatting with you today is is just so like give you the floor really is essentially what we're looking to

**Nakia:**

Well, let me say this to you to you both Nikki and Sarah is and and am I calling you Nikki or Nicole?

**Nicole:**

Haha, you can call me whatever, I mean you can call me Nikki.

**Nakia:**

But I want I want to I want to say this to you and I really really mean this that I think you should ask whatever question you need to ask. I don't think that you should hold that. I I would say that we are we are a safe space for you to ask the questions that need to be asked because cuz you may be thinking of them and someone else may be thinking them and and and we won't get the answer out and and it's very it's not that often where these kind of conversations happen and the conversation are safe.

**Nicole:**

Yeah

**Nakia:**

And and until we can have hard dialogue. No one's going to really understand and no one is really going to hear. So I'm going to push back on you all a little bit and give permission for you to ask whatever you need to ask whatever your this the question that's burning in your soul. This is why you do this work. This is why you are in this space because questions that are burning in your soul that needs to be answered. Somebody else needs to hear as well.

**Art:**

And I cosign her statement 100%.

**Nicole:**

I love you guys. No, really- I appreciate that and please keep us in check. Then as we are having conversations. and You know Sarah and I want to be we just want to be aware of the fact that you know, living, you know Art and Nakia of course also identify as disabled. And so we've had lots of conversations around that and I'm very comfortable having you know, those kinds of conversations in that space with you and there's that there's the conversation of like it's not "our job to educate" like pick up pick up the books. You need to pick up and and do the homework you need to do to be educated

and So we just want to be really mindful that you know there if there are stupid questions being asked that you call us out, you know, so also that as well.

**Nakia:**

gotcha.

**Sarah:**

Yes, and I know that sort of the work that we're doing into the Disability Advocacy I know that that's something that we come back to a lot is that we really want people to be allies and also to help support like that the the meat or or the sort of like core what's happening. It is coming from the Disability Community and that the Allies are following that message rather than people hearing something and then sort of leading things on their own that could be completely off task and off topic and that are actually end up being destructive.

So I feel like I know internally in myself because I don't identify with the Black Community, but I want to help and support and be a good allies the Black Community, but I also you know what I want to be able to, you know, so learn and take action, but I also want to bring to know that I'm learning and taking action that's on the on the task of the Black Community and I'm not making things worse.

**Nakia:**

You know Sarah, Art is the expert, and and I will I will follow his lead, but I think we the two of us are comfortable than our Blackness. We are comfortable in who were are and and we love people and so and and I would say our skins on pretty thick. And there isn't anything that we can't handle and and so so let it rip. and we will help you and knowing and knowing knowing knowing Nikki, at knowing who she is. I think creates a very Level Playing Field here. Where an open and honest dialogue will do more good for people than then the fear of stepping on our toes the fear of misleading way. We got it got it. You can handle it.

**Art:**

Yeah

**Nicole:**

I love it. I love it so much. So I guess with that. We technically haven't even introduced to you guys. Are we have with us today Art Sims and Nakia Green art is an amazing radio personality just person extraordinaire and Nakia does a ton of diversity equity and inclusion work, but I want them to kind of introduce themselves as well. So Art, can you can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

**Art:**

Sure. It's an honor and a pleasure to be here. I'm so honored to have my sister Nakia on the phone with me as well to my name is Art Sims, but everyone knows me as Chat

Daddy. I'm a 26-year media personality radio television and newspaper. My newest platform is digital media. I'm a native Chicagoan born and raised on the south side of Chicago over the course of my life, I've lived everywhere from the downtown area. Currently- I'm a resident on the south side. I am a very proud Chicagoan we're the third largest city in the country and I just watched so many things over the course of my life that I'm just overwhelmed with grief and emotion with the current state of the way things are in our country and our cities and even in our homes.

**Nicole:**

I am excited to dive into that with you a little bit here Nikki. I can you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about you.

**Nakia:**

Awesome. Thank you so much. Sarah and Nikki for having met I as well and overjoyed and being on this platform with this expert by the name of Chat Daddy and I am grateful for the space to have this conversation. My name is Nakia green. I too am Chicago and born and bred on the west side of Chicago. I'm a complete Chicago girl though. There is no parts of the city that has not been Untouched by me in my lifetime.

I Am a diversity equity and inclusion practitioner. I have a for-profit organization, Culture Solutions, and a non-profit Culture Solutions and Action. Founder of those the goal is to minimize unemployment and underemployment among minority and disabled college graduates. Likewise. I have a consulting firm in a cage a consultant that focuses on DEI leadership development and organizational development. and I identify as a black woman with a disability that you see can't see, a Christian black woman with a disability that you can't see and my pronouns are she her and hers

**Nicole:**

Yeah, I love it. Well, I mean let's let's just jump right in. I'm wondering if you can share we kind of started the call talking about what you were seeing and hearing around you. Can you share what you've been seeing and hearing around you the past couple of days that this is a two-parter question both like outside your window, you know outside your Chicago window in your community. But then also what have you been seeing and hearing when you're logging onto like social media sites. What is what are those two different areas looking like in your world right now?

**Art:**

I'll stuff first. The one thing I will say is social media. I look at it like this: It's a blessing and a curse all in the same key stroke if that makes sense. It has helped me to stay connected with my city. It helped me to stay connected with the community. But the various things that I've seen on social media are just heart-wrenching from the beginning of you know, just the protesters standing up for the Life of George Floyd and so many others who have died tragically at the hands of Law Enforcement Officers to

actually those that opportunities opportunities to be looters to just destroy and and wreak havoc on the communities that they come from.

You know, I'm a huge advocate of social media. This is how my career staying afloat right now. now but I'm also sick and by just you know, the way you seen things unfold but this is also our new way of seeing how our world lives.

**Nakia:**

I um, ah Social media has been Sometimes for me especially during this time, it can be a void and it can be it can suck you suck you in quickly and suck the life out of you. It is painful to see black men die publicly lynched. It is painful to see the countless stories of the men who died at the hands of police and transgender brothers and sisters who are dying at the hands of the police.

And then likewise a protest of white men and white women who are fully armed. And they are not met with the same aggression. They are not met with the same force and Black and Brown and allies were protesting are not met with the same force.

So it's painful. It's painful to see people grapple with what right and what's wrong people try to make place blame on people and communities who are looting Who are protesting without allowing the agitators to bear the weight and what is happening?

It is painful to watch people grapple with the loss the losses that they see in their Community. It is painful to watch people still and and this uprising that's happening- we are still dealing with the pandemic.

So that's painful to watch is people are still dying and people are still unable to bury their loved ones going to send them off and Grand fashion as we are accustomed to so it is it's quite painful.

**Nicole:**

I wondering doe this, how does this what's happening right now in the world does this feel different than other times, but there has been protests or we've Tried to actually move the dial forward a little bit and if it does or if it doesn't, why?

**Nakia:**

Hmm. I remember when Ferguson was happening and the uprising was happening in St. Louis and then it start to spark across the country. I didn't feel like this. There's something different about this. It very well could be a that our government that's different. That we have been faced with a person as it's in the house in the White House that have Has been racist and sexist has been an ableist you name it he has done it.

And so this feels different probably because of that this also feels different because we are again I say in the middle of a pandemic and and 2020 has been tough and and

then so much has happened in this week alone last week alone. Not only did you have George Floyd, Not only you had Tony McDade. You have Brianna. You had a list of black people you had. Mr. Cooper in New York. You had all of these things happening at the same time in the same week and people of color black people in particular are tired.

**Art:**

I couldn't agree more absolutely. I could not. Years and years of discrimination years and years of the status quo years and years of having to prove yourself not only to the world to your employer's to mankind the issue that I am faced with all the time. Nakia will do extremely well because she's a beautiful, talented, and smart black woman. As a black man, I've got to double up. I've got to build the confidence of those around me that I'm not going to snatch your purse. I'm not here to hurt you. I'm not here to have sexual relationships with you. I'm here to be valued as a human. I'm here to be valued as someone who has a gift and and believe it or not, you know. I'm kind of split on this because I've had abused from both my own race of people. I've had abused from other races of people but in all in all I've got to say that when times have gotten really tough. It was other races of people who really did just give me the hand up it really so I'm not you know, I'm not against people all walks of life coming together to love and nurture and help each other. I'm not against that at all. I'm really questioning. Where are we in our Humanity as his people as a whole?

**Nakia:**

I think I think art brings up a great point and this notion that this is a black-white thing because it's not it is a it is a matter of humanity. It is a matter of seeing black people as you see yourself. And seeing black people for who they are which means seeing their experiences as well. And and and so it's important that when we talk about these issues that it's not an indictment on one person but it absolutely is an indictment on the system that allowed this to occur.

**Nicole:**

Mmm-hmm.

It is an indictment is not an indictment on white women or white men, but it is an indictment on white men who allow their privilege to ensure that the system stay in place. And it's not an indictment on an individual person but it is an indictment on those who don't recognize that privilege and don't use their privilege to speak truth to power.

**Sarah:**

I know that a lot of the disability history if it scared at all is entirely whitewashed, right? Like we don't share the stories or leaders to our of different group when I was looking to do a post in relation to some of our Black Leaders we ever thinking that into the fiber for sit in and sort of we know that the Black Panthers and sort of in relation to Bradley Lomax who was really prominent in ensuring that all the protesters were being fed. And one of the quotes that I read out of here said from the Black Panthers when they're like,

why are you helping disability rights movement and they said “We support you because your asking America came to change to treat you like human beings like you belong we always support people fighting for their rights”

and I just felt that that was was really powerful in sort of in conjunction where like I know here is me in my efforts to try to help promote Disability Advocacy that like we're all sort of in this together. And like now it's my turn to help, you know, my brothers and sisters who are helping me and sort of all those things. So I just I feel like that that sort of reiterate summary highlights which are saying these are these are human rights issues and that we need to acknowledge and acknowledge that are Black Americans and our black leaders are humans and we treated and incorporated as such.

**Nakia:**

and so I don't know if Art, if you have the same experiences I did but we're we were all in ADA Advancing Leadership and we learned of the disability disability rights movement and its history and and learn that the deep connection to the Civil Rights Movement it brought me to the movement. Because as you said there are disability, you know in 2016. There was a hashtag this #disabilitytoowhite and they're after you if you run that hashtag, you'll see a lot of notes and images that portray that But but but we having that being able to see myself in the Disability Movement by way of being connected to the Civil Rights Movement helped me tremendously in my personal walk and my personal disability walk because I have the privilege of having the privilege and the curse of having a disability that you can't see and so I can enter into spaces and not be seen in that manner, and enter into those spaces same spaces and not be seen when I need to be seen that that makes any sense.

**Art:**

Hmm. It does. Yes it does.

**Sarah:**

I'm also wondering some the variety of movements that have happened sort of after Ferguson. I also want to say I said remember things from the Occupy movement and some of these various things that have happened- have you found that there was any like initial change that you were like really excited about that came as a result of these movement or ended that change kind of thing. Either way, do we feel like we're kind of does it feel at all? Like we're moving forward and then moving back or or does it always kind of feel like we're moving backwards back at all. Can you tell me sort of what has life felt like after those movements that feel like it just went right back to where it was or do we feel like there's anything that is kind of growing some change that is helpful I suppose?

**Art:**

To me nothing much history changed. It has been the same situation over and over again. It's a lot of lip service but very little action and with a lot of the destruction that

has gone on not only here in Chicago but across the country of the Looting and rioting it's a demographic that is saying, you know some up to no good, but then there's the other demographic that says too much too much corruption too much materialism too much xenophobia too much just a lot of things that have just gone a ride for years. And and I think now more than ever that everything is being destroyed as you see young people here in Chicago taking it to the burbs. They're there. They're just knocking everything out their crippling a system crippling a system of people

**Nakia:**

I would like to add that. Chicago has not seen Uprising as they have in the last few days as they did and in the 1960 when Dr. King was killed. And the South and the West Side were damaged tremendously that happened all over this country. All at the same time the entire city cities went up and the blaze and I read something that it took six days of consistent rioting before Civil Rights Act of 1968 was passed after six days of burning cities after cyst six days of burning institutions and bucking against system. At the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

When we look at uprisings when they are when it's people of color. We use words like riots and looting right which which provided a negative connotation and it doesn't matter who's doing the Looting and who's doing the rioting because it's a black issue. It's always going to be put on black people, but we celebrate this country's active looting and active rioting when we go to war this do other people country is exactly what we do when we want as we are concerned about the National Guard being on our streets. We do this two countries every day every day.

We celebrate the Boston Tea Party. We learned that in our history books as small children. They're doing the same exact thing. And so I think it's important that we are careful about this narrative while -it is it is it is hurtful, I know small business owners, I know people who are out of work from because of all that has happened.

But to to to “to be black in America is to be in a state of rage at all times” and that is a quote by James Baldwin. And so when you shake up a bottle of pop or soda and you take the top off it will bust it will spill out everywhere. It will get on everything and that is what we are experiencing right now.

**Nicole:**

I'm wondering, I want to so I want to be respectful of time here. I'm wondering if we can or you can share with us. What are active ways good ways that your allies can actually step in and be useful. You know, what what really really is the way that we can we can step up?

**Nakia:**

Um, Okay? Social media is powerful. Using your voice on social media pushing back

against organizations that do not support the people even if it's organizations that you work for hold them accountable. Hold your peers accountable. And and leave room for your black and brown friends to hold space and you follow them. follow them. them and they're holding and they're holding their space. And to donate there are tons of organizations specifically all over Chicago all over Minneapolis that are working to not only build people out who are imprisoned because of the riots but also that are doing training on the ground for people who are organizing donate to those organizations.

Put your money where your mouth is. So we can talk about things and talk about things but we have to also be moved to action and there are tons of things that are happening all across this country. There are beautiful images of allies standing in between their their black counterparts and and the police there are things that are happening on the ground share those things.

**Nicole:**

I love it. What what? Yeah, what would you like to leave us with what? What party and words do you have as we kind of come to the end of our call here? What words of wisdom do you have art?

**Art:**

The words of wisdom that I have is that we've all we've all got to come together. We we've got to roll up our sleeves. We've got to sit down and hash it out figure out. What can we do as humans to help each other. It's nothing about being black white it different. It's about the human race when you were born. You were born girl. I was born boy. It has nothing to Do what I color as much as heart our thought process. How do we make a difference where we are in this world? Let's think of how many disadvantaged people we have right here in the world in which we live in?  
and that is what's going to make a difference in how we are perceived and appreciated by our fellow man.

**Nakia:**

Malcolm X's you stand for anything you stand for nothing you'll fall for anything and so my ask is that we all stand during this time, even when it's painful even when it's tough that we stand that we push forward that we be honest that we be vulnerable, that we ask questions that we hold space for those who don't get to be the don't get space held for them often. I also would ask that we be love, tender, because black folks need it right now.

**Art:**

And and nobody asking for a handout. Nobody's asking for any of that. It's let's be fair lets be just.

**Nicole:**

Lets be fair, lets be just. Well, I just can't thank both of you enough for just like being willing to like hop on the call and to allow me to like just, Sarah and I, excuse me to just like jump in the conversation and you know to allow us to maybe ask the stupid questions. Like I just am. Yeah, I'm so thankful to of course call you to friends and to be your allies to be your allies.

And of course let us know what what we can do. Things are arising. We're trying really hard to kind of like follow the lead that's put down their black and brown friends, but like give us give you know, like give us the direction and we're here to take it like we are willing and wanting and yeah, that's what that's what we want. We want to be active participants in the right way. So just thank you so so so much for again just engaging Us in conversation because again, that's a responsibility that I know that it's not always fun to bear. So I appreciate the fact that you're willing to chat with us.

**Nakia:**

mmm thank you.

**Art:**

Thank you so much. I really appreciate just the support the love the you know, reaching out, you know, Nicole and I first you know where she called me. I said absolutely it would be my honor and my pleasure because we've all got to be on the same page. We've all got to understand we're humid and and we've got to make a difference no matter what so it is my honor and pleasure. Hope to have you ladies on one evening to talk about your blog on my digital platform and the Nakia it's time for you to co-host with me. Why not? You ain't even gotta leave home. Yes is put on a cute top, you know, right? It's from the neck up is already.

**Everybody:**

Bye-bye.

**Sarah:**

Thank you for spending part of your day with us. We want to give thanks to our Network Public House media for intro beads to Jason Barnes with CYBRNETX. Our logo artist, we want to remember Patrice. You can find his work at [normal person's.com](http://normalperson's.com).

**Nicole:**

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