



Library podcast

Seattle Urban Book Expo Author Showcase

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[00:00:35] Hi everybody. It's nice to see you here tonight. Thanks for being here. I'm Stesha Brandon. I'm the Literature and Humanities Program Manager here at The Seattle Public Library and I am delighted to welcome you to tonight's showcase of authors from the Seattle urban Book Expo. Before we get started tonight I have just a couple of announcements I would like to thank the Seattle Times for their generous promotional support for library programs and we are also grateful to our author series sponsor Gary Kunis. Finally a big thank you to The Seattle Public Library Foundation. Private gifts to the foundation from thousands of donors helped the library provide free programs and services that touch the lives of people in our community so to library foundation donors here with us tonight. Thank you very much for your support. Now it is my pleasure to introduce Jeffrey Cheatham. The second Jeffrey is the author of two books The family Jones and the ex of Rex. And why is Jane so mad. He is also the founder of the Seattle urban Book Expo which will take place this coming Saturday at Washington Hall. Jeffrey is going to talk a little bit about Sal urban Book Expo and then introduce tonight's featured authors Kenneth Martinez Myra Ostler and Shuja driver. And after the authors read there's going to be time for your questions. And then the authors will be selling and signing books at the table to your right. So without further ado please help me welcome the founder of Seattle Urban Book Expo Jeffrey Cheatham.

[00:01:57] Hello good evening. Thank you all for coming tonight. Appreciate it. You all could have been somewhere else but you guys chose to be here. So thank you so much. It means a lot.

[00:02:07] I am the founder of the Seattle Book Expo. And what that means to me is an opportunity for. Authors of color. To express their voices and show their worlds. For those who are interested. As will be showcased tonight by our featured authors I started my journey as a writer in 2014 when I saw published my first book The Family Johnson eggs Rex. And the reason I self published the families of the rest was because of my daughter my child or my manager and how they came about was I went to Barnes and Noble. She was interested in dinosaur books and I wanted the Barnes and Noble to look for a dinosaur book for her and I can find one. And then I noticed that there were too many black or brown kids on the cover of the children's books so I wanted to write one for it just because that. So

after I published the books. I thought that you know once you read a book you publish it you just let it be in the world and do the magic for you. No. I had to do some work. So during that time of me trying to promote my book I was looking for not only people to show my books to but a community of writers who looked like me who thought like me who came from the world I came from and I had a hard time finding them and I was at a point in my life where I was thinking do I want to continue doing this.

[00:03:37] And then I asked myself Did I give this 9 percent. And I answered no and then I asked myself what will happen if you dig if it's on a percent. Okay let's find out. At that time I was invited to a book fair out in Toronto Canada. Was there an NBA All-Star weekend in February in Canada 11 below zero. It was I well so I went out there when I went out there. I just fell in love with not only the city of Canada but the book fair because I saw nothing but black and brown authors showcasing their work. And it wasn't just one particular genre of science fiction. It

[00:04:14] Was romance it was erotica it was children's books so it wasn't it wasn't a monolith. And I was like Man this is so this is so cool.

[00:04:22] I was feeling more festive I'm dancing in the streets and then when I came back home in Seattle it is all washed away. And I was like wow am I feel like that. And it was like because there isn't like that here in Seattle and I did my research.

[00:04:35] We do have great organizations that cater to African-American and Latino community literary scene but I can find. Has there ever been a Book Expo to cater to that demographic. So I decided to start one. The Seattle Open Book Expo. And I wanted to. And I created it to give an opportunity for the authors in our communities to connect with the people of our communities to showcase our literary work. The first one I did was in October and we had two hundred and twenty five people show up for that one. At eight authors so it was a I like to call a literary party because we had music and food there and it was a great experience. And afterwards it went by like a bolt of lightning as well by so fast. After I came back to me was the next one was the next one I was like I only even on to do another one. This is what I've done. And then my daughter asks me one day so daddy we can do the next one. I think for the next one you should have a bouncy house or you should have a bouncy pool. And I was like no cost money. And I also think about the next one. And then I challenge myself to not only do this again but create a better opportunity for more authors in my community to showcase their work in case they feel like I felt when I first started to I feel like I had nobody to talk to about.

[00:05:58] My creative process or how do you edit your work or how do you why would I go to proofread. So not only is to me the ultimate Book Expo not just an event I want to create to become a lifestyle where people come to Seattle and there are you know either Polynesian Latino black Asian or whatever. They can come and say hey I want to write a book who would I go to. They'll say SUV and they come. To a place where they feel welcome regardless of writing level background culture sex. It doesn't matter if you have something to say I want SUV to help you present that to the world. And that's what I hope this Saturday does for whoever comes and supports they get that vibe from us when they come and see the work that's being put in by everybody who's there because we have a

lot of talented writers they're going gonna be there on Saturday and I hope everybody here shows up to the one on Saturday. Watching it all August 26 from 1 to 5 p.m.. That's why I started this Yellow Book Expo.

[00:07:04] Now without further ado we have a few of the authors who will be there at the Seattle Book Expo. We're going to come up and read parts from their stories. And the first one and I'm going by order of appearance Kenneth Martinez. Hi

[00:07:26] I'm Kenneth Martinez. I'm one of the members of Seattle screamer let's create is a community of writers and people developing their writing skills in Spanish. So we are very passionate about promoting Creative Writing promoting our language which is Spanish and we want to help people that are learning to write polishing their skills in writing that are looking for venues to publish. We want to help them all to publish in our native language which is Hispanic Spanish. We have a little bit more than 50 people that have joined the group. There is a website that is out there is our Facebook group and we all try to help others. The people that have published in this group are very little but there are many others that I just want to improve their skills I want to be in touch with other writers limited a little bit about my personal my personal story. I am from Mexico. I was born in Mexico. I was raised in Mexico. I moved to Seattle six years ago. Another long ago. I am an engineer. But I always had a passion for writing. Ever since I was a little kid I love reading. I love writing but my dad didn't think I could actually make any money writing so I ended up being an engineer. But I always loved writing is like a passion is a need to write. So even though I have a job I couldn't stop writing I writes short stories something like tails. And after after several years because I've been writing since I don't know middle school.

[00:09:02] Somebody told me that I should bother them because they are well received. So I tried here and there and after a few and fruitful attempts I finally was able to publish my first book. Don't you trust Quintus which means Tom and another story's DOMO is the hero of one of the short stories. I really enjoy what we are promoting here. A benefit for everyone to be able to showcase their skills in writing even in any language because this is not about the English right. It's in Spanish or in any other language that we are called to write. Thank you for this opportunity. On behalf of Sara let's create. Thank you for allowing us showing what the Spanish is to show the richness and the beauty of our language. But now. When I read the little bit one of my stories. I hope you understand the Spanish because. Because it's in Spanish and when I read just a little bit a couple of pages then the name of the short story is called Monday and this is a person is a guy that is in high school and he starts to receive these messages about somebody. That wants to kill him. So he received a message that says Hey you're gonna die this way in this day. So it starts to get a little bit darker and trickier. And when I read a couple of pages loonies. They're muttering Ken Guinness going to be don't

[00:10:27] Jiggle this whiskey professor yet yeah. The end tells me they can travel. Comedic the algos overrated director Roman solo thing got the input tomorrow we'll liberate that. Yes. It's just like I said one though will not double estimates later than me bunker. It. Is could. Awesome married this. Year. What the end for. This book. Are they having more children love on a salvo. I interrogated a liberal Miguel. Cedillo momentous over Democrats fascinated by this complete gallows as the great

TV so Alamo etc. enthrall alone Salon go on the world will air a little boy amateur Kenneth Freund will say saying that wasn't me remarry Marianna said I mean. Could awesome miraculous World War I you got a on him and a professor on my right hand. I think it's better ask the lassie interview wrap it up tomorrow missing cantankerous gotta let us know Ivanka on that costume rope and went through all that a lot there Serafina on the way you sent me I think is the most you ever feel is love Uncle love's like editors that we are my dad Kenneth Gabriel real honesty. Bruce Gordon. And do my classy Moscow cheekily wonders I was sick of a lot more yellow bagel debacle cause look at the end of one political ad on Halloween Komodo Lu the in D Day there we are Muhtar Kent your real ones in. Alien the up for DNA. See you soon have Roma coming other immigrants to work a union remote I meant to be circa they like I I will form the view investigative miss if you are interested in the end which is about this guy named Kenneth. Awkwardly that somebody wants to kill him you can continue. This story is one of the 15 short stories in my book. The more you trust Quintus. Thank you very much.

[00:12:16] Thanks again. Appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you. So a lot along. So the next reader who's here by print appearance is Nari Ostler Hello my name is Myra Ostler.

[00:12:34] I was born in California but raised in Seattle so a local Seattle light and I too have been writing my entire life. I always felt that. I had a writing talent. But just last year in October finally decided to publish my first book. And just wanted to get a feel for. If my writing or how I felt I was writing translated to other people. And I think it did. So from that point I've also published a second book. And. I'm on my way to publishing several more. Before being a writer. I'm actually a reader. And one thing that I dislike is a mundane story that's predictable. I like to have entertainment as spontaneity in stories that I read and I wanted to give that to readers. So I feel like my book retribution is filled with twists and turns and every chapter and gives you that experience where you're not waiting for something to happen there's something is always happening and the story is pushing you through it rather than pushing yourself through the story.

[00:13:37] So I'm going to read the premise of retribution something we can all relate to a tumultuous relationship. And the main character is a CYA and she's going through that with her husband and she does some things in the book that we might consider doing or be tempted to do but wouldn't. And then there's repercussions for those actions. So it's a tale of love betrayal and murder. So a lot of drama in it but also I think that it has some lessons that we can use in life.

[00:14:06] So I'm gonna read a very dramatic part from my book. James sat in the car with his son waiting on her to come out of the coffee shop. When she called Steven and told him that she was having his child. He didn't believe it. JAMES They called back and confirm what she said apologizing to the other man for snaking him for his girl. Reluctantly Steven agreed to meet up with her and go over how. How they could either co parent the little ones successfully or raise the baby together. Jay had messed around with many women that were in relationships before some of them even married. This was the first time he actually regretted doing it. Steven seemed like a good guy and he would have definitely loved her and treated her better than Jay would have. He hoped everything will work out for them. About 30 minutes after arriving she came walking out with a smile on her face. James could tell the meeting must have gone well by her body language. He was eager to find out what the

outcome was. As she approached the car he leaned over and opened the passenger door for two shots rang out shattering the peaceful sunny day. Jay immediately squeezed between the seats implored his son's head down covering him. When he was sure there would be no more gunfire. He sat up with his own pistol cocked and ready. The scene outside was chaotic as people ran for cover and checked each other for injuries on the ground outside. She laid on her back. A puddle of blood had formed near her head and her Hazel contacts stared up at the sunny sky. Jay looked down at her one last time. Damn. He lamented as he reluctantly closed the door and pulled away. He looked in his rearview mirror just in time to see Stephen sitting on the ground with her in his arms. That was. From. My first. Book retribution and then I also have a follow up to it

[00:15:50] And thank you for listening.

[00:15:57] Thank you for that.

[00:15:59] Last but not least my guy Zachary driver. Good evening.

[00:16:04] So I began writing my book while I was incarcerated.

[00:16:07] I was in prison from about 15 to 25 years old and I just was released two years ago. Here to Seattle since I was birthed in the Seattle because sometimes I see prison as being my mother and like a womb that I was cultivated and created. I knew inside of me read this portion of this book and then yeah we'll talk more in the Q and A I dropped the idea of you and I and reconnected with the consciousness of interdependence that we are all one. I remember that not too long ago we were all connected a love

[00:16:47] That we were not yet divided by the Maya or the allusions in this road and that we still side each other as the beloved. We had a god they for each other and play and seriousness had spoken about our next upcoming adventure taking these bodies as vehicles to our destination appear to vacation education fun and enlightenment. We had spoken about the tragic events that we knew we would experience and the joyous occasions that would make it all worth living. We loved on one another because we know that once embodying this human flesh we would only see the difference when we looked into each other's no face. We would judge and evaluate and forget that we are all siblings friends and lovers. It hurt our hearts to think that we could forget such an amazing and powerful love. A love that existed here in the dark. And the world vibrating at a frequency which was above what we would perceive. Once we took these bodies but with love and desire for truth we made our choice and we came into them. And I remember times when I saw you or at least it seemed for a split second that I saw you in the male person that I saw you in the person who came and cleaned up the dishes. I believe I saw you and the president the judge even the police officer. I thought that I had seen you but my mind told me that I had not until now. Now I see you and I remember you. I see you even when you do not see me.

[00:18:10] And although it hurts when you do not remember me I can remember the times when we were so in love. The purest and best love ever. The love that was so sweet so safe and so warm

where I felt absolute joy in sharing my wild creative and vulnerable self I remember those times so when you passed me with no acknowledgment I smile when you cross the street when you see me I smile. When I reflect on the prison sentences that you blessed me with a smile still I remember to smile when I reflect on when my earth mother screamed as your fist connected with her face or when you told me that she wanted a divorce I smiled because I remember love and I know that you will remember too even when you say you do not want to live for God. I smile because I know one day even if by accident you will look inside of yourself and you will find God there and we will smile together. I heard it once said that it is love that we must aim for any great archer knows that if there is any wind in the air they must compensate for that resistance and gravity as they train the arrow on the target. If they aimed directly at the bull's eye the resistance will force the arrow under the target as it decreases in velocity. This means even if ever so slightly it will still miss the intended target.

[00:19:28] When we pull back the bow strings of social change it is not enough to aim for justice along with all the resistance that the forces we oppose provide. If we aim for justice unfortunately it is inevitable we will fall short of even that the great archer takes into consideration the opposing force. When they aim the arrow and they aim above their intended target so that when resistance comes it actually works in favor of the archer helping the arrow find its way onto the perfect path. The pad the Archer had intended it to take all along. Therefore like the great archers we must not aim for social justice. We must stand for love and this way as we meet our resistance. We smile because we remember our ultimate destination is a place between love justice and liberation for all beings on this earth.

[00:20:18] Thank you thank you so much.

[00:20:25] And if you guys be so kind. I get all the authors to come up here and sit on the hot seat. I mean the front row. I'll see you guys give another round of applause for all the books I read today.

[00:20:35] Those so here's the scary part.

[00:20:42] Does anybody have any questions.

[00:20:46] Two reasons.

[00:20:47] Oh I see three. One like when I went to the bookstore to look for a dinosaur book for my daughter I couldn't find one. And I wanted to write one for my daughter. Over there in the corner too. When I came back from college I was trying to get into the movie business by trying to write. I was trying to write movie scripts. No success whatsoever. So it was I wanted to have a personal achievement you know something that I did. You know like to be proud of myself.

[00:21:19] So all those things go by in this case kids became out. That's where I came from for me.

[00:21:27] Let's see. My mother actually continued to press me to do it while I was in prison and I was like No mom I'm not about to write a book I'm in prison who wants to hear what story is there to say

how to get arrested and one hundred and wants that fly you know. But she continued to press me to write and to write and to write and to write and eventually one day I started doing it and it was really therapeutic actually to sit there and write because I'd been reading for so long having nothing to do other than lift weights and read books that weren't actually picked up the pen and put it to paper. There was a big release. So I continued to do that continue to do that. And then I actually shared it with a friend who shared it with one of her friends friend sons. And he read part of it and he's like you got to finish this like this like this is important.

[00:22:19] Like this really moved me. And when I heard that I was like All right then it really became a mission of mine to finish writing this book. The reason I

[00:22:30] Am in the writing is because well I I don't know I. I could not do it. As I mentioned since I was a kid I love reading. When I open a book and read the story it captivated me. It awakens emotions to my imagination. It feels great to be into a book it will be a story in character. So the only thing that I wanted to do was express or try to try to write to do the same for others as a book has done for me. So I feel like a force I feel like a passion I feel like I need to take a pen and a piece of paper and start writing to share a story and to try to convey an emotion of feeling a sense of all that others.

[00:23:20] Other books have done to me for me the decision to write a book was influenced by family members especially my husband. He's read a lot of my writing over the years and felt like I should publish a book. But I was afraid to put myself out there like that. So eventually I decided to go ahead and write a book mainly because I read a string of books that I would start reading and I was too far in to turn back and then I would get to the end and I would do it.

[00:23:51] I wanted to write something that would be relatable and have death for the characters. So even though it's for entertainment and fiction I want to relate to. That's why I started I started with the retribution series because I felt like people closest to me could relate to that series.

[00:24:11] I want to branch out. I am branching out in fiction.

[00:24:19] How do you guys feel about writing and being an author.

[00:24:24] It be the weird. A couple of weeks ago they invited me to this Hispanic Channel host call aptitude Latina is like a program. And they interviewed me and there I think I was on TV

[00:24:40] And they treat me like an hour. And I was like really is that me. I guess I'm still not used to the idea that I'm an outlier but if I look my name in Google is there. So

[00:24:51] Israel is true.

[00:24:52] And if it is I'm still getting used to the feeling it feels really fulfilling when people read this book and they tell me like how it's transformed them and I mean it's people from all different walks of

life. And so I'm getting that feedback or at being an author with this book out and hearing the feedback that comes from people who have read it and have had a relatable experience with it.

[00:25:20] It's really fulfilling. And like Jeffrey talked about earlier it's there's a sense of achievement that came with writing something and getting it published how you feel about being a writer it's dope. Dismissal. Because I look at a writer or author

[00:25:42] As we our job is to create worlds that people can believe in whether real or fake. And the fact that people can invest their time and energy into the world that we put on paper is a great responsibility that I enjoy having. And also it makes me love it even more the fact that it creates opportunities like this to share my story. So

[00:26:09] I think it's dope either of you describe what you believe to be urban drama is it means for me urban fiction or urban drama.

[00:26:21] Are things that relate to black and minority culture and things that enlighten other people on our culture.

[00:26:31] And can either negate stereotypes or reinforce stereotypes. Well that's what I think of is urban fiction things that we would naturally relate to and other people might have. Okay. That they would learn

[00:26:45] Things about our culture from reading she said. Yes.

[00:26:50] Follow up.

[00:26:51] Well just off the cuff urban technically means community in a way but it's usually it's a euphemism to describe African-Americans and Latinos. So I just look at urban as community and that's why I put it in the name to see out of Seattle urban book expo because I'm talking about the Seattle community book expo.

[00:27:16] That's what it means to me. Actually when I heard you ask that question like there was a question in my own mind because I never actually said I'm an urban person you know what I mean like that's an accent and that's a name that someone's placed on me and I don't know where it even comes from community or whatever but I'm an author. You know I mean I am a you know I'm a. Whatever title

[00:27:42] You can probably tell from what I read. I don't even go with like I'm a human being. I think you know like it's too deep for me.

[00:27:48] But as far as urban goes that sounds like Exxon and that was placed on us.

[00:27:54] You know what I mean so I have a question for the panel. I literally met all you guys this year which I'm happy about. So what I did last year well calendar year because we're not twelve months in yet.

[00:28:09] So I wanted to know is what made you guys to decide that the Seattle Green Book Expo will be a great opportunity for you to showcase your work besides me asking.

[00:28:22] I wanted to be with my people you know where my people's hearts where I miss that. And I thought it was a great opportunity because after meeting you in the vibe that I felt from you. And actually some of the other authors that I know who had actually shut up Emily money Rose course and Fred you know different authors they were amped about it.

[00:28:47] And so I wanted to join in and be part of that community.

[00:28:51] So mine the first book that I written it was scheduled to be released October 1st of last year. And lo and behold I found out there wasn't Seattle urban book expo on October 1st. So it was kind of like the stars aligned and I was meant to be there. And so I kind of used it as the launch of my first book.

[00:29:11] So I felt like it was meant to be that's why I ended up in it. My husband knew Jeff and it just worked out perfectly.

[00:29:19] And here I am. My answer is going to be you may have satellite TV satellite feedback but he has like something a five or six published authors. I get even though they agent generates some kind of noise in the Hispanic community in Seattle they are not very well known I guess because there is just not enough opportunities or no opportunities for the Hispanic community among all the minorities. So this is a great opportunity for the Hispanic community for all these Polish authors. There is no heat on Monday they'll order Victoria myself to show that they dissected a lot of writing a lot of publishing in the in the Hispanic community in the Spanish language so I wanted to ask what

[00:30:04] Other authors have influence you guys. Start writing tells me personally. The one book that really got me interested in being a writer was makes me want to holler. By Nathan McCall. His autobiography cause. His story is pretty much he grew up in Norfolk Virginia. And he went through hard times as in gangs street violence. He got locked up and you know being a reporter for The Washington Post I thought I was a dope story. Also The Autobiography of Malcolm X told to Alex Haley told her through her. But the time. That was an interesting story as well. And also the hurricane the story about Rubin Carter. I just love stories about people overcoming harsh conditions and hard times because it grounds me and it humbles me. It makes me realize that I'm not really going to shit because we can get in our head sometimes think that we're going through hard stuff but then you read somebody else's story like what I'm going through is easy compared to this person like Rubin Carter got framed for murder.

[00:31:07] It was in there for like more than two three decades for a crime he didn't commit. How do you remain strong knowing that you need because you didn't do something. Where does that strength come from. Nathan McCall you grow up in the rough streets of Norfolk Virginia.

[00:31:22] Racism gang violence drugs and you rose above that to become a reporter for The Washington Post. Those stories are dope. And also. I've. Ever stories of the giver. Bellows. So every child a story. So those those are the books and force me to really look at writing too. And also professional wrestling as well.

[00:31:43] So one of my favorite authors is Terry McMillan. And the last time I was actually in this room I came where she was doing a reading. So it's weird that I did a reading where she did one. So I definitely enjoy her books. Ironically I don't really read a lot of urban fiction. I read a lot of. Self-help books. And things like that. So um I don't have a favorite author per say I like to read a variety of things. So whatever I enjoy it's me at the moment. I. Typically read about that. And it just so happens that I wrote in this genre but my plan is not to just hold into one genre. How has the political climate influenced. What you think. About in terms of

[00:32:31] How you want to communicate with your audience.

[00:32:39] Yes absolutely. There's a quote says and so the lion learns to write the story will always glorify the hundred and I feel like it absolutely resonates with my community. And I mean for so many years even recently actually there was a text book that was put out in the Texas. I want to say middle schools that said that there was no slaves that they were just migrant workers. And so you know until we start sharing our stories and telling folks whatever identity you have our truth

[00:33:15] And really push in our truth I'll refer to a Sanskrit term satyagraha which means truth emotion or the force of the truth. It was something a pillar that Gandhi moved that moved from and so he would say yes like this is a peaceful nonviolent movement. And at the same time the truth is the truth and if you're oppressing someone then we're going to stand with that inaction not just you know armchair philosophizing or intellectualizing real events that are happening in the community and in the streets. So for me this an opportunity is where I can go and teach yoga in my community where I can talk to folks and share whatever education or knowledge that I have and learn from them and we can collectively grow together. I'm all about it from the Hispanic perspective in this political climate that has been like a lot of

[00:34:10] Finger pointing at us but I need to say I we cannot truly compare to what the Afro-American community has experienced so I cannot be in the same boat. We have expected some backlash but these very recent. And I just kind of know what you guys experience and going through. I know that from the Hispanic. Perspective there has been like a few talks and these groups had a less. What we want to do is showcase that the Hispanic community provides value to America. We want to showcase that we provide beauty and culture and respect and that this society is better with offsetting it with our language with our traditions with our history. We want to show that Hispanics are Hispanics and reach this country so we don't want to fight. We don't want to attack. We don't want to

get into the lower side we just want to rise and and showcase whether we're capable of how is that reflected in your art differently feel like you're taking more risk to say when you want to say or feel like you need to take cover because. I personally in the things that I'm writing in the in the in the top 10 I am having I am personally taking more risk because I live in the great nation of Seattle where like it is a bar of a lot of support but I don't know why I good I could do if I were in some other city or in other state right now I want to be a voice and support

[00:35:40] What the Hispanic community is going through in all the country. But. I

[00:35:45] At least personally is because I feel I am protected unsafe in this city and in this state so for me the political climate has had a big influence on my writing.

[00:35:57] I've decided that my next story should should focus on a social issue. So what I'm currently working on. We have the side of minority men being racially profiled are disproportionately victimized by police brutality and then we have the side of the police. Who. Are the police and sometimes they're fear and sometimes very discriminating. So one side that doesn't get told. Is the side of the black police officer. So he's from our community. Yet he's on this team. So my next story that I'm working on is coming from that point of view and the struggles that this officer goes through in their life dealing with that situation and also having a job working with the people that his community feels are victimizing them as a children's book author.

[00:36:46] My responsibility is representation through imagery and also to realize that we are all in the fight together because every time you see something go down is just not just black people out there it's not just Latinos. It's not just white. It's not just Asians. It's all of us. So that means there needs to be a conversation that we all need to have an honest brutal conversation on where we stand. What's going on in the country or in the world today. But to answer your question directly about how what a look what my art. Is imagery and representation and not just pigeonholing the lifestyle that I see as being an African-American male only being relegated to one side. Because one of the major reasons why I wanted to write children's books is when I was when I did see children's books with black and brown kids on it there was always took place in New York

[00:37:42] In the country or in a rural countryside somewhere or had some to do with slavery or civil rights. And my biggest question is. We can't fight war lots. We can't deal with dinosaurs. We can't find a mystical world only forbids Yeah we can. But I wanted to challenge myself and only showcase that. But make sure the story was of quality though so that people could understand what I was trying to say with representation with my kids books.

[00:38:12] Time for one more question if there is one.

[00:38:18] To be honest my inspiration comes from readers and their feedback on my work lets me know what I need to improve on what they feel about my work or what they want to see next what they enjoy. Did not enjoy so daily feedback that I received from people that have read my work. It is very inspiring I remember after my first book I said Oh I'll write a book

[00:38:40] Put it out and just leave it there then people started saying oh wins. Part two coming out. I said oh let me write part 2 0 then part 2 out and then people say. Part 3. So I feel like readers push me to keep going. So as long as I keep asking gnocchi writing. We get up to part two hundred will still be going my inspiration comes from reading.

[00:39:02] I love reading. I read on kind of follow thoughts I've all kind of genera. I read approximately a book a week and I get my inspiration from all the books.

[00:39:11] I resonate with what the sister said here and feedback about what the book has helped people with is definitely one. But then as far as the motivation to continue writing for me is definitely yoga as and practice and just getting deep into the philosophy and wanting to share that with people and a kind of like an encoded way in what I write.

[00:39:36] So I have two motivations. One is my daughter. She's one and the second one is I want to create an environment where everybody

[00:39:52] Respects each other because everybody understands each other in the best way to understand somebody is by learning about them. The best way to learn about somebody is by reading about them. So if I can create literary work where it makes somebody who doesn't know about the black community and he read my book and he wants to know more about. That side of it I feel like my. I've accomplished something. So is this is this a community that I want to live in personally where everybody respect each other. Why. Would I have to get along. Because that's impossible. I get along but we respect one another. That'll take us a long way. So that's where my motivation comes from.

[00:40:32] Excellent. Thank you guys. Thank you for coming.

[00:40:36] The authors will be signing books right over here and yeah. And you can chat and mingle and learn more about how to get books published. Okay. Thanks guys. Thank you.

[00:40:49] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.