



Library podcast

Roots & Routes: Decolonizing Immigration

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[00:00:57] And I have like five of them so you may want to hold your applause and we'll get through all of them Asian Counseling and Referral Services.

[00:01:06] I love the love you're like we can't hold it back.

[00:01:08] We decided that we're going to think everyone didn't show social justice. Northwest. WASHINGTON Immigrant Solidarity Network. And of course Earshot Jazz

[00:01:34] We're going to get ready for a turn and talk but really quickly when we do public engagement programs at the library there are about connection and we can connect in person and we can also connect over social media. So if you have your cell phone if you would do us all a favor please silence it. You don't have to put it away. We don't shame people for using their phones during programs. But if you want to tweet tonight our hash tag is hash tag decolonize S P L ass's in Seattle Pias and public and library decolonize. SPL. So you may have noticed if you're looking at the slide show that we have a turn and talk. So of course tonight's theme is looking at immigration through the lens of decolonizing. Now did anybody look at the word decolonizing go. What does that mean. Well take a moment at literally a moment like two minutes and talk to your neighbor about what decolonising means to you. But I want to give you a sample. In a moment we're going to have a mini keynote from a Noack Herat from ACLU Washington yes they like the best audience for a podcast.

[00:02:50] Thank you for that awesome energy.

[00:02:53] When we asked Enoka to tell us a little bit more about what did colonizing immigration meant to her actually. Can we hand a microphone to someone who would read aloud from the audience because I've been talking for a while.

[00:03:08] They don't want that slide.

[00:03:10] It is a all right turn into a sample tweet to decolonize immigration. We must decriminalize and demilitarise enforcement against indigenous black and brown people.

[00:03:24] We must build a system that centers the power and humanity of immigrants. Recognizing that migration. For love opportunity health

[00:03:34] Refuge is a fundamental aspect of being human naaka. So

[00:03:43] I am going to grab that Mike back from you but for now just in the spirit of community. Introduce yourself to your neighbor. Share your gender pronouns and say a little bit more about what decolonizing immigration means to you. And it'll literally just be like a minute. Go for it. I figured I would call her MC Dakoda Camacho because Ducote and I were kind of rehearsing. You all actually made it really easy so we didn't have to rehearse this much but I was like Dakoda I'm going to ask you what decolonizing immigration means to you.

[00:04:21] And what did you say you were going to do Dakota.

[00:04:25] I said I was going to chant. Do you go ahead and try that out.

[00:04:32] In the. Oh in the. Ye oh Mandrill to you had you said he and I'm going to see how the man in my family my mobile going to go down the up to me mimp then and then the second and see how the. Man. And. I. Will be Giacobbe ma saying. I

[00:05:30] Say he Leshin you saying hootch you and I say no. Do you she asked Singh do some thank you.

[00:05:45] Dakotah.

[00:05:52] So as you can see I'm going to leave you in the able hands of a really wonderful MC and Dakotah is going to introduce a very esteemed guest for us and we're going to get going with our program.

[00:06:04] Thank you.

[00:06:10] Yes my name is Dacota Alcantara Akamatsu and I am Makarau from the highlands of Lagos was Zindani on my father's side and on my mother's side my lineage has come from a place that we call Europe and also from a place that we call your local which is the northern part of what dominating culture calls the Philippines. And I am really honored to be here on the lands that are sacred that have many ancestors all around us that have been here for since time immemorial is a phrase that I've learned from from the Kosilek peoples from the Duwamish peoples and the promised peoples of Swinomish the Shabab and all these nations which are thriving in the midst of this mess. Thank you very much to the ancestors. I want to also leave us in the hands of a very able person to walk almost into this land and that is that is a descendant of Chief Seattle. That is Ken Workman.

[00:07:01] Born and raised in Seattle the fourth great grandson of Chief Seattle Ken is a retired aerospace analyst whose hobbies include native language studies motor racing and data analytics and his retirement can enjoy his public service. He has been involved in the Duwamish River Cleanup coalition and Southwest Seattle historical society and remains committed to the Duwamish Tribe. Please we have a warm round of applause for Mr. Ken workman and all indigenous community

[00:07:35] Thank you for your chat. Thank you for your work.

[00:07:42] Thank all of my friends for their travel to this this great house of learning.

[00:07:47] Today on the streets called Seattle but by formal introduction in our own language this language that was spoken by my grandfather and when I say that I mean great great great great grandfather Chief Seattle. It's the language that we were discouraged from using for so very long. And then when our children came back and they didn't want to talk in this way it would be an honor for me to speak in those words before you here today.

[00:08:27] And so my name in Lushootseed this language of the Coast Salish this language that are right here on the Duwamish land is your use films so yeah ustaz deeds da da ones I am Workmans of the Duwamish Tribe.

[00:08:45] Yay yay. OB's.

[00:08:48] John and great great great great grandson of Chief Seattle normally we go in when we introduce us to introduce ourselves. We say this is my mother this is my father this is my grandmother my my grandfather my uncle my aunt. And we we just go through our lineage until we see heads nod.

[00:09:10] It's just a long list of names so I just go straight to the chase.

[00:09:19] And so it's important to recognize all the hard work that goes on here today. And so for these words that were not allowed to speak for so very long. We have Alaskan friends from the plane get tribe who use this word Goodnow Cheech and so when they get on this land and they hear there's word they know that the Duwamish people recognize them and then they are welcome here.

[00:09:46] The Heida 300 miles south of the clean get they use Hauwa for their word for a thank you note Tsimshian Nadler's Deutsche com.

[00:09:59] You get down in the middle of British Columbia on the West Coast Vancouver Island you run into the new channel and they use a word means the same thing.

[00:10:09] Thank you the Canadian U.S. border. The Sandidge and the Lummi they use. Hi Scott. So with you here high school around here you know these people are saying thank you. Our friends to the north. The Tulalip used Taig right here the Squamish Duwamish it's no Kwami the Muckleshoot

and appear all up we use. So when we say yes we did it just did. Thanking you and our friends on the Columbia River use Hayam channel and not all of these ways. When these people come we say thank you for your journey to this place.

[00:10:51] Just as my grandfather who stood just across the bay right over there by it's a hundred and sixty seven years ago in 1851 and he told these new arrivals you are welcome here La little DCI Oddish or glad of that. Bring your canoe ashore bring your canoe you're sure you are welcome here.

[00:11:14] And so this word welcome is GWI. So when we say we it means I am welcoming you as an individual. When I say good grief it means I'm welcoming you I'm welcoming your entire candor. But when we say we had it means everybody is welcome here and so we say.

[00:11:42] Yeah yeah. Well Doug Hey thank you my friends for your big hearts. Good to see you.

[00:11:50] Hey we love where your great strength dog when he was high for your great knowledge little the ideational good we had. You are welcome here. You are invited here. Go ahead. We had the thank you

[00:12:26] I was listening to that and saying wow it's so beautiful because of my leg which the word is the pronoun of an individual. So just think about how our languages connect us also through our immigration and how we've been immigrating for thousands and thousands of years. So we thank you very much. So can we please keep that energy a welcoming welcoming to all of our ancestors coming from all directions. Also welcome an ancestor lineage of ancestors and the ancestors of to head out ahead. We'll be sharing the history. Of the

[00:13:03] Look ahead. We'll be sharing a history of race

[00:13:05] And immigration in the United States and after Nokia we will be having. We'll have a special performance of pomace from the Seattle Public Libraries. English language learners poetry class. So we have a shout out to all our bilingual people. You bilingual. Make some noise. If you

[00:13:20] Trilingual make some noise. New multilingual make some noise that should have been all the bilingual and the other lingual people.

[00:13:31] All right please welcome the no go ahead.

[00:13:38] Hi everyone. Thank you so much for showing up. Thank you so much for being here. My name is Enoka Hirata and immigration is personal to me. I am the proud daughter of Sri Lankan immigrant immigrants and I bring that perspective with me when I approach these issues and my liberation is intrinsically tied to this fight and I believe that yours is too. And while things like immigration and race while it's easy for us to intellectualize those things I think it's actually so much more powerful to to start from our own stories. And so I want to do another turn and talk where we get to share our migration stories because we're not all immigrants you know some of us were have

indigenous or native ancestry some of our ancestors were brought here against their will as slaves. But every one of us has a migration story of how we and our people got here. Migration is just a fundamental aspect of our humanity and a part of our reality. And so we're going to get an opportunity to share with one other person and to listen to someone else's migration story and so as the speaker we're going to try to keep it really crisp because I know that that these these stories are so important to us but as a speaker we're going to try to answer the question you know when did our people come. How did they come and why. And as a listener you know it just give the person space give them space to share. Give them your full attention. And then we'll actually switch. So you'll get one 2 minutes to be the speaker in two minutes to be the listener. And we're going to keep it like I said pretty pretty quick and I really love this exercise because these are really fundamental stories of our lives that we don't often get to share.

[00:15:26] But they are important in seeing how how all of this sort of fits together. So I'm going to time it. So please find someone to do a turn and talk with maybe someone new.

[00:15:40] All right. Thank you everyone. You know because of the forces of assimilation that have been a part of our country for generations.

[00:15:51] So many of our stories have gone invisible eyes are silenced. Some people more than others of course. But I really want you to carry your story and the story you heard into this presentation because because our stories are utterly shaped by policy and the law and the judges and justices who interpret that law.

[00:16:09] And so when you watch this presentation I hope you can see where your people sort of fit in. So when I talk about immigration law immigration law really answers three questions. Who can come who can stay and who can become one of us. I really see the question of citizenship as one of belonging. And lawmakers when they decide who can become one of us get to determine what it means to belong and who gets to belong in our American community.

[00:16:42] And the first U.S. Supreme Court case that determines this question who answers this question Who gets to be a United States citizen. Is the Dred Scott case. And so this is the eve of the civil you know before the Civil War and 90 1857 and Dred Scott was born into servitude. His owner took him to a free state and gave him autonomy and independence and he eventually married and had children and when his owner passed away he became afraid that the owner's wife would separate his family and that his family members would be sold into slavery. And so he sued for his freedom and his citizenship in the United States.

[00:17:22] And the Supreme Court answered that question by saying the black man has no rights that the white man is bound to respect race. They made the determination that black people were not and could never become citizens of the United States of America.

[00:17:40] And so the very first time our country answers this question of who can become a citizen. It is entirely based on race and what it says is that white people can be. And black people cannot. And more than that in in this opinion Native people are referred to as subjects of a foreign government.

[00:17:57] So there's already been a determination that native people are not one of us are not American cannot become citizens.

[00:18:07] After the Civil War the 14th Amendment is enacted that allowed for all persons born or naturalized in the United States to become citizens. And that's why my brother and I were born to Sri Lankan parents but we were born here. That's why we got to be citizens and millions of others.

[00:18:23] Right. And this is called Birthright Citizenship. The way this was interpreted because of the use of the word jurisdiction. This amendment actually excluded native people.

[00:18:32] So birthright citizenship did not apply and was not interpreted to apply to Native people. Even at this time so you can see it sort of again. You know who can who is in and who is out on it should note that that there were piecemeal acts that allowed certain native native people to become citizens naturalized if they served in the military if they married white people et cetera. But is this piecemeal. There wasn't a birthright citizenship. And so these cases have answered the question a little bit of who can become one of us. Now the question of who can come to the U.S. that is also something that's been that's been addressed by law. And you know I hear this myth around well you know people today should just follow the law because my ancestors follow the law and of course usually that's why someone who has a European heritage says that a white person. And part of that is because there weren't any laws restricting immigration. Right. Anyone could come especially here from Europe and can anyone name the very first law limiting who could come into the U.S..

[00:19:38] Exactly exactly. And the Chinese Exclusion Act the very first time. And I'm actually this because this picture is so troubling.

[00:19:47] I was covering it with picture my kids 0 9.

[00:19:55] And so what the Chinese Exclusion Act the very first time any limitation by our government has been placed on who can enter the U.S. is a Chinese Exclusion Act. Once again entirely based on race and nationality and this. And you know many people have spoken about this but Washington State was instrumental in getting the Chinese Exclusion Act passed. And this is a poster from Mayr west bank of Tacoma. And so that is just ingrained also in our history. Locally and I wasn't going to put the slide in because I know time is scarce but because of the news I just had to so Wang Kim Ark is a man who was born in San Francisco to Chinese parents and he moved to and he traveled to China to go visit his family. And when he came back into the United States an emboldened border guard denied him entrance and said there's a the Chinese Exclusion Act is in play. You're Chinese and you will always be Chinese. You're not American you cannot come inside. Right. And so this is sort of what it showed me sort of what policy what rhetoric what law and what the climate can do.

[00:21:03] And we're seeing this every day today against Latinos people. Right. So a month ago CBP agents Border Patrol agents in Montana arrested people because they're speaking Spanish.

[00:21:15] And then just yesterday the Washington Post had an article talking about how U.S. citizenship documents passport documents are being denied to two people of Mexican heritage. You know even though they have birth

[00:21:29] Birth certificates saying you know and what that is is an emboldened law enforcement agency that is is is internalizing the racism and the rhetoric and just applying it willy nilly. Thankfully the U.S. Supreme Court went the right way and granted and agreed with Wong Kim Ark that he should be allowed in the country and that anyone born in the U.S. was a citizen. So then again the question of who can become one of us 1096. There's no dog whistling right like this is just in our laws the way that you can because the only people who could become citizens in our country or people who are. Who are white. And aliens of African descent and this is you know and this is one of those things where it's in in our laws and it remained on our laws for decades. Right. So again even if you could come into the United States the only people who would actually become citizens or people who are white. Right. And and this also you can see you know so many of the racial dynamics that are. Are currently in play place that still happened today. You can see the setup for them by these laws. And so this idea that non black people of color are pitted against black people to be sort of work towards whiteness in order to belong.

[00:22:45] You know it starts from some of these laws and we see a couple decades later that that these laws get challenged and the first case to challenge this is to cow Ozawa and he didn't challenge it on the fact that it was based on race. There are equal protection or 14th Amendment protects equal protection against this kind of racism. And I don't know that the courts would have found in his favor anyways. But what he argues is that Japanese people are white and should belong and should become citizens. And his argument had three prongs to it. He's had said look at our skin color our skin color is white. Look at our religion. He had converted to Christianity. Look at my language. He drafted his own brief and what he was saying is that I am as assimilated as possible. And this is something that I think a lot of Asian Americans and like I said non nonblack people of color feel like this is this is part of that. Right. Assimilating not to American ness but to whiteness. And that was the only way that one could actually belong right.

[00:23:46] And to be one of us is to be is to convince to convince the government that you're white.

[00:23:52] And so the Supreme Court answered unanimously and they said you know it's not about skin color. It's not about skin color. And this is a term they use the swarthy Eastern Europeans you know they have their dark skin way people thought of skin color swarthy. Right.

[00:24:07] And you know there are essays about like when did the Irish become white when the Talian because we know that there's prejudice against those groups too. But for all of these laws they were always seen as white. They were able to assimilate because of their skin color.

[00:24:19] So what they said was that no was actually based on science at the time. Racist science had only three categories of race and Caucasian was one of them.

[00:24:29] And Japanese people were not caucasian under science and so no you could not become a citizen you cannot because you're not white and it just sent this message that the Japanese perpetually inherently foreign. Same with the Chinese Exclusion Act perpetually inherently foreign. The following year my people South Asians came forward and this is Bhagat Singh Thind who is the first turben man to serve in our in the U.S. military living in Bellingham Washington. He came forward and he had served in the military and said oh well kind of crazy but at the time South Asians were Caucasian. But they were a science

[00:25:10] Race. So they were Caucasian and he brought occasions. All right. And he actually was granted citizenship but then the government rescinded it and he took it up to the Supreme Court. And so this is a year later the same Supreme Court justices. So they've already said it's not about skin color. They say it's about science. But then they have this guy right. What are they going to do. And so they sort of bend over backwards to say we didn't quite mean just science we meant science and the popular notion of whiteness. And and this is the test for whiteness that is still on the books. These cases were never overruled. Right. And it still informs how we think of whiteness. Right so you wonder why Middle Easterners are considered white.

[00:25:53] Right. Are consider Caucasian in the census for example you know there were cases around Armenians Persians you know who is white who can assimilate in this way because of skin color and and a notion of whiteness.

[00:26:06] But again Indians perpetually inherently foreign. And so then after that this is like a parade of horrors right. But in 1924 the following year they just banned. They're like you know we can keep it simple we're going to ban all immigration from Asia. Right. All immigration and again there's no dog whistling here. So the purpose of this was to preserve the racial composition and preserve the ideal of US homogeneity and in favor of British and European immigration 1924 Indian Citizenship Act.

[00:26:36] This was the first Birthright Citizenship Act for native home for native people 1924 and it did even cover all native people.

[00:26:43] It just covered people born after this act was enacted all native people weren't covered until 1940 1940 1930s we see the deportation and repatriation programs that targeted Mexicans in the Southwest.

[00:26:58] Over a million U.S. citizen Mexican children were deported. So once again inherently perpetually foreign.

[00:27:07] Even if you're a citizen so family separation you can see this history from slavery from this just through our LACE throughout this. And of course 1942 Japanese internment honored 20000 people. Two thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. Again inherently perpetually foreign all people of

color. Right. And the Osama case laid the groundwork for this. You know I already made a determination that this group of people were less than second class citizens China's exclusion act was only repealed in 1943.

[00:27:42] So for 60 years the Chinese Exclusion Act was in place and the ban on all Asian immigration was in the books for 30 years. Imagine what this room what your neighborhood what our country would look like if those had not been the policies and what our future will look like with the Muslim ban in place where people of Somalian heritage Sudanese heritage where their Syrian heritage or they're not allowed they're excluded from our country based on nationality.

[00:28:10] 1952 The Immigration and National. This is the first time the race has eliminated as a basis for citizenship.

[00:28:16] 1952 and and while the ban was lifted it was still a way to give affirmative action to European heritage folks and also create this new system of family unity and skill based immigration work visas.

[00:28:35] Things like that and well here I'll go this one was in the 1965 immigration national Nalgae Nakliyat was the first time that there's ever a commandment and of course this is following on the heels of the Civil Rights Act and that people's movement but the irony of this is that the white supremacists in Congress at the time. Again there was no dog whistling. They wanted to preserve the racial hegemony of the white race. They actually favored family unification because they thought if we give visas to brothers and sisters and parents then we're going to replicate the current immigrant the current population of immigrants. So in 1960 90 percent of emigrants came from Europe. And yet Northern Europe and Western Europe 50 years later. By 2010 90 percent of emigrants using this these visas come from non European countries and this is exactly what Trump is targeting when he says shame when he has now called it chain migration because he knows that actually that is the way that that people from different countries non European countries are coming immigration under combat.

[00:29:47] We know this right. Everyday we see this very whether it's deporting millions of people building a wall banning Muslims cutting legal immigration but family unification in half. Switching from family base to wealth based you get points if you can invest not 1 million but 5 million dollars in the US. A halt to the refugee program. No our country denied and Frank's family visas to come here when they're trying to flee the Holocaust and our refugee program was born out of the Holocaust and a sense of that we could have done something we could have done something right. And now the refugee admissions are at an all time low and are kind of get lower and lower.

[00:30:29] So pressure families do naturalization. It goes on and on.

[00:30:32] And what we see is Trump dehumanizing immigrants from from the jump right from his very first day campaigning dehumanizing immigrants as much as possible and you get the privilege of hearing Tommy Cato speak later tonight. And you know something that he said about this is that you

know the reason why this dehumanizing rhetoric happens is because it primes the American people so that once a group is interned excluded deported imprisoned that we actually feel a sense of relief. It primes the American people to oppress people right. And I saw that my talk was not as like a keynote and I'm sorry that this is not inspirational at all but I want to just say that you know we're seeing what we see today is just recycled history. We've seen it before. And the thing that's different. The thing that is different from the 1920s from the 80s 80s is us.

[00:31:30] It's us showing up it's us changing it's all showing up and demanding something. So you have to do that. Thanks again for coming and thanks for showing up for this

[00:31:50] Beautiful knowledge.

[00:31:52] I think something that's really quite inspiring is that you know despite and because of that like really heartbreaking history that you know so purposefully you know gave to us is that all of us have ways that connect us to people who are examples of the spirit of human liberation really trying to find and express itself's through how our families conduct ourselves and so we have four inspirational people sharing stories that came to the Seattle Public Library as part of the program called Poetry for learning English which is facilitated by the instructors Elizabeth Vásquez Heyn a librarian Margot.

[00:32:33] And we're just really really happy today to have four poets reading you all today. All right women Roberta Canu Veronica Luongo and Yanyan Lee please have a big round of applause for

[00:32:51] Hello everyone. This was a very powerful speech and it's something I really want to hear every day.

[00:33:00] My poem it's called My roots my roots.

[00:33:08] I am an immigrant of the world. Why don't you listen when I tell you my roots are bleeding when I say it in so many ways. The words I made mine. Everything I was and then will be my roots are rotting under your heavy rain or lies. Oh I can escape it. My soul intact roots do grow back you know. I tell you my roots are bleeding. Why don't you listen. With every sacrifice I become stronger. My dreams larger my roots are breaking down are violent low lives. Oh I can't escape it. My courage intact roots do grow back.

[00:33:53] You know.

[00:33:57] My roots are blue. Me. Why don't you listen. Against all tyranny. My heart intact. I believe I am mine

[00:34:13] Hi my name is Yanyan Lee. Come from China. This poem is for my mom well Mom this is the only possible language I can use to talk to you. Oh it was I know a simple there's no vocabulary for excuse no eloquence for escape. I need to talk to you right now. Before I hide behind two words

you left the visitor lighting rain aged 66 in the night. Two years ago ended all the suffering a black hole has sprouted inside me since then I wonder why I dream of you so often and only after I came here to the United States. You must be somewhere near here so I must talk to you right now. Before I leave this land for good you have always said you were proud of me. I am a professor. I got a Ph.D. leaving at once the city. I have a successful life but you must have known I am not a good daughter. I'm not even a good person. And they were so you could become Seath and there were so I wouldn't need to change your diapers. I couldn't sing. They didn't come to my at once the city I knew was suffering. I allowed myself to agree with your words. You wanted to stay home. You didn't want to take those useless anticancer appeals. I told myself it was your decision. But the truth is I was relieved. I was worried about spending time money. You must have known my selfish thinking. You told me you were doing well. Until two years ago in summer. You asked me to return home and saw your face to hand. I could not accept you at that person scheme and for 20 days I took care of you with your sisters. They tried to get me to the easiest the park but it was intolerable to see that you were just going to die suffering enormous pain. I could not bear it. I even hoped you'd go faster. But you were so cautious. You see you wanted a miracle to happen.

[00:36:56] You prayed to God prates you.

[00:37:03] I am not a good daughter. I am not even a good person. I can not ask you to forgive me. I don't deserve it. But please visit my dreams more. Let me talk to you more. Let me see your face my mother's face smiling at me saying I'm proud of you. Please just be there. Same my darling with me. My name is Veronica and I'm going to read my life in America

[00:37:41] America LERT ME with TV and movies since my childhood in Montevideo my life in the hands of San Francisco. It was love at first sight. The beauty of the Pacific Ocean. Little diamonds under the sun. The smell of a crispy Turkey the flavor that keeps on giving my self-esteem beaten up America took me in. Ask no questions leave me up and offered opportunities to become the best of me here. I embody my dreams not the daughters sister or a wife of any mind. Now I live by my own means and finally free the American Dream isn't always beautiful. At times it is difficult and brutal. Some people demanded English only some people now want to separate my family.

[00:38:39] Politics are a scary rollercoaster. Fear is about a vice or they are temporary bluster wildlife. Brace for impact America. I love you still and forever. You are my home and my home. I will fight for our dream. My arms open to the next point. Look. At it

[00:39:08] Keep going with the program but I also want to point out that I think that there is an opportunity to do donations for our English language learners program and also I wanted to let you know that their books are available so if you love those poems from our new poets the books are available when you exit the program. Thank you so much to our poets and to their teachers. Thank you.

[00:39:35] One of the benefits of decolonized immigration is having so many perspectives somewhat if it places somebody like which backgrounds are so beautiful.

[00:39:43] I think that one of the important parts of being a part of the social justice movement is actually being involved in movement. So yeah yeah it's a good feeling. To

[00:40:00] Have a really great movement facilitator come and share some movement knowledge. Are y'all ready yet. Please make a round of applause with David

[00:40:13] Hey how's everybody doing. Awesome.

[00:40:17] Thank you for that introduction. My name is David. I'm going to be talking a little bit later on but I wanted to start because we're having conversations about the call out colonizing immigration. I think that it's really important to approach these kind of conversations with a fair amount of mindfulness and being in the moment right. And I think that a really brilliant way to do that is to remind ourselves that we are living in these human bodies. So we're going to start really comfortably and I invite you to your knees or cross to simply allow both of your feet to be on the ground.

[00:40:47] And as we do that I invite you to put one hand sort of on your stomach maybe the right and the left hand on the sternum and we're going to start by doing three collective breaths because I think that the power of breath is really strong and it connects us as a group right. So before we do that as we inhale I want to invite you and encourage you to allow your diaphragm to bloom like an umbrella.

[00:41:09] And as you inhale I want you to visit visualizer most glorified version of yourself when you see yourself most beautiful most stunning most funny most passionate and vision that person.

[00:41:21] And as we exhale I want you to expel all sort of negative thoughts that are existing in your mind that are existing in your day. You have to do something after this. You know if you have to go to KFC before they close they get those berries before the sale ends.

[00:41:35] Just let that go and be in the present moment. Right and let's all breathe together.

[00:41:40] So we're good we're going to inhale for three exhale for three and again as you inhale visualize a glorified version of yourself your most beautiful and your most powerful and as you exhale dispel all negative feelings are all negative thoughts sound good. Here we go invite you to keep your eyes open your eyes close. Here we go.

[00:41:56] Inhale one two three. Holding that glorious energy exhale one two three LET GO of anything that's not serving you in this moment. One more time we inhale one. Three holding the most glorified version of yourself exhale one two three LET GO of anything you don't need one more time inhale one three.

[00:42:26] Picture yourself vibrating at your high frequency exhale. One two three LET GO of anything that you don't need. How's everybody feeling good

[00:42:37] Also. So

[00:42:40] Now that we've gotten ourselves in our present bodies. What if we move it around a little bit. We're not going to do anything crazy or promise we're just going to move ourselves.

[00:42:49] I come from West Africa and there we have this glorious way of using our bodies to sing songs.

[00:42:56] We've already heard such brilliant ways of using poetry through words and now we're into his poetry with our bodies.

[00:43:01] So I invite you to stand up it's not going to we're not going to be moving around at all and it's going to be very simple. So if you're in the first three rows one two three raise your hands. You're going to be my group won. The next three rows. Can you raise your hand. One two three yep. You're going to be group two. And the last rows in the back holding it down I'll stay just going to be or group three. Then you raise your hands also.

[00:43:26] So I'm going to teach each group an independent rhythm and then we're going to do is where to put all those three rhythms together to seeing our own little song. How's that sound. Yeah. All right. So my group wonder couldn't hold it down with this two Stamp's at the feet right. Laughs. The thing is my home girl syncopation was invited to the party. So we're going to syncopate the steps a little bit so rather than going step step we're going to go step by step.

[00:43:54] Yeah I'm going to count five six seven eight steps. Yeah. That was Major six seven eight steps six eight steps six seven eight steps back said

[00:44:11] Major. That was incredible. Hold on to that. Group too are you with me also.

[00:44:16] All we're going to do is do a similar rhythm but instead of doing it in our legs we're going to do it with our hands and we're just going to clap. So we're going to go they're going to go step by step we're going to clap clap. I'm going to set the Mike down so that you can hear the rhythm. So step step group two is just going to go

[00:44:41] Clap clap. Yeah. So go 5 6 7 8. 6 7 8 8 clap

[00:44:49] 6 7 8 clap.

[00:44:51] Yes Major. That sounds good. Awesome. Now my group three Gergana combined what group what and group 2 has done together. You're going to step with her right leg and you're going to clap. So it's going to go ah ah ah

[00:45:06] Ah ah ah. Sound good. All right.

[00:48:27] Yeah. Just look across. So you can pick a side this way or that way you choose.

[00:48:35] Yeah. So all we're doing is we're gonna be up this middle portion if you're on the right side of this you're going to be looking this way and if you're on this side of the line you're going to be looking that way. And the goal is that we are singing and dancing together. We've created these three independent rhythms and now we're going to put them together as a community. We've connected our breath. And so let's let our breath drive a little wave. All right. How does that sound. Have fun with it. Move your body. I'm going to count you. And then we're going to make it do what you maybe you do. Here we go. Six

[00:49:05] Five six seven eight. Of. A Hey hey

[00:49:43] Off.

[00:49:46] Thank you guys so much for letting me take you through that journey. Yes yes yes.

[00:49:51] As we go throughout the night remind yourself that the physical sensations that are happening inside of your body we've already prepped ourselves and go out and find a seat. We've already prepress helps to do it. So if you find yourself hearing something that makes you feel maybe uncomfortable or nervous or excited or whatever. Keep in mind what's happening inside of your body so that you can be present inside of that moment. Thank you again so much and I'll be back little with. More noise. When our body. Goes. Away more

[00:50:25] Awesome. Yeah. So for the second part of the evening we're going to have an intimate conversation with people who identify as a part of the immigrant communities and we're also recording the conversation tonight. So for a podcast and I'm going to ask the presenters to be as descriptive as possible. And the reason why is because it's good to a kind of sort of be a visually driven conversation.

[00:50:49] We've asked two of each of our presenters the six percenters but those two pairs that we'll listen to for 15 minutes each and each person and the pair has brought one or two images that tell the story of immigration as they see it in the United States. So does that sound like a kind of enticing way to spend the next 45 minutes with each other. And don't forget that these stories are about movement right. People moving from place to place and there might be parts of your bodies or spirits or blood flows or brain cells or neurons or however you want to think about it moving through you as this is happening to so let's let's carry on the wisdom of David aroo and moving into the conversation about movement. The first person the first pair actually is going to be a pair between Tommy Kaieda and Hoda Hassan

[00:51:41] I have a bio for each of these people so I'm going to I'm going to read them as we welcome them. So Tom kidda is the I saying that right. Thank you so much. Sometimes I don't see my own name right. So it's good to say other predictions.

[00:51:51] Tom McKenna is the founding director of Denso a nonprofit organization started in 1966 then shows mission is to preserve and share the personal testimonies of Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War Two to explore issues of democracy and tolerance civil rights and the responsibilities of citizenship in our increasingly global society. Tom is a sensei the third generation Japanese American was born and raised in Seattle. Tom's parents and grandparents were incarcerated during World War Two in Seattle. At Minidoka in Idaho. Tom has conducted more than 250 video recorded oral history interviews with Japanese Americans. Tom has received numerous awards for community and historical contributions including the Humanities Washington Award for Outstanding Achievement in the public humanities and the National JCL Japanese American.

[00:52:40] The biennial award the Microsoft alumni Intel Interbrand fellows Award and the Japanese American National Museum's Founders Award we please have a round of applause.

[00:52:56] Next up I would also like to introduce Hodeida Hassan a community organizer and activist in Seattle. In her day job she's the climate justice organizer for Green Station at the Black Power epoch center where she develops community leadership represented scouring the local alliances and is working on creating a campaign narrative on climate displacement and education.

[00:53:14] Modan began her journey as a Washington Bus fellow where she learned all of the skills of a political organizer. She then moved on to work as a campus organizer with the bus where she works with students from six universities on campus civic engagement and when she's not working. She's probably watching a ton of TV shows to please have some toys for our

[00:53:36] Ok so let's start this. Thank you David for warming up the audience. I mean

[00:53:42] Just keep this going. I want to keep this as interactive as possible. I mean you think about the connection we've just made tonight.

[00:53:49] Just amazing night of music poetry stories history. So what I'm going to do today is to build on this is to share a personal story.

[00:53:59] They asked us you know to share a couple of photographs and I'm going to share from an immigration perspective the story of my grandparents. This photograph. Is of my grandparents 100 years ago in Seattle. They were Japanese immigrants who came here and it was a very tenuous journey to get here. I mean we listened to you know because you know sort of lecture about immigration history. So they had to navigate the immigration path. My grandfather came in 1908 and he had to come. You're right after or right before I'm sorry an immigration band called The Gentleman's Agreement where they stopped having Japanese workers coming to United States and was it was a treaty actually between the United States and Japan because the United States was starting to segregate schools in California and creating these segregated Japanese only schools to separate them from the White students and the Japanese government didn't want that so they agreed to work with United States government by stopping the immigration of Japanese workers. My grandfather came just months before that that treaty was enacted. And then after working in Seattle

at the Rainier club not just a few blocks away from here over 10 years. He then went back to Japan married my grandmother and then they came back. And so this picture was taken about 1920. And for me no because. Lecture. Yeah that was a time when it was really hard to be a Japanese immigrant. So you know you mentioned how 1922 there was the Osawa decision. So my grandparents were told they could never become naturalized U.S. citizens. They also had things called like the Alien Land Laws the Washington State Alien Land Law which said if you were a person eligible for citizenship essentially an Asian immigrant you could not own land or property which really hurt the Japanese. And furthermore

[00:56:10] I got the third one so get going.

[00:56:12] So let's fast forward to World War II. So right before the war started Japanese American community was the largest minority group in Seattle about 2 to 3 percent of the population was Japanese ancestry. Just within the international district around here there are about 7000 Japanese and Japanese Americans who live there. Two thirds of them were U.S. citizens. So when the war started you know the question I guess why I want to try get across so why did this happen. What was the rationale. And so back then they said it was a military necessity that you know we wanted to protect the country. Japanese were dangerous. And what we found in the 1980s you know when we looked at this more carefully and I think this is a lesson learned from the Japanese incarceration was that the lies that the government can tell during times of war. So essentially what they said was there was this threat of an invasion like to places like Seattle. The Japanese were going invade that there were imbedded in the Japanese community as spies saboteurs terrorists and what was actually the truth was that the military people knew that there was no chance of a large scale invasion of the Japanese Navy couldn't do that as well as the intelligence people saw that Japanese were as loyal as any other community.

[00:57:41] Now in terms of going back to my my grandparents story here's a picture of them now 1944. Here they are in a concentration camp in Idaho. Minidoka you know they're there with at this camp with about 10000 other Japanese Americans who were placed there mostly from Seattle were first taken to people up and then to the Mendonca Idaho a concentration camp. You know the pictures of them receiving the American flag. Their eldest son my uncle was killed in action. He was a student at the University of Washington taking ROTC classes and and volunteered to fight for the U.S. Army. Even though he was placed in a concentration camp. And the reason I showed this picture again when we think about the immigrants and we think about how they're being talked about today you know what my knowledge of immigrants are. Now look at this picture my my grandparents when I think of you know the wisdom you know the strength they gave me the resilience the values so much of that came from my grandparents. And here they are facing the you know the suffering and the indignity of having to accept this flag an American concentration camp having done nothing wrong. And so when we think about what's going on today and the reason I'm here is I am so committed that a similar indignity does not happen to immigrants a day that we see. Not the threat that we're told over and over again. That's what what happened to the Japanese and it's not it wasn't true. And it's important for us to know these stories today. So thank you so much for sharing

[00:59:43] This Thing On. OK.

[00:59:44] Hi.

[00:59:46] I feel like I'm just like so overwhelmed by like everything we've been talking about thus far and the rhythm I just realized I have rhythm. So yay. So when I was I pick two pictures that like I don't know some say something about immigration to you. Why did everything last minute like the trooper consider that I am. So I sat down and I googled immigration and I just looked through all the images of like people moving from one place to there are a lot of fences. But this picture just kind of like spoke to me like it's almost like an invitation. Here is some place you can call home. A little blue book that will let you move around the world if you feel it in a place that you can follow. And I feel like those three questions like who gets to be here who gets to be one of us and who is to truly belong. This is kind of like that promise right. My parents and I we came to the United States in the early 2000s and like everyday feels like as the years have gone by it has only been 16 years. We're kind of like at this place where like Muslim people and Somali people in particular are like here's the thing we've been like under the radar for like thousands of years.

[01:00:57] Ok I'm like no one's talked about us. No one said anything about us. And then all of a sudden here is he who shall not be named. You know the Somalis that's who we should get. Let's put them in this list of bands of countries that might harm the United States. And there's a lot of like duality.

[01:01:13] Right so where do I call home. Who do I associate with. Who am I. When like the two people two country that identify the most are like at war with one another.

[01:01:22] Well one says Kind of there possibly and the other ones like the attacking you could OK. And this picture just kind of like I don't know I just saw it and I wanted to cry because as a Muslim person the United States you're constantly having to be like

[01:01:45] I'm American. Can't you see like look this man is praying with the United States flag wrapped around him.

[01:01:51] I don't actually think that's a thing you could do like have them in symbolism while you're. But that's neither here nor there.

[01:01:57] But it's just like always having to say like yes I'm American yes I'm American like me too. Like he is who he is I am I'm just as American as this whatever white dude who like maybe doesn't even care that much for the title and you're constantly reminded that you are not right. So you go to the airport and have you heard about the story about the young woman who got stopped at the airport and she went through a little whatever thing you do. And they saw that she was wearing something and they asked her like what's that in your underwear. And she was she was like I'm wearing a pad. And the TSA agent made her take off her underwear and show them the bloody pad. So. That

[01:02:37] Was like first of all. That's absolutely disgusting. Why do you want to touch. Oh no.

[01:02:42] Also like why didn't you just believe me that whatever I have is not something that's going to hurt you or hurt the United States. Right. So this constant burden of having to just rear Storrier Americans like here like I'm a citizen. And now again who he who shall not be named. He took on forty five for the tragedy there that is is now putting together a deep naturalizing Task Force. So here's our promise of that invitation. Here's this little blue book that you can say that you belong here. But now they're going to take you back because of safety. Right. And I think what is like the connection between both of our stories is that the conversation about interm and turning Muslim people and registries and all that stuff is kind of like in the news as

[01:03:31] Like Heikki is the first time when they started mentioning it. But I actually tried to imagine all my life would be like.

[01:03:37] Because like we learn whatever Japanese history like the two days we spent on our full year of high school years what happen and like it was a tragedy. Now we've moved on whenever I going to do it again. But now is that conversation like starting up again. And I thought to myself OK so would there be Netflix and this internment camps like trying to plan my life around it in case like event that it becomes real. Right because I don't think that your grandparents thought that it was going to be real until it was real for them in that moment. So I think it's I'm going to stop right there so we can be like in dialogue.

[01:04:11] You are currently hanging out for like a minute with us because we decide that want to ask you something or mention something because I noticed that we both are a second slide. You had the American flag that was part of this and just recognize you I think you know most people probably don't really get this but when you're a community that has been targeted and you feel this pressure you know there's a lot of pressure to wrap yourself around the flag to show that you're American and as part of that there is this challenge or obstacle to actually resist what's going on. And I just so I know that that's something going on in the Muslim community today that in some ways it's hard to resist or to be very vocal in their resistance because I know Japanese did the same thing. And how and why it was so important for allies to do that for us sometimes this is just something I wanted to share as we think forward in terms of what we can do because in some cases it's difficult when you're Muslim to really stand up and push back because you're viewed as not American. And so I think it's important for others to see that because I noticed that in the same way I wrapped the flag on my second when you did the same thing.

[01:05:33] Exactly. Sometimes you are considered like the enemy in your own home so it's kind of like who like the conversations that other people have about you. And I think what we talked about earlier like that preparation to make people feel like OK enough to save this group of people are too dangerous to be in society. I that when that phase right now there's a lot of that discussion is happening right now with everybody in the White House and whoever is left in the White House just like still like having to have that conversation of who is American and who's not. And yet the importance of allies like and I don't like that word I like coconspirators.

[01:06:14] I like people who have skin in the game like I want you to be in the fight with me. Not for me.

[01:06:19] So like just like tweaking that definition but also definitely like have that conversation with people who are just like hey you know like Muslims are terrorists.

[01:06:28] And then in that moment I can be like I'm not a terrorist and they're not going to believe me.

[01:06:32] But if someone else is like that's actually messed up and you can't say then here's all the reason why. That is like all the more important this moment. Tonight

[01:06:50] If somebody already you know that Mr. David route and that's it you might not know this about David David is a dancer an arts professional that's based in Seattle was previously down with the Black Boys Project his interests lie in the inner such as the visual and performing arts driven by play creativity and rigor through the lens of racial inequity.

[01:07:08] And then we're going to have David to be joined by Tuesday April Lasko it Tuesday Valastro is also a Seattle based vocalist and mother and its expression power house this for us so yeah Tuesday we'd like to welcome to the stage and David have a seat here and then we'll hear from your other of to get to my good.

[01:07:36] So I will just keep this picture up.

[01:07:38] Feel free to just kind of read the caption and I think it will tie back into my story but I'll just talk a little bit about my family's kind of migration to the United States. I was born in Liberia for I want to start I just want to talk a little bit about the history of life here. So I am by no means anybody's West African historian so I have this kind of talking from oral history that's been given to me by my parents and my own research so once upon a time Liberia was sort of given to freed African-American slaves as a form of kind of reparations after the emancipation.

[01:08:11] And as you can imagine they weren't met with the warmest of welcomes by the indigenous people that lived in the area that were already there which was my family our family was born and always have been in Liberia and were never left the continent of Africa.

[01:08:25] As a result of the transatlantic slave trade. And I think what's so complex and interesting about this story is that the

[01:08:33] American Liberians I think work are called were utilized a lot of the sort of same colonial strategies to the indigenous Liberian people in the hopes of sort of bringing civilization and American culture to Africa.

[01:08:48] So the indigenous Liberian people that lived there were stripped of rights to vote right to their land right to education because their country was given by another country to another group of people to be made their own country.

[01:09:06] So my family my dad was working for the embassy and at the time it was 1989 and it wasn't safe for anybody to be living in Liberia let alone a family of five children.

[01:09:16] So we moved to Brooklyn New York. And then when I was six years old we moved to Fridley Minnesota and that's where I grew up. And Minneapolis shuttled to the Midwest before. And that's where I grew up and I grew up always funnily enough always surrounded by other immigrant people. Minneapolis has a great sort of Liberia immigrant population. But that brings me to this photograph now because I wanted to find something that speaks to the current events that's happening.

[01:09:46] And so I just want to read this quote Some Liberians from Minnesota and there protesters rally on the state capitol in St. Paul to urge the renewal of a protective status through a program that's called deferred Forsman departure in the United States.

[01:09:59] On Monday this was March 2018 and their efforts failed because the next day the president said that this program will expire. So what is really insane to me is that unlike a lot of Liberian people that came to this country as a result of the civil war that desecrated the country. Are now being sent back and they were protected with work work visas and able to have policies that would protect them. And now they're being sent back and thinking about the questions that we heard about earlier and who's right.

[01:10:27] It is to be here it got me thinking about well who's right is it to you plan to a certain people in the complexities of that conversation and what it means for me as a black person as a Liberian person as an African-American person and whose land was it to be given or taken away. These are questions that I never like to propose my own answers to I'd like to meet with us.

[01:10:52] Fair amount of neutrality because it's so deeply complex that it's not my job to impugn my own value on it but I can't also deny the fact that my family's lives were completely destroyed because of what happened.

[01:11:03] So thinking about that I was like makes me angry but my next thing goes to this image of how I respond to this and this is an image of me and one of my dear friends Randy Ford.

[01:11:16] I'm creating a duet called Dandy Candy. Hi Frutos Tuyet

[01:11:23] Incredibly important to utilize the arts to for me have an access points towards these conversations. I want to turn the mike over to you. Hey

[01:11:34] Thank you so much for that.

[01:11:40] I could never be part of our interviews. Basically how we can help decolonize and I think this is a good start to that or rather good continuation I think people have started that since they arrived. They've just been fighting for it.

[01:11:58] So I chose these images here. I put a collage of images of of a western culture that has a history of arriving to other people's lands and other people's cultures and deciding what they want from it and the majority of it is pretty much the just kind of guiding the culture and taking out

[01:12:28] The center.

[01:12:28] And then just leaving the people who cultivate it and created it to begin with.

[01:12:33] And I just find it a little ridiculous that you know America is clearly so made up of all these cultures here and a lot you know we have even fast food tacos.

[01:12:50] In that sense you know so America has been full of so many cultures but it is still so deep deep in xenophobia is still so 2018 still.

[01:13:01] There is a disconnect between the people and the culture.

[01:13:06] And it just becomes their culture. As you can see the first images of white Jesus who is from the Middle East who is described as a man with copper skin and woolly here whether you believe he was real or not.

[01:13:19] This description is that he's a brown man here from the Middle East. You don't need to know that he was brown.

[01:13:27] You know you don't need a description you already know. But

[01:13:30] It's more digestible so they've just decided that those are alternative facts and we're going to go with this now. And so it's just as you can see you know you see a

[01:13:41] Western man here a white man playing Native American. We all know that Elizabeth Taylor played. CLEOPATRA. Sahal a black woman. So yeah I think

[01:13:56] It's I think it's important to kind of discuss that in Western culture that I would love to get to a place where we can where we can indulge in all these cultures in the sense where we can enjoy the food and the fashion and all the beautiful things that this culture brings all these different cultures bring without it feeling appropriative without feeling like we're stealing it but because we're still so deep in the history of doing that and not giving paying any reference to it it doesn't come across and it's like when you know when you're in school or something and everyone can do this one thing and then someone just goes overboard with it and they ruin it and now no one can have that right. And

that's kind of how I feel about it. Sorry. No one gets that right into we're all on board because America is a group project. You know. We. Haven't. Failed in. Class because your teammates did not feel their way. And so America really wants. The brown and the black people. It's custom to pool all the weights. And. My

[01:15:06] My sister and I were talking about how you know brown and black people bring so much to the table and you know the Western culture is asked to just bring scraps and are praised highly for it.

[01:15:20] Well we're over here just like OK that we brought this and watching this and that and then everything and they're just like it's just expected.

[01:15:28] So that's that image and then this image which we kind of spoke on earlier oh that image was much larger.

[01:15:36] There was there were two other images below but you saw the one image that was covered up with those beautiful children. Was Uncle Sam kicking out the Chinaman. And. The other image was just of this Chinaman on the rail which is also historical of. America using immigrants or forced immigrants in the case of Africans

[01:16:04] Labor for their benefit. And so and as we know that this this flyer here is from our very own beloved Washington state and that this this wall here is the reason I brought this up is that to show that America obviously as we know the immigration is not about we don't have the resources or the economy to support it's always been a historical thing of racism.

[01:16:34] And as we can see here it's documented this is fact. So that's that's another thing that I wanted to discuss. On immigration between the two of us being interviewed or just sharing our thoughts on how how we can approach

[01:16:54] America the fear of other cultures are basically black and brown people and how we can find a way around that because we can only go so far in the nation until white America allows us to proceed just as we saw in the case of the black man trying to receive his rights and white America said actually you don't deserve that. And we've decided so how.

[01:17:22] David I'll just turn to you.

[01:17:26] Yeah I think one of the questions was how we can address snaffled this deep xenophobia. What do you think it's going to happen how do you think it's going to what's an open. Kind of the eyes to to seeing that you know a woman

[01:17:45] Like yourself doesn't need to show their pad to someone to say hey I'm not trying to harm you.

[01:17:51] There's not a history of this but yet you know but yet here I am. Yeah how did we do that.

[01:17:57] Well I think that it's a huge conversation that are about to turn right back to you.

[01:18:00] But I will set it off.

[01:18:03] I think that it goes to what you said earlier about sort of being a coconspirator. And I think that it's so important because this is such a massive conversation to start with yourself and use whatever sliver of opportunity that you have to leverage these conversations to push this conversation. I like just racial equity and see this kind of anti xenophobia thing. Start with yourself. So I'm thinking about it. I work at the Seattle Art Museum which is a very large white institution but I have the opportunity to push the organization's racial equity efforts forward so that with everything that I do whether it's a public program or whether it's somebody that's on the poster or whether it's who's invited into the space to photograph whatever doing wherever the caterer is centering people of color in that conversation and if white people ask well why are you doing that.

[01:18:51] Then we talk about what we're talking about right now. Right. And for white people I think that it's really important to be honest with yourselves about the fact that this country structure is botched and you're in the bricks from the room. And she's still being watered and that's

[01:19:06] Oh yeah I'm so you as a white person have active agency in order to dismantle those things using the power and privileges that you have that others don't. Yes and that's how I would start with it. And I know that that's very specific and it's very small but then there's the other layer of how I use my black dancing body to have these conversations whether I am speaking it or whether I'm dancing it with or I'm using my fashion in the way that I dress to immediately demand respect because of my forgiveness and doing things in my everyday life to do to have these messages.

[01:19:38] Right. You know I think it's important to understand that it isn't just on

[01:19:45] Like I said it's a group project. So because of the deep desire of assimilation it is also on a lot of ground of black people who don't understand they are colonized.

[01:19:58] You don't understand that they deeply desire to be assimilated because the society tells you I understand this from personal experience.

[01:20:09] I thought oh I'd like to be like this and like this like this then I will be accepted for who I am for what I am. And that also goes I think with being a woman. You might try to be softer or this that and the other.

[01:20:23] Or you might try to be aggressive or you know it's there's there's many things that that society tells you you cannot be if this that and the other and I think it's important to have the conversation and to be honest with yourself like you said and to not be I think a lot of people once this conversation comes up. It's like so many triggers for so many people because the truth is so

[01:20:46] Heavy it's it's too much to unpack and so it's in the immediate that just does not compute shutdown. And then there's a complete shutdown and then both sides start to do the same thing to the other. So what I see is we see this will just use for the terms we see the Republicans and the Democrats to me when I see them in their in their most raw form. They are the same exact people the same people.

[01:21:15] And I think that's what is frustrating because I would never be like them. I would never be like this but they do X Y and Z. Yes. And you do that. And it's if you add up you're over there pointing fingers at each other like just angry just angry and upset and someone's basically with so much hatred because of this because of the truth that's deeper underneath that we don't want to see.

[01:21:40] And I think that if we were dedicated to that we could find a common ground with this group project with progress you know.

[01:21:49] But where we could gain some yardage is now. But. But again

[01:21:59] It just seems like we're in a time right now where the truth doesn't really seem to be anything important. OK. Tanya thank you guys so. Thank you. So much

[01:22:21] David. One more pair before he pulls it off

[01:22:25] With some of them off closing remarks. But first I'd like to welcome Bob to somebody that you've already seen tonight and that's a no go that's going to be to be paired with Gracie Linda. Yes. Potter. Potter guys wanted us. And Graciella is originally from Caracas Venezuela. She was raised in the historic little Havana neighborhood of Miami Florida. Growing up alongside Cuban refugees in Latin America American immigrants.

[01:22:51] Realized that these communities were forgotten by local and national leaders. Graciella grew up in a working class family that struggled to make ends meet. Her parents to on multiple jobs at once. Even though her parents were hardworking they didn't have financial stability in high school. Grace Yela and her family moved to Seattle to seek better job opportunities. Rachel. Graduated from high school in Bellevue and earned her B.A. in Political Science from the University of Washington at Rykiel ordained Purple Group where she connected with other undocumented students navigating the university system. She found strength in her community by opening up space for discussion and support and healing. Over the past year curricula helped to lead advocacy efforts in Washington state for the uncertain future of the doctor program. She was the lead legislative interpreter at Washington State Labor Council AFLCIO where she joined forces representative Julie Hansen in passing the extension of the College Bound scholarship program to include undocumented students in grade school. And now Graciella works as political and community organizers for you.

[01:23:48] 775 hope caregiver's union. Hi

[01:24:01] There. Hi everyone. Thank you so much for taking the time to come out tonight. My name's Grassie anonymous spotting us. See that 10 times fast. It's a mouthful. But yeah. I came to notice states when I was 7 years old. I'm a Madaka beneficiary. I am essentially what you call a dreamer in the United States. Living in limbo. And. Then this conversation that we're going to have I know I I. I'm just going to highlight and give you a window into the life of an undocumented young person in America. Mind you I am 23 years old.

[01:24:40] Yes. Why me. You do people ask me they come up to me

[01:24:47] And they ask me what are you going to do. What are you going to do when Dakota is gone. What are you going to do when. You don't have any. Like. The permit to work anymore. What are you going to do if I come to your door. And they bring up all these

[01:25:02] Great questions right.

[01:25:04] I'm glad you're asking these questions. But mind you again I'm 23 years old and I'm going to stand firm by the fact that. I don't even know what I'm going to eat tomorrow so I'm not going to tell you what my immigration plan is because that is not our responsibility or my duty to have that. Ready. No. 23 year old should ever be faced with those questions. So. No I'm going to hand it off to a couple is going to ask me some questions.

[01:25:34] So Graciella and I are coconspirators in The Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network and an immigrant rights movement here in Washington state.

[01:25:42] And so I thought we could just ask them questions and make this a bit of a conversation. But you could share your story about what it was like for you as a young person when you found out that you were undocumented and what that was like.

[01:25:56] Wow. So I came to the United States when I was 7 years old in 2002 with my parents from Miami Florida. I mean not from Florida from Caracas Venezuela and we arrived and Miami International Airport

[01:26:11] And we went through immigration customs and said that we were here for a visit.

[01:26:16] However that incident would extend into now. And yeah we are what's considered to be sent overseas. So and that's about if. If I'm. Correct

[01:26:28] 40 percent of the 11 million undocumented immigrants are visa overstays. So it's just something that's common. And another thing that Venezuela is being torn by civil war economic unrest is as well as an authoritarian dictatorship. So essentially my parents were fleeing something that they could see they could see that our country was not sustainable that the economic policies and the crime. That. The violence against people women. Especially after Latinos. Made that's. For Latino the discrimination he faced. That was not going to go away was going to be amplified. So it

was that year that led. To. Their ambitious minds to bring me to the United States. And I am grateful for their sacrifice and for their bravery in doing that because as we see the images of the zero tolerance policy at the border. I

[01:27:24] Go back to that time when I was 7 years old and my parents told me were going to go to Walt Disney World. So I. Look at that and I remember being with my mom my dad I'm an only child. I don't have siblings. It's only us three. And I just can't imagine like I can't imagine showing up at Miami International Airport and then having people separate me from my mother and my father. I cannot imagine that that is unfathomable. So. I found out that I was undocumented and when I was of course 18 years old when I was applying for college and I couldn't

[01:28:01] I couldn't really fill in the FAFSA form I couldn't.

[01:28:06] I stopped and I was like OK I don't have a Social Security number why don't I.

[01:28:10] The question and then a bubble. But. That's not really the time that. It. Was. One of. The first of many challenges that came from finding out I was undocumented but the real honest time

[01:28:23] I really connected with that identity was September 5th 2017. So this is a year ago. When I was commuting to work

[01:28:35] At an immigration law firm. And I had on my phone. The attorney general saying. That I was an illegal alien and that aurally. And that I did not deserve these protections that I did not deserve Dokka that I was not human that it was a person I was an illegal alien seeking to steal your good jobs is coming here for crime and that was the first time I found out I was undocumented because I knew that I had this fear in the back of my mind since election night. But what happened outside. Had not impacted me internally. I hadn't cried when when the president won his election. I didn't cry. Because I was a Hillary Clinton organizer. I did everything I could to organize from August to November of 2016 to make sure she won and I did not feel guilty. I went to bed with a clean conscious conscience. But then a little bit under a year later. We found out that that was the case that I was not a human and that I was undocumented. So that's what has this past year been like for you. When I say. It's been definitely transformative experience. I

[01:29:56] Have been lucky and very fortunate to have a community around me as well as a lot of the thousands of dreamers that live in this state. A lot of people step up. And actually about a year ago on this day I remember that I put together like this brunch for Dokka. I gathered some community leaders together. Gathered. And. I brought along

[01:30:21] People from the Washington Dream coalition the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network Northwest Immigrant Rights Party. And we just got together on a Sunday afternoon and Labor Day weekend to talk about what would happen when the attorney general makes this decision which had which was the Tuesday after Labor Day weekend. So. Like my activism has been shaped like critically this year. Especially as I think back on the history of the dreamers. And the people before me

that allowed me to have this platform and allowed me to have. Gocta because Dachau was something that

[01:31:00] Immigrant Youth fought tooth and nail. After the failure of the DREAM Act in the Senate and this is where this picture comes from

[01:31:09] Are all the factions. This is this young woman

[01:31:15] That was arrested. She was one of the 21 dreamers that stormed one in a swarm but. Occupied. The Senate Office Building the Hart Building

[01:31:25] In anticipation of the Senate Dream Act vote back in 2010. That was eight years ago. The DREAM Act has not been introduced to the Senate since well it's been introduced but not been voted on since. And this young woman was in her cap and gown. And I remember growing up seeing the images of dreamers and capping gangs fighting for rights. Heckling the president and calling him the deporter in chief. It was their fearlessness that really shaped this generation of DREAMer activists. And I'm forever grateful for this young woman because we don't know she qualified for Dokka. I don't know if she if she's like in this country anymore I don't know her history but I know that this image shows me that. Civil disobedience in anticipation of a life changing law is something that it's required. Even if you're undocumented and

[01:32:27] So this was way before. This is from 2006 an immigrant rights protest. And Ali it was

[01:32:35] This bill that was getting introduced by Representative Sensenbrenner. It was called the Sensenbrenner bill that would have immediately classified like anybody that would help an undocumented person. They would get a felony for that and that's that bill. Each are 44 37 in 2006 and I remember attending that vote just with my parents and wearing all white. And there was this talk about immigration reform that preceded the DREAM Act back in 2006 four years before that this hope to fix our broken immigration system. It's not a new thing. Something I grew up and have

[01:33:10] More employees and my household and we've been talking a little bit about you know what people can do to show up and step up and be coconspirators. And so what do you have recommendations for us in ways that we can back you back. Dreamers yes. So number one votes

[01:33:28] And the number two vote and we're three votes. Number four. Show up to protests number five each.

[01:33:37] Don't hold me and don't mean to these organizations doing this incredible work. If you're unable to show up but if you are going to show up show up with your family show up with your friends. That's because we need to stand up together. I know that Seattle. The city of Seattle is considered a sanctuary city.

[01:34:01] I'm sorry. So. The city of Seattle was a sanctuary city. But for me the real sanctuary

[01:34:11] Happens in living rooms. It happens back about a year ago when I was talking about the brunch for Dokka where we were all. We all got together and. You know brainstormed on the best ways to respond to these attacks

[01:34:25] That sanctuary. I found sanctuary and that keeps keep families together rally. In front of SeaTac. I found sanctuary in the conversations that people have with me about how can I support you. This is what I'm doing. This is this is what I'm what I'm showing up I'm gone volunteering to help this person be elected to office.

[01:34:45] I'm volunteering to flip this district because if you vote my life depends on it. Whichever way you vote. And that you should walk away with that. And you should walk away with that. Not only my life. But the. Life. While the lives of my parents the lives of people that don't have Dokka the likes of single mothers that don't speak English but clean your hotel room their bags depend on your vote. I'm fighting for the right to vote with the DREAM Act. I don't have to vote but I lived in this country. So. Please vote because a lot in this. There's a lot at stake in this election and we don't know how we're going to move forward without. Having a strong civic showing at the polls in November 6.

[01:35:48] You know I chose this picture because so much of the work I do is local. And actually while immigration was federal they rely on local police departments and sheriff's offices and jails to enforce and and further this this misguided and inhuman dehumanizing immigration agenda. And so there's so much that we can actually do because those are those are our public servants are our public dollars to really change things. And. I guess last line would leave you with is that I've really found it all this this this work we do. In our movement is that actually the more action we take the action actually inspires hope really.

[01:36:28] And rather than hope you know moving us to the action this is showing up in every small way we can. That makes makes us hopeful and makes to

[01:36:44] You so much it integrates. You know we have another round of applause.

[01:36:56] Coordinator of Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network the largest immigrant led coalition in the state and made up of over 100 organizational members. She has worked tirelessly on the ground for over 10 years to mobilize the LGBTQ and immigrant communities. You can join her. In the conversation on her twitter instagram handle

[01:37:16] My say LGBTQ. Please here Monserrat.

[01:37:28] So once again I want to thank everybody for being here today. You know. It is important that we as a community have this critical conversations and being able to have the added. Approach of decolonization. You mentioned earlier this month set up by the UN the coordinator of what Weismann and I want which is a Washington immigrant saw Darina work. It's a very powerful network that's made up of immigrant communities who are working together to ensure that when ice shows up

in our neighborhood we stand up and fight back. Another part of myself is that I'm undocumented and unafraid transgender and ashamed and. Share. That. I want to bring back the conversation to decolonizing. And I wonder bringing it to this moment in my life where for the first time undocumented youth as you saw in the picture earlier put their lives on the line and we started changing the conversation in the name in our immigration history. We started changing the dialogue in as undocumented youth. We use this chance as a way to ground ourselves. And govern ourselves unafraid.

[01:38:38] So when I see undocumented youth say unafraid of undocumented documented undocumented. Those are the words that we as undocumented youth have used to power you know to energize our our emotions

[01:38:56] Into action. I remember being in Seattle 10 years ago for the first time sharing my story. And I would say this can or cannot be my story. And that was my little added layer of protection that have somebody in the crowd was anti immigrant would you know I would. That would be my added layer of protection. I would just say maybe they don't know and talk to me or not. Fast forward our movements. 10 years ago undocumented youths started coming out of the shadows as undocumented and we started building powerful networks powerful coalitions youth that were no longer subscribing to the ongoing narrative of of being illegal as being an alien of a life for our voices to not be heard in a line for our dreams to never even you know reach out to the light.

[01:39:47] And to this day we are now having conversations of why are we fighting for something. To belong to a country. Through this document

[01:39:59] That for such a long time in this country's history has done nothing for our black brothers and sisters. Why are we fighting

[01:40:07] For our people that for so much is so much part of our history that did nothing for Asian and Pacific Islander communities or our Muslim siblings.

[01:40:18] So the question as a movement we took that back to ourselves after we saw the rise up in Ferguson after we saw multiple trans women being murdered brutally.

[01:40:32] And we brought it back as a woman and really questioned ourselves what are we truly fighting for. Is it really citizenship or is it our right to humanity to be to have dignity and humanity right. As why we're getting hundreds of calls every week people were calling into our hotline. Open up our hotline number a quick our hotline

[01:41:02] Which hopefully you're able to take down and we have some flyers up fronts over here.

[01:41:07] We're getting calls every single day of families who have been torn apart from their parents from their husbands from their wives and people who have no idea what's next. As a network of 100

positions we're working every day tirelessly to be able to provide the resources and guidance to secure their families and secure their future as much as we can and we're building that assistance.

[01:41:38] However I wouldn't bring bring back a little bit of oftentimes every day I wake up with this sense of holy crap. We're losing we're losing here.

[01:41:50] Washington state why I say that. This is like you know when I was like oh why. Why do I feel like we're losing we're losing because Washington's day has yet to pass. I mean local collaboration between ice and police.

[01:42:02] So our goal this year is to make sure that keep Washington working which is the policy yet the the legislature in 2019 passes making sure that intergovernmental agreement contracts which is the way that county jails are being used to house immigrant folks are no longer a thing of Washington state and that local resources are not being used to house immigrant communities.

[01:42:25] We're also working on ensuring that folks have the resources that they need to organize their communities and to not allow a financial burden to be a reason why people are in indefinite detention. And finally we're organizing communities to fight back

[01:42:48] So I have 3 3 3 questions or not questions or three requests from you.

[01:42:54] First if you have not yet Bill the rapid response team what they do is essentially lifeskills up to your neighborhood and takes one of your neighbors.

[01:43:02] How would you as a community response if you have not been part of that training her training your community and you want to do that.

[01:43:11] Major commitments commitment as you mentioned and September 5th is going to be the rest.

[01:43:23] Dr. risk resigning anniversary soon. And right now there's thousands of undocumented youth who can potentially apply for their renewals but are not able to because of financial burden. Who here has friends who can and knows how to throw a really good tea parties or like cocktail parties

[01:43:40] And can throw fundraising for that community ready.

[01:43:46] Our community have been throwing fundraising parties.

[01:43:49] We have been saying yes I mean those take thousands of dollars to bribe. So we all know how to organize big parties with big money.

[01:43:56] So if you can organize something like that so we can have resources for the Washington Coalition to provide Dr rhenium funds.

[01:44:04] Let's start organizing especially as the anniversary is up next. And finally let's make sure that this hotline is out there because just recently there was another raid in Bellingham yesterday where 18 folks were picked up. And now you have 18 broken families in Bellingham and every day.

[01:44:21] Ice is gearing up to take more communities with more funding for CBP which is Customs Border Patrol more funding for immigration agents every single day. So being able to get this hotline number out into the community is critical.

[01:44:38] I know I said that it sometimes seems like we're losing but the reality is that we are organizing and fighting back in the last couple in the last couple of months. We've been able to build over 20 rapid response teams across the state in small towns such as Twisp. Folk know. As

[01:44:57] You see right now you know we're statewide. Right.

[01:45:01] We were building teams all across the state really.

[01:45:04] I mean it's important like if your group was organizing as well on immigration efforts that you joined our collective movement efforts where over 100 organizations are working together day in day out to be able to have plans of actions and I think that that's what wakes me up after I realized oh my god I'm undocumented 40 50 still president and then I remember myself the power of the NoCo the power of the power of power and it allows me to come out of bed and say it might feel like we're losing but we're fighting back every single day way to give it everything we have.

[01:45:38] So are you ready to give everything you have to fight back. So. Before we close I want to end up with a chance. That grounds us to continue moving forward.

[01:45:49] It's a quote that we use a lot of undocumented youth when we're putting our bodies on the line. And it's by a shot to the core of black liberation fighter feminist liberation fighter who has shown us how do we fight for immigration and decolonize our minds our hearts and our spirits. And he goes like this.

[01:46:06] Repeat after me.

[01:46:12] It is our duty to fight for freedom. You all are such a stellar

[01:47:04] Audience. We're going to get ready to wrap up but we have some some radical proposals.

[01:47:12] Is that OK for the library to be kind of nonpartisan but radical. Because

[01:47:19] We didn't be OK if we can have everyone who presented today to come to the front so we can give you a final round of applause because this was a pretty phenomenal program.

[01:47:55] 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.