

Crowned and Proud Script

(Suspenseful Music)

Francesca Oi: *Because I grew up with like, in school, like where people would say like, oh, black fro's or like, massive hair was like, kind of like a distraction in class*

Kitan- *Like how did it impact your mental health when people were making comment or like microaggressions on your hair*

Francesca *For me, I kind of like bring me down and like not to love my hair and myself. I would kind of have like problems where I would see like that wasn't pretty enough or like I didn't fit society's example of having good hair*

(suspenseful music getting louder)

Kitan- This is what many black women go through. They often get judged for their natural hair, and they aren't seen as enough. 66 percent of Black girls in majority-white schools report experiencing hair discrimination. And 81% of black girls at majority white schools wish their hair was straight, according to the Dove Crown Research Study.

(unsettling music)

Shanti Forte: *I think yeah, it's just a really big insecurity problem, especially if you grew up like around all white people and there was not really a lot of black students who also didn't wear the natural hair out. So like, you're just kind of trying to fit in, I feel like.*

Madison : *Uhh, I wish they understood. It takes a long time. Really. Like, I think, especially for black women, it takes probably us the longest out of any other group of people to take care of and do our hair, like, on a daily basis.*

Kitan *Since many black women face discrimination because of their hair, they think they will be accepted more because of their braids*

Shanti *Growing up, i wanted straight hair, but like I couldn't do that with my natural hair. So, for the most part, once I got into middle school, I just wore braids all the time.*

Kitan *Except theirs one issue*

Music playing

Kitan *Black female students at UConn are struggling to find places nearby to get their hair done. Welcome to Crowned and Proud. I'm your host, Kitan Arole, and I share the stories of black female college students at predominantly white institutions - or*

PWIs. Today, we are diving into the University of Connecticut. With the lack of resources available for black women, it begs the question, why is it so hard to find hairstylists, and how do microaggressions on black hair affect female college students' mental health at the University of Connecticut?

INTRO MUSIC

Madison: *Like, if I'm home for the weekend and I know that, like, I just text my hair lady, like, a couple weeks in and I'll be like, hey, I'm coming home. Like, do you have any spots open for me to get my hair done? And I just do that instead, because it's, like, hard to get your hair done up here.*

This is Madison Rollins, a junior pharmacy student at UConn. Many places around UConn cost up to \$500 to do hair, and the extensions for the styles are not included.

Francesca- *I would go back home, like, at least once a month to get my hair braided because my aunt does hair.*

Kitan- *Francesca Oni is from New Jersey and lives over 2 hours away from UConn. Yet she will still make the hike to leave UConn to get her hair done because of the lack of resources available.*

Francesca- *Yeah I feel like it would be easier, especially because I live 2 hours away from UConn and, like, easier to maintain my hair and like have like, like maintain my time, basically.*

Kitan *The closest place to get your hair done for a reasonable price is Hartford, which can be difficult for students to go to if they don't have any means of transportation.*

Shanti- *So a lot of times I have to go to my dad's house, he lives in Hartford and then we have to drive like an extra 20 minutes just to get my hair done. Because on campus, it's like, there's not that many, well, there are braiders, but it's just like, they're more expensive than the person I go to. So it's kind of hard.*

(SOUND SCENE B SOUL)

Kitan - *Shanti Forte, a sophomore is in the residential learning community at UConn called BSOUL. With around 55 members, BSOUL only has black women, which can help create a sense of community and acceptance around her hair.*

Shanti *I feel like being able to see other girls wear their hair naturally or in different styles, like braids or weave or anything, it just makes me feel a lot more confident because, like, oh, at least I see other people that look like me and they're pretty, too, and all this stuff. And I just feel a lot more confident.*

Kitan *But even with this community, Shanti still finds it difficult to get her hair done on campus. For Madison, she would rather go home. She said it's too much stress figuring out the timing of her appointments and doesn't want a student to do it for her.*

Madison: *One getting in contact with somebody who can do it is going to be hard and then two, like, then I have to, like work around that person, like, school schedule, and then I have to, like, jump through all these loopholes, and then it's, like, can't installation fee this and show up late, and I'm going to add another fee and all this other stuff. And like, no shades of people, you know, like, respect the hustle, but you're probably just going to end up getting your hair, like, in somebody's dorm sitting in, like, the hardwood chair. So it's like, I go home.*

Laughing

Kitan- *But even though Madison doesn't want to end up getting her hair done by a student, it can be a great option for some. Katie Sangare, is a freshman at UConn who owns a business called To the Salon. She braids other students' hair in her dorm.*

Katie - *I like wanna like do something like affordable for like all of us, because I know how like it's hard to get your hair braided, like on campus here,*

Kitan: Why *should like black hair be more accessible at PWI's?*

Katie *I feel like it should be accessible because there is kind of a lot of like black people now in campus as like the PWIs and I think we should get more like to be more comfortable so you like more welcome on campus.*

Kitan *And then describe like what's a typical process, like when someone comes into your room after for an appointment.*

Katie *I just tried to make them comfortable. I give them, like, candies.*

(Candy wrapper unwrapping)

Katie *I usually have like a bucket*

(bucket sound on the floor)

Katie *when you walk in. I have, like my whole setup and then they come if their hair*

blow dried

(Blow dryer sound)

Katie *so I just go like right away. And I try to just like either listen to music or watch like something. For my last appointment.*

(Love Island soundbite overlay Katie)

Katie *:We were watching Love Island because she wasn't into it. I wasn't into it. My roommate put us into it, so we just like started watching it together. And then she said she's going to come back to just like finish it.*

Kitan *: For Katie, the most requested style is small bohemian knotless box braids. She said this style can take up to 8 hours to do.*

(Clock ticking sound slow)

appointment

Kitan *And like, what music or do you like, like listening to, like during your appointment?*

Katie *Well, they to anything and everything. We listen to like afrobeats, R&B, like a lot of, like musical genres of music.*

(Sza R&B)

Kitan *But not everyone thinks a lack of options for braiding on campus is an issue.*

Evelyn Simien *As somebody that's in Africana studies who teaches black feminist politics, and we spend time on hair and beauty, you know, my pushback is why not go bona fide natural, whether it's the big chop or why spend \$300 on hair and then you owe money to the university for credits.*

Kitan *This is Professor Evelyn Simien, the head faculty member of the Africana Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut.*

Evelyn- *Who can't see myself, even with two girls, I cannot see myself. But I say that as somebody with a six figure salary that I can get down with paying \$300 or more for a car note, for a car, you can drive or I can pay that fee bill before I put it on hair.*

Kitan *Mm hmm.*

Amanda Cannada- *I think that's kind of a layered question. In terms of how, one, how society feels about tight, coiled hair and how it makes black women feel about their own*

hair.

Kitan *This is Amanda Cannada, the coordinator for the Africana Studies Institute. She disagreed with Professor Simien.*

Amanda- *There are many girls that grow up and they don't know how to take care of their hair and they aren't taught to love their own hair that comes out of their head. Well, I'm saying for you, because you and your girls don't have tight coiled hair, it's easier for y'all to just get away with like, I'm just going to wear my natural hair. That is not easier for someone like me or Kitan because society makes, it acts like 4C hair or whatever, you know, you want to call it to hair as something ugly or not attractive or unappealing.*

Kitan *4C hair is a hair type that has tightly coiled z shaped curls. It often is very thick and requires lots of care.*

Amanda- *Take that as a someone who is a young person and they're going to college away and they don't have that knowledge*

Evelyn- *So I think here's a challenge, because I went to HBCU. And I'm like, well, where's the sisterhood? Where's the? Because having gone to an HBCU, girl, we spent our Friday nights, you know, even with my hair.*

Amanda *When I was an undergrad, we had it was a girl named her, it was Rosalyn So we would all go to Rosalyn*

Simien *Its a slumber party and we would do that.*

Amanda- *But not, but that, I feel like somewhere along the line, that knowledge, that sisterhood and the knowledge of like doing things, of doing your own hair, like somewhere along the line that got lost. And I'm not sure when exactly that happened, but it got lost.*

(Music)

Kitan- *Black female college students can begin to have poor hair esteem, which is the emotional and psychological impact of hair on self-esteem. It's often associated with depression and anxiety. But change can still occur...*

(Uplifting music)

Kitan *What would you want with like black women at UConn to know that they should do with their hair?*

Francesca - *I would say embrace it, embrace your natural hair, embrace your curls because as black women, we're told our hair is to distraction. So I feel like us having confidence within our hair is something that is very inspiring and shows us allows us to be ourselves. It shows us that we are more than what society sees us as*

(Closing music)

Kitan- *Love and staying true to yourself. That is always going to be the most important part. Even though it is difficult for black women at UCONN to get their hair braided, it's important for them to know that's not what defines them, and they are beautiful with or without their natural hair. With hair braiders on campus, and the recent addition of black hair products in the student union we are all taking the necessary steps to help make UConn more inclusive for black women. This is Kitan Arole, and thank you for listening to Crowned and Proud.*

(Music fades out)