

Quotes from Black/Indigenous/Disabled Communities' Collective Response to HarperCollins, HarperOne, Ijeoma Oluo's book Be A Revolution

select quotes from a 9-page Collective Response sent to HarperCollins/HarperOne editors & attorneys on June 30, 2024, from profiled people, families, organizations, and our Elders.

Posted on Instagram @freedommapping xx:xx pm EST, 6 July 2024



[access info, including audio, video, slides, & more at bit.ly/pullbearevolution]

IG Post Content immediately below, followed by image descriptions of ten slides in written English.

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Spoken English audio & American Sign Language coming in next post and linked added here once uploaded to youtube: [insert ASL link]

Please note any additional access needs in the comment section. Thank you in advance for your patience with the process as this is all very emotionally, physically, spiritually, etc. taxing and labor intensive for those involved/affected/responding.

Thank you also in advance for sharing in advance with your networks.

Our Collective Demands/Requests to HarperCollins/HarperOne:

1. Send all interviewees unaltered copies of their videos, transcripts, quotes, etc. and block author's access to the same (Interviewees and others named should decide what redress looks like for themselves);
2. Cease and desist use/sharing of any content about us--especially those who have stated we do not consent to being publicly written about (and those who did not affirmatively consent), including and especially our videos, transcripts, quotes;
3. Notify all interviewees of these concerns (some may still not know they have "profiles" and those profiled in this book should be made properly aware of these concerns);
4. Pull all current versions of Be A Revolution in all formats. If you wish to re-issue the book, do so without any content from those who did not explicitly consent to the specific content, and without any references to loved ones, Ancestors, minors, employment information, and alleged identities to which people did not explicitly and affirmatively consent.
5. Issue an errata, retraction, public statement of apology, correction, accountability.

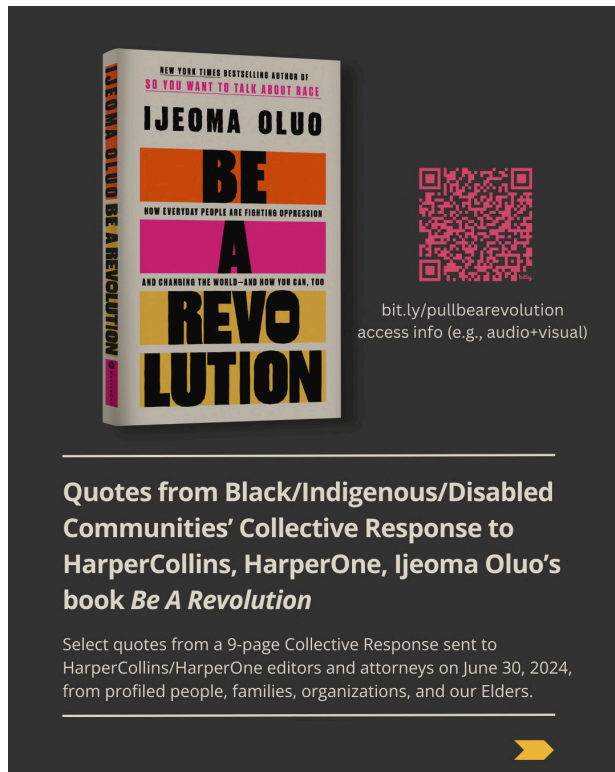
SLIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

SLIDE 1:

Quotes from Black/Indigenous/Disabled Communities' Collective Response to HarperOne & Ijeoma Oluo's book Be A Revolution

from profiled people, families, organizations, Elders. Sent to HarperCollins editors and attorneys, 30 June 2024.

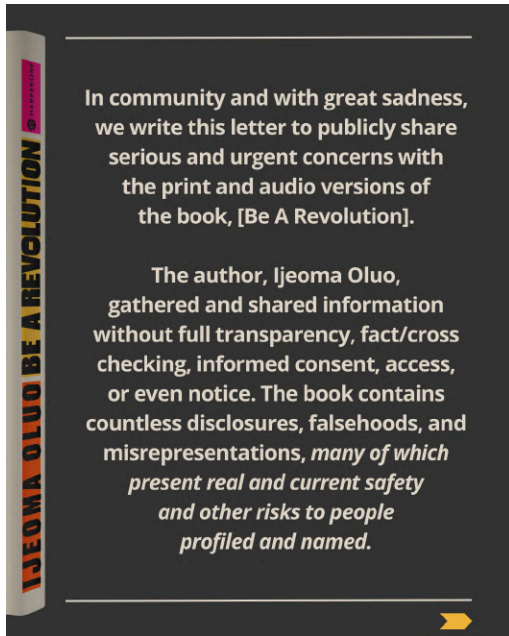
Image of book cover and side panel (creme background with orange pink and yellow rectangles and the title of the book) alongside a QR code with access information: bit.ly/pullbearevolution access info (e.g., audio+visual)



SLIDE 2:

In community and with great sadness, we write this letter to publicly share serious and urgent concerns with the print and audio versions of the book, [Be A Revolution].

The author, Ijeoma Oluo, gathered and shared information without full transparency, fact/cross checking, informed consent, access, or even notice. The book contains countless disclosures, falsehoods, and misrepresentations, *many of which present real and current safety and other risks to people profiled and named.*

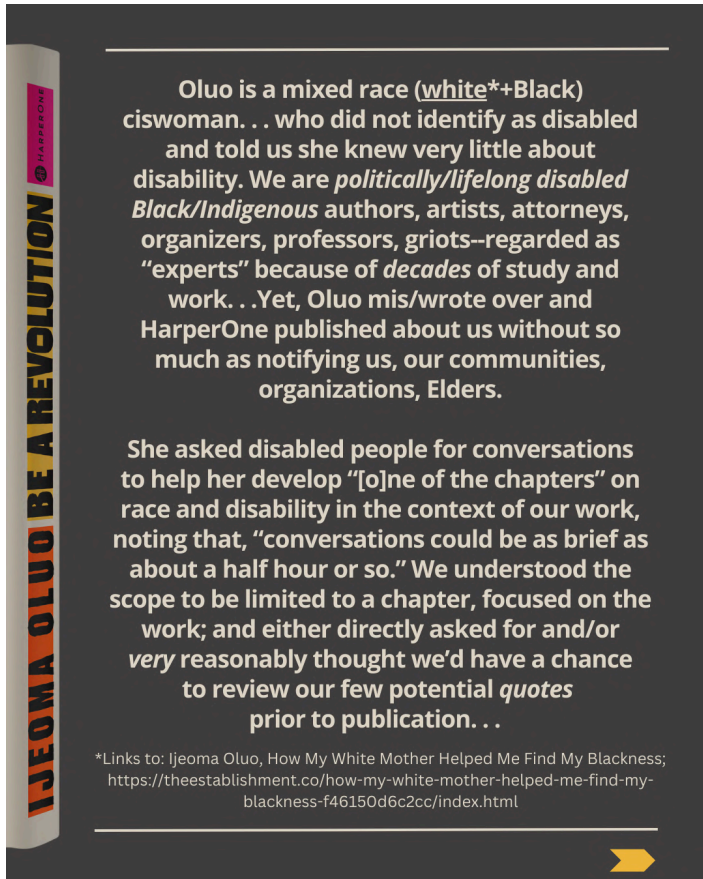


SLIDE 3:

Oluo is a mixed race (white*+Black) ciswoman. . . who did not identify as disabled and told us she knew very little about disability. We are *politically/lifelong disabled Black/Indigenous* authors, artists, attorneys, organizers, professors, griots--regarded as “experts” because of decades of study and work. . . Yet, Oluo mis/wrote over and HarperOne published about us without so much as notifying us, our communities, organizations, Elders.

She asked disabled people for conversations to help her develop “[o]ne of the chapters” on race and disability in the context of our work, noting that, “conversations could be as brief as about a half hour or so.” We understood the scope to be limited to a chapter, focused on the work; and either directly asked for and/or very reasonably thought we’d have a chance to review our few potential quotes prior to publication. . .

*Links to: Ijeoma Oluo, How My White Mother Helped Me Find My Blackness;
<https://theestablishment.co/how-my-white-mother-helped-me-find-my-blackness-f46150d6c2cc/index.html>



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Slide 4:

Oluo requested and set the tone for very casual, short, intimate community-based conversations, not formal on the record interviews. . .

Oluo also did not provide any of us questions to prepare before the conversations or drafts for review before publication--not even to those of us with disability/language/communication/AAC access needs. . .

Despite Oluo creating conditions for language/conversation/disclosures not suitable for audiences outside herself with interviews, she radically repurposed "very organic" private conversations meant for a single chapter into "intimate first-person interviews" of almost all disabled interviewees as individuals.

These were taken directly to print some two years later including profiles, language, misinformation, and framing that many of us would *never* consent to.



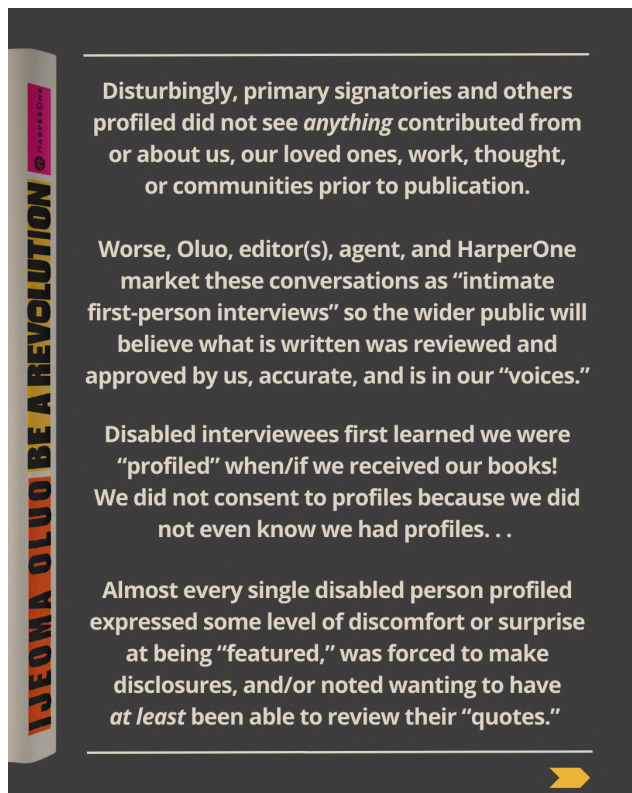
Slide 5:

Disturbingly, primary signatories and others profiled did not see *anything* contributed from or about us, our loved ones, work, thought, or communities prior to publication.

Worse, Oluo, editor(s), agent, and HarperOne market these conversations as “intimate first-person interviews” so the wider public will believe what is written was reviewed and approved by us, accurate, and is in our “voices.”

Disabled interviewees first learned we were “profiled” when/if we received our books! We did not consent to profiles because we did not even know we had profiles. . .

Almost every single disabled person profiled expressed some level of discomfort or surprise at being “featured,” was forced to make disclosures, and/or noted wanting to have *at least* been able to review their “quotes.”



Slide 6:

In early February 2024, one of us urgently communicated serious concerns about consent, privacy, and misrepresentation to Oluo and HarperOne. . . Instead of treading lightly and humbly and giving our communities time and space to collectively process and consider how to respond to her violations, Oluo shared yet more private/inaccurate information about us from private conversations to *hundreds of thousands* of followers. . . ; called attention to and chastise [others](#)* who had done what we’d just noted she had done; and continued sharing [at length](#)** about disability and ableism on her book/media tour, calling yet more attention to us and misinformation about us, our communities, work, and Ancestors.

Had HarperOne and Oluo immediately checked with others profiled, they would have easily and quickly discovered the scope and gravity of this breach and could have immediately begun harm reduction.

* Links to Oluo's 14 Feb. 2024 Instagram post, chastising Brené Brown; <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C3Vz3Pdvkg0/>. We notified Oluo & HarperCollins of urgent concerns on 3 and 8 February 2024, respectively.

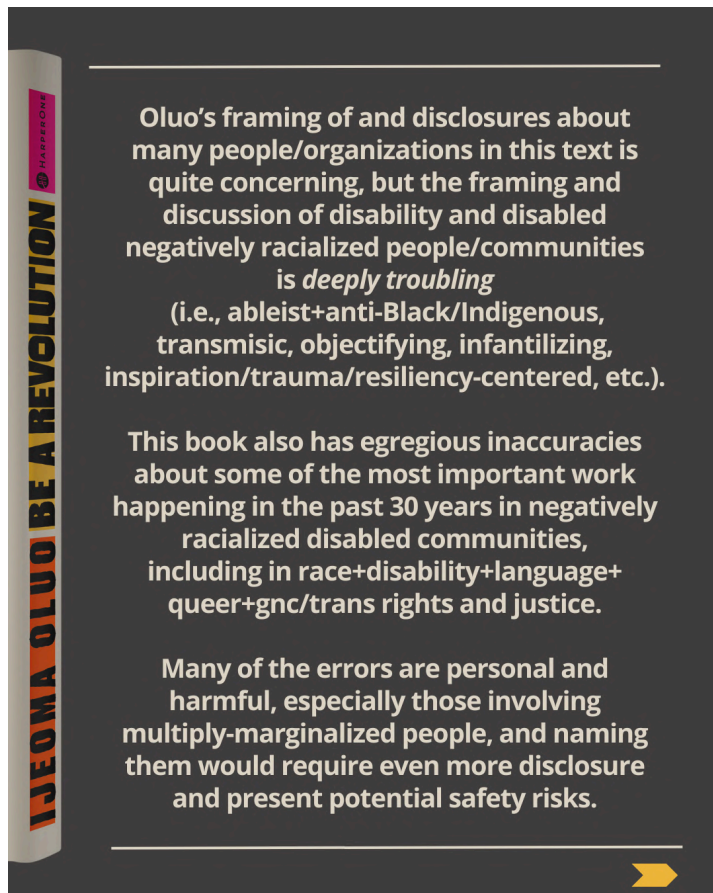
** Links to Oluo C-SPAN interview, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?532583-1/after-words-ijeoma-oluo>.



Slide 7:

Oluo's framing of and disclosures about many people/organizations in this text is quite concerning, but the framing and discussion of disability and disabled negatively racialized people/communities is *deeply troubling* (i.e., ableist+anti-Black/Indigenous, transmic, objectifying, infantilizing, inspiration/trauma/resiliency-centered, etc.).

This book also has egregious inaccuracies about some of the most important work happening in the past 30 years in negatively racialized disabled communities, including in race+disability+language+queer+gnc/trans rights and justice. Many of the errors are personal and harmful, especially those involving multiply-marginalized people, and naming them would require even more disclosure and present potential safety risks.



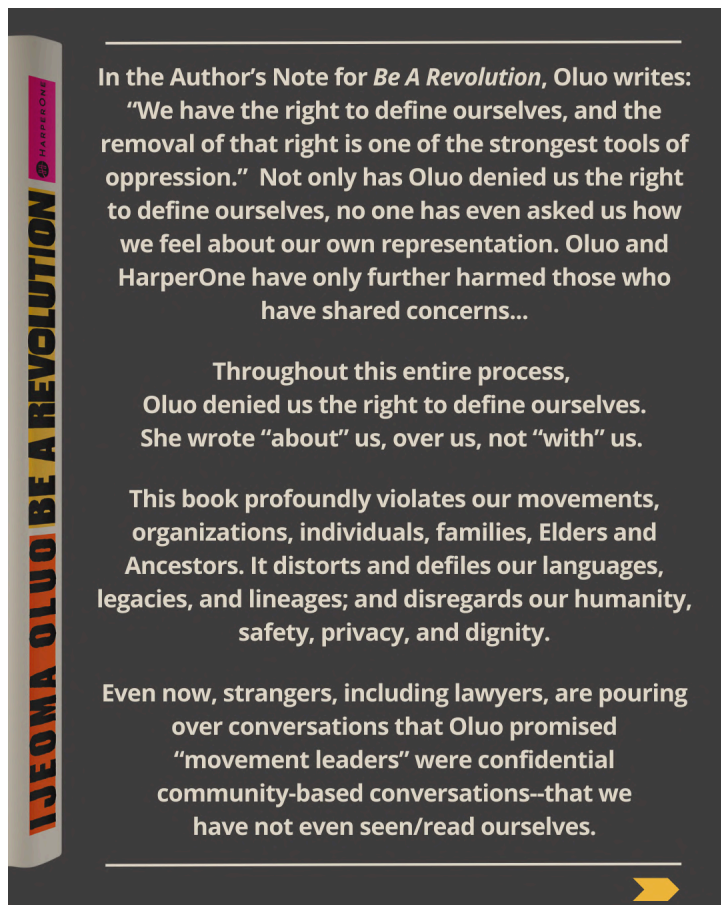
Slide 8:

In the Author's Note for *Be A Revolution*, Oluo writes: "We have the right to define ourselves, and the removal of that right is one of the strongest tools of oppression." Not only has Oluo denied us the right to define ourselves, no one has even asked us how we feel about our own representation. Oluo and HarperOne have only further harmed those who have shared concerns...

Throughout this entire process, Oluo denied us the right to define ourselves. She wrote “about” us, over us, not “with” us.

This book profoundly violates our movements, organizations, individuals, families, Elders and Ancestors. It distorts and defiles our languages, legacies, and lineages; and disregards our humanity, safety, privacy, and dignity.

Even now, strangers, including lawyers, are pouring over conversations that Oluo promised “movement leaders” were confidential community-based conversations--that we have not even seen/read ourselves.

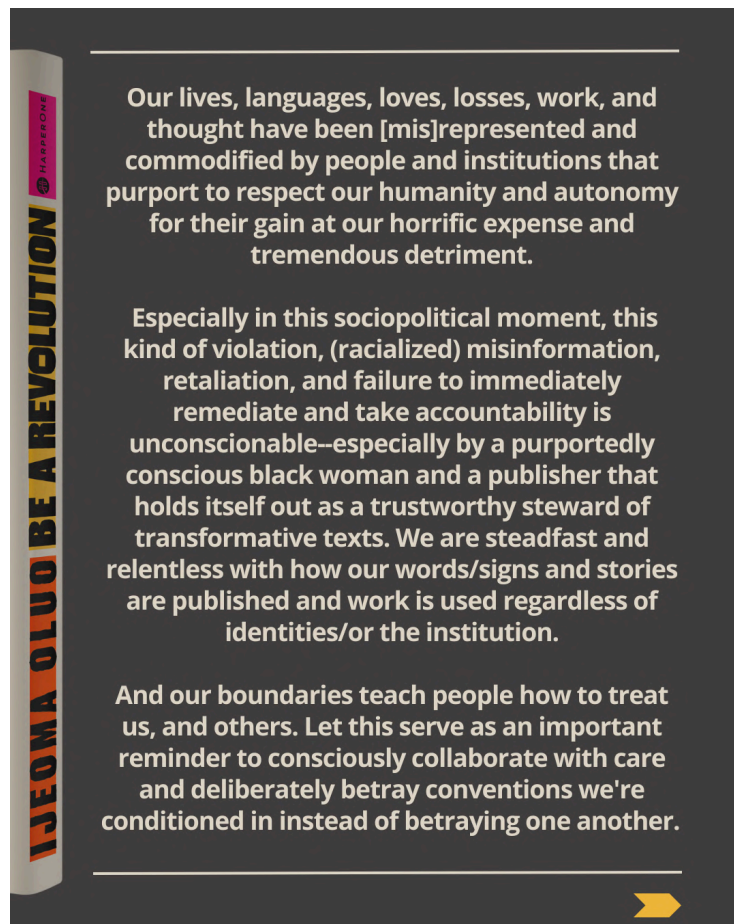


Slide 9:

Our lives, languages, loves, losses, work, and thought have been [mis]represented and commodified by people and institutions that purport to respect our humanity and autonomy for their gain at our horrific expense and tremendous detriment.

Especially in this sociopolitical moment, this kind of violation, (racialized) misinformation, retaliation, and failure to immediately remediate and take accountability is unconscionable--especially by a purportedly conscious black woman and a publisher that holds itself out as a trustworthy steward of transformative texts. We are steadfast and relentless with how our words/signs and stories are published and work is used regardless of identities/or the institution.

And our boundaries teach people how to treat us, and others. Let this serve as an important reminder to consciously collaborate with care and deliberately betray conventions we're conditioned in instead of betraying one another.



Slide 10:

Primary Signatories*:

Talila A. Lewis & Family

Sami Schalk

Alice Wong

Secondary Signatories*:

Three misrepresented families;

one misrepresented disabled person;

seven signatories on behalf of the following three
misrepresented organizations/collectives:

HEARD

the Harriet Tubman Collective

#DisabilitySolidarity

Elder Signatories*:

Nine respected Elders from a variety of backgrounds, organizations, universities, and communities across north and south americas, many of whom are foundational to the work that Oluo/HarperOne misrepresented in this book.

*primary signatories represent themselves and others who prefer not to be named who were “featured/profiled” non-consensually & without notice; secondary signatories are mis-named/represented without consent or notice; all identities other than primary signatories are omitted for privacy due to ongoing retaliation by Ijeoma Oluo and HarperOne/HarperCollins. We may share more information in other places at other times.

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