, disability, queer abolitionists, and other movements in the United States and globally. I'm going to hand over to Talila now. I'm so excited. Thank you. (cheers and applause) TALILA "TL" LEWIS: Greetings. Everyone. Ah, I come from the call-and-response community, so you all get to say SOMETHING back. Greetings, everyone! ALL: Greetings! TALILA "TL" LEWIS: Okay! Beautiful! Eyy! Ha, ha! So, I'm having extreme anxiety. (soft nervous laugh) I am first, before EVERYTHING, human...! (silent pause) ...That's really important. So, you all are gonna have to bear with me? Um... And I'll have support -- also, you can get a chair, if you want. COMMUNICATOR: No, no! TALILA "TL" LEWIS: I need someone standing next to me. I may call on particular... people to come closer to me. The particular type of, um... um... retaliation against me, and my communities, as a result of our solidarity, has been... pernicious. And violent? Um, and has caused me EXTREME... trauma? (emotion audible in voice) And... I am here because I love... humanity? I love our environments? Our communities? (breathing heavier) I am the child of educators? Generationally? This is not part of my presentation, but I suppose it's important that you all understand why I am a QUALIFIED narrator on my own life. (silent pause) ...I am a QUALIFIED, and the ONLY qualified, apart from my kin...! And my communities...! Hello, community. On MY own LIFE... MY languages. My organizations. MY heartwork. MY solidarity with Palestinian peoples, and all oppressed peoples across the globe? (silent pause) ...I am a FREE human. As my ancestors who were enslaved, before me -- Harper Collins attempted to CAPTURE me... in a "book." They did not succeed? Because I appear tonight as a THIEF! And a robber. I stole this head. This body. These limbs. From those who THINK they're my masters, and I ran OFF with them. Frederick Douglass... with my modification, thanks be to the ancestors. (silent pause) ...MY name?? Is MY name!! And they didn't even get it right in the book. And THAT's how you know it's propaganda. How DARE you!! (silent pause) ...And this is what happens... to oppressed, and colonized, and marginalized, peoples, the world OVER. Artificial intelligence is NOT new! Do you know who... also was a pseudo-intellectual who had several books?? Samuel Cartwright! Anybody know who HE is? Or WAS? ...Coined the term drapetomania! Drapetomania. OH so intellectual. What was drapetomania? It was a crime! And it was a mental illness! According to white powers-that-be -- mind you, this was the mainstream thought of the day, and it's the mainstream thought of TO-day. You hear what I'm saying?? ...Oh, the thought of freedom! Samuel Cartwright said. Insanity! ...Oh, you wanna stay on your ancestral land -- insanity AND criminal! And we will do whatever we WANT to you, and to anyone who SUPPORTS your cause for liberation... if you DARE!! Not speak, not act -- THINK!! ...THINK the thought! Of freedom, and liberation. THAT's what artificial intelligence is. THAT's what the police state is. THAT's what Zionism is. THAT's what the United States is. And that is what the GLOBAL, corporate, oliggachical structure, is doing to all of us right now. Data! Your information! Is the premium. Our bodies, our minds. For academics, and folks writing, all the folks creating, signing, typing different content -- that information?? (heavy nasal exhale) Is being... destroyed! Control-alt-right-delete, is the title of my presentation. Everybody tracking? Control-alt-right-delete. So it's about the erasure, the degradation and destruction of our narratives and stories. Of our lineages. I can't TELL y'all how far back my educators go! Now, listen... one thing that's true about me is that I'm a code-switcher. So wherever I go... I sound like wherever, whoever is talkin'. Um, I speak multiple languages. I grew up in many places, including Panama, which is in Central America; y Guatemala. I come from a family of soldiers! Actually. Which is interesting, because I am an anti-imperialist, which... leads to... interesting conflicts. But IMPORTANT ones! These are the tensions and conversations that must be HAD! It's also important to remember the CONTEXT! In which our ancestors, parents, grandparents, lived and survived, and why they needed to do many of the things that they had to do, to make sure that \*I\* can now travel freely...! Speak multiple languages...! And NOT be...! Violating the rights and lives and humanity and dignity, of people around the globe -- mainly, Black, Indigenous, Brown, Muslim majority, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Mineral-rich, et cetera, et cetera. ...So I don't know how I GOT there. (soft laugh) But that's where I'll begin. (brighter chuckle) Thank you! Um. How much time do I have left? We're on colonial time today, y'all, so. How many? 30 -- oh, that's beautiful! I stretched that, didn't I? (claps) Um, there's so much beauty in Blackness and indigeneity. We are sacred! Mm-hmm. Sacred! S-A-C-R-E-D. SACRED! I am SACRED! My father? My father's father, my mother, my mother's mother? My grandmother just passed away in October? Rest her soul? I don't know HOW many people she taught to play the piano. Down in Jacksonville, Florida, in the United States. I'm from the DEEP South. (soft exhale) ...I'm just pausing to take a breath. Thanks for y'all's patience. (another soft sigh) ...I almost didn't make it through last year. Do y'all understand what I'm telling you? ...I call it, ah, States United. (soft chuckle) The attack against my colleagues and myself. We are miswrote -- "misrepresented" doesn't even begin to CAPTURE, what they did to us in this book. Y'all heard of that, ah, that movie called, uh... what's that movie called? Go to the next slide, please? Oh, actually, a couple slides -- oh, I can do that? Cool, thank you. No? Okay, hold -- oh! See, we don't wanna. That's -- that's the -- mm. How do we get to the next... Through your y'all, bear with us. (high giggle) I just need to know how to -- oh, is it THIS? Oh, YOU are up there doing magic! Ah... thank you! All right, let's see. Cool bean, cool bean. Um. This, this is -- I have extreme anxiety, especially right now, so I'm... words and signs are just dropping, so forgive me. The name of the movie is American Fiction. Have y'all heard of that, or seen it? THAT's what Be a Revolution by Ijeoma and Harper Collins did to me in this book. But I'm going to show y'all just a little clip, because maybe some of y'all aren't familiar with what that looks like. And it's interesting, because -- because I AM Black, and from the Deep South. AND an abolitionist. The way that I dealt with it, along with my colleagues who have ALSO... been in deep study around abolition and praxis. Wu quietly! Because this is what WE call: family business. We tried to protect HER. And in doing so, she FURTHER violated us -- her AND Harper Collins. They said they made us look like social justice warriors. And that's how you know it's propaganda! But this is what -- this is the trailer. We're just gonna... try to show the trailer. But I wonder if it... I don't know, let's see; let's find out. Oh, I got a little -- you know if you can...? Or you could just find it on, ah, YouTube. Oh, they're handling it. Thank you! And just like the first part, I'll tell you when to stop. (no video playing online) ...While they're working that out? I'm gonna give y'all an oration! (little chuckle) Part of this? When white supremacists... try to disrupt and erase and distort... who we ARE? A large part of the response must be? To create more of our genuine selves. And so, while they're trying to figure out how to show y'all that? I get to show y'all -- me! (piano chord that cuts off) Ah! Go ahead, play it. VIDEO: (playing with captions) TALILA "TL" LEWIS: -- real-life people! All fun and games, until it's real-life PEOPLE! My colleagues are SACRED! My communities are SACRED! My heart-work? SACRED! My name -- is OUR name. I am not OWNED; I am not BOUGHT? I am not BOSSED? I am FREE! The 20 years of free labor I did to liberate my people from various forms of incarceration? Will continue until the LAST of my kin are out of this book! Now, I told y'all I appear tonight as a thief and a robber: That's because the first edition of the book... came out with... that AI iteration of... "Talila Lewis." I'm the fourth of my name, for the record. What Black folks in the United States have had to do... is bury secrets! In plain sight. My name is Talila... A.! Lewis. My father? Has a A. in the middle of his name, Terrence A. Lewis. My eldest sibling -- I'm not telling y'all names, 'cause I'm under surveillance, clearly. T. A. L. That's T. A. L. 1, that's big T. T. A. L. 2 is my middle sister. I am T. A. L. 3. See how that works?? If you don't have the A. in the middle of my name, that's not me. And guess what happened in the book, y'all... That's not me...! (sighs) Thank you all for just sitting with me and bearing witness? I understand that this is heavy? But trust me, it's heavier for me? And this needs to be WITNESSED. Um, I'm a writer's writer. I'm an order's order. So, I'm trying to figure out which of my notebooks I would like to, ah... (chuckles) To, uh, have. I think it's THIS one, right now. My weapons. (giggles) Are a pen! Similar to Rifat! Alaria. (correction: Refaat Alareer) (silent pause) ...The heart breaks a thousand times. How -- every university, in a single place, demolished? ...Make it make sense! No justification. Children! Murdered. Families! COMPLETELY wiped off the planet! Make it make sense! There IS no justification for this type of violence. \*I\* don't care WHO it would be! (silent pause) ...And yes, I will continue to speak out. And you all can CONTINUE to try to make clones of me. And my people will continue to say: WHAT?? ...is this WHITE... supremacist... eugenicist... trans- misic... trash? Because they KNOW who I am. I want to recite, for you all -- I'll let you all decide. Would you like to hear a poem, of MINE? Or would you like to hear a poem re- -- both recitations -- from... Rudyard Kipling? Okay, if you're in the camp of Talila A. Lewis, would love to hear something of yours, identify -- oh! Okay, for those who can't see, everybody's like, oh, let's hear -- let's hear T.L.'s work! Okay, give me a second, give me a second. I just need to pull this out so I have my cues. But I'm gonna try to recite it for y'all. I don't yet have a title for this -- oo, I'm stretching time, y'all! That's the beautiful thing about being Indigenous and/or Black. Listen...! What we're able to do with time? Y'all can't imagine! And I'm not gonna tell you the secrets. (soft laughter) I'm not gonna tell the secrets! I'm not gonna tell the secrets. Okay, y'all. This is an untitled poem. From 28 July, 2024. So this book was published -- this book! I always say "book" in quotes; it's not a book. It's propaganda? It's -- I don't, I -- I still haven't quite found the term for it. Neuroextractiveism? My colleagues and I were consulted as experts on the topic of racism and disability? All off the record, kick back, kitchen table conversation? Um, and... she, and Harper Collins, Harper One, purported to world that these are our formal voices. Mm-hmm! Yeah. And then completely de-contextualized it, so we don't even -- anyway. Don't let me, don't let me get started because I WILL do a tailspin, and I don't want that do that; I wanna be grounded? As possible, in this moment? But whoo, y'all! This has been... this has been something else. All right. July... So this is July 24th. And you know a real writer? Because this is what a real writer looks like. (chuckles) (laughter) I got notes for y'all? I got, I got everything! We got computers; everything! Can you, um -- whoever -- oh, I'm controlling this. I just don't want it on THAT? I'd rather it be -- ah! That's the actual poem! Important! One of my, one of the key takeaways I hope you all will have from... this exchange? Um, is... the importance of Indigenous, and Black, and Signing, and Disabled, cultures and traditions of remembrance? ...Which, again, I'm not telling secrets? But they're so important right now...! One of those is what my family does: We're orders; we memorize lots and lots of information. I can give you Bible verses in multiple languages, poems, other things like that. Oral tradition is so important right now -- but/and! Be careful! Because in the same way that we know there are deepfakes, with video and... lots of bots and trolls? In fact! If you look at the profile of this author -- whose name I will not name again...! Um... Most of the subscribers and followers are trolls and bots. So this idea of being an influencer? And how that HAPPENS? That's what we have to be careful of. This particular "author" of this book -- which, I believe the book was generated? I don't actually think this person has written... ANY of their books? That's a whole other conversation, because this person is a -- New York Times best selling author? Has been lecturing white people about how to treat Black people? Since Mr. Floyd was assassinated? (silent pause) (tapping on podium) ...necroextractivism! It's the way that people profit off of the DEATH. Of Palestinian, Black, Indigenous, Disabled, peoples, communities' -- brilliance! ...And I have a piece from like 10 years ago. I'm a lawyer, as well. And, I don't want y'all to think that I'm like a, um... I'm only beating up on the publishing industry? I beat up on my industry as well. Um, because there's a way in which civil rights, ITSELF, has become a... um, counterrevolutionary tactic? Ah, or lack thereof? And it has been for quite some time, and that's like another conversation, but I wanna pin that! 'Cause there's a lot of money, and there's a lot of bravado, and there's a lot of things that are unhelpful -- in fact, often set us BACK, from actual liberation. Things that we could just sit down and, and hash this out! Figure out how we can work together. Versus 10 years of litigation, and... oh, we wanna litigate, so people in solitary confinement can have access to interpreters. NO! No one should be in solitary! Right. And these are the kinds of things that happen! So we have to be very mindful of what are our strategies and tactics. Again, I can't say a lot, because I'm under surveillance? And I wouldn't tell y'all anyway, because I KEEP family secrets? Um. But... there are some things we should be thinking about. Okay. Sorry, y'all. I'm not sorry; thank you for your patience. (soft laughter) I don't know WHY I am... I see you. Thank you. ...Let me just try to start it! I don't know -- if -- while I start, can you try to find July? It's in order! It's in chronological order; I'm just anxious? So, at the top, it should say July -- oh! There it is right there. I see it. Thank you. I just needed some support. And this is what disability solidarity looks like. Okay. ...Oh! And before I start: I'm not in the -- I'm not -- I'M! Their version of me. Is not in the new edition, that's still being sold, and she's still presenting as though this book is something. Mind you, my colleagues, who also let them know alongside me, with nine of our elders, in a letter to Trina Hun, Esquire, of Harper Collins, that they too did not consent or even KNOW about this... they're still in the book! The "book," in quotes. No consent, no knowledge -- all disabled! Disabled professors. Black, Indigenous. Lawyers! No consent. Imagine! And this is what's happening, so you all need to be very careful. The last piece that I didn't mention about who this author claims to be -- claims to be very pro-Palestine! Ain't that interesting? ...Mmmm-hmm! Mmmm-hmm. REAL interesting. Making lots of money, off of a lot of dead bodies. Black, Brown, Indigenous. Globally! Just runnin', runnin' around making money. And after she stole our brilliance...! She created a company called... All Of Us, Or None, or something -- which is OUR language. She literally stole our information. And now is chargin' people, to give classes and stuff like this. This is what's happening! And this is what we need to be mindful of. All of our... SKINfolk! Are what, y'all? Not our KINfolk! That's right. Zora Nale! Zora Neale Hurston. All right, this is one of my poems. Untitled; you can help me, um, give it a title if you wish. And it actually is up there, even though it's difficult to see. ...It MEANS something to be me! ...To move the way I move... To come from whence, whom I'VE come? ...To sing and swing the way I do? Hmmph. I...? WE? Have, and will NEVER be captured. EV-ER! Even when bodies hang ourselves, spirits are fly free. What's in a name, true blue? What does it MEAN to be me? GIVING child. ...True blue. ...Bus school. Paul Nalish. OUR my way. I, WE, make meaning. Words, signs, sounds, dance... I, WE, make meaning! Sacred...! Soldier...! Sacrament. Money? Means NOTHING. Fame? Means NOTHING. WE? ...WE? ...Mean EVERYTHING! ...Word, play, bars, languages, languaging. ...Recitation! Storytellin'! DISCIPLINE! To... BE the glory! ...Sacrifice. ...Selfless. ...Silent... speech! (silent pause) ...Thank you, Erin. (soft laugh) Um... That wasn't part of it; that's one of my interpreters. ...So it WAS part of it. I'm gonna go back up, and come back to the, ah, poem. Recitation...! Storytellin'! Discipline! To -- BE the glory! Sacrifice. ...Self- LESS. Silent -- speech! Perpetual attempted... dismembering. DIS-remembering. ALLways, and ALWAYS remembering! SO much many more than just my SELF. ...Equal parts ALL my parents. And theirs? And theirs? And THEIRS, and. I am not my SELF; I am WE! Attempted lynchings we escape. Southern trees. Oh, the blues...! I am we. Thank you. (applause) All right, y'all. How much time do I have left? Oof! We are stretching time today! I got it, it's okay. Thank you. May I have a little water, though? Thank you very much. ...This is the first time I performed that in front of like a very large group, so. I hope that was, um, um... worthy of the ancestors. Thank you for receiving that. Okay. Y'all, the other thing is I'm one of the most respectful people -- my mother is a pastor. (chuckles) In Florida. They have me -- ME, cursing in this book. Do y'all understand what I'm telling you they did to me? I have a man named John Wilson, signed name JW on his chest. He passed away in 2019. I worked for 13 years to free John Wilson from prison -- for free! Alongside my communities. We worked -- he spent 25 years incarcerated. In this so-called book, they have me calling my venerated ancestor... HOMEBOY...! ...Do you all understand what I'm explaining to you? ...John Wilson, my venerated an- -- I, I know y'all understand what I'm explaining to you. I KNOW you understand what I'm explaining to you. That's who they painted... me and my colleagues to be -- one of my colleagues is twerkin' on the stage with Janelle Monae. Now, how did that get into a book when we were talking about education? Do y'all understand what they did? This is called enfreakment! Enfreakment...! ...All right. I should jump to the definition of ableism, because I did promise that I would share that with you all. (soft laugh) Although... I wonder... um. Thank you so much. I appreciate you. Thank you for your patience, y'all. I just wanna make sure there's nothing that I, um, that I really want you all to get, that I'm missing? Um, before I just jump to the ableism, and then I'll let... things flow. ...Ah! Gosh. Sojourner Truth! I'm a sojourner; I don't have a, ah, I don't have a formal home. So I also travel and live in various places, with consent of Indigenous peoples. Um, and in community. And I just wanna make sure that I TELL you all, and... and implore! Not an invitation. I implore you to look at this, because I don't have time? I'm also working on a syllabus that I'll share with you all, for this conference? Um...! (chuckles) 'Cause there's just so much information? So I'll probably just add that to the syllabus? But, do -- and, gosh. Some of y'all just don't even know. But, a lot of folks would be familiar with this -- the, the... purported quote, "ain't I a woman?" Has anybody heard that? I see some nods. "Ain't" -- that's not Sojourner Truth's voice...! Literally didn't come out of Sojourner Truth's mouth. A white purported abolitionist wrote that 12 years LATER, in what SHE thought was the Black Southern dialect. Now, Sojourner Truth was from -- was a northern slave! Was enslaved up in the north of the United States! And actually was, had Dutch ancestry! So spoke completely differently. We have a complete transcript... that she DID review, with a journalist, that was published pretty much simultaneously, a couple of days after the actual presentation. Versus the "ain't I a woman" version. And that is precisely what is happening, now -- and I'm not the first person this has happened to; this is why Frederick Douglass emphasized that he wrote his own autobiography! Because this happens to us all of the TIME. I also have to note for you all? Because people are often like, "well, you shouldn't have sat down with her." I asked this woman for prep? I'm the most meticulous person you will EVER meet in your life. Because THIS very thing that be done to me and my communities. And when I spoke with her? That's the exact thing that I said. She promised to send all sorts of things, to all of us, and DIDN'T. And THAT's another reason why this is a violation. ...Because -- and, and I -- and there's a psychological piece of this that I haven't shared with you all? The use of technology, to cyberstalk and harass all of us? Has been horrific...! Horrific! Me, mostly because I was the most outspoken. Creating profiles, and... doing all sorts of stuff to us. But we ARE abolitionists. Unlike... She claims to be, but every time you look at an article, she's talking about talking to the police, so. Make of it what you will. AND also, abolition requires an anticapitalist... praxis. Right? As does disability justice. ...Right? So, anyone who claims to be an abolitionist? But who's selling you "end-stage capitalism" shirts? That's the other thing this person sidelines doing, is selling products that are made... (slaps hand down) By undisclosed people, in undisclosed places. Why are we just selling things? That's not anti-capitalism. AND, abolitionists don't traffic in humans. OR in clones of humans. Mmkay? And so let's keep in mind, what does it MEAN when people say these words? And, a lot of this is a, ah, narrative warfare. The idea of -- human animals! Right. Black people have been talked about like this; Indigenous folks have been talked about like this, written about like this. That's the whole POINT. It's, what I call, dis-humanization. DIS-humanization. Which is separate and distinct from, but related to, dehumanization; I don't have time to get into it right now. But it's very important, 'cause they do it to disabled folks. They do it to any marginalized group -- women. Right, trans folks. All of that! Very important. Don't have time... Ah, Sojourner Truth. So, the implore is to please go to The Sojourner Truth Project, and go read the two, um... the two... the two speeches, speeches side by side. Because she should be remembered properly, as well. Um, last thing. And I know I am... It's too long. It's too long, you all. But I'm just gonna read it. That's what we're gonna do. We're gonna just collectively review it. Ah, you're welcome to take pictures; please don't share it out yet? Because it's, like, definitely a living working draft. (clears throat) And then I have like the caveats page after this. Gosh, you all, I have so much I wanna share with you. I'm so upset with you about this time thing. (bright laugh; people laughing with) Um... (softly) Gosh. ...Okay. Um. Another really important takeaway. What I just explained to you all, that happened to my colleagues and I? I've been working for over 20 years now on wrongful convictions. Of Disabled, Black, Indigenous, multiply marginalized people. And, and this is why we don't talk to cops. What happened THERE? Is exactly what happens to multiply marginalized people who get trapped up in the system. They say very nice things; they're... they're gonna do this, you'll have another chance to fix it. They claim they understand our language; clearly, they don't. All of these things, and then they completely de-contextualize things. And then you end up in court with things that look like that book. And your jurors are looking at you wild. And that's how this happens. There are so many wrongful convictions in the United States, and I'm sure in other places as well. But/and? Artificial intelligence is only going to INCREASE that, and already HAS? And I want people to be very mindful of that. I have TWO minutes left; I did not stretch the time as much as I wanted on THAT. But, it's okay. So I'm just gonna, we're just gonna woosah and review this definition. Um... If -- I, I've been creating working definitions of ableism. The first one was honoring the whole humanity of everyone. I talk a lot about humanity, and that's really important, especially in this age. I'm just gonna read this. I'm just gonna read this. And I'll be reading it a bit slow, because the interpreters are gonna be... working with me as well. So we'll go a little bit over the time. Thank you. Thank you for your indulgence. Ableism: A Living Draft by Talila A. Lewis. ...A system of power that assigns value TO... and extracts value FROM... bodies, minds, cultures, communities, et cetera... based on societally-constructed ideas of "normalcy"/queerness, productivity/conformity, desirability/fertility, intelligence and/or excellence, health and fitness, rarity or popularity, and more. Second paragraph: In the unitedstates context -- "unitedstates is not capitalized intentionally" -- these ideas are deeply rooted in, and draw their power from... eugenics; anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity; settler-colonialism and imperialism; capitalism and classism; christian nationalism, white supremacy and colorism; patriarchy and misogyny; xenomisia, queermisia, and transmisia. I'm gonna pause to just explain those endings. Usually, you all would see those with the ending phobia, F -- P-H-O-B-I-A. I don't use that, that ending, because it is ableist in and of itself? M-I-S-I-A, misia, it means extreme hatred of and violence toward. And that's a much better use of language, in my opinion and a lot of other people who are thinking through this. So I'm now going back to the definition. Pseudo-intellectuals, algorithms, and "artificial intelligence"; various forms of "news and/or media," and more. Third paragraph: People, communities, institutions, states, corporations, et cetera... use this system of power and domination... to assess and assign value to themselves, and others, based on actual or perceived culture; intellect; age; wellness; language or languages; accent or accents; dialects; appearance; religions or lack thereof; birth- or living-place -- and I should say or lack thereof, living-place; gender, genders or lack thereof; and/or the ability to produce or reproduce, "excel," and "behave," among other things. And I always tell people, the most important part of this definition, in my opinion... although it should be very com- -- it SHOULD be complicated. ...That language is not the best way to explain that in English. Hold on one second. This is the most important thing? But I want you to think about that in complicated ways. Is that -- okay. And the most important thing is: You do NOT have to be disabled to experience... ABLEISM. Okay. And that's it. That's all I have time for right now. I will be sharing -- I will be creating, or finishing creating, a syllabus for you all about AI... and a whole bunch of other things; repression. Um, and also with some resources. And, please check out HEARD has a new video called Signing Cops Won't Save Us. I'll add that to the syllabus, too. I think that's all I've got time for. And, thank you all for, just, bearing with me and being so wonderful. Thank you so much. (applause) COMMUNICATOR: Wow. (clears throat) Thank you so much, Talila, for everything you've shared and offered today. I would now like to introduce our response to the keynote presentation, Alberto Vasquez Encalada. Alberto is a disability rights activist and codirector of Mad Thinking, an initiative dedicated to bringing disability activists together, creating spaces, tools, and opportunities with the aim of building stronger, sustainable, and inclusive disability movements. And Alberto is going to engage with our keynote presentation, I believe focusing on how it resonates in the Global South. (applause) (keynote captions ending)