

DOPE LABS

Transcript of Lab 051: BHM: HBCU Edition

Speaker 1: What a HBCU means to me is freindship. So I met them in 2003 and what is it, 2021, so lifelong friendships? That's what it means to me.

Speaker 2: Yes. And I think a HBCU is a nurturing environment that puts African-Americans in a great spot, especially when we go on to our endeavors. Whatever your career may be, it set you up for success.

Speaker3: It's dope, that's it.

Speaker 4: How are you guys doing? I am Timothy McDonald. I'm a senior chemical engineering major from Baltimore, Maryland, and I have the pleasure of serving as a 44th Mr. Howard University. Being on campus is the epitome of black excellence, I would say, being surrounded by people not only of black minds, but black minds were willing to challenge you. That's something that I hadn't faced in high school. I went to a majority white high school, right? And I just didn't have a lot of people that looked like me. And once I came to Howard, I knew that it was home. I knew that it was a place I had to be for the next four years. And even though we have been in a pandemic and it's been hard now that we're back, it feels like, you know, an outpouring of good times vibes and just being around black people was like a cookout, right? But all day, every day. So that's something I really enjoy. So our chant is something that you've got to learn, which is "HU, you know," that's something you do maybe a thousand times in the first week alone. So that is something and it kind of transcends classes, right? You can have alumni from ninety six all the way back to 66 and they're going to know "HU, you know" right? So it's that chant that we hold near and dear to our heart.

Titi: Thank you so much, Mr. Howard

Speaker 4: No problem.

Titi: I'm Titi.

Zakiya: And I'm Zakiya

Titi: and from Spotify. This is dope labs.

Zakiya: Welcome to Dope Labs, a weekly podcast that mixes hardcore science, pop culture and a healthy dose of friendship.

Titi: OK, Zakiya I have a question for you.

Zakiya: Shoot.

Titi: What do Spike Lee, Toni Morrison, W.E.B. Du Bois, Thurgood Marshall, Jerry Rice, Phylicia Rashad and Debbie Allen all have in common

Zakiya: fantasy dinner wish lists?

Titi: Yes, but also they all went to historically black colleges and universities.

Zakiya: So HBCUs.

Titi: Yes.

Zakiya: And that's right on time because it's Black History Month, and this week we're focusing on HBCUs. We're covering everything from history to homecoming. We're delving right into the HBCU experience. You know, HBCU have been in the news. They've been in the media. We've seen them portray positively. We've seen students complain about conditions at different HBCU. So remember in D.C., however, we saw some folks protesting.

Titi: Yeah, about their housing conditions.

Zakiya: Yes. And Howard is not alone. A couple of other schools have seen some similar things happening, so similar feedback from their students. Then recently, just earlier this month, do you remember when all the bomb threats were called into the HBCUs?

Titi: My goodness, that was so scary.

Zakiya: Yeah. So, you know, I feel like we're seeing positive things, but also negative things and outside influences just so much going on. But I think there's still a lot to celebrate about the HBCU experience.

Titi: And Zakiya I am really excited about this because you went to an HBCU.

Zakiya: Yes, I am a graduate of Hampton University. And so I can't wait to reminisce and talk about some of my HBCU experience. Those were some formative years.

Titi: I cannot wait. Let's get into the recitation. All right. So what do we know?

Zakiya: Today there are just over 100 HBCUs in the United States, and that equals about three percent of our colleges and universities, both public and private. Many of our HBCUs are located in the southern states, and Alabama has the most HBCU as per state with 12 total.

Titi: Another thing that we know is that HBCUs play a huge part in education, and we are particularly focused on STEM education and addressing inequalities in STEM education.

Zakiya: Yes. As a matter of fact, about 27 percent of black undergrads got their STEM degrees from HBCUs. And if you look at black doctors in the US, 50 percent of them are HBCU graduates.

Titi: Not to mention, in my field of engineering, 46 percent of black women engineers graduate from HBCU and 30 percent of black doctorates in science and engineering are from HBCU.

Zakiya: You know, HBCUs have been underfunded for decades, and we're starting to see some lawsuits in cases where states are having to pay up. So just last year, the governor of Maryland, Hogan, signed a settlement for five hundred seventy seven million dollars to go to Maryland's HBCUs. What they found is that the whole state wide system of education for Maryland was disproportionately sending funds to primarily white institutions and underfunding the four HBCUs under their care. So over the next ten years, they will disburse those funds back to those schools,

Titi: the 25 largest, predominantly white institutions their endowments are greater than the endowments of all the HBCUs combined. So what do we want to know? I know that there's a lot that I want to know because I didn't go to HBCU, unfortunately. So I've got a lot of questions because I feel like it will help me know my friend even better.

Zakiya: Hmm. Well, we're going to focus on a couple of things friendship and camaraderie, mentorship and stewardship, how attending an HBCU might affect your identity so the black experience and different perspectives on campus life. And then we'll talk about how HBCU Jews have been portrayed in the media. But one component of that that we have to touch is Homecoming, which is a celebration of coming together and being back on campus. I know we said three things, but I couldn't stop.

Titi: I am very excited to dive in. So let's jump into the dissection. Today, we are so excited to have our friend, Xavier Jernigan in on the show. He's going to be talking to us all about his HBCU experience as well as Zakiya, so we got two experts today.

Xavier Jernigan: I'm Xavier Jernigan, everybody calls me X, the host of The Get Up Spotify's Daily Morning Show, and I'm also an exec at Spotify, and I'm a proud, proud Florida A&M University, FAMU rattler, I bleed orange and green. Yes, I said it orange and green

Titi: Choosing a college if you decide to go to college is a really big deal. Choosing the right college. Choosing a place where you know you'll feel comfortable to further your education is a really big deal. And as you can hear, we have someone who is very proud of their institution on the show.

Zakiya: We asked X to tell us why he chose an HBCU and where his beginnings of his love for HBCUs kind of started.

Xavier Jernigan: Our hometown Daytona is an HBCU city, so I grew up around it. My aunt and uncle worked there. My cousin, Zach, was section leader of drum line. I couldn't move my cousin, Terry. His sister went to Cookman, and we always went to the homecoming parade. Zach will march by me and my brother and show out in front of us and wink at us, and then me and my brother became drummers.

Titi: So it sounds like your HBCU experience started when you were really, really young.

Xavier Jernigan: Very young.

Titi: And I have definitely heard that with a lot of people that I know that went to HBCUs, that they were exposed to HBCU cultures young.

Xavier Jernigan: I do think that's a big part of it, like your exposure to it. And I grew up on like School Daze came out when I was a little kid and A Different World was like, those were my formative years.

Zakiya: X is making a really good point, Titi. I feel like over the past couple of years, there has been so much HBCU exposure in the media.

Titi: Absolutely.

Zakiya: If you think back to Beyonce's homecoming at Coachella, that performance?

Titi: Yes. Yes.

Zakiya: I've even recently seen Lil Nas X do something. It wasn't HBCU centric, but it definitely gave me homecoming vibes.

Titi: Yeah, definitely. Drumline, homecoming. You know, things like that.

Zakiya: So X talks about exposure in the media that kind of drove his love for HBCUs as well. Specifically, School Daze, which was written, directed and produced by Spike Lee, who graduated from Morehouse an all male HBCU. And School daze, also gives a good view of, yes, the HBCU experience, but in particular, the black Greek experience. And Titi you know, a little bit about that.

Titi: Yes, the Divine Nine, it's made up of nine fraternities and sororities, and I am a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc..

Xavier Jernigan: So like going up to the campus, me and my mom and my brother would go up there and just hang out in my Aunt Helen's office or my Uncle James's office. And just being in

that environment and my mom went to Cookman and a big part of my story, y'all. So my mom had me and my brother, young. My mom was about to enter her freshman year at Bethune-Cookman. At 18, she was pregnant with my brother. I come along in the next summer. He still keeps going. But then it was too much so she didn't finish. But all throughout growing up, y'all, she will always say to me and my brother, I'm going to go back one day. And just a few years ago, my mom finally went back to Bethune-Cookman university. She was able to finish that degree, and then she went on to get her master's because she's a G. That's the HBCU experience.

Titi: And Zakiya listening to X it really brings back memories from stories that you've told me about your upbringing and your experience at Hampton because you grew up in Greensboro, so you were near an HBCU.

Zakiya: Yes. What X is saying resonates so much with me because I grew up in Greensboro, and that's where North Carolina A&T is, and it's where Bennett College is, which is a women's HBCU. It's a huge university town. I was talking to somebody and I was saying, Hey, I know you went to A&T but would it be strange for me to have A&T sweater? And they're like, you didn't go to A&T. But I feel like A&T raised me. Yeah, when I think about my trajectory, my path to science, I always say, started with these Saturday Academies for Math and Science and North Carolina A&T.

Xavier Jernigan: Yeah.

Zakiya: My mom was going back to school at A&T while I was in middle school was so Saturdays I was going to these academies learning more math and science and doing like the sat and psat training. And then by the time I got to high school, one of my first summer jobs was working on A&T's campus is in the Ron McNair building, which was named after Ron McNair, who was a black astronaut. And my first exposure Titi to it was in your lane in engineering. I was doing some civil engineering stuff with the Army Research Lab in North Carolina. A&T and that was like my first hands-on science internship that I was doing.

Titi: Yes.

Zakiya: You know, Titi. I feel like there's been a lot of conversation about high school students and just people in general when it comes time to deciding, OK, yes, I am going to college. Do I want to go to a HBCU or a predominantly white institution or Ivy League? You know, I feel like we've been seeing a trend towards high profile students going to HBCUs.

Titi: Exactly. Travis Hunter. He was a top college recruit for the class of 2022 for football, and he chose to go to HBCU Jackson State University instead of Florida State University, he switched his commitment and is now attending Jackson State.

Zakiya: We talked to X about this a little bit too, because that's not a new sentiment. You know, the concern about what does it mean if you choose an HBCU early in your career and he's heard some different arguments against it as well.

Xavier Jernigan: There is like this argument out there. It's like, Oh, don't go to an HBCU because that's not the real world. But when do you get another time to be around your true peer group? Not just age, age and people with a similar experience from you like cultural experience for a five year period in my life. And what that does is it removes, at least on that campus race. There is no black student union it's just the student union because we're 90 percent black and it's just this loving, welcoming space. It's truly the definition of what a safe space is. It gives you this confidence to know that you can go out in the world after and truly know who you are. When we're talking about HBCUs is we're talking about schools that were the only schools that could and would educate black folks when they didn't want us at the other schools. So for me to choose to go, there is just something really special. To me the college experience was the black college experience, and that's the only experience I wanted. So I only applied to Howard, FAM at the time and I got accepted to both. You know, my brother was at Howard. FAM had a five year MBA. I went to FAM. It was that simple and it was the best choice of my life. Never regretted it, loved every day I was there, even the bad days was special. The bonds you form, they care. Like FAMs motto was "excellence with caring", and that's real. Like we are going to push you to be great, we gonna care about you, but we're going to hold you accountable. And if you messing up, we're going to tell you. So I had, you know, a mom from home, Dr. Harper my heart, like she helped me down, and it's just a special, special experience.

Zakiya: I think we all can think back to, you know, special people who guided us or kept us on the right track as we were moving through our academic careers.

Titi: Yes. And I always love this story that you tell about Dr. White.

Zakiya: I met a woman. Her name was Dr. Gladys Hope Franklin White. She came to my high school and she was like, Hey, I went out to people that want to go to college. She was an alumna of Hampton University. I told her what I wanted to do. She said, Have you taken the SATs? I have these Saturday classes. I mean, it was very much a community and nurturing kind of thing.

Xavier Jernigan: That's right.

Titi: I love that.

Zakiya: She said. Come to my church. The admissions officer will be here. You can apply in person. You could tell your story, talked to them.

Xavier Jernigan: Come on.

Zakiya: And I got a full ride that day to Hampton when I went to meet the admissions officer.

Xavier Jernigan: That's big.

Titi: That's huge.

Zakiya: And I had no clue this woman was just helping me. She helped all these other people. She had helped my friend Randy. The year before and when I actually went to visit Hampton, I was like, Oh, Gladys Hope Franklin White Hall, this is her dorm.

Xavier Jernigan: She earned that, though. She got a lot of people in that dorm.

Zakiya: This type of community shows up in different places, so I was able to do admissions at a local church, but this is no different from some of the offers to interview applicants to Duke or to other schools that we get as alums, right?

Titi: Absolutely, absolutely. It's a story you hear in a lot of different spaces. White folks do this all the time.

Zakiya: Yes.

Titi: The good old boys club exists. And what HBCU grads and HBCU faculty and staff do is just that giving people opportunity and chances that they might not be aware about or say, Hey, I know somebody that you can talk to. They're giving you additional resources that your white counterparts are getting. We see it all the time.

Zakiya: It just feels so special to see these folks, you know. Have you ever met or any other traditional, you know, PWI campus, have you ever met the person that the dorm is named after? Have they ever come and recruited you and your friends? No. And that type of love and care that is central to the HBCU experience. And I think we try to do it across the board. I've tried to bring Titi into the HBCU fold.

Titi: Yeah, I have my Hampton sweatshirt that now I'm afraid to wear because I wore it in the airport because I was going to visit Zakiya. It was for her birthday. I was meeting up with her and all her friends from Hampton QT6 all the girls from the dorm, everybody. So I put on my Hampton sweatshirt and I was in the airport and beautiful black woman comes up to me and she says, I like your sweatshirt. And I said, Thank you. That wasn't the right answer. She knew I was a fraud. She knew that I did not go to Hampton and I was mortified. I started sweating. I was like, Oh, that sweatshirt got so heavy you felt like a million pounds in that moment. I was just like, Somebody help me get this off.

Xavier Jernigan: Felt like you had a bulletproof vest on all of a sudden.

Zakiya: And that's what it is. The HBCU experience. People are holding you accountable. They're like, Do you belong in that Hampton shirt? Are you really a Hamptonian? And there's so much nuance, even from university to university, and even when you get to a school Titi, little groups at that school.

Titi: Absolutely. As we know, black people are not a monolith and there are lots of different types of black folks. And you and X told me about your experiences on your HBCU campuses and your exposure to different black upbringings and lifestyles.

Xavier Jernigan: Most of my friends growing up came from single-parent homes. I thought that was the norm because that was all my friends. I went to fam. I was in the minority when it came to that. So my roommate, Lance, he had both his parents in the house, my boy Brian, both parents Alida, both parents Erica both parents Kimau both parents. I got this other experience and I needed that, y'all. I didn't know I needed it until I met a whole bunch of people who had an opposite experience coming from the black community. Zakiya, what about you?

Zakiya: I can remember my first day coming on the campus similar to you, X. You know, I just thought my experience is my experience. This is black folks in the south. Virginia is still the south to me,.

Xavier Jernigan: Right it's true.

Zakiya: My guy, when I got there, I was like, Who are all these people dressing different? I always tell Titi because Titi's from PG County. I always tell her the Maryland and Baltimore people, tdressing like ninjas . It was New Balance. It was Nike ACG boots. There were all of these little microcosms of blackness that I didn't know about. There were stratification of class, socioeconomic status, exposure to different things, things that were related to geography, language difference that you could just pick up on and hear, exposure to music, culture just so much. And I grew to appreciate black culture in such a way that I hadn't experienced and hadn't appreciated it before. And so I was meeting people for the first time from the Caribbean, one of my closest friends my first year, she came in and she was already married. That was unheard of to me.

Xavier Jernigan: Oh wow.

Zakiya: One of my other exposures from Hampton is everybody I knew up until the end. What I consider to be middle class are doing well. When I got to Hampton, I met folks whose parents were in entertainment or show business or were lawyers, and my parent is about to be a judge. This is how we do their campaign. Like things like I was never exposed to people whose parents were doctors. I didn't know anybody who was a doctor before that just meeting other people who look like you and it open the world of possibility for me.

Xavier Jernigan: I totally agree. You see somebody that that looked like they could be your uncle or your dad. That's big to see that at like 17, 18, 19, 20 years old.

Titi: Right. So it contributes to that. If you can see it, you can be it mentality. So I've heard a lot of things about life on campus at HBCUs, something like dress codes, curfews and things like that. I really wanted to know more about that.

Zakiya: Hampton had a lot of rules. Our first year, we couldn't have a car as a freshman. Yeah, it was in by like nine or 11 or something like you need to be in the dorm. And we didn't have coed dorms.

Xavier Jernigan: We didn't either.

Zakiya: And we have a dorm mother or a father, somebody who stayed in the dorm and our dorm mother. Her name was Mrs. Charity. And Titi you remember on my birthday, we recorded a video message for my dorm mother who we all still keep in touch with all these years later. And so there was just this feeling of community, and if you got in trouble, you would not appear as a Hampton University student on the news. You would appear as a former Hampton University student. They will call it out by five, because you would be expelled by five p.m.

Xavier Jernigan: That's real.

Zakiya: It was very strict,

Xavier Jernigan: you know, one of the things at FAM so the dorms were separated. So if you went to visit a girl, you couldn't go past the lobby. And when you stepped in the building, you had to give an I.D. sign in and be approved. And all you could do is sit in the lobby and it was doors that would lock on either side of the lobby.

Xavier Jernigan: Yes.

Titi: No sneaky links

Zakiya: No sneaky links

Zakiya: It's real. Nah, it ain't going down. And you see all these guys lined up on the stairs like waiting for the girl they want to talk to. I just remember hearing stories about people sneaking people into the dorms. That's not happening with the girls dorm, but the way to do it in Samson Hall, where I stayed another story for another day.

Titi: OK, so that's curfew. What about dress code?

Xavier Jernigan: talking about dress, going to the school of Business and Industry SBI. There were certain dress that we had to wear for certain events. We had to wear a certain dress code on certain days, blue suit for men not black, blue or power gray. It was teaching us how to be ready for the corporate world, and they'd be like, Listen, you're going to get judged on the way you look. So do you want to get discriminated against because you don't know the proper dress and the proper etiquette in the business environment because you already got certain things to deal with as black folks. Well, we're going to go in and we're going to be dope.

Zakiya: Absolutely. I remember receiving something in the mail that said, you need to have a black pant or skirt suit, you need to have a white dress. That was for convocation. There's a building on campus called Ogden Hall, and there's a circle in front of it, and there's first of all some superstition that you don't walk across the grass in Ogden circle or you won't graduate on time. But the way they told us this is how you dress when you come to Ogden Hall. This was like our auditorium. So when people were describing attire for events, it was say you wear your Ogden's best.

Xavier Jernigan: I like that.

Zakiya: To different things, right?

Titi: I'm coming in my Ogden's best.

Zakiya: Yes, we knew what we were supposed to have on. And you just got used to dressing up. You got used to being comfortable in those clothes. If it's your turn to present in glacier dressing up, you're not presenting in your jeans. not happening.

Titi: I presented in pajamas. What was wrong with me? You know, like, why wouldn't you think these people are important people? Clearly their professors? Why wouldn't you try and impress them?

Zakiya: And you've seen this in person? Remember when we went to A&T and gave that talk?

Zakiya: Absolutely. Everyone was so impressive. Folks came in their Ogden's best OK? And they were ready. First of all, when folks would stand up, everyone knew the exact spiel to give to introduce themselves, so they would say their name, They would say what year they were, they would say where they were from, and then they would proceed with their question.

Xavier Jernigan: That's right. We were taught that. Good afternoon. I'm Xavier Jernigan. I am a fourth year MBA student from Daytona Beach, Florida.

Zakiya: Same thing.

Xavier Jernigan: We got taught that in SBI, that was like Week one. Oh, you know what else? Handshakes we got taught how to do handshakes look each other in the eye and then do that with the introduction as well. As a freshman we had to go around with a notebook. It was called a nothing book. And you carried it around your first semester and you had to have upperclassmen sign it, but you had to go up to them and give the proper introduction. They'll correct you if the handshake was wrong, like, no, you do it like this. OK, try it again. And once you got it right, then they will sign your nothing book and you had to get three signatures the week for, like the whole first semester. So you had to go up to professors to upperclassmen. Until you got it down.

Zakiya: We didn't have a book like that, but there was something very similar about this culture of each one teach one right? The upperclassmen looking out, and everybody had like big brothers and big sisters like folks who looked out for you and your crew told you what you needed to be doing. Like, these are the classes you should take. Here's who you should talk to.

Xavier Jernigan: That's right. There's a class where you learn all the presidents of the school before. You had to learn that we had to learn our alma mater. We had to learn the Negro National anthem. We sang the Negro National anthem before every forum and forum was like a big thing on Tuesdays and Thursdays, where a big executive from a company, for example, from Amex came down. We have a bunch of people. This was every week they'd give a speech and a student would introduce them and we had to ask questions for grades. So I go into corporate America. I had the confidence to ask CEOs questions. So we would have mock dinners and we would have

receptions where different companies would come in. They have relationships with FAM and SBI. We're going to know how to move in these rooms and you're going to know how to dress and what proper fork to use when you're at dinner. And that was so special and so important. So when you had your interviews and did your internships, you were really confident in there, and I carry a lot of that with me today.

Zakiya: And there's also just so much culture around being the product of an HBCU. So like different songs you sing and poems to know just all kinds of stuff like that. You also get that education, too. And it's so valuable, and I think we see more and more people appreciating that as they learn that that's part of the HBCU experience.

Titi: We're going to take a quick break, but we'll have much more with X when we get back.

Zakiya: And we're back. Let's jump into our deep dive with guest expert Xavier Jernigan on HBCU's.

Titi: So my next question is about HBCUs in the media. X I know that you have mentioned school daze and how important that was to you, and we also talked a little bit about a different world, which I was absolutely fascinated by growing up and watching that. I binged, watched a different world again. And it just gets better and better with age. And it really highlights another point that you and Zakiya were making about the nuance of blackness. Do you feel like all of the different TV shows that are set at HBCU's are accurate in their depiction of HBCU culture?

Xavier Jernigan: I was so fortunate. One of my favorite interviews so far that I've done on the get up is I got to sit down with Evette Lee Bowser GOAT. She created living single with the first black woman to create a network sitcom. Friends took that archetype. Sex and the City took that archetype. She was a writer and a producer on a different world. I thought a different world totally nailed it. I experienced that as a little kid. . Then I went to FAM. And then my appreciation for a different world went on another level because it was just like, Yo, they really got that right.

Titi: I heard that a different world was based off of Hampton. Is that true?

Xavier Jernigan: I think it was an amalgamation of a few schools.

Zakiya: I think it was too.

Xavier Jernigan: I know it was Spelman campus that they shot like the exterior scenes, like when they show a campus. But the fictitious school Hillman was actually in Virginia and they would go to D.C. sometimes.

Zakiya: Yes. When I think about it, I feel like every show from our time really depicts it well. I feel like I have a friend that fits every one of those types of characters. And I think about shows like Martin, where people are wearing HBCU gear and stuff like that.

Xavier Jernigan: Yes, living single as well,.

Zakiya: Living single. It feels like that people are still friends. You meet other people's friends from college with all this connectedness. So at Hampton, we had two cafeterias.

Xavier Jernigan: We did too. We did too.

Zakiya: One was the big main cafeteria. And on the other side of the kitchen for that cafeteria was a smaller seating area that they call the little caf.

Titi: Ok, So they're connected.

Zakiya: They were connected, but they were only connected by the kitchen, so they had different entrances and stuff. And it's just so crazy to me that different HBCUs, they find the smallest things to claim and represent is not just, Oh, I went to this school is not just, Oh, I was this kind of major, Oh, I was in this dorm. It's also like, I'm team little caf. I saw Justin Tinsley, who graduated from Hampton, and he's a writer he just did that great podcast with Nipsey Hussle.

Titi: Yes, the 30 for 30.

Zakiya: Yes. He was tweeting and he said, Team Little CAF. And he just brought back so many memories when I saw it because me, I'm team big caf.

Titi: OK, then we're team big caf. Was there a difference in the food?

Zakiya: The vibes are totally different. Like one of them might have had a waffle station on Sundays or they opened at different times like the big CAF open at four p.m. I was opening up with the people. I'm like, Let me help you push these chairs in and get ready. I want it to eat food right then. It was like clicks, right? There were always these older people who are like, now, baby, you don't need to be eating this. You've been having corned beef hash every day. That's not good for you. All of this stuff. It just felt so true to my singular experience. And now realizing its true across all these experiences. And really, what I'm trying to say is that the portrayals of the HBCU experience that I see on television feel realistic to me because they capture some of this nuance, even on a different world. The importance of Mr. Gaines.

Titi: Yes, he was so important a pillar in that community.

Zakiya: And that was very real.

Titi: Mr. Gaines was the cafeteria man. He was one of the cooks for the cafeteria. I think he was the head cook, and then some of the students will work for him, and he gave really great advice. He was very funny. And he was critical.

Zakiya: And they began to realize that is kind of true across all of these different experiences, regardless of which HBCU you went to. It's like they really nailed it.

Xavier Jernigan: Yes. There's this universal experience of which bonds all of us that went to HBCU. You know, we'll say HBCU Pride we'll shout that out, and we will try to go to each other's homecomings. I remember when Howard and FAM played in D.C., we took a trip up to D.C., so I hung with my brother. And then at one time, he came down and surprised me and hung with me and my friends at FAM, which was like one of my all time favorite memories.

Titi: And just hearing X talk about going to other people's football games that makes me think about Homecoming and what we all know, I don't care where you went to school, you know that HBCU homecomings are different. OK. They're built different. OK.

Xavier Jernigan: Let's talk about it

Zakiya: because it is something special to me.

Xavier Jernigan: People care. First and foremost, we care about homecoming. My understanding that PWIs people didn't really care about Homecoming is just a regular game.

Titi: I have literally never gone back for Homecoming.

Xavier Jernigan: Right? We make plans a year in advance. Like, you're going to homecoming. you going to homecoming. When The football schedule is released that day we're booking rooms. It's like that serious. And man, just to be there on campus again with the outfits, all the FAM gear, because any fan event, you're going to have a sea of orange and green. Ain't nobody got school like FAM, I'm telling you. You go and you actually go see your professors. You email them before you go down. Like Dr. Harper, who I mentioned earlier, she retired. I went and saw Dr. Harper, and we both were like tearing up, sitting there, talking like, its that special? How was it there, Zakiya?

Zakiya: I think back to five and six year old Zakiya marching in the homecoming parade at A&T with my little dance troupe OK. I think about tailgating on Sullivan Street and hanging out at my aunt's house down the street from the stadium. Hampton felt a little different for me right when I was there. I didn't care about the football team. I wasn't particularly in love with the homecoming experience at Hampton, which may be like taboo to say because I was always going back to North Carolina for the homecoming experience at A&T.

Xavier Jernigan: Right.

Zakiya: Which is known now as the greatest homecoming on Earth.

Xavier Jernigan: That's the biggest marketing shenanigans.

Zakiya: I know. I'm just I knew you wouldnt like that

Xavier Jernigan: nobody else calls it that

Titi: X dont like that

Xavier Jernigan: It's a farce stop it. Stop the Aggies.

Zakiya: And so I went to the predominantly black high school in Greensboro, which is down the street from A&T, which they used to call little T, where the marching band culture was really big. So the homecoming for high school will often be that Friday and then it's A&T Homecoming Saturday. Right. So people would show up at my high school homecoming. The oldheads would come back and they trying to out cheer and out march the current high school students. And so for me, it's always been going back seeing my friends and family in Greensboro. I would bring my college friends with me from Hampton to come down and experience this. We would hang out all night on Friday. We will be coming into the house late, but at 7:00, my mom was coming and knocking on that door like everybody ready to go to the parade. So we're getting up to go.

Xavier Jernigan: Early morning.

Early morning to the parade and you're out there all day tailgating, walking around, who knows where you parked your car, you're probably blocked in. You're going to be there all day. People are riding up and down High Point Road, all these places near the campus and you just running into people, tailgating the smells, the sounds, generators going. People were selling those mix CDs. You can hear the game in the background. I never really went to the game, but I will always hear cheering. I mean, it's a roar because there are so many people and older folks coming back and asking you what you're doing with your life. How can they help you? What do you want to do next? It is such a communal affair. Everybody there is rooting for everybody else.

Xavier Jernigan: I totally agree.

Zakiya: They used to have huge concerts Saturday night cause of course, I remember my first homecoming concert I went to. It was rough riders. DMX was there. Jay-Z was there. It was the hard knock life tour coming through and hearing those things on the radio leading up to it is just excitement. It is celebration in his truest sense.

Titi: So y'all have given us a little bit of background on the sites, but let's get into the sound of Homecoming. Tell me about the bands.

Xavier Jernigan: Yeah, so you got the guys with the flags. So the flag corps they go hard. They throw them flags down and get to poppin Florida style because we grew up on booty shake and bass. Zakiya mentioned the bass, bass culture and car culture is everything, especially Daytona like home of NASCAR birthplace of auto racing. The drum majors I think it's seven of them. And it was the first female drum major a couple of years ago. So that was a big deal. And she showed out. Now the band on the field, you know, they got this fast march that FAMU is known for, and it's like a billion of them on the field marching 100. But that's a misnomer. It's literally like 400 of them guys out on a field, but they're going to play the contemporary music. I was watching a game on ESPN and they played Leave the door open. Bruno Mars and Silk Sonic.

Zakiya: I saw this.

Xavier Jernigan: Right, you saw that oh, at the end of their performance, they somehow in a formation, formed a stick figure with a basketball, dunking it in a hoop. They did this on the field and you knew exactly what they were doing. It was the illest thing I've ever seen in my life with the marching band.

Zakiya: Do you remember Battle of the bands.

Xavier Jernigan: Of course

Zakiya: People used to go to battle of the bands and the band would show up. I don't even feel like drum line really captured it. It didn't quite get it.

Xavier Jernigan: Yeah.

Zakiya: It was intense

Xavier Jernigan: Yeah, they tried.

Zakiya: It was intense, intense.

Xavier Jernigan: But they'll also play classics because they're not trying to forget the people who came back, right? Parents, they want to play music from your time, too, so everybody's singing along. Everybody stand is so at PWI Homecoming or football games. Halftime, that's when you go use the bathroom. Go eat, get back for the third quarter. So this is the true first quarter super packed everybody's in the stands because it's the beginning of the game. Then by halfway through the first quarter, the only people who stay in are people really care about the game. Everybody else is going on below the stands to walk around on a stadium, seeing people showing off your outfit. It's a day outfit and you're going to change clothes for to go out later on. But by halftime, you have your butt in your seat and everybody standing. We call it a corner to corner, like every corner of the stadium filled in is beautiful because this is a sea of black people, all on one accord and the band is playing. We got a chant and it's "FAMU, FAMU, FAM got dang U all right. All right. All right." Everybody's just singing the songs, their hype, and then so the band kills it, right? They break it down. They just basically go to instruments now and just start popping and dancing like hard. Then they pick up the instruments. They go off the field. But the last people off the field with the marching 100 are the tuba players, and they form a line like a snake coming off the field. Literally, all the tubes jump in the air and in on a split at the end like dominoes. But the last tuba gets to show out and spin around, and everybody's like aye and it's the dopest thing. So when the tuba player goes up in the air and goes down into the split, the whole crowd goes, Oh boom. Everybody says that in unison. And this is one thing to it. I tell you all about the hundred when they march off the field at the end of their performance. They always played good times. So that's what they march off the field on. It's like everybody gets it, it's just the most special thing you've ever seen in your life, and it's nothing like it. I just I love it.

Zakiya: If you are not sad about missing homecoming after hearing X, describe that you have no heart. You've never known a good time.

Titi: You ain't never had fun in your life.

Xavier Jernigan: You have no soul.

Zakiya: Never had fun in your life. Thats right Titi

Xavier Jernigan: Never, ever, ever. Oh my gosh. I love everything about it.

Zakiya: So thinking about all of this stuff, all of this is part of the experience. And it makes me reflect on what it means to be a product of an HBCU.

Titi: Yes, there's just a certain je ne sais quoi about people who have graduated from an HBCU. There's a certain confidence, a level of intelligence, just a swag about them that's just different. And so I want you guys to kind of just talk about some of the great people from your institutions or just from HBCUs in general that have been really impactful on your lives and just what that means to both of you to be the product of an HBCU.

Xavier Jernigan: Yeah, it's like a lineage that you just so proud of, right Z? like, of course if they go to FAM, I'm super hype about that. But if they went to an HBCU and they making a noise, I go crazy.

Zakiya: Yes, clap it up. For me, it really feels like the people who are in my class, in the class above me, I am still in awe of my peers.

Xavier Jernigan: Me too. Yes.

Zakiya: And Titi knows some of my friends and I'm like

Zakiya: They all are killing the game. Doctors, lawyers,

Zakiya: everybody's doing something because now we're at the stage where you're starting to see people pivot and you're like, Yo, I didn't know you could do that. My friend and her husband both went to Hampton Kia, who went to grad school with us. And they've built this huge real estate vacation rental home empire. I'm like, Girl, what did you learn this interior design?

Zakiya: Kia has a Ph.D. in the sciences.

Zakiya: Yes, anesthesiology, she studied dose acceptance Pain.

Titi: And now she's selling real estate.

Zakiya: You're taking these places. I'm like, You're about to be competing with Airbnb. Is this legal? When I got to Atlanta, I asked one of my really close friends of high school. I said, Who do I need to know in Atlanta? Who should I be helping? He's like, This is my homeboy from Morehouse he's running for city council. Here's somebody else Board of Education like, you feel

so proud of these folks. I feel so excited to say I know them they went to HBCU and we should spend our dollars here, right giving back to folks who are trying to make these things happen. How do you support the people who are out here trying to do it? And people are saying Dope Labs, you've got no dope labs just off the strength that I went to HBCU.

Xavier Jernigan: Same with the get up. We got a really big audience and the show is doing really great. But the fact that I get to be the current day representation of somebody who went to an HBCU and is just proud of that, and I bring those stories into the show.

Zakiya: You are the modern day Dwayne Wayne.

Xavier Jernigan: Thank you. And you were on a show Titi you been on the show, but like for us to be able to represent that, I talk about my boy, Bryant price. I brag on him all the time. He's this dope marketing media exec and Lance, my college roommate from South Chicago. He built the parachute on the Mars rover. He did the parachute.

Zakiya: Wow. Call him right now, I have questions.

Xavier Jernigan: I now have people who like, Yo, my kid wants to go to FAM literally today I got a text and she texted me and was like my 17 year old niece listened to the get up for the first time yesterday and loved it. She's looking at HBCU's. FAMU, was on our list. Can you come meet with us and talk to her about fam? I was like, We doing it next week. That's important. My friend's daughter, she's in her first semester at FAM. They stop through Brooklyn on the way. I brought her two fam hoodies like top of the line exclusive joints like here let me get you right. And when I go down there, I'm taking you out to dinner and I got kids that ask me, can you get me some fam gear? Yes, I will. I'm telling you it touches me like makes me tear up every time.

Zakiya: That's real. It just makes me think that my first year of grad school, I'm the grad school counselor for the summer program for students who are interested in science. So we're at Duke and I have a young man who went to Winston-Salem State. He is like a deer in the headlights. What do I do this and that? Him and another young woman from Winston-Salem State? And to see them both become professors now in the sciences. He's a professor at Vanderbilt. She's a professor at Bowie State. Our family reunion used to have this saying and "let the circle be unbroken." Right? We just feeding into each other and let it expand, Titi get on in the circle. You're in here. You got your HAMpton sweatshirt you in here.

Xavier Jernigan: You in the FAM.

Titi: Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm going to do my best to represent well.

Zakiya: Yeah, it's looking out for the next generation, so it's good to be proud. Wear this like, you wear Nike, wear this like everybody wearing those Yale sweatshirts. OK.

Xavier Jernigan: And you can be a part of this. We're going to pull you in and we're going to tell you about it. And we're going to make a way for you. To be able to do that is one of my greatest joys in my life right now.

Zakiya: I love it.

Titi: I really love this conversation. I love hearing about both of your experiences, I should have went to Hampton. Thank you both so much for sharing all of this. It's been heartwarming just to be able to sit back and just listen to you guys Talk about this.

Xavier Jernigan: My honor, y'all know I've been a day one Dope Labs fan listener.

Titi: Yes, you have.

Xavier Jernigan: And I'm proud of what you are doing, really. I'm proud of how y'all represent for black women and for your varied experiences. Because one thing I do talk about is I don't like if somebody that went to an HBCU tries to invalidate the experience of somebody that went to a PWI. All of these experiences are valid, so I'm glad that you have to adult women on this show that represent both sides and a commonality because there's merit and value in all of it, that's the beauty of our people.

Zakiya: All right. It is time, for one thing.

Titi: I'm so excited. What's your one thing Z?

Zakiya: Well, we kind of already talked about my one thing in the episode. And if you follow me on social media, I've shared it too. My one thing is Corine DeMarco. This is a brand that produces HBCU apparel, and I love their sweaters. That's where I got the sweater that Titi talks about wearing and pretending that she was a Hampton alum. I am a big fan of this brand, so please go support this small brand that's putting out great HBCU gear. That's Corin DeMarco.com

Titi: My one thing is Corine DeMarco.

Zakiya: Perfect. That's it for Lab 051. What did you think? Did you learn something new about HBCUs? Call us at 202-567-7028 and tell us what you thought or if you have an idea for a lab we should do this semester tell us that too. We really love hearing from you. That's 202-567-7028.

Titi: And don't forget, there's so much more for you to dig into on our website. There will be a cheat sheet there for today's lab and additional links and resources in the show notes. Plus, you can sign up for our newsletter, so check it out at Dope Labs podcast dot com. Special thanks to today's guest expert is Xavier Jernigan.

Zakiya: You can find Xavier every weekday at seven a.m. on Spotify as Morning Show. The get up

Titi: reading our credits today is an HBCU grad, one of the Zakiya's long time besties, and one of my new friends Alana House.

Zakiya: Yes, certified clown and a certified goon.

Alana House: Hi, I'm Elena House and I'm a proud graduate of Hampton University, an HBCU. I'm also a goon and a clown, as Titi and Zakiya shared, but also a scholar too. You can find Dope Labs on Twitter and Instagram @DopeLabs podcast. Titi is on Twitter @dr_tsho, and you can find Zakiya @zsaidso. Dope Labs is a Spotify original production from Mega Ohm Media Group. Producers are Jenny Radelet Mast and Lydia Smith of Wave Runner Studios. Editing and sound designed by Rob Smierciak. Mixing by Hannis Brown. Original music composed and produced by Taka Yasuzawa and Alex Sugiura. Creative producers are Candace Manriquez Wrenn and Corinne Gilliard. Special thanks to Shirley Ramos, Yasmeen Afifi, Kimu Elolia, Teal Kratky and Brian Marquis. Executive producers from MegaOhm media group are Titi Shodiya and Zakiya Whatley. And I'm sending all of this to you from my teenage sons really stinky closet because we are the only quiet place in this whole house. Pray for moms. Thanks for having me. I love you both.