The Black Podcaster-Scholar: A Critical Reflection of Using Podcasting as Methodology as a Black Doctoral Student

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Abstract
I am a Black woman, a doctoral candidate, and a podcaster. In every facet of those identities, I have been worried about my voice. As a young child, teachers pushed me to sound “collegiate” and not “ghetto” so I could impress our private Christian school’s predominantly White and male board of directors. My graduate and doctoral programs led me to challenge and critique previous ideologies around voice and audience, while also perpetuating gatekeeping via academic jargon. Podcasting became a way for me to resist falling into the social norms of voice in the academy, but not without confronting challenges the industry itself carried around voice as well as my own insecurities. Beyond a text replacement and a way for doctoral students and faculty to widen their audience and build a brand, podcasting in the academy should be recognized as a critical reflective praxis for scholars that centers the voices of those that often go silenced or ignored. This article is a critical reflection of my methodological use of podcasting to resist data collection norms and traditional research boundaries in the academy while also confronting my own internalized anti-Blackness surrounding Black sonic existence.

Keywords
podcasting, Black podcasters, academic writing, graduate student, public scholarship

Introduction
I am a Black woman, a doctoral candidate, and a podcaster. In every facet of those identities, I have been worried about my voice. As a young child, teachers pushed me to sound “collegiate” and not “ghetto” so I could impress our private Christian school’s predominantly White and male board of directors. As a graduate student in a doctoral program, I find myself torn between methodology books that stress passive voice and objectivity and critical scholars who look like me calling for decolonization of the academy, but the voice of their work is filled with jargon that is inaccessible to me. The inaccessibility often leaves me frustrated, as I believe that to write about, for, and to a community and yet do so in a way they cannot understand does little to change the hegemonic structures of the academy. Podcasting became a way for me to resist falling into the social norms of voice in the academy, but not without confronting challenges the industry itself carried around voice as well as my own insecurities. Beyond a text replacement and a way for doctoral students and faculty to widen their audience and build a brand, podcasting in the academy should be recognized as a critical reflective praxis for scholars that centers the voices of those that often go silenced or ignored. This article is a critical reflection of my methodological use of podcasting to resist data collection norms and traditional research boundaries in the academy while also confronting my own internalized anti-Blackness surrounding Black sonic existence.

AAE and Codeswitching
African American English (AAE) is more than just a language that is spoken and heard; it is a language that is felt. AAE utilizes English words while retaining syntactic features found in West African languages all while carrying linguistic rules that are distinct. Some linguistic rules of AAE include use of double negatives (negative concord), intensifiers, semantic bleaching, verb copula deletion, habitual aspect markers, and signifying (Smitherman, 2015).
sake of accessibility, I will provide examples of each of the aforementioned linguistic rules of AAE. However, before continuing, I must emphasize that the linguistic rules noted above are a non-exhaustive list. Furthermore, not every African American use AAE and those who do partake do not use all the same rules (Jones, 2015).

An example of a double negative in AAE would be “I didn’t tell nobody.” The use of didn’t and nobody would be a negative concord as opposed to saying, “I didn’t tell anyone.” Intensifiers are used to indicate strength of feeling or action. For instance, to underscore Fantasia’s singing ability, I could say “Fantasia can sing her ass off” using ass as the intensifier. Another example is the use of the word whole. “I can’t believe they told a whole lie.” Semantic bleaching is the reduction of a word’s intensity and meaning (Nordquist, 2018). Shit can refer to a person’s belongings (“stop touching my shit”) and not just refer to feces. Verb copula deletion is removal of the verb from the sentence—using a form of the verb be. An example would be “You late turning in this paper.” Habitual markers connote repetition or a continuous state of action or being. The habitual be is one of the most frequently used in AAE, and arguably the most incorrectly used by those who are not familiar with AAE and/or attempt to mock it. A correct utilization of the habitual be is “she always be late” or “Anderson Paak been making good music.” A key aspect of what makes AAE unique is the distinct speech act of signifying. Coded messages laced with skillfully crafted petty insults that are used for exaggeration, throwing shade, and irony are necessary for signifying (Morgan, 2002). A subset of signification most familiar to those who are not fluent in AAE would be playing the dozens (Henning, 2021; Kirk-Duggan, 1997, p. 142). Signifying is a skill. It requires being able to deliver crafty indirect jabs at another person while being intentional about the identified target.

All of this is said to be clear about not just what AAE is but also what AAE is NOT. Despite White supremacist notions of the contrary: AAE is not “broken” English. AAE is not “ghetto.” AAE is not the language of the uneducated or lower class. It is not words randomly strewn together; fluent speakers of AAE know when the language is spoken incorrectly and/or in mockery (Henning, 2021). Nor is AAE restricted to one geographic location or spoken the exact same way with the same terminology in every space. AAE, like Blackness as a whole, is not monolithic in nature.

Despite AAE being rich of history and nuance and requiring cultural knowledge, social context, and linguistic skill to properly execute, the language is often degraded in the educational system. Teachers (including pre-service teachers) have been trained to recognize Standard English as the measuring stick to determine whether any child is at the appropriate literacy level for their age (Newkirk-Turner et al., 2013). Instead of recognizing that many African American child are immersed in one language at home and another in the classroom and finding ways to use the home language as leverage for acquisition of a second language at school, African American students find themselves being told by teachers that their home language is a marker of unintelligence (Godley & Escher, 2012; Tamura, 2002). This deficit framing of African American children’s lived experiences through language often have the opposite result from their perceived intended goal of preparing them for success. Rather, many African American students experience a decrease in confidence and academic performance, leading to more conflict and troubles within the educational system. As Salih (2019) poignantly writes, “when teachers insist on the monolingual use of SE, they may be correcting these students home language, and unknowingly, their identity” (p. 67).

For some African American students like me, the ability to co-exist in both spaces and languages without teachers questioning their intellect (but rather lauding them for being “so articulate”) comes through codeswitching. Codeswitching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a conversation or situation to better navigate a social setting (Goldrick et al., 2016). For some African Americans who are fluent in AAE, codeswitching has been to some extent a survival apparatus for navigating spaces where one language is the preferred currency over another. Codeswitching can occur in a variety of settings including but not limited to work, school, phone calls, and social gatherings where there is a potential of AAE being policed in some regard. Codeswitching can be learned through observation—for example, watching parental guardians codeswitch between AAE at home and Standard English among work colleagues and school meetings.

While codeswitching may appear to mean being able to partake in both languages without having to surrender one to the other, that is not necessarily true. Sometimes, the switch gets stuck on one never to move again. At other times, the lines blur. But a larger question of identity and voice emerges during codeswitching: is a person’s voice lost during codeswitching or does it become multifaceted? I believe the answer is dependent upon the individual experience. Below, I share my experience switching, deciphering, and reclaiming my voice that includes AAE that eventually led to podcasting.

Train Up a Child in the Way They “Should” Speak

I learned at an early age that the way I spoke and wrote was scrutinized, so I started codeswitching like hell by the time I was 8. It was during elementary school, where though my peers and I were Black children from mostly lower income homes taught by mostly Black teachers from our communities, our Board of Directors were mostly White, no connection to our upbringing but saw themselves very much as the hand of White benevolence. Their affirmation of our performance and their use of my ability to “articulate so well” generated revenue for fundraising for my school. Perhaps it was because at age 8 I was in White spaces where I was expected to sound a certain way, affirmed for sounding a
certain way, received astonishment for sounding a certain way, and hell invited into other spaces for sounding a certain way that I thought that must indeed be a sound to success. That “certain way” meant that no words could be chopped off or slurred together, no southern drawl or very little trace of one. All traces of brashness had to be eradicated and replaced with a resonance that was low, soft, yet firm and sure. There could be no “ums” or “uhhs,” no “aint,” “finna,” “bout to,” “boffum,” “allum,” or “sholl.” It omitted everything that seasoned my southern drawl shaped and battered in Birmingham buttermilk and served a la cart in Alabama. Before I heard the phrase “dress for success,” I was taught to speak for success—a definition of success that appealed to White norms. By eighth grade, my school launched a campaign during Black History Month titled C.E.O. (Correct English Only) that was complete with poster, essay, and oratorical competitions. I won most of them. I did not realize it was codeswitching, I just knew that whenever I changed my speaking voice the way my great aunt or great grandma did whenever a stranger called the house, I got recognition and accolades. I began to learn what my family and teachers knew and what Alim and Smitherman (2012) articulate- “How Black people are heard makes a big difference in how they are perceived” (p. xi).

Codeswitching carried with me into high school, but there I was challenged with whether my writing and speaking were good enough. Public speaking was mandatory. I was taught how to “neutralize” my southern accent because southerners are not seen as intelligent. I had to make sure there were no vocal fillers, no letters cut off. All syllables had to be spoken, not slurred. Our teacher counted each time we did with tick marks. I practiced incessantly, memorizing my speeches to ensure I hit every vowel and consonant. Instead of being taught that both languages were valuable (Greene & Walker, 2004), I learned that one was correct and articulate and the other denoted perceived incompetence. By 18, I internalized that what was in my brain would not be received in school or work if it was served a la cart the southern drawl my great grandmother offered with ease and confidence. So, I decided I would speak when necessary and write as if it was obligatory. That way, when I did have to speak, I could maintain the switch flawlessly. My writing could make my identity untraceable, undetectable. And it did—one day I could not hear myself. I couldn’t decipher which voice was my own and which was the voice I was programmed to pass off as my own.

From that moment on, I struggled with not just finding my own voice like other adolescents and young adults but also deciphering exactly how my voice should sound. I struggled for years between wanting escape being presumed incompetent while also feeling as if the real me and my real voice was in a witness protection program of sorts. Protection from what? From being marked inarticulate, incompetent, too country, unprofessional, and unqualified for social mobility. Instead of appreciating my southern AAE for its velvety resonance, I saw it as my scarlet letter. I thought to appear smart, I had to study “neutral” fields and topics, nothing that screamed too loud. Nothing that was “too vernacular,” “too country,” “too Black,” “too . . . me.” I decided to major in business management so I could continue being groomed to become the “ultimate professional.” I thought it would be a perfect fit for me as well because I co-founded a student community service in high school, so the entrepreneurial spirit was already in motion.

**But When They Awaken, They Will Resist**

Through a summer service-learning program that I helped design and facilitate for the business school commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, AL, I was able to study Blackness as central to my studies for the first time. I felt alive. I was intrigued. I wanted to know more about the economic scene of my hometown through the lens of race. I learned that I could study the world around me and could share what I learned beyond my professor for a grade. I could do academic work that was about my community and was relevant to my community’s needs. I realized what I had been starved of in my educational journey and decided to pursue a graduate program where I could study the Black daily vernacular primarily instead of a la carte as an elective. Ever since my junior year of undergrad, I knew that whatever work I did had to be for, to, about, near, and with Black people. The challenge that remained was what I would study and how I would do it.

Although my master’s and doctoral learning programs challenged the norm of the academy in many ways while positioned at predominately white institutions (PWIs), they each still carried their own discipline and field-specific academic jargon that everyone seemed to find more accessible and even radical—except me. Yes, a few articles were easier to grasp, but they were often written by professors whom we were told had the safety to do so because of tenured and senior status; their academic prowess was already established. I began to wonder “what does this mean for me?” Will I have to spend more years of my life assuming a voice AND a language that is not my own and that I don’t understand just to hope that I achieve enough accolades to be granted the permission to use the voice I was born with and the language I was born into? Who would I be risking all of this for? Who was my primary target audience even in the academy? I wanted to write about topics in my culture that I loved, that I wanted to know more about, that I wanted to critique, that I wanted to preserve. For me, that topic was African American entrepreneurial engagement in street food vending, specifically the food truck industry.

I chose this topic because of my love of food, my family’s long-time support of Black businesses and particularly street vendors, and my initial curiosity into the recent and rapid growth in the presence of Black-owned food trucks in
my hometown. I wanted to know the growing presence of Black-owned food trucks was correlated to gentrification, but no scholarship mentioned anything about it. The deeper I dived into academic literature on food trucks, I realized that the experiences of Latinx, White, and immigrant food truckers (Agyeman et al., 2017; Lopez, 2010; Martin, 2014; Munoz, 2019) were being documented in varying degrees, those Black food truck owners were nowhere to be found. The more I studied, the more I saw their absence in food truck scholarship as a part of a longer narrative for Black street food vendors being literally and figuratively policed and silenced (Palmer, 2020; Reese, 2019; Williams-Forson, 2006).

Harris and Englehardt (2013) state, “The excitement generated by an ice cream truck’s distinctive sounds is one of the last vestiges of door-to-door food vending” (p. 340). I argue that they did not just disappear but were also silenced in the relative lack of preservation of their stories. Furthermore, I also argue we must listen for them in a different way. Like Harris, Reese, and Forson, I wanted to preserve the legacy of the most recent iteration of Black street food vending—food truckers. By not preserving their legacy, we run the risk of once again contributing to Black erasure and more specifically Black silencing. Because Black street vendors have been historically policed for both their physical and specifically their sonic presence, I saw podcasting as a way for them to speak uninterrupted.

Why Podcasting?

In 2005, Podcasting was defined as “a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Although often placed in conversation with its radio industry cousin, such as in its definition, it is a form of media communication representative of the turn of the millennium. As Sullivan (2019) states, “before the advent of social media and the cloud, podcasting features a decentralized technical architecture, whereby audio content is stored all over the web and linked together via RSS...” Real Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary was developed in 1999 as a text-based tool that provides users free, automatic updates in content provided by blogs, websites, and podcasts. The free and open technology allows users to find, listen, and subscribe to content from a blog, website, or podcast without having to visit a specific storage platform or website (Markman & Sawyer, 2014, p. 20).

A fusion of the word “pod” (Apple’s iPod) and “broadcasting,” the word “podcast” became the New Oxford American Dictionary’s word of the year in 2005, just 5 years after Apple debuted the handheld iPod music player (Bierna, 2005). A decade later, with the wide reception of true crime podcasts like Serial and the entrance of radio titans like NPR into the podcast arena along with higher education institutions, the definition of podcasting developed into the following:

To define podcasting for this article, I use Podfest Expo founder and podcasting expert Chris Krimitsos’ definition of podcasts as content that is “on-demand, searchable, and usually episodic in nature” (The Messengers: A Podcast Documentary, 2017). Not only has there been growth and changes to how we define podcast but also with its familiarity among households in the United States and around the world. In March 2020, the Infinite Dial report, compiled by Edison Research and Triton Digital to track consumer audio habits and podcasting trends found that 75% (212 million) of US Americans aged 12 and older are familiar with podcasts while just a little above one-third (104 million) of the US population age 12 and older consume podcasts regularly (Hou et al., 2020).

Despite the growing nature of paywalls like Patreon and exclusive content on networks like Spotify, podcasting remains largely open access. RSS feeds allow a show to be located and downloaded with ease, providing the opportunity for voices to commune in chosen communities at chosen times and in chosen spaces. Becoming a podcaster holds fewer barriers to entry compared to its radio and legacy media predecessor. Although podcasting courses are emerging at universities, such formalized experience is not required to produce content to be heard worldwide. Within the past decade, the podcasting industry has experienced rapid growth with the entrance of podcasters hailing from backgrounds in legacy media to those who are picking up a microphone for the first time. However, the podcast industry is not without its own shortcomings as it pertains to the dominating Whiteness of the podcasting landscape.

#PodcastingSoWhite?

Although women and people of color are entering podcasting at growing rates, podcasts hosted by White men dominate the top 100 of Apple Podcast—the directory that is arguably single-handedly responsible for providing exposure and growth to podcasts (Friess, 2017). No search feature on Apple Podcasts is available to search for podcasts hosted by Black hosted. Rather, what can be occasionally found are curated tabs of shows on race in time for Black history month (Friess, 2017).

When I was researching how to start a podcast in November 2018, I saw the Whiteness of the field firsthand. I read countless blogs and watched perhaps too many YouTube videos that underscored the criticality of high-quality audio for podcasting. I took in their suggestions and listened to their audio samples, but there was just one problem. Not only did they not look like me, but they also sounded absolutely nothing like me either. Every podcasting how-to video I came across...
was void of Black people and specifically Black women. Often the person modeling audio recording quality—and by extension voice—was a White man. It was rare to find a woman modeling audio recording (had to scroll past the first 20 posts), and it was usually a White woman. None of the videos featured anyone with a southern accent. For me as an African American woman with an unmistakable southern accent, I questioned if my voice was fit for radio and podcasting since the dominant voice and ear of podcasting is White (Edison Research & Triton Digital, 2020; Friess, 2017). Filled with insecurity, I let my podcast equipment sit on my couch for about a month. It was the encouragement from food truck owners as well as seeing more Black podcasters in my network launched that pushed me past the insecurity. I realized I did not need to be heard by everyone but be heard and in conversation with the community I want to study and serve.

Black Podcasters

The past decade has been one of growth and expansion for Black podcasters. With early Black podcasts like The Black Guy Who Tips (TBGWT) and Insanity Check using “The Chitlin Circuit” to describe the then small group of podcasters in 2010, there was a long-held belief by major media companies that the market for Black podcast listeners was nonexistent. These early Black podcasters proved that to be wrong. As Sarah Florini (2015) writes, the TBGWT and other shows went to their so-called “nonexistent” audiences for financial support when formal media networks underestimated them as well as turning to others in the circuit to make guest appearances on each other’s podcasts for cross promotion and reaching wider audiences. In referring to themselves as the podcast Chitlin’ Circuit, Black podcasters were making a historical connection between their informal social media network and the venues, hotels, motels, comedy clubs, and theaters that supported Black musicians, comedians, artists, actors, and others in the entertainment industry during Jim Crow when White venues barred them. These spaces and places along the Chitlin’ Circuit provided the Black entertainment industry with its own ecosystem to be profited despite segregation and marginalization from White mainstream society. Florini (2015) defines the podcast Chitlin Circuit as follows:

The podcast Chitlin’ Circuit is held together by informal affiliations and reinforced by social media interactions. There is no central focal point, and not all of the podcasters interact directly with one another. The network is neither monolithic nor univocal. (p. 210)

Since 2011, Black podcasters have steadily grown and so have their audience. An audience that was once invisible to mainstream networks, Black podcast listeners now represent approximately 11% of all podcast listeners in the United States (Edison Research & Triton Digital, 2020).

Although the name Chitlin’ Circuit may not be as frequent now, the mode continues to persist, albeit with a little more formality. To provide podcasters of color and specifically Black podcasters a space to be seen and supported, groups and collectives have emerged. Three of the most recognized and dominant spaces are Berry Sykes’ Podcasts in Color directory, Tia’s Dope Black Pods, and Oghogho’s Blk Pod Collective—all three founded by Black women. My show, The Food Truck Scholar Podcast, is housed in Podcasts in Color and Blk Pod Collective.

Podcasts in Color’s mission is simply stated as “To elevate podcasts that are in color” (podcastsincolor.com). Not only does the website provide an extensive directory of podcasters, but also maintains a listing of collectives and groups based on ethnicity and genre. This includes Oghogho’s Blk Pod Collective, Dope Black Pods, Black Audio Dramas Exist, and other POC directories such as Los Podcasteros and Asian Podcasters.

The Black Pod Collective in particular goes a step further to provide tiered membership, workshops with leading Black podcasters open to members and general public, member meetups, member only discounts, and a podcast for podcasters. Launched in April 2019, Oghogho created the Blk Pod Collective because like me, she did not see anyone who looked like her providing resources on podcasting nor was there a space where she felt completely safe to go for support and community (The Atlanta Voice, 2019). Just over 1 year later, and the Blk Pod Collective has over 50 podcasts in its directory, 2,500 followers on Instagram, a micro conference at Podfest Expo (largest global summit for podcasters), and a host of other milestones accomplished. In May 2022, Oghogho launched the first Blk Pod Festival as a hub for celebrating Black culture, entrepreneurship, and the art of podcasting. At the Blk Pod Collective, members are encouraged to share resources, tips, and strategies with each other in addition to the resources provided by the collective. These resources and communities were not only beneficial to me, but have also been critical enclaves for other Black creatives who have turned to podcasting for several reasons. I offer a few of them in the following paragraphs.

Why We Podcast

The rise in Black creatives in the podcasting industry should not be surprising. It’s open access nature, relatively low barriers to entry, and creative control allow Black creatives to create the content they want to engage with as opposed to only having the content presented by mainstream media. There is no need to pitch a TV station or network or publishing company to get our content to the public. We do not even need experience in broadcasting. Several podcasters have no formal training in broadcasting, journalism, or other fields in communications. You also do not need a huge following or fancy equipment. A smartphone and earbuds will do. A podcast needs great content, energy, commitment, consistency, and great sound quality to be successful.
We can share our stories however raw they may be. In doing so, we are able to forge digital communities with others who can identify with our experiences, no matter how nuanced or far away they may be. Podcasting while Black is a form of creativity but also resistance and insulation for both the creator and the listener. The creator gets to resist against the controlling images society perpetuates of Black culture through media by producing their own counternarratives. Bull (2007) studied the use of mobile audio consumed via headphones as a tactic for listeners to “cocoon” themselves sonically and insulate themselves from their surroundings. In a similar manner, Florini (2015) mentioned that Black podcast listener consume podcasts via headphones in predominantly white spaces where they work or live, and may to some degree be “cocooning” themselves in the sounds of Black sociality as they navigate a hegemony that constitutes white culture as normative. (p. 210)

Beyond the micro and mezzo level of benefits for the individual podcaster or regular listeners of a particular show, Black hosted podcasts are also a form of counterpublic at the macro level. Vrijkki and Malik (2019) write,

Considering that those at the margins of mainstream representation have struggled for decades to be able to represent themselves in the public realm (Eddo-Lodge, 2017, p. 1–23), podcasts can make audible struggles for representation, challenge institutional colonialisms, and traverse both the political landscape and lived experiences of racialised oppression. (p. 276)

The podcasting industry and listenership may be predominantly White, but that has not stopped Black podcaster and listener presence from growing. The draw of the field of podcasting rests in the vast creative control the podcaster and listener have. Black podcasters can create the content they wish to see. There is no need to pitch a TV station or network or publishing company to get our content to the public. We can share our stories however raw they may be. We do not even need experience in broadcasting. Several podcasters have no formal training in broadcasting, journalism, or other fields in communications. You also do not need a huge following or fancy equipment. A smartphone and earbuds will do. A podcast needs great content, energy, commitment, and sound quality to be successful. It was the latter that had me worried. Would my voice be appealing to listen to in this space? I would be to my knowledge the first and only food truck host of a food truck podcast to my knowledge. I will speak to those facets by drawing on my own personal experiences.

Podcasting as Methodology

What has not been discussed is the need for Black (and more specifically Black women) doctoral students to turn to podcasting—not as a method for academic reputation building but as a decolonizing methodology and a form of resistance. There is yet to literature on Black doctoral podcasters doing research about and centered in Blackness and for the preservation/reclamation of their own sonic existence and those they study. As a Black woman doctoral candidate studying Black entrepreneurs in the food truck industry and the only Black and woman host of a food truck podcast to my knowledge, I will speak to those facets by drawing on my own personal experiences.

The Food Truck Scholar

The Food Truck Scholar was established 6 June 2018, and later launched a podcast 18 March 2019. The Food Truck Scholar Podcast is where food, business, and stories collide. Each episode, I peel back the cultural, social, economic, and political layers of the food truck industry through interviews with guests and the occasional solo episode. From Food Network contestants and former bank executives to self-trained and formally trained chefs, The Food Truck Scholar Podcast introduces you to entrepreneurs from all walks of life who are ready to feed your mind with tips to start your own food truck while feeding your heart with inspiration and motivation.

Mic Check—Community Accountability

Podcasting provided two critical pieces of research ethics and responsibility. First, it made the interviews reciprocal. Marginalized and underestimated communities are inun- dated with researchers who infiltrate their spaces, ask probing questions, gain trust and access to insider information with the promise to produce something beneficial to the community that rarely materializes. The Food Truck Scholar Podcast created a platform that Black food truck owners could use to market and promote their own story and business. A prime example is Patrick Lanier, owner of LipSmackin’ Creations Food Medic in Nashville, TN. I met Patrick in February 2019, one month before the official
launch of the podcast as I recorded the interview of his longtime friend Terry Key, the owner of Drop It Like It’s Hot Wings (Season 1, Episode 6, 2019). Key invited Lanier to the interview so his food truck could be promoted, and I later did a separate interview for Patrick (Season 1, Episode 7, 2019). Because of the podcast interview, Lanier has experienced a growth of new customers and sales because of the reach of the show even months later after the original air date (Figure 1).

At the time of writing this article, on 13 October 2020, Patrick called me and later posted about the impact of the podcast in helping him to share his story on even larger platforms. As the first and only person to do an interview on his story and his food truck, Patrick called to tell me that National Geographic found his story and he just finished interviewing with them with the hopes it will air (Figure 2).

In addition to forming a reciprocal relationship for the participant and researcher, the podcast allows for the participants’ voices to be heard in the full interview as opposed to only the excerpts included in my dissertation and published work. This adds another layer of accountability to my work because it pushes me to make sure the quotes I use are in
context with the original conversation. Third, the podcast episodes are released before the publications are released, allowing the participants to benefit from the encounter without waiting on me to publish in the academic because the podcast is public scholarship.

By Us But Reaches Beyond Us

One of the biggest moments of unlearning I experienced while podcasting and finding my voice is realizing that it is not just other Black people who would appreciate my voice as it is. While my podcast features mostly Black entrepreneurs, it does have an international listnership that spans multiple races and ethnicities. I was taught as a child that I had to speak a certain way to truly be heard and become successful, and I was learning that my home language of AAE was enough on its own. People from all different backgrounds around the world tune in because not just the information that is shared about the industry but because the sound is different. Below is an email I received from a woman who has become an avid listener of the show and describes what drew her in (Figure 3).

It was receiving this email that pushed me to realize that my podcast and research stood out because it sounded distinct from the rest. There was no need to cut out the “umms” or “uhhs” from the interviews from myself or the participants; that is part of what made it real. The latest Apple Podcast review confirmed that the distinct sound of The Food Truck Scholar Podcast was exactly what my audience is looking for at this moment (Figure 4).

The reviewer took time to specifically note hearing my passion for this industry in my voice when they listen to the show. Having a podcast that consistently airs gives the listeners and participants the opportunity to evaluate my sincerity to not only the podcast, but also them. As a result, I can build

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Figure 3. Listener Shares Personal Impact of The Food Truck Scholar Podcast.

Figure 4. Apple Podcast Review From Listener.
ethos with food truck owners in a way that traditional does not provide.

**Conclusion**

As scholarship on podcasting continues to grow, it is necessary that more research be done on Black podcasters, specifically those who use the medium as a form of resistance to academic norms around publishing and conducting research. Although podcasting can in fact make doctoral students and professors stand out in CVs and tenure dossiers, the research on podcasting should expand beyond this to cover podcasting as a decolonizing methodology. This article only begins that conversation with the hope it will continue. I would specifically encourage a case study on Black women doctoral students or recently minted PhDs who have launched podcasts in relation to their research and/or their academic journeys.

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