

PrideTO BQTE: EP05: Moka Dawkins

LENGTH • 51:05

SPEAKERS

Hollywood Jade, Moka Dawkins

Hollywood Jade 00:00

You're listening to Pride Toronto's Black, Queer and Trans Excellence podcast, where we honor and celebrate the Black experience through the lens of the LGBTQ+ community with honest conversations about embracing Black joy. I'm your host, Hollywood Jade!

Hollywood Jade 00:28

Coucou and bonsoir, welcome back to Black Queer Trans Excellence! As the intro said, I am your host Hollywood Jade, my pronouns are he/him and sometimes cis, depending on who I'm around and who's addressing me. We - that's a subject for another time, but my guest today is a Black Trans freedom fighter, an educator, volunteer activist and community organizer; my guest is also someone who has gone through some things that no one should have to go through. This name might sound familiar to some of you, it might not others, but there's definitely a story here that needs to be told, and I am so glad and grateful to welcome Moka Dawkins to Black Trans and Excellence podcast. How are you?

Moka Dawkins 01:23

Oh, I'm so good. Thank you for that beautiful warming welcome!

Hollywood Jade 01:28

You know, we do what we can! Especially me. Like I - it is become more prevalent, prevalent on my spirit- to make sure that I'm doing what I can, to make sure that everybody who comes around me feels welcomed and accepted and loved, you know, so I'm glad that's how you feel.

Moka Dawkins 01:44

Definitely got that energy, yeah, definitely get that energy. Thank you.

Hollywood Jade 01:48

Yes, get that energy. So um Moka, how are you today? How are you doing on this date?

Moka Dawkins 01:59

I am okay. I'm healing. I don't know if you've heard, but this past Friday, I really got beat up by the police violently. I was just shopping in my neighborhood, and I wish I could tell you guys so much more, but um, unfortunately,

because the case is still in front of the court, I can't make any type of statements. But I really, really, really want to tell you guys right now. Um,

Hollywood Jade 02:27

Wait, I want to pause for a second - you said this happened recently?!

Moka Dawkins 02:31

This past Friday, yes, things are real! (very sad) so..

Hollywood Jade 02:35

Oh, wow!

Moka Dawkins 02:36

Yes! I'm having some bruises all over my body, it's ridiculous! (nervously chuckles) Yeah, it's okay, thank you! Well, it's not okay, but..

Hollywood Jade 02:44

I am sorry! And, and I want to respect and allow for the legal system to hopefully do the right thing and get you the justice that you deserve, so we will, we'll, we'll put a pin in that for a quick second. I wanted to talk to you about - I want to go back to the beginning of - if you don't mind - going back to the beginning of your journey into coming into the understanding and acceptance of you, in your fullness as you present to us today.

Moka Dawkins 03:23

Um, for me, I started that journey here in Toronto, back in 2008, (voice shaking) when I had turned 18. I was living with my father, he's old school Jamaican; at that point in time, he had just caught cancer. And, um, you know, we were just always our relationship wasn't the best. So when I finally became an adult, which was, which is 18 in Montreal, I decided to pack up and move out. I had a friend that I grew up with that was living in Toronto, who I knew from Montreal, you know like, "I have a place, I have a room you know, you can rent out, whatever, come" and that's what I really thought to explore myself, because I was more closeted then. So that's when I really got to when I came to Toronto, I really got to explore myself and find my identity and who I was, you know, as you know, I was like out in the scene, with the girls and stuff, you know, back from Mirchi days, Mirchi productions and DJ Unruly, DJ Black Cat, you know?! I'm going back from those days, those are the scenes that really helped me find myself. So, um.

Hollywood Jade 04:34

Beautiful!

Moka Dawkins 04:34

Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 04:35

So I wanted to, I'm gonna, I'm gonna go back - so you're not from Toronto originally, you're from Montreal?

Moka Dawkins 04:42

Right.

Hollywood Jade 04:43

Were you born in Montreal?

Moka Dawkins 04:45

Yes.

Hollywood Jade 04:45

Born and raised in Montreal, and then you moved to Toronto in 2008.

Moka Dawkins 04:50

Yes. For one year at that time.

Hollywood Jade 04:54

Okay. So then, were you - because and - how- sorry, I should ask, ask this in the beginning and I apologize. Um, how do you identify what are your pronouns?

Moka Dawkins 05:08

She and her.

Hollywood Jade 05:10

Nice! And when did that become the reality for you because?

Moka Dawkins 05:19

Um, when I was about, I was like playing around back in the day. But when I was, when I turned more 20, when I was 23, is when I was like, you know, this is really me like, 'cause I don't know, I just, I felt like Crunky was more of like, how do I say he was a socialite, but like, you know, I don't know, I just didn't enjoy, I just didn't enjoy being a male anymore.

Hollywood Jade 05:48

I get that. And, and I mean, I say that I get that, I don't fully, but I understand what it means to no longer feel like yourself in one state and doing what's necessary for you to transition to a state where you feel more like yourself.

Moka Dawkins 06:11

Yeah. I think more so for the fact of my family before-, why it took so much time because I knew they were uncomfortable with it. Like they were just okay with me being gay at the time. So I knew Trans like coming out to them, like, you know, "I'm actually a woman," like they, they're still adjusting now. But I know that, if I would have came out like back in those days, it would have been all hell..

Hollywood Jade 06:33

Interesting. And timeline-wise, I think it's important to give people context that, you said you moved here in 2008, to Toronto, sorry, moved to Toronto in 2008, and then you started transitioning or fully accepting that you identified as a woman around the age of 23?

Moka Dawkins 06:59

No, well, I knew from 18, remind you I was here exploring my identity from the age of 18 to 19, but I had moved back to Montreal when I was 19. So that was my family conflict is even though I was able to express myself here, I knew my family wasn't really what- accepted back home. So that was my dilemma.

Hollywood Jade 07:20

Gotcha.

Moka Dawkins 07:20

That's why it's kind of like back and forth, a little bit.

Hollywood Jade 07:23

No, I and I, I hear you, and I think what I'm trying to flesh out is when did, did Moka really form? Like, around the time..

Moka Dawkins 07:36

Moka formed, like, Moka was always out. You know, 'cause I like from working and stuff like that, like, with those girls, like I was always out in that sense. But, um, I guess when I came, like, into the scene, like when I've come to the parties and stuff, and people really started seeing me as Moka, because that's the only really time like, I kind of saw people as like, if I was flying in and out, you know?!

Hollywood Jade 08:02

Right.

Moka Dawkins 08:04

So, um, I guess the scene started to, the Toronto scene started to really see me as Moka, I don't know, I would say it depends, like some in my 20s I'm in my early teens. It's weird, it's a weird timeline.

Hollywood Jade 08:19

So you were always sort of like dabbling with, with your feminine form, so to speak, from when you were 18?!

Moka Dawkins 08:28

Yes

Hollywood Jade 08:29

Okay, 'cause..

Moka Dawkins 08:30

From a young age, I was doing a closeted he moment, like I was wearing my mom's stuff closeted and every Halloween like, I'd be a woman, you know?!

Hollywood Jade 08:38

Like most of us, yeah (both laughing). I've been a Spice Girl more times than I want to admit.

Moka Dawkins 08:43

Right! (both laughing)

Hollywood Jade 08:47

Okay, so you now when did you like at some point you transition to living back in Toronto?

Moka Dawkins 08:54

Yes. 2014.

Hollywood Jade 08:56

Okay, so it's 2014 and now you are now living in Toronto. What is your experience like? And are you living in Toronto as Moka?

Moka Dawkins 09:05

Yes. So when I came to Toronto, I had moved back in with the same friend that I had moved in with in 2008. And her mom was also like my mom. Um, you know, they were also they know me as Crunky. So like, I'd stand by there was kind of like a difficult thing again, like it was a hard transition. But once I got like, once I was able to get my own place and move from there, I was, I was Moka.

Hollywood Jade 09:39

Live!

Moka Dawkins 09:42

Did I answer your question? Did I do that correctly?

Hollywood Jade 09:44

Yeah, no, it's good. I think, I think I'm, and if I, if I sound like I'm, I'm stammering, it's because I'm really trying to work on my language and make sure that I'm phrasing things properly. So if ever I say anything that is over a line or whatever, just be like "Hollywood, I'm gonna need you to gather yourself," you know what I mean?! And no tea, no disrespect. 'Cause I really want to give a fuller picture and a fuller narrative of what your experience was like transitioning from Crunky to living fully as Moka and then the adversities that you faced in being, you know Moka, fully.

Moka Dawkins 10:24

Um I faced more discrimination from men than I have women, but I have this, I have been this ..actually I lie, I lie! Come to think about it, like, you know 'cause I have - when I, when my case was hot in the news, when I had got arrested and charged with murder, there was this feminist group that had came after me and they're like "Oh she's not like she's not a real woman, that's a man" and they were, I didn't really read the blogs of what they were saying because I don't make myself in any type of negative media about me like that, but I did catch a little glimpse and that was kind of what I caught like what they were saying and how they were like coming after me. And they, I've received a few emails and stuff so I have to like switch out emails but um you.. Yeah, it's been, I've had my, I've had my, my diversities of a heteronormative discrimination.

Hollywood Jade 11:25

Let's, let's back up for a second, because you dropped some pretty big bombs in that last little segment that I think are worth - if you're comfortable talking about and setting the record straight and allowing people to hear this narrative from your mouth directly. You talked about being arrested and, and abused violently by the Toronto Police and being incarcerated in a male prison

Moka Dawkins 12:00

Yeah, the Toronto South, most dangerous jail, you know, it's crazy in there, real life.

Hollywood Jade 12:04

So let's, let's go back - how did this whole thing get started? How did it transpire? Like how did this whole thing come about?

Moka Dawkins 12:17

Um so back in those days, I was working as a sex worker and I had this client who, we've had, we have met a couple of times before. Um, it was the end of Caribana weekend and I was getting ready to go, to Fly, because that was where they were having the end party, it was a Sunday. And Jose had, came from New York, and he was like "see if you can get some weed," so I was like okay. So long story short, I'm just gonna be skipping out on some parts, but um

Hollywood Jade 12:56

Yeah, you don't have to call names

Moka Dawkins 12:58

Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 12:58

We just want to hear it from your perspective and..

Moka Dawkins 13:01

So the my one of my clients, Jay the person, he had called me and said that he wanted to see me and I was like you know at this point in time I'm busy I'm getting ready for the club, and he ended up persuading me, because he told me that he had some weed and stuff and I was like "Oh perfect, 'cause I need a joint" (chuckles) I need like

a blunt for the people who come to the club right?! So um, and he didn't live too far by, so anyways what, I ended up going he was highly intoxicated and he just didn't want me to leave, and he ended up taking a knife from the kitchen and stabbing me in my face, so the knife went through my face and then he took it out and then he stabbed my stomach but I had backed up like he was trying to grab me open at that point in time. And by the grace of God, like I got the knife and I swung back.

Hollywood Jade 13:57

Wow!

Moka Dawkins 13:59

Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 14:00

I'm..

Moka Dawkins 14:01

Real life. You know, working in the industry and the sex game and stuff, you have your one-two brawls and, but you never think something so severe would happen, right?! You just never think it would happen to you, and this like, this whole experience was just, what an ordeal.

Hollywood Jade 14:17

Wow! So you are defending yourself, trying to save your life, then what happens?

Moka Dawkins 14:26

And mind you like we had just lost Samaia at those times, too, right?!

Hollywood Jade 14:31

So tensions were high especially surrounding, you know, the Trans community - us just losing somebody.

Moka Dawkins 14:43

Yeah but you know what I'm saying like y'all Samia was real like you, I, I knew Samia's as Mo you know what I'm saying like that's how far back you know and Samia you know knew me as Curtis, you know what I'm saying?! So like yeah. So for us especially like, you know, in the sex industry, the sex part of the scene like, you know the girls working on the block, out online and stuff, like things are for real, y'all see like, you know, we come out we kiki, we have like, you know, but I don't know, like some of it like, I've experienced myself, you know, some really violet life, you know, people getting like, clients coming in and getting high, don't know how to handle themselves you know and then they just want to get violent with you and you have to defend yourself, because then you talk about how they want back their money and you know there's no refunds here, you know?! (both laughing) So, so yeah like I've had like ...

Hollywood Jade 15:37

This is not winners, Sir! (both laughing)

Moka Dawkins 15:39

For real, you know?! So it was just, at that point in time like, um tensions were very high for us, because we really, we had no, we had no type of protection.

Hollywood Jade 15:50

Right.

Moka Dawkins 15:51

You know, nobody was really protecting us, and we still had to go and make money and protect, and, and survive.

Hollywood Jade 15:56

Correct. So, you defend yourself from this attack how does it then transition to you being arrested and charged and sent to jail, like how do we get there?

Moka Dawkins 16:18

So basically what happened was I had called 911, I had like, you know, I need police and ambulance straight away, I went outside to go meet them, um.. They had maimed me in my face when I had went outside to go meet them, so I was blinded, I couldn't even point out where Jay was. Um, but when police did get to Jay, he ran, he had just gotten out of jail, I have to give a little detail, 'cause just to give some background to it, but

Hollywood Jade 16:50

Context, yeah.

Moka Dawkins 16:51

Ahem. Um he had just gotten out of jail that April, which I didn't know, for unprovoking stabbing somebody. And yeah, over a lighter. You know, so I didn't know that the mental state of this guy or anything, he was just a client to me, and I was just working, you know what I'm saying?! So um, I didn't know like, you know, the severity of his depression and all the type of things that he was going through and his mental state. But when the police came, he had run from the police and tried to shoot himself down a garbage chute, and that's how he ended up dying really and truly, it's because the police, they have called, when they had got to him, he was still alive and they had called for the ambulance, and when, they had knew they had had difficulties getting into the building, you know what I'm saying?! And there was two officers, and when they were calling for the ambulance to come upstairs to help him, not, like one of the officers, like one of the officers could have went and opened the door, but because nobody went and opened the door for the ambulance to get upstairs, he ended up bleeding out.

Hollywood Jade 17:59

Oh wow!

Moka Dawkins 18:01

And then they charged me with murder.

Hollywood Jade 18:04

Oh my goodness!

Moka Dawkins 18:05

Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 18:09

I'm sorry, I'm.. guys, I'm, I'm listening to this, and I'm gagging at the, the.. wow! So, you now get charged with murder

Moka Dawkins 18:23

In second degree.

Hollywood Jade 18:25

Second degree murder, and then you get sentenced to jail!

Moka Dawkins 18:33

So after trial, I was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to eight years.

Hollywood Jade 18:42

And even though you identify as Moka, they sentenced you to serve this time in a men's facility.

Moka Dawkins 18:54

Yeah, so how it works like, from trial, even though I had federal, I had a federal sentence, but my time was done provincially. And how that happened was, because by the time we got to trial, I was I already had like over three and a half years in the South and what I got found guilty, I got two-for-one is what they say for time served, so it added up to six years or something. And then, I had like 18, I can't remember the math of it, but however it worked, you know, I had, I had to do 18 more months by the end of the trial. So my, the date that I got out was November 6, 2019.

Hollywood Jade 19:47

Wow!

Moka Dawkins 19:48

2019, no am I lying?! Yeah, 2019.

Hollywood Jade 19:53

I know, it's not your fault , 2020 has thrown everybody for a loop, because it's the year that didn't really actually happen, so it's all right. Um, I have so many questions, (chuckles) like how, but you are you identify as a woman?!

Moka Dawkins 20:11

Yes.

Hollywood Jade 20:12

And this was not taken into consideration while you were serving this time?!

Moka Dawkins 20:18

So when I had, when and they did bring me to Vanier, but at Vanier they left me in segregation and they said if I wanted to touch a range, I wasn't going to be able to touch a range, unless I went to the South. So therefore, I said for my mental state, because being locked in a room 24 hours, imagine all those years.

Hollywood Jade 20:40

Yeah.

Moka Dawkins 20:41

You know, so I was like "I'll go to the South."

Hollywood Jade 20:45

So your options were, be self-isolated, or serve this time in a men's facility?!

Moka Dawkins 20:55

Right, right.

Hollywood Jade 20:57

Wow!

Moka Dawkins 20:58

Um hm. You don't know what I had to go through in there. And when I still got to the South, they still put me in segregation.

Hollywood Jade 21:08

I mean, don't, I don't want to make you relive any of this, but can you give us an example of some of the stuff that you had to endure being..

Moka Dawkins 21:21

By the guards, the guards beat me up tough, too, you know, 'cause I didn't put up no bullshit from nobody, you know I've never, I never have, and I never will, you know, that's just - when you say something to me, and I feel like, you know, you're coming at me in an offensive manner, I'm definitely gonna defend myself, and trust me I can also give a tongue lashing, you know, so.. With the guards, it was just so difficult, because they had took my hair, you know, they wouldn't allow me my wig at first and everything, and so I was tying up my head with a t-shirt to imitate a wig, and like they were giving me so much trouble, and they were like sending me to segregation, and when I go to segregation, like the safeguards, those are the ones that really beat on you, and um they would run into your cell, and you know they would kick you when you come out the cell, to push up against the wall, who are punch you in your rib, you know how to, and they're doing it on camera, and like, they don't even really

care, because they have the people that are in the bubble that will just delete it, you know what I'm saying, so you know whatever it goes to like to court, whatever, it's like could clearly tell that the footage is missing, so you know like sometimes somepeople you know you get rewarded human rights tribunal things, or whatever the case may be, when incidents like that happens. But um, yeah, that's, that, that's what really happened to me, and just because I wanted my hair, which I ended up getting after two years of fighting with them.

Hollywood Jade 22:46

Wow!

Moka Dawkins 22:48

Yea'um.

Hollywood Jade 22:49

I, I mean, you expect almost, you almost like, you know, from what we see on tv and in in media, expect that from inmates, you would definitely, you know, feel harassment and, and..

Moka Dawkins 23:11

Oh I have I've definitely, I just mentioned the guards first, but I've definitely had my interactions with the inmates, as well. But I was ran at when I was like butt naked in the shower, they ran at me in the shower, came up and I mean they, they've organized to like have me attacked by some, they have, what they call like, like little dojos on the range, right?! So you know, because of mans dem them they don't want to get token off their range if they're comfortable or whatever the case may be so to have like would you like consider outside as a "runner." So they'd have like your little runners go like run up behind me and like box up on me, you know, it'd turn in to scrap on range, and yeah code blue would be called and injuries would be made.

Hollywood Jade 23:52

Wow.

Moka Dawkins 23:53

Ahem. It's really crazy in there. Because they got shanks and everything you really have to protect yourself, like when you go to South, it's like you, you know, how they talk about American jails and how you see it on TV, and just what you hear alone, well it's like the light, it's almost like the reality, like that's what really settled in for me in there be-, actually being in there.

Hollywood Jade 24:14

Yeah, and I think that's what I was saying, I was like you, you, you know, we've seen the Oz's and we've seen the locked up whatever, you know, we've seen all these TV shows, but the reality of it, especially being somebody from the Trans community like, you know what I mean, I can, I can't imagine that being an easy or a positive.

Moka Dawkins 24:43

No, I was an automatic target because,

Hollywood Jade 24:45

Right!

Moka Dawkins 24:47

My like, everybody else was in orange, and I was in green, so I was in the Vanier clothing. They allowed me, the only thing that they gave me to properly self-identify was the Vanier clothing, that was it, like everything else i had to fight for. So like to get the value canteen list, like for makeup, the right for my hair, for LGBTQ+ programming. It was, it was all a battle in there, because it's such a heteronormative environment, you know?!

Hollywood Jade 25:17

Yeah.

Moka Dawkins 25:18

It's such a, such a, it's such a toxic masculine heteronormative environment at the, at that, you know what I'm saying?! So testosterone levels and masculinity, it's crazy!

Hollywood Jade 25:31

And here you are, just trying to be a delicate flower!

Moka Dawkins 25:34

You know what I'm saying?!

Hollywood Jade 25:34

With your t-shirt.

Moka Dawkins 25:36

Locked in this jungle, girl - ugh! It's crazy, yeah!

Hollywood Jade 25:41

Okay! So you served your 18 months, because I want to, I want to keep moving forward, because that is part of the story, but that's not the full story, you know?! And I think, myself included, a lot of us get stuck on "oh girl, did you hear?" and the this, that, and the third, so that's why I wanted to give you the opportunity to share this from your own mouth and through your from your perspective, because I, it's not a narrative that, if you're not in your immediate circle you heard, you know?! We all saw the headlines and then it disappeared.

Moka Dawkins 26:17

Yeah.

Hollywood Jade 26:18

You know?! So you've served your time now, you, you've survived in this toxic environment, and you get out, and now you're out,

Moka Dawkins 26:34

Normal.

Hollywood Jade 26:35

And where did the, I mean I can sort of, almost pinpoint it, but from your mouth, when did the, the activism really take take hold for you?

Moka Dawkins 26:51

So it started, my activism started from inside those walls. Really, well, I've always been like part of like BQY and um, you know, supporter of Black Lives Matter, and stuff like that always came on to Blackaroma, you know?! So I've always been on, in the community, my voice has really started to get active in the community when I got incarcerated and arrested on the murder charge and really fighting for my rights to be myself, because everybody has, you know, everybody had their religious rights to express themselves in there, so why should I be denied the rights, you know, to express myself the way that I want to.

Hollywood Jade 27:32

Absolutely!

Moka Dawkins 27:33

My spirit, why can't I let my spirit shine. Um, so my activism really got started from inside the self.

Hollywood Jade 27:46

And how did you continue that once you got out?

Moka Dawkins 27:51

So once, I once I was in there, because I wasn't playing with these people, you know what I'm saying?! Like that's the whole thing like the tea, it wasn't just like I spoke to a guard and I got my way, you know what I'm saying?! Like I had to go through, like many levels of seniority in that place, like I had to go all the way up to the regional and those people are not in you know the Toronto South.

Hollywood Jade 28:13

Right.

Moka Dawkins 28:13

So I had faced a lot of barriers because I had like guards ripping up my inmate statement forms and shooting them out, you know, it was difficult for me to get like the Programs Coordinator to come onto the range to social workers and stuff, it took me two years to like, or like just like, get the proper paperwork in, because I always have to like write a copy for myself and then submit a copy and then like, I would wa- you know the guys like, they're very feisty in there, and like some of them that, like they do it to your face you know what I'm saying?! So then I would have to, like you know, have to rewrite it and whatever the case may be, and have to wait till another guard came on duty to who would submit the paperwork, and you know, like just the timing of the different sergeants and stuff, like that, it was, it was difficult.

Hollywood Jade 29:00

Yes.

Moka Dawkins 29:00

It was so difficult, right?! But um,

Hollywood Jade 29:04

So you were saying you, you have to almost like schedule when you submitted paperwork based off of who the guards were?

Moka Dawkins 29:12

Yes! And then I got associated with PASAN, and from PASAN, I got associated with Maggie's, with Maggie's I got associated for - Coda got me associated with The519, and you know, I just released a little making phone calls and advocating in that way as well because I had to reach out to outside community organizations for people outside to rally for the same things that, you know, for, for the rights that we needed on the inside.

Hollywood Jade 29:42

Absolutely.

Moka Dawkins 29:42

So it's a little bit hard like the Prisoners' Rights Project, and stuff like that, which I had found out about, and then I had started writing an article called Girl talk in CELL COUNT, which is a magazine for ex-prisoners, prisoners and their families.

Hollywood Jade 30:00

Oh, wow! So you had mentioned things like Maggie's and what, what are these, these names that you were calling, just for those of us who don't know?

Moka Dawkins 30:10

So these are all community organizations. Maggie's is a sex work organization that helps out sex workers. So they run like a lot of like, what do you call it, bursaries or like grants, like, stuff like that. So they give out a lot of benefits to the community and help them, they help us with like, if we need like legal fees, or, you know, somebody advocated on our side, someone to show up for court, like they were amazing with that. PASAN are, they're a prisoners rights organization.

Hollywood Jade 30:47

Okay.

Moka Dawkins 30:48

- and HIV AIDS awareness.

Hollywood Jade 30:50

Beautiful. So these are all people that you became affiliated with while you were incarcerated.

Moka Dawkins 30:57

Yes.

Hollywood Jade 30:58

- that helped you advocate for yourselves, for - sorry, for yourself and for others like you?!

Moka Dawkins 31:05

Yes, yeah.

Hollywood Jade 31:06

Come on, sis.

Moka Dawkins 31:07

You know, like, I really needed them to hear my stuff. My the thing, my biggest fear, was the fact that I was by myself behind those walls. I'm like, mind you, I was like, even though I was advocating in jail, like, I needed someone to know what happened to me. Yeah, like what was going on, because I was also facing, you know, a lot of prejudicial discrimination from the courts. You know, I needed the community involved. Because, like, if you're by yourself, and you're going through that, like, they'll just lock you up and shoot you away, right? Like, you'll never be heard from them again.

Hollywood Jade 31:43

And I'm, I'm sure if you didn't have all these allies, like you're saying, you probably would have just sat in there, suffering.

Moka Dawkins 31:51

Um hm.

Hollywood Jade 31:52

You know, I want to touch on, on you brought it up really quickly about the courts and how, how were they with you through this process?

Moka Dawkins 32:04

They were awful. There were so awful. Um, during the trial, they didn't allow me to have my expert witness, which would have testified on the dangers, and they would have educated the jury, as a judge, on the dangers in which sex workers face and you know, also educate the jury and the judge on the type of reactions, because how the Crown was trying to make it seem, and how my reaction was, like, you know, just out of the blue, like, I'm like, these are white women who've never grown up in the 'hood, or never had anything happen to them,

Hollywood Jade 32:39

Right.

Moka Dawkins 32:39

You know what I'm saying?!

Hollywood Jade 32:40

So it is a very different reality from ours and yours.

Moka Dawkins 32:45

Yes. Like, these are people who watch Law & Order and then grow up to be Crown attorneys, like, you know, you never really have no experience besides a textbook and TV.

Moka Dawkins 32:53

Don't even say Law & Order! (laughing)

Moka Dawkins 32:56

For real, you know. (laughing) So like they don't, they really don't understand the magnitude of, you know, the dangers in which we face, and you know, how they presented themselves, especially how they present themselves and, you know, the way how they fought just to dis-include information, like his criminal record, where he has like multiple attacks on people, convictions for attacking people with knives, and stuff like that. It was crazy, they really tried to frame me to look like a murderer.

Hollywood Jade 33:22

Oh, my Goodness!

Moka Dawkins 33:23

It was scary! That's the power supremacy, you know?! Like, they really tried to frame me to look like a murderer. Ahem. That's what I'm saying. In government.

Hollywood Jade 33:36

And you know what, what, - and I'm going to sidetrack for one quick second, but what's crazy about hearing all of this, is thinking about the event, the pull up event that Black Cat hosted a couple of weeks ago for Black History Month, and just seeing the joy and the energy that you brought to this online thing. And looking at you now, sitting here, dusted, painted down, outfit on, y'all can't see it, honey, (both laughing) we're giving name plates, and like, ladies who brunch makeup. (both laughing)

Moka Dawkins 34:13

Diamonds, everything!

Hollywood Jade 34:14

Come on! And you know, and I ..ohh, and the robe is is sheer, I'm describing it so you can get into it, it's a sheer robe with a feather..

Moka Dawkins 34:26

Feather sleeves (laughing)

Hollywood Jade 34:26

Feather sleeves and accents (both laughing) Ooh. Sorry, but I say all of this to say like, you haven't allowed these experiences and the stuff that you have survived because you're a survivor, the stuff that you survived to turn you into this negative, nasty person.

Moka Dawkins 34:50

That's the power of God, you know?! He's the only one that really got me through it all. You know, I'm a Christian, you know what I'm saying?! And that was the only place that, when I was down and out like, you know, I had so many there's so many times that I just wanted to commit suicide and just end it all, and you know, when I looked at my Bible was always right there looking at me. And, you know, I'd just open it up and when I'd open it up, I'd find a scripture, and it would just speak to me, you know?! And then one of the scriptures that really spoke to me was second Corinthians, I don't remember the verse right now, but I remember the chapter, I mean I remember the verse, I don't remember what number the verse is, but um, the verse is "To be spiritually minded is life and peace," and to be harmony minded is that. And I realized at that point in time is that like I had to think what Jesus went through, you know, just for us, and you know He did warn us about our long sufferings, but to lean on him, and that was the time that I really had to learn to lean on him, and you know He, with the power to cross and his blood baby, come on, you know, He really got me through it ..

Hollywood Jade 36:00

Listen, and I would also like to say, can we please normalize queer people who believe in God, and this being a conversation that we can have, because so many of us have our own relationships with God, which I think is ultimately the goal, you know, for you to and God could be the universe, or whatever it is that you believe, but I think we need to normalize, in this case, queer people in general, queer men or women

Moka Dawkins 36:38

We just need to, We just need to experience the acceptance the acceptance of God, Jesus Christ is all we really need, you know, that we don't have to put no identity to it,

Hollywood Jade 36:49

This is it.

Moka Dawkins 36:50

There's no identity to the love of Jesus in our life.

Hollywood Jade 36:53

And I love that. And I thank you for saying that and sharing that, because people would look at you and not assume that God is what really got you together in the darkest moments.

Moka Dawkins 37:06

For real.

Hollywood Jade 37:07

Ooh yes! I wish I had sound effects, (Moka laughing) like you know what I mean, a round of applause for Jesus.

Moka Dawkins 37:16

For real. For real. I would also like some gospel music happening! (laughing)

Hollywood Jade 37:20

Look, I love that, thank you, thank you, thank you, so much for sharing that. Um, I want to talk about the "Surviving the Block" documentary, and - that came out on OUTtv, and you - which I think ties into you make, wanting to make sure that your story was told that you weren't just somebody that they hid away and tucked behind a wall. Yeah, so, let's talk a little bit about the "Surviving the Block" documentary.

Moka Dawkins 37:48

That was the whole point like my, my whole story was survivor like you know what I'm saying. (laughing) If I really didn't reach out to those organizations, I wouldn't have had even such, such opportunities like I did with OUTtv, right?! So that's how dangerous and severe, you know, um the levels of racial discrimination is in these branches of governments, right?! Um but with that being said, um I just, you know, I have to say I was blessed, it was all the advocacy, everybody coming out for the rallies and stuff like that, that's what really brought that opportunity to me, um you know, just thank you to Allie, Senna, Alanna, Melissa Ridding

Hollywood Jade 38:39

Yeah call their names.

Moka Dawkins 38:40

Me, Rosa from The519, Victoria, you know those were the ones that really, and if i forgetting Anya, Anya cannot forget Anya Wood, you know?! Those are the girls that really put the flyers together, put, put, you know, the whole #JusticeForMoka, really got it out there, and you know, really opened up that layer and put that level of protection out there for me. So with them doing all that work, I was contacted by a Yap Films, and while I was inside, they had contacted my lawyer and contacted me. And they're like, "we'd love to do a documentary" and you're like from, I was supposed to, from i got out they were like right there filming. It was very awkward, because like (chuckling) I mean

Hollywood Jade 39:31

I can imagine but like.. like

Moka Dawkins 39:34

When you get out, like I was just like, my first thing was I wanted to hug a tree, you know what I'm saying like, you don't see the outside world at all. So I was like "I see the tree and I hugged the tree." and then they're like "okay,

could you stop and retake" and I wasn't even able to like really fully embrace everybody the way that I wanted to, because I was already stopping and then retaking, right?! So I was a little awkward yeah

Hollywood Jade 39:55

Interesting and..

Moka Dawkins 39:56

But it came out well!

Hollywood Jade 39:58

I love what, what, one of the things that I, I, I'm finding really fascinating about this conversation is I'm loving hearing all of your different perspectives on things, and like how I'm really getting an opportunity to see the world through Moka's eyes, you know what I mean?! And it's a really beautiful thing, because even with the, the ugliness that you experienced, and I know you didn't go into detail, but I can only imagine the, the terrible things that were said and how you were treated. And you're sitting here smiling.

Moka Dawkins 40:38

That's the power of Jesus, you know what I'm saying?! Like, you could overcome anything through him, you know what I'm saying?! Where, where he is, where he is lowered, where we are, where He is low, I can't remember but, where we are weak, He's strong. Amen.

Hollywood Jade 40:53

Come on. It's it's the, it's the footprints for me that always gets me. It's, you know, it's what happens when there was only one set, that's when I picked you up, and I was carrying you. And it's clear to me that you have been lifted and you are being carried.

Moka Dawkins 41:07

Thank you.

Hollywood Jade 41:07

Um, so other than Jesus, um what brings you joy?

Moka Dawkins 41:15

Oh, my gosh, what could bring me joy besides Jesus, what else could bring me joy? I don't know.

Moka Dawkins 41:22

I don't know, I'm asking!

Moka Dawkins 41:23

To be honest, there's no, there's no greater joy than him. But things that I do, that make me smile.

Hollywood Jade 41:32

Absolutely.

Moka Dawkins 41:33

Like, I still dance. Yes, so I saw Brock out, do my thing, you know (both laughing). Um, I still love to shop, and you know, just really be around community, and just really, you know, put a lot of love and support into the world any way that I really can.

Hollywood Jade 41:53

I love that. Um, I, I, one of the things with this podcast is, it's, it's about really like embracing and, and leaning into Black joy, you know, and that's why I ask, I'm like, what, what other than Jesus brings you joy? But how are you prioritizing joy in your life? Like, how are you making sure that, because it's, it's clear to me that there is a lot of joy in your life, you know.

Moka Dawkins 42:22

You know, there's not a lot of joy, well, yes, there's a lot of joy in my life, because God is with me, but I mean, at the same time, I'm still going through things like, you know, as everybody else, you know, day by day, I just, I, when you pray on them, there's nothing you could do, but leave it in His hands, and when you come to that, understanding that that problem or your problems are left in His hands, you are relieved. And at that point in time, like, you know, I just have to be grateful for the power of the blood and just smile.

Hollywood Jade 42:51

And keep going, man, keep going. That's, that's, that's a heavy couple of years that you've been through, and then to hear that something else dealing with these same individuals has transpired recently. I'm sure it's, it, there's probably a lot going through your mind even, like, because hearing that something like this happened to you again, I'm, my immediate thought is I'm like, is she being targeted?

Moka Dawkins 43:32

Well, I've always been targeted, like from the beginning, right?! And it's kind of scary, because I'm not trying to have that, like, as a, as a, as a normalization in my life, that I have to always watch over my back, you know?! Especially from the police. Because I do speak out, you know, especially when it comes to, you know, defunding the police, and, you know, prison abolition, I'm a prisoner abolitionist, I'm there at the protest, and I'm there and I'm taking the mic, and I'm, you know, I'm also giving interviews to news reporters, and, you know, politicians and government leaders are actually seeing this. And they hear when I'm saying, and they see that what I'm saying makes sense. And, you know, I do have a supportive backing with my community and for them, that's a threat.

Hollywood Jade 44:18

Right.

Moka Dawkins 44:19

You know?! And they're still in that settlement, settlement mindset because the type of diversity and inclusivity that we're fighting for, they're not ready to offer.

Hollywood Jade 44:31

Right. It threatens, it, it threatens them, they feel threatened by it.

Moka Dawkins 44:38

Ahem.

Hollywood Jade 44:38

Ooh.

Moka Dawkins 44:43

Sorry, if we as crazy as a lot to take in, I know (chuckling).

Hollywood Jade 44:47

That you, and gave, you gave me, and us, and everybody listening, you gave us a lot today, and I thank you for being so honest even about your past career, you know?! And And, and this trial and you're, you're, you're overcoming all of this adversity.

Moka Dawkins 45:10

Thank you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to. And I also just want to say, at the moment, I do have a GoFundMe page, it's www.gofundme.com/JusticeForMoka. And Right now, you know, I have to say, I'm very grateful for the community for all the donations so far, because that's what has gotten me my housing stability that I have today. But right now, I'm looking to redistribute funds back into the community by hiring different artists and activists to come on. I have, I had started a podcast called T-Time Tips with Moka Dawkins, that was FemThem Productions. But some things happened with that, behind the scenes, with the production team, and it fell apart, so I decided to start my own not-for-profit, which is called T-Time Tips Productions. And I'll be bringing back the podcast and would appreciate the donations to the GoFundMe page so I can get the equipment, proper equipment needed, and as well as hire BIPOC artistes and activists.

Hollywood Jade 46:22

Absolutely, absolutely! I, I support this message, let me know if there's anything I can do. Outside of donating to help like, even in terms of.

Moka Dawkins 46:33

If you could promote the page as well, that'd be amazing. Thank you.

Hollywood Jade 46:36

Absolutely. And, and even with helping you produce this content, if you need help in that, like, I think it's important for us to really, as a community rally around each other and support each other and be there for each other. Because by the time this airs, this will be, you know, I've already passed, but just yesterday, we lost an icon,

Moka Dawkins 47:09

Risotto rocks.

Hollywood Jade 47:11

A leader, somebody who greatly inspired and touched and changed my life. And all I can think about is I'm like, who's handling all of her affairs, you know?! As, as queer individuals, we spend so much time figuring out ourselves, that we sometimes neglect figuring out the people around us, you know?! And, and I just want to send a super big shout out to Michelle Ross, may you rest in peace. We call your name, we honour you, we celebrate you, and you know, more than that, more than ever, I think it's important for us to establish a community that is based around us, for us, building us, uplifting us, up, correcting us when we're wrong, you know?! I think it's important and and if there's anything I can do to help, I'm definitely down to help.

Moka Dawkins 48:12

Thank you. I definitely appreciate that. And one thing I want to mention, and talk about Michelle Ross, like you had just brought some stuff, some enlightenment to my thought, because that's something that I never thought about it's like who arranges people's affairs when you hear about the girls die, when you hear the girls passing away sorry. But I'm thinking like, I'm not I'm wondering, I will have a couple of productions with BLAC, the Black Legal Action Center, and I'm gonna mention and ask, because I'm, I'm gonna see if there's something that they could do for the community in that sense.

Hollywood Jade 48:42

Yeah, like, and a lot of us, like, I think reality is starting to hit, we're all now, all of us who are 18, 19, are all aging up, you know, and

Moka Dawkins 48:56

Don't tell them that. (both laughing)

Hollywood Jade 49:00

I mean, you already told all of the tea, when you gave Dave out here, the girls are not out here doing that's, it's fine. (both laughing) But no, we're all getting older and like we really have to start thinking about these things, and, and these are the realities of it. And, and I think part of it is that we need to reestablish a sense of community, you know, so like, if you're not feeling well, or something like this happens to you, you send one message to one person, you know, everybody gonna rally around and be there and, and you know, there's a lot to unpack with this whole thing because us as Caribbean people are very hush hush, don't tell anybody your business. But what happens when your business is that you're, you're not well, you know?! So, anyways, I, I thank you for your time and, and your, your hard work and, and I think it's important stuff that you're doing, I think it's really important work that you're doing, and it's such that you keep getting involved in these unfortunate situations. These highly probably preventable situations with these authorities, but sis, if they pick, they pick the right wrong, whatever they pick the right one on the wrong day.

Moka Dawkins 50:26

You don't thank you so much for (both laughing) you know?! But yes, I'm, just thank you for having me, it was great, you know, just really, hopefully my words get to really inspire and help, help someone, that's the, that's the

main purpose. So I just wish everyone love, thank you for listening to my story and being supportive. And please don't forget to donate at www.gofundme.com/JusticeForMoka.

Hollywood Jade 50:53

And on that note, we are signing off I will be back soon with another guest on the Black Queer and Trans Excellence podcast. Peace, love and hair grease.