

HOST:

- When I say this is unceded territories, I have never surrendered this to you. I will never give this land up to any of you Canadians, or your queen. Never. I will never give it up. I will never sing your national anthem.
- Oh Canada. Our home on native land.
- Today I humbly stand before you to offer you a long overdue apology.
- Residential school was, and still is, is a nightmare.
- There's nothing on the surface, but once we interpret the data, we'll can see if we can find these children.
- Broadcasting from the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nation.
- How do you train students and teachers to prepare for a school shooter?
- ... down 1.7% here a loss of 37 points or so Apple shares are just getting hammered this morning...
- We're down by between three and four-and-a-half percent generally across these markets. Let's talk about the speed with which we are watching this market deteriorate. We're red everywhere, essentially, down by 4 or 5%.
- We're down over 16%. Dow at the same time has fallen about 18%.
- The stock market is now down 21%.
- We're now down 43%.
- What in the world is happening on Wall Street?
- [screaming]
- The fact is ever since Columbine, 15 years ago, the US has had more than 160 active shooter incidents. That's about one a month and as we saw in Sandy Hook, even the youngest kids aren't safe.

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- The fact is ever since Columbine, 15 years ago, the US has had more than 160 active shooter incidents. That's about one a month and as we saw in Sandy Hook, even the youngest kids aren't safe.

- It's time to ignore your own misery and play, What Personal Hell Are You In? The game where you, the audience, are given clues and must guess the hell that our contestants are in for a chance to win a shirt that isn't as bad as theirs. Let's meet our contestants. Traditionally red, known as the Prince of Darkness, the tempter, the deceiver, please help me welcome the OG prankster, the despicable, the Devil! Calcium-rich, effervescent, and home to abundance of marine life, welcome, Coral Reef! Known to some as nature's organic garbage collector and harbinger of well-treated soil, please welcome, multicellular organism, Earthworm. And lastly, the human of humans of our contestants, the warm-blooded, unenthusiastic, shy yet determined, Armstrong O'Connor. Now, the audience is eagerly awaiting to hear more about you. But first, tease us with a one-word clue of what hell you may be in.
- Devil here. I also go by Fallen Angel, but Devil for short. One word: colour.
- Coral reef. My friends call me Reefer. My word would be hell.
- EW, aka Earthworm, aka destructor of waste. I'll go with... dry.

- Um, I'm Armstrong. I go by, uh, Armstrong. My word I guess is hell?

- I am sorry, Army, hell already has been taken. Okay, looks like Army needs a bit more time. Leaving our listeners in the dark, are ya?

- No.

- Well, thank you contestants. Let's take a break and eavesdrop on two imposter poets confronting their imposter syndrome in Braeden Etienne's "What the Hell is Poetry?" And when we return, more clues, more torture, more hell.

Braeden Etienne & Melissa Brizuela - What the Heck is Poetry?

- I don't know. Do you think we're any closer to answering the question of what the heck is poetry? Am I even a poet?

- No.

- So what the heck is poetry? And am I even a poet? This is a question that me, Braeden, and my friend here Melissa have been asking ourselves for quite some time. Ever since we met in a spoken word workshop ran through Hillside Festival back in winter of 2021, we've been filled with this sense of imposter syndrome of whether we're poets or not. And that only grew deeper when Hillside invited us to perform our poetry at the 2022 festival.

- I will say that this question gets stronger every time I get invited to do a performance or anytime someone asks me about my poetry. So what the heck. What the heck is poetry? And am I even a poet? For this session, what Braeden and I will be doing is that we'll swap and voice each other's work to demonstrate to listeners that how you perform a poem can be just as powerful as what you say in it. By

revisiting one poem each that we performed at Hillside in 2022, we'll have a brief discussion around the process of writing, reading, and what it's like to have our work reinterpreted by another poet.

- After our discussion, we'll guide listeners through an easy-to-adapt poetry exercise, so you too can begin asking the question, What is poetry? Am I even a poet?

- Let's introduce ourselves to our listeners. Braeden Etienne is a person, writer, comedian, poet, and performer. Braeden has performed at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, the Guelph Comedy Festival, Ottawa Improv Festival, Hillside Festival, and the festivals they create in their bedroom. Braeden is a lot of other things, too. Depends on who they're talking to.

- Melissa Brizuela is known to draw endless Venn diagrams between places, foods, and friends, then colour in the spaces with her poems and stories. She is a writer and poet living in Toronto, and calls anywhere in the world home where loved ones carry a piece of her in their hearts. In life and on the page, Melissa mines the minutiae of the every day in search of buried treasure, for gifts hidden within grief, and lessons within pain.

- What do you think, Braeden, should we start with "Tagarp" the poem, a poem that you recited at Hillside in 2022?

- Yes, and I would love to start with this. And I would love to hear your interpretation of it first. So Melissa is gonna read "Tagarp," and I'm very excited to hear this. I've never heard her perform this poem before. So it's everyone's first time. And then yeah, I'll read it how I originally performed it, and then we can talk a little bit about the differences and how this poem came to be and, yeah, enough talking.

- Great. I didn't realize how nervous I would be to read someone else's words to them to their face. So this somehow makes me more nervous than reading my own work in front of strangers. But here we go.

- Ah yes, I'm very intimidating as well.

- As you can hear from the sound of your voice.

- Yeah.

- All right, let's, this is "Tagarp", take one. "Tagarp," by Braeden Etienne.

Tagarp!

The light! The see-er!

Exclusively sold by IKEA dealers.

Entrancing! Standing screwed in and tipping,

with photons emitting from here, and here, and here!

And here — On/off reads the switch, so his function is clear:

just one flick and the lost is found and

gone is the darkness encasing the ground.

Sometimes I wake from a frightening dream,

to have slender still Tagarp looking over me.

Spread on the wall, a shadow so tall,

Reminding us all we're just one misstep away from falling.

From breaking for good.

We're far more likely to topple than trees,

when pulled together with just a couple of screws

and only one key.

Writing and lighting. They're completely different right?

Shining writings of truth is tough,

tougher than glowing up a room full of stuff, you gotta

write and

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right...

it still might not lead to anything fruitful enough.

Never can my truth stand so reliably

as Tagarp's all-or-nothing on/off mentality.

And like Tagarp, my art oughta find

one true purpose.

A truthfulness. A usefulness.

So together aglow we'll all bloom to this

well-lit certainty.

What if life was just screwing in the pieces?

If everything else was this easy, Jesus!

If every next guess came step by step,

with some spare parts left, you could just

leave in a drawer and completely forget.

I want to stand like this lamp of mine,

so steady in its fixture.

Stand poised like a poet,

deep insight to deliver.

Knowing everything touched is no longer in shade

is worth so much more than the \$20 bucks paid.

With your light in my corner, I'm better today.

So Tagarp I really have to say:

for faux sunny day weather inside,

you really do tie the room together my guy.

- That was so fantastic. I'm just getting goosebumps just like, hearing, because that's the first time I've heard anyone not me say that poem.

- Yeah. Well, I'd love to know what your experience is like. Because I mean, maybe you can tell me, remind me sort of where the inspiration for this came from, and how it feels a year later to hear someone else interpreting what you've written.

- Yeah, this actually came as an exercise in the class that you and I were in, Melissa. George Elliott Clark had an exercise called freefall. So the idea of freefall is you just start writing about something that's in your room, or something around you and your surroundings. And then you let it sort of naturally evolve into some sort of deep thought or purpose that you have. So that was just going through that exercise. There's a lamp that's in my office. Right now Tagarp is just two feet to the left of me. So I started writing about an Ikea lamp. But obviously, as a new poet, we were going through that insecurity of how do we bring meaning and purpose, and we're just new, and we don't know what we're doing. So a lot of that came up as I was writing this poem about Tagarp. So that's, it kind of came about the insecurity of writing and never being so certain with how that process goes.

- I'm so curious, because we just started this talking about like, am I even a poet, and you were talking, how the poem "Tagarp" was sort of working out some of those doubts. So a year later, hearing

someone else interpret it, do you have a different feeling about how you process that doubt, I suppose, that we're working through around poetry, like self as poet?

- Yeah, I think it was, although it was interesting, because I noticed you emphasized a lot of the same parts that I do when I do the reading, too. So like, the parts where I'm like, oh, this is the, like, crux, like where I put a lot of meaning into it, or the lines that I felt like were really communicating that idea, I noticed you like kind of slowed down and noted them and did that. So there was a bit of a validation there in someone else's interpreting this work in the same way I do. So my words must have, you know, connected on some level with what I was trying to communicate. So that felt really cool. Yeah.

- Cool. I mean, the listeners can't see it right now, but I'm also looking at the text as you've laid it out with the stanzas and the line breaks. And I feel like it really guided me how I decided to emphasize much of this poem. But I wonder if this was written in prose form, if we would have still interpreted it the same way.

- Interesting. Yeah.

- Maybe?

- Probably not.

- Yeah, well, maybe maybe.

- I'm also very bad at punctuating my poems.

- Maybe, maybe now's a good time to listen to your interpretation of "Tagarp."

- Sure, yeah. I would love to, I'm just gonna go up to, no. It's interesting, I'll add the caveat: I took this poem and I sort of adapted it to almost like more of a musical, like almost rappy kind of thing where I do it over the IKEA waiting loop song, and I just to do it over a loop. I won't do that today, so this is actually me going back to kind of reading it traditionally, as a regular poem. So, here we go.

Tagarp!

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with photons emitting from here, and here, and here!
— On/off reads the switch, so the function is clear:
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And sometimes I wake from a frightening dream,
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Shining writings of truth is tough,
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with your light in my corner, I'm better today.

So Tagarp I really have to say:
for faux sunny day weather inside,
you really do tie the room together my guy.

- Wow.

- There was a guest spot by my dog on that one, I don't know.

- It's so cool to see you read this poem like a whole year later. And also watching you perform it, I realized that you really embody the performance of it. Like I feel like you stepped into a character. You were gesturing at just the right moments to emphasize points even though I'm the only one that can see you right now.

- Yeah.

- But yeah, that's, that was really cool. I mean, I haven't heard you read this in quite some time.

- Yeah. And that one's like, I think that's like, ah, it's very much in my bones now. Like, I've memorized that one. And like literally in my bones because I'm doing these movements that you're talking about almost involuntary, like, there's almost like a choreography I do when I perform poems, because I feel like if you're standing a certain way, or you have a certain expression on your face, your words are going to take on different meanings, or you can play with ideas of sarcasm and irony and things like that. So, yeah.

- I mean, I remember last summer when we were preparing, and we were rehearsing our poems with each other, and like working out edits, we were even talking about what would it feel like to be on stage, and I think at one point I asked, Would you bring the lamp out and sort of do with choreography with the lamp to really emphasize it? I really felt like just watching you read this on the screen, like you were really bringing that same energy to it.

- Yeah, no, and that was a great suggestion, because I did end up performing that poem later on at a cabaret. And I just like, it was, I had the poem memorized. So I spent all my effort on just like doing a

whole choreography with Tagarp and like lighting effects, because it's talking about lights going on and off. So I would, you know, turn Tagarp on and off at certain points in the poem to like, emphasize certain things. So, there's, that's why we ask, What is poetry, right? Because it's like, is that poetry? That's like dance and choreography, but it's a whole—

- I was just gonna ask, I was just gonna bring it back to that, because you also perform comedy.

- Yeah.

- And so, where is the line? I mean, maybe the line just overlaps.

- Yeah, exactly.

- Poetry and performance and comedy.

- Yeah. I often say my comedy is like, unintentionally deep. And then my poems are unintentionally funny. Like, it's like, there's like a, uh, yeah. Because at the same, at the heart of it is the same sort of creative energy or creative force, like it's making something from nothing. And the medium, I don't know, doesn't always matter to me. I like kind of living in between the medium. But, um—

- Yeah. Well, as George Elliott Clark would tell us in our workshop series all the time, that poems are really little plays. The speaker or the characters in the poem are all the characters in a play. So, I think—

- And there's, yeah, there's always a nice result, there's always sort of a beginning, middle, end. And it's always a very emotional thing. But that could apply to so much art. So when people say, I'm not a poet, it's like, I think your definition of poet is very narrow. To me it's like a very broad definition of what it can be. But yeah, thanks for the, thanks for the reading. Now I'm excited to move on and read your poem next.

- Yeah, I'm ready to hear it. I have not heard anyone else read this. Should I introduce, like, some context for it first, or do that after?

- I think, I think so, especially, yeah, yeah. I think that would be good for some context here.

- Okay. So the poem "Suplada" that you're about to read is a poem that I wrote last year, also as part of George's class. The workshop series was about spoken word, right? So it was like intentional to

perform our poetry. And I think the exercise itself had to do with introducing ourselves, or basically writing a poem that was a bio about who we are. So there's some specific references in here that, you know, I guess, in some ways, like fictionalize, or, what do you call it? You know, take from parts of my life, my life experience. So this is why no one else has read this poem. But I'm so curious to see someone who occupies different identities than I do to interpret this, and then I'll be happy to read "Suplada" after you.

- Yeah, okay, great. Well, here we go. "Suplada," by Melissa Brizuela.

The other side of snobbery? Let's say it's sensitivity. But knowing that couldn't have negated the nagging negativity. Mine was a culture where self sculpture wasn't tolerated, so to survive meant my ego had to be abdicated. Suplada in Tagalog means to be snug up, means to be stuck up or snobbish. I'm a sensitive soul, so I always got admonished. My silence in a crowded conversation meant I had a stinky opinion. Everyone and their mother floated their Air Wick suggestions, yet they never stopped to ask me questions. Just tried to see beneath the onion-skin layers of my convictions. Suplada was a weapon, the way they bandied it around like a diagnosis, told me to grow a thicker skin lest the onslaught of emotions bleed through, involuntary osmosis. Reassurance came in the form of, They're just kids being kids showing their jealousy. But their taunts rattled on my nerves like a haunting melody. The wounds their words left behind would eventually scab over. But in those early days there was too much stimuli, and I couldn't just let things fly, not until I learned how to Jedi mind trick my way out of situations so sick and unruly.

- Wow, it's so odd to hear someone else reading this.

- Isn't it?

- It really is. I wasn't ready for it.

- Yeah, neither was I.

- So one thing I didn't tell you is, before you read this, was, writing this poem last year and then having to perform it was such a stretch outside of my comfort zone. Because, especially, I think, when you and

I met, I was really asking myself a lot do I write for the page? I don't think I write for the stage like, can I, can I perform? Right? And I think since we've known each other, you've read a lot of my drafts, and you've seen a lot of my other poems, and the way that you read this, it seems really on, on par with like, how I feel like most of my other writing is read, and how I would typically read it. So I, that's interesting. I'm so curious, what did it feel like to you to read this knowing that it was a highly, it's essentially, it's a fictionalized bio of who I am?

- Yeah. Yeah, I mean, there was a bit of nerves in my, like, in me as I'm reading, because it's, it includes elements of your Filipino background, and I'm like, you know, I'm a white dude. So, reading that, I'm always like, oh, I, you know, I want to be respectful and treat those things. But in reading it, it was interesting, because it's like, well, this is, you know, has cultural references that I, you know, aren't my background. The feeling of that, not fitting in, or being misjudged, or the other kind of, like, prescribing you an identity that you're not comfortable with, like, all of that is very universal. So I found as I was reading it, I kind of like was able to sink into that emotion a little bit more. So it's interesting reading something from someone's other, you know, from a different cultural background, but finding that cool, emotional similarity and finding what the universal things are.

- Cool, thanks. Thanks for reading that to me. Yeah, I often find that your, I often find that your performances have such an element of, as you said, sometimes unintentional comedy, or even not unintentional comedy, but a lot of drama and flair to the way that you perform.

- Yeah, I love drama.

- So this was so fascinating to hear you read it in the way, like I said, I think the way that much of my other poetry that you've read, sort of, is typical to how I'd read it. So I'd like to share with you my version of "Suplada".

- I would love to hear it. Let's do it.

- All right. "Suplada"

The other side of snobbery? I'd say it's sensitivity. But knowing that couldn't have negated the nagging negativity. Mine was a culture where self sculpture wasn't tolerated. So to survive

meant my ego had to be abdicated. Suplada in Tagalog means to be stuck up or snobbish. A sensitive soul, so I always got admonished. My silence in a crowded conversation meant I had a stinky opinion. Everyone and their mother floated their Air Wick suggestions. Yet they never stopped to ask me questions, try to see beneath the onion skin layers of my convictions.

Suplada was a weapon, the way they bandied it around like a diagnosis, told me to grow thicker skin lest the onslaught of emotions bleed through, involuntary osmosis. Reassurance came in the form of, They're just kids being kids showing their jealousy. But their taunts rattled on my nerves like a haunting melody. The wounds their words left behind would eventually scab over. In those early days, there was too much stimuli. I couldn't just let things fly. Not until I learned how to Jedi mind trick my way out of situations so sick and unruly.

- Nice. I love hearing you read it because almost like the rhymes kind of come in differently from like, like, I feel like it's maybe more again, it's that like being more in your bones thing. But I felt like I was kind of flubbing over some of the rhymes or not setting them up in the right way. But it was really cool to hear you. Yeah, it's so smooth when you do it. It's very smooth. And I was like, oh, this is, you know, like, reading it I was like, how does she make it sound so smooth? So yeah. Is that something you think about? Or, I don't know, does that make sense?

- Well, you know, that's so funny, because actually, when I'm writing and when I'm editing, I often read it aloud to hear the rhymes and to hear the slight rhymes. But I wanted to talk about the way it's laid out on the page, because yours, like I said, when I read "Tagarp," really guided me with how the stanzas were broken down. Mine is not as evident in terms of where the pause and the emphasis should be. So I wonder like, what's that experience as the reader of someone else's work?

- Yeah, I don't know if it's just me, but like, I often when reading poetry will like skip over the commas or like not pay attention to them in the same way. And I think that's really important, like a lot of poets use commas very intentionally of like, you're supposed to pause here, and I kind of blow through them a lot of the time. So that's, I think that's more on me than anything. But yeah, it's interesting, because I think with my stanzas often I'll have the rhyme kind of at the end of the line. So it's very, like, clear that this is

coming up. Whereas you have some sneaky rhymes in here that are just like in the middle of the, like, in the middle of the next line.

- Yeah, I do.

- So it, I think that adds to the smoothness I'm talking about when you read it, because you know they're coming, so you like kind of set them up a little bit more. Yeah, I would love to just like read that a little bit more. But it's very, like, it's interesting that this was your like, this is a writing page because to me it is a very spoken word piece with how that rhyming works, like that kind of quick rhyme structure that you have going on in this.

- Yeah, this poem, especially, which is why it was such a stretch for me, because I'm used to writing to be, for what I always thought would be just like read silently, or like in one's mind. But I remember in George's class, he was like, really, like, draw out those words. He's like, don't just say bleed, like *but-
eed*, like make it feel like you're bleeding as you say it. I was so nervous to have to read this in front of anyone, you know, but that's why I took the course.

- I think you did a great job. Like it's really, like, impactful poem.

- Thank you.

- Like I feel for you. I'm like, aw, little Melissa.

- Aw. Thanks. Well, I don't know, do you think we're any closer to answering the question of what the heck is poetry? Am I even a poet?

- No. I think that's kind of the point. I think the idea of poetry is that you're always asking that question and in a way of like, how can I keep being creative, or push a boundary, or write about something that is confusing to me and try to make more sense of it? Like, that's to me what poetry is, is just making sense of the nagging thoughts in my brain and like, how can I give that a nice, pretty structure?

- It's true. For me, I think, I think we did get closer, and then I think we also got further away because sometimes it's, I feel like poetry is like such a living, breathing organism. I think the act of writing, reading, and reciting our own work and other people's work shows us that it's always, uh, that it's alive. I think poetry is alive.

- Yeah. Yeah.

- And, and maybe there's poetry when we don't even realize we're making poetry.

- I think so.

- I think that's a really good segue into the exercise that I want to walk people through.

- Yeah, I think so too. So let's get into it.

- Great. So I'd like to walk everyone through a brief exercise on found poetry. Braeden, I know this is one that you and I have talked about a lot since first collaborating. It goes by different names. It's found poetry. It's sometimes called erasure poetry, blackout poetry, or redacted poetry. And the main thing is that you take an existing piece of work, and you take a pencil, marker, a pen, and you cross out words, and then you create a poem based on work that's already there. So it's really about finding the poetry in something that already exists. Would you like to tell everyone what we chose to do for this exercise? And then maybe you and I can read each of our respective poems?

- Yeah. So Melissa and I, and thanks to programsound for having us on this program, thought we would make block poetries out of the About page on the programsound.fm website. So Melissa has made one, and I've made one, and we haven't read them, and we're going to now. Would you like to start?

- Sure. I'll start. So, taking that text, I've titled it, call, it's called "About Storytellers."

Storytellers, foster connection. An invitation to listen and know the conditions for accessible national collaboration. Stay connected. Who are you? Why are you? Explore the potential of storytellers on Turtle Island. When the creator and performers storytell outside, together they develop further. Investigate, dedicate, storytell. Research and experiment. Prove hope is creativity and connection. So artists, produce and broadcast them. Thank you for the support and encouragement. Continue to develop love. Storytellers, this is just the beginning.

- That was very good.

- Thank you.

- That was very good. I should have gone first.

- I'd love to hear your take. I'm also expecting something funny or dramatic.

- You shouldn't be. Mine is called "Optimism FM."

The stream of sound comes through, connection across distance. And maybe, while kept apart, it also has brought us together by pushing us, an opportunity to tune into the void. To let us know we are not alone. Who are you, and why are you doing this? We are a collective and together develop the idea: Hope is this radio. Thank you.

- Oh, you know what's so cool about that for me is that, obviously the poems are very different. And knowing that it was from the same source material is, it's just like, we just looked at the same thing from such a different angle. And I think that's what's so beautiful about poetry, is that we can find, we can find the message in almost anything.

- Yeah. And it's really cool using, you know, like, we're asking, what is poetry? this whole time. And it's like, that was not poetry. And somehow we just made it poetry. Like there was no intention of that being poetry when it was written. It's written very beautifully, and it has a lot of great language. So I think that made it a great candidate for block poem. But poetry is all just about the intention of shaping something that already exists. So it's very easy to do. You can do that, too.

- Yeah. And so we, what my suggestion is, when you're doing erasure poetry, or this kind of found poetry, is maybe just give yourself a moment to read through the text the first time through, and then it's on the second and third and fourth passes when you start to scratch out those words to see what calls out to you.

- If anyone does make a found poem, I would love to read it, see it, hear it. So feel free to send it to either me or Melissa on Instagram. My handle is @answerstofive. And it's after my nickname, five, which is my aspirational internal age.

- My handle is @BraedenEtienne, which is my name. That was given at birth. So Melissa, what do you think? Are we any closer to answering the question, What is poetry? Or am I even a poet?

- What is poetry? And am I even a poet? I feel like I have more confidence in this moment to understanding that I am a poet. I definitely know you're a poet. But ask me again in another moment,

and we'll see where I'm at. I feel like it's always an iterative process of understanding who we are as people, as poets.

- I completely agree. I think poetry is an evolving thing. And being a poet is an evolving thing as well. And I think that's why we meet and continue to ask this question. So I look forward to the next one.

- I love collaborating with you, Braeden. Thanks so much. And thanks to all the listeners out there who joined us.

- Yeah, thanks, listeners. Bye.

- Bye. Braeden and I would like to collectively thank programsound for giving us the opportunity to create this episode.

- We also want to thank our teacher George Elliott Clark who we met back in that spoken word workshop in winter 2021.

- We'd also like to thank Marie Zimmerman, the executive director of Hillside Festival, for believing in us and getting us on the stage. Also big thank you to Jenn Pidgeon, the coordinator of the Sun Stage at Hillside Festival for programming us at the festival. And of course, we'd love to thank all of our friends and family who have supported us along this journey of becoming and understanding that we're poets.

- Yes, thank you, friends.

- Yeah and thanks to all the listeners today.

- Yes, thank you, listeners. Okay. Bye.

- Bye.

HOST:

Hi, I'm Angie Lang, and you're listening to How to Create From a Professional, I swear. This segment will take you through the steps of how to professionally create and craft your creation, from a professional. My name, Angie Lang, once again. I will take you through some primal preliminary steps. Just wait. Just listen. Sit back, relax, and learn how to create like a professional. From a professional. Step one, examine yourself. Are you prepared to fail? Witness your mistakes? Are you in the right mind

to push through all insecurities? Step two, blank canvas, whatever it may be. Imagine the potential. Resist the urge to self-edit in this phase, as it will hamper creative output. Strive to be prolific, not perfect. Step three. At this point, you may become overwhelmed with too much possibility. I advise you right now to call the person you love. Maybe it's your mom. Maybe it's a sibling. A cousin, perhaps?Whoever it may be. Oh, wait. I'll go one step further. I'll call too.

Hello? Hi, it's Angie Lang, your future self. It's 2023. And I know you're just a teenager right now, experiencing profound peer pressure, emotional toil, all while trying to solve for X. It's a cruel trick in life, being forced to learn the capital of Myanmar as your body is going through a dramatic hormonal change. However, I am here to ensure you get through it all. You've created a fabulous and successful future. At times, you struggle, and you worry about money, and you worry about being alone. But you learn the lesson of building beautiful and long-lasting friendships. The importance of a chosen. In 2023 you guide a cohort of individuals experiencing overwhelm trying something new. You become an expert at this. You become an expert at feeling through your emotions and creating majestic art. You encourage your fellow artists to do the same by your actions. You got this.

Now it's your turn. Call that person. Tell them how you feel. Get through that emotion. Because in our next segment we are going to create. But first, let's listen to some inspiring conversations with African women poets from different backgrounds. This is Vanessa Chisakula taking us through insightful interviews and discussions.

VANESSA CHISAKULA TRANSCRIPT UNAVAILABLE

HOST:

Ah! What? Where am I? I fell asleep in five minutes, and now the sky is gone. Where did the sky go? Where is sun? Uh oh, I'm veiled, in a dark place, with strange colours that like, mock the sun? Did I die

in my sleep? Wait, what's that music? Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. This tree is a lie, it's not even made of tree. It even feels funny on my feet. God, you try to do something new one time. I thought, oh a smaller tree, that'll be cool, I will feel so large, perspective is so fun. Oh my god I can't even see the outside. Has it left, is it gone? Is this life now? Oh, a door. Someone opened a door. Humans. The room is filling with humans. Oh, I'm inside. The place that humans are always so desperate to go. I've never, I've never been inside. Underground, yes, but never inside. These humans. They don't quite look like the humans I'm used to seeing. Not quite baby humans, nor adult humans. They're like, middling in their humanity. They're like little goslings trying to lead their own lines. In a lot of ways the humans are familiar. Their behaviour. Kind of like cicadas. Some of them over there in a pile. Music playing, but very few dancing. And then in the middle of the room there appears to be an absurd courtship ritual going on? There is a strange want with a deep lack of follow through. Like there! The two humans there, red shirt and purple shirt, are close, but so far away. And the green shirt is dancing with orange dress, but orange dress cannot stop staring at purple shirt. Orange dress just hand touched with purple shirt in a sort of like one sided celebration. Are they in cahoots? Is orange dress going to eat purple shirt? And, and the others are observing the humans in the centre just like I am. But are also looking very disinterested in everything at the same time. How do they do that? Oh whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa. There's shift. Music, music is loud what's happening? Why is the ground... Oh god. Earthquake!

I had a vision of one of them middle school sog hops. You know, pastel tulle, ribbons galore. And all those shy little dead wallflowers clinging to the sides. I was on the sidelines myself, as sidelined as you can be, all the way outside. Lighting up and gazing through the window. Never my scene, never my song, never my dance. As I watched all those nervous nellies, I thought, is this *anyone's* idea of fun? And then I blinked, and when my sight resumed all those little wallflowers were laying on the ground. Nothing but bones. But no funny bones. No life in there. Just a floor of femurs. All their little skulls laying lifeless, not a spark in them. They looked just like me.

Roberta McDonald – Here's What I Hear

Good morning. My name is Robin McDonald, and I exist on the stolen traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples here in Vancouver, BC. I'm also functionally deaf in my left ear, and I have maybe about 30% hearing in my right ear. I wear hearing aids, but they're not perfect. And all they do is amplify some of the sounds sometimes that I'd really rather not be hearing. So today I'd like to invite you along on my morning walk so that you can experience how I hear the world. So, you'll hear a door opening, and then it'll sound like something's wrong with your speakers. There's nothing wrong with your speakers. I've done a little bit of post-editing sorcery to make it sound like what I hear or don't hear in the world. I hope you'll join me on a walk through my neighbourhood down to the water and, yeah, you'll hear things sort of fade out towards the end, and you'll hear a lot of silence where there shouldn't be silence, and that's what I hear every day. So thanks for listening.

- See, my hearing aid's doing this thing, can you hear that? I just have to readjust it so that it's not squawking everywhere. One second. Okay.

- Hey good morning, can I get a, one of those pistachio, with the gluten-friendly donut thing?

- The vanilla or chocolate?

- What's that?

- The vanilla or chocolate?

- Hard to hear you, sorry.

- The vanilla or chocolate?

- The chocolate one? Yeah, I think that's, whatever it's called, the vegan chocolate ring pistachio thing, and a decaf oat milk latte? 12 oz size? Thank you.

- Hey good morning, can I get a, one of those pistachio, with the gluten-friendly donut thing?
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- Come on. You can do it. You can do it, it's okay. Kind of scary.

- I know, right.

- Come on. You can do it. You can do it, it's okay. Kind of scary.

- I know, right.

- Attention to the pool, attention to the pool please, the time is now 930 and your swim session washrooms are now locked, so please use the washrooms outside the gate. Thank you.

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HOST:

- And we're back. We just heard Roberta MacDonald with an audio narrative that explores the sounds in her head. Well, contestants. What kind of sounds do you have in your head? We asked our

contestants to provide us with a sound to help our listeners get closer to identifying what personal hell are you in? Mr. Fallen Angel. Take us through the sound you got.

- As some of you may know, I can tolerate a lot. But this sound is my personal hell.

- [young child singing]

- Really living up to your evilness. We love it! Coral Reef, you are up next.

- I've been under the weather lately. I think this sound is the culprit.

- [noise]

- Here's to a speedy recovery, reefer. That sound is unpleasant to the ear, that's for sure. Earthworm is next.

- This sound is my greatest fear.

- [gentle rain, birds]

- E.W., your personal hell is my paradise. Lastly, Army Armstrong O'Connor.

- It's just... Armstrong.

- Alright listeners.

- My sound... my hell..

- There you have it. More clues. Some hell-arious, others hellishly optimistic. Where are they? When we return, the revelation of two contestants' personal hell.

Gabbi Greco - MINDFUL MOMENT 1, BREATH

It's time to slow things down. For a mindful moment. With programsound. This mindful moment is dedicated to mindful breathing. Learning how to focus on the breath allows us to ground ourselves in

the present moment, relieve stress, and reestablish inner calm. Let's get ourselves into a comfortable position. Sitting on the ground, on a chair, lying on the floor, on a bed, couch, whatever feels good. Allow your eyes to close. Relax your jaw, shoulders, and any other tension you might feel in your body. Take a big breath in, and out. Become aware of your breath. The natural cycle of your breath. Feel the cool air travel in through your nostrils and softly into your lungs. And exhale. Feel the warmth of your breath release. Breathing in for three seconds and out for three seconds is a good natural rhythm. For diaphragmatic breathing, place one hand on your belly and the other hand on your heart. Feel your belly raise and lower as you breathe in and out. This is the best kind of breathing to increase oxygen in the blood, cleanse toxins, and relax. Maybe by now some thoughts have come into your mind. Objectively notice them and then let them go, like these rad radio frequencies moving through the air right in front of you. Every time you get distracted by a thought, bring your attention back to your breath. Rest in the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out for a few more moments. We are coming to the end of our mindful moment. So let's gently open our eyes. And together take one big final breath. All the way in, and all the way out. Thanks for joining the mindful moment. With programsound.

And we're back. We're hoping that Gabby Greco is mindful moment was long enough. So, what did you guess? Let's recap those sounds again. Army?

- It's Armstrong.

- E.W.

- [gentle rain, birds]

- Reefer.

- [noise]

- And Devil.

- [young child singing]

- Now it is time to reveal, what personal hell are you in? By random draw, Earthworm and Coral Reef please reveal your hell.

- Oh wow. It was a pleasure to be on the show. I don't wish my hell on anyone. My hell? Stuck on the sidewalk after the rain and sun starts shining. I am moments away from drying up from the sun, getting stepped on by a giant, or food for the raven. I really... [raven cawing]

- Looks like E.W. is making their way to a different paradigm. Aren't you glad you're not a worm? Coral Reef? Share with us your hell.

- Pleasure to be here and share my plight. Parts of me are dying off and calcifying permanently. I'm impacted by humans even though I've never seen a human in my life. My health, plastic pollution. Killing me. Slowly.

- When we come back, we ask Devil and Army, where are they comfortable, safe? And their answers may surprise you. But first, let's get funky, placid, and freaky with Detroit's own One Single Rose, a poem about sex and the dating cesspool. Yikes.

One Single Rose - CHEF TELL

Hey fellas, I'm trying to understand how the energy shifted from old school dating values, where you might meet a woman, expressing interest by telling her she's pretty, compliment her dress or her hair, or just say something witty to grab her attention, to get her cell phone number, where you guys slide into our DMs, sending eggplant emojis or Dick flicks. Inquiring minds want to know why so many men lead with the little head in their pants instead of using the big heads on their shoulders. Leading with what's in your pants will literally get you fucked. Some of us ladies prefer that men lead with their brains to grab their attention. My text messages and DMs are filled with so many pictures of appealing and unappealing penises that I've created a digital file folder entitled Desperados. I really wanted to put the Desperados on blast for my social media networks to see, but instead penned a poem describing one

of the true accounts contained inside the poem. I wrote a poem about it. You want to hear it? Here it go. It's entitled "Chef Tell."

Bullshitting brothers hold me up from ending my second virginity. Kitty cat need to walk. Because I don't want to be celibate anymore. Not interested in anyone else's man, husband, or side dude. Not entertaining any casual folks. I'm trying to build something real, but I'm not having any luck. Maybe I'm too picky in my old age. Refusing to settle, because I ain't trying to get played. Got these emotions in check. Not entertaining anything less than what I want or deserve. But these brothers out here nowadays are getting on my last fucking nerve. Here's an example of why I've been screwing myself. Chef Tell was trying to holler. "Know what's on the menu today? Me and you." Gave himself the highest praise. "Yeah, that's right." Told me he'd have me living good and eating good. And that he's orally gifted. He persisted until I contemplated letting him clear the cobwebs from my booty. Placed all my cookies in his bag. Then he raised the red flag that messed me up. An unsolicited picture of his uncircumcised dick with a caption that read, "Are you ready for this?" Wow. So I'm staring at the turtleneck trying to figure out what this could be. Because all I saw was skin, while I'm searching for the beef. Where's the beef? But here's the kicker, I expanded the picture, the shit didn't get no bigger. Man, what a shame. Someone told me not to give this man my real name. Grown ass man with a little boy dick, biggin himself up like I'm the thirsty chick. Bragging that he'll do damage with a fucking raisinette. Little dicks don't get my coochee wet. Time passed and we never discussed it. Because I knew at the beginning he wasn't getting shit. A couple days later he sends another pic. This time it's a baby, I'm like who the fuck's kid is this? Hickory dickory cock. Restarted his child support clock. 57 year old with a reckless tool. Equipment apparently still works, but he's a motherfucking fool. He's got a newborn son he says he won't abandon. After he ran up raw in a random. His grandkids are older than his only son, which confirmed what I already knew. He ain't the one. Yeah, I know, babies are a blessing. Chef Tell mishandled his erection. Grandpa Daddy's a student who should be teaching lessons, but he's too busy on the streets, slinging penis with no protection. Giving these young girls something they can't feel.

He's gonna be 75 years old when he pays his last bill. Dumb little freak, go mess around and catch a disease. But it don't matter to me, because I'm not doing that sleaze. One Single Rose, no stump.

HOST:

[children playing]

The playground. Remembered as a place where imagined worlds emerged and bullies roamed. In my day, it was an escape from the chalk dust, toxic felt markers, and class-hamster-poop-filled oasis called the classroom. The rules were different on the playground. It was not a matter of learning your two-times table or 3.14 equals pi. No one cared about A-pluses, similes, or metaphors. The playground was all about street smarts. An independent haven of mischief and mayhem. A 15-minute endorphin high far greater than the fructose melange brought to you by the vending machine. Yes. The playground was where I dominated. I spat on shoes, I ruffled feathers, I fucked shit up. It was my domain. I ruled. I grabbed little dweebs by the collar, giving them the death stare, throwing them roughly aside as they pissed their pants. I wasn't nice, but can you blame me? What they were getting wasn't nearly as bad as what I was receiving at home. So give me a break why don't ya. Give me this chance to rule someplace. Allow me this power grab. Don't worry, I'll get mine. My karma will come. But back then, I ruled. I'm not the only one causing havoc in the world, though. Jesse Walker shares with you all the secret and troubling life of birds. A true crime story, here on programsound.fm.

JESSIE WALKER - THE SECRET AND TROUBLING LIFE OF BIRDS

Birds. They're at your feeder, in your front yard, and around your home. Categorized in Latin by the *Avis* class, birds are some of our earliest examples of evolutionary potential, with birds today being

considered some of the only living dinosaurs. There are over ten-thousand species of birds worldwide, ranging from the smallest hummingbirds at your nectar feeder, to the ostrich roaming the plains of Africa. As a person growing up in a town, in a country, you'll probably have the distinct memory of a time when birds have touched your life, with their sweet songs, craving for crumbs, and petite, feathered frames.

But what if the birds were not all that they seemed? Do we truly know the potential of the birds in our neighbourhoods? Perhaps we do not. Every day, bird crimes affect countless innocent civilians all across the world, from doctors and teachers, to lifeguards and school children. In this podcast, we will explore the dark underbelly of the bird society, and the effects that their crimes have on families across the world every day. From robbery to forgery, laundering to loitering. The crimes of these reckless fowl will not go unanswered. This is *The Secret and Troubling Life of Birds*.

We open on an average summer day at the humble border crossing between Houlton, Maine and Woodstock, New Brunswick. The trees were lit gently by the rising June sunlight, as the border officers swapped their shifts, preparing the day officers for the work ahead. Just like any other day, Joe Sullivan showed up to his job with the Canadian border agency with the same mission. Protect the safety of Canadian citizens, at all costs. He prepared for the day as he always did, waking up, kissing his wife Brittany goodbye, and enjoying a double-double from Tim Hortons before arriving to his station for the day. He claims that nothing seemed off or unusual about the day, other than the changed out tank at the water cooler. All seems normal. Or so he thought.

- Yeah, I was just pulling up to work in my Hyundai Elantra, usual parking spot. Nothing strange about it. And as I was loading my gear out of my car and looked up to see this big old gaggle of geese. Nothing unusual about that this time of year necessarily. We usually see them migrating across the border, or resting in the front yard. But it was clear that these geese were flying lower to the ground than I was used to, carrying something in their little webbed feet. And I couldn't quite make out what

they were carrying, when suddenly I felt something large and rectangular fall from the sky that hit me on the head and knocked me out cold. When I came to, I realized what it was and couldn't believe it. It was a block of wood.

That's right, firewood. While many in the world have undoubtedly heard of the drug-smuggling parrots of the Colombian drug cartels, far fewer are aware of the threat right at their doorstep, the firewood-smuggling Canadian Geese of Canada. Banned by the Canadian and US governments in 1981 as an effort to further the war on drugs, it is known to the seasoned traveller that firewood is illegal to transport across the border, due both to the pests it might expose to the environment, and the potential to encourage arson. However, for a lawless goose, a cord of firewood is not only a lucrative opportunity, but a dangerous one. In an effort to combat what they felt were the unjust policies of the Reagan administration, Canadian Geese began forming task forces all across the border, inspired by the earlier drug crimes committed by their parrot friends. For the last 40 years, Canadian geese have been carrying countless cords of wood across the border, utilizing their wings as transportation, and their wit and cunning as a guidebook. Their primary market is for-profit campground sites, who sell the firewood at a considerable markup against Canadian wood distributors. Their payment and market is simple. In exchange for their goods, many of the top officials at campgrounds across Atlantic Canada distribute large quantities of both Canadian and American currency to the birds. But what is even more alarming is what they do with the cash when they receive it.

- Many American and Canadian citizens are not aware of the sheer amount of political influence geese hold, both in the Canadian Parliament and in the American Congress.

The voice you're hearing now is that of Dr. Laura Birderson, a lead researcher and avian political science at the University of Manitoba.

- It is estimated that between 85 to 95% of politicians in both Ottawa and Washington are under the influence of the goose lobby, making them one of the strongest corporate lobbyists worldwide. One

might argue that their political scope outweighs that of both big pharma and the NRA, and that their power is stronger. However, while other organizations argue for tax cuts and reduced corporate red tape, the geese are known to simply leave notes outside of the offices of elected officials that read, quote, Free Bird Seed Now!, accompanied by between fifteen- and twenty-thousand dollars cash. It is honestly a miracle that there are still for-profit seed companies out there with the influence the species has on our current political climate.

Despite many militant efforts to shoot these geese down at the border. geese have proven to be just as brutal in the air as on land, often honking at and chasing government fighter jets into submission. In an effort to combat the raging goose epidemic, Joe even acquired a pilot's license himself in an attempt to be the first line of defence against these godless creatures.

- My father, John Sullivan Sr., was one of the greatest Mounties known to mankind. His career spanned 50 years in service of his country. When I first got onto the force at the border, I knew I was making my family proud. When the opportunity came up to join the Anti-Goose Aerial Task Force, I knew it was important to my family for me to step up and defend our rights. At first, the job seemed simple. Get up in the air and drive the geese back south of the border. But it was not that easy. Did you know that geese will bite planes? Yeah, and not just like, nibble on them. One of those little bastards took my left engine my second day on the job.

But that was not all. While Joe may have survived that initial run in with the firewood smugglers. His father, Joe Sullivan Sr., was not so lucky. After rejoining the force to counter the increasing threat of goose terrorism, he found himself on the sharp end of the bill, getting bitten multiple times by the geese on the legs, arms, and face. While his son said that he is on the path to a speedy recovery, the memories of what he saw still haunt him to this day.

- Dad can't sleep. He can't eat. He wakes up in the middle of the night just, honking. He hears the honking every night.

So what can be done about the seemingly unstoppable firewood smugglers of Atlantic Canada? Under the instruction of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the RCMP have placed the geese as a collective unit on the wanted and highly-dangerous criminal registry, and intend to pursue all charges related to these crimes. They are led to believe that the geese are leaderless, working as a collective rather than answering to a higher up. Since his retirement from the Aerial Task Force, Joe has taken up the mantle of finding the geese on land, both for himself and for his father.

- Oh yeah, we're trying to bring them up on treason charges. They're called Canadian Geese for a reason. And if they're going to continue to smuggle contraband across the border, to harm military equipment, and bite the faces of traumatized officers, then we're going to do something about it.

Next, as we transition, we move not only to a different location, but a different time. The year is 1996. In Tokyo, Japan, an unperceived threat to commuters across the city begins to take shape. Police were unable to determine the source of the vandalism, which came in the form of rocks placed on the train tracks of commuter trains across the city. After weeks of attempting to locate and name the vandals, hope came in the form of a single photograph taken by a civilian photographer along the train route. In this photo, the disruptors took simple yet unassuming shapes. Large beaks, sharp talons, and the intelligence of the average two-year-old human child. After much time spent researching the photographs and hosting high-stakes stakeouts near the train tracks, authorities were able to stop the bandits. A murder of crows, who had been terrorizing the city for weeks. While the apprehension of these deviants curtailed the transportation epidemic across Tokyo, nearly 10,000 kilometers away, an even greater storm was brewing. From the tracks of Tokyo, we find ourselves in a small series of seaside villages on the Italian Riviera, known as Cinque Terre. The series of quaint towns have often been regarded as a popular tourist spot, hosting around 2.5 million visitors every year. Many know Cinque Terre for its beautiful scenery and vibrant culture. Perhaps most recognizable are the hundreds of brightly painted buildings marking the mountainside of this beautiful seaside town that have served

as beacons of relaxation and merriment for generations of visitors and locals alike. While the average tourist may know Cinque Terre for its gorgeous landscape, and other, more cultured tourists for its feature in the popular Disney film *Luca*, few are aware of the dangerous string of bird crimes that hit the small Italian villages only mere years after the Tokyo crow incidents. In 1997, nearly 300 Vespas across the small towns were affected by what has now been nicknamed the pigeon escapades. Starting with the Vespas outside of small cafés, and expanding into some of the region's most popular scooter distributors, a small gang of pigeons began disassembling the wiring on the inside control panel of the scooters, causing mid-ride malfunctions, inter-vehicular collisions, and what some have nicknamed the Road Runner effect, with Scooter drivers comically dangling midair, while their scooters came crashing to the ground beneath them. While the citizens of Italy and the pigeons had spent countless years in harmony leading up to the escapades, the socio-political effects of the conflict can still be felt between the pigeon and human populations to this day. Susie Houston, an expatriate from the United States of America, who found her way to Italy in the late 90s. has described her memories of this time in her riveting and revealing memoir, *I Was the Bread Crumbs*, surviving the Italian pigeon escapades. We've invited her on the show today to speak to her experience and Cinque Terre during that time, and to provide us with a more vivid picture of what exactly was happening in the region during those years of intense conflict.

- Susie, thank you so much for being with us.

- It's a pleasure to be here. Thank y'all so much for having me.

- So you were in Cinque Terre during the pigeon escapades, is that correct?

- Yes, ma'am. That is correct. I had originally found my way to Italy as a part of my study abroad at the University of Texas at Austin. I had been studying mechanical engineering and came here to learn more about Vespa technology at the turn of the century, and oh boy, let me tell you, they roped me right in and I never left.

- So, working at a Vespa repair shop, you must have been right on the ground floor in the midst of this conflict. What was that time like for you?

- Well, uh, I mean, it was a bleak time. I had been working at the Vespa repair shop for about two months when the pigeons first became a problem. It was a little shop, mostly catering to tourist rentals and regular repairs for the locals. Folks would usually start showing up around seven, eight in the morning looking to get their bikes fixed. The owner was also my boss, a lovely older gentleman who we all called Zio. Well, bless his heart. We lost him a couple years back, and that was a real shame. Luckily, his sons taken over the operation now, but at the time Zio and I were all the little setup had. I spent those first two months happier than I'd been in years, but spent most of my days sweatin like a sinner in church with that hot Italian weather, honey. The pigeons had always been around, but that wasn't unusual. I mean, I can even remember throwing them leftover crumbs from my lunch most days. I would have considered them friends, honestly. But, but who does that to a friend, you know? Who in their right mind does that?

- So, Miss Houston, if you feel comfortable sharing, from your perspective, how did this all begin?

- Honestly, it's hard to say. One day, I showed up to the shop, and the pigeons all had a different look in their eye. Something much more sinister than I'd ever seen. As I was propping the door to open the shop for the day, one of them followed me into the back room. And I didn't think much of it, little animals in the area come in and out of the shop all the time. But as I was going about my routine to get things ready, I noticed that the pigeon had brought a notepad, and seemed to be writing furiously as he followed me. He kept following and writing, following and writing, whatever I did, following and writing. When I finally looked down to see what he'd been writing, I noticed that he'd been charting my movements. And he labeled the diagram, Destroy Vespa Now. Honestly, I was less concerned with our safety, and more shocked for how it was that the pigeon had managed to learn written English. Not only was it a written language, but English? Where in Italy? I'm sorry. There's just so many unanswered questions. Sometimes it's hard to live with what we don't know. How did they even learn to write? Before I could snatch his tiny pen away from him, he cooed right out the door, watching me the whole time with those beady little eyes. You know the eyes I'm talking about.

- So, after you were met by the first intruder, how did the events transpire from there?

- The rest of that day, and the couple of days following that were actually relatively quiet. Of course, now we know that that was the time that the pigeons were using to organize. They had a couple of carrier pigeons in their ranks, so they had some really mighty fine impressive organizing skills. But as the days progressed, I honestly think I forgot about the pigeon with the notepad I'd seen days earlier. But then it didn't take long before all hell broke loose. I arrived one morning to find the shop was a sea of broken glass, and every window of the shop was blown in. Sifting through the glass, all I could see were small, beak-sized holes in each shard. See, I thought it was a robbery. Bullet holes put through the glass by some crook. But I knew, I had always known. And every day, their torture began to get worse and worse. Little things here and there, until one day, I'm sorry, I arrived to work to find a pigeon sitting at my desk, wearing my uniform, typing orders into my invoice request sheets.

- I'm so sorry. Let me get this straight, the pigeon was wearing your clothes, Miss Houston?

- Yes ma'am, he was. The little bastard had stolen it from my work locker earlier. He'd gotten custom alterations done to fit them perfectly. They did the same thing to Zio's uniform. They were sick, I tell you, absolutely sick.

- So, Miss Houston, is this to say that the pigeons were attempting to steal your identity?

- Not exactly. When I attempted to confront the pigeon at my desk, she pointed to a whiteboard where we kept a running list of necessary repairs. All the lists were gone. And all it said was, again in English. Look at me. Look at me. I am the captain now.

- I'm so sorry. Miss Houston. Are you saying that the pigeon made a written reference to the movie *Captain Phillips*? I don't believe that movie was released for another two decades. This was 1997 we're talking about here.

- I know it sounds crazy, but I promise everything in that book is pure fact. I swear on my granddaddy's Bible.

- I'm so sorry, Miss Houston. I wasn't trying to upset you. I know that this is still very hard for you to discuss. If we can move on from this, what was the point at which you noticed the pigeons physically disassembling the Vespas?

- Well, in that same moment I turned my shoulder over into the back garage, and I noticed that the pigeons were pulling apart the central cover to open up the bodies of the scooters. Their technical knowledge seemed impressively adept, like they'd been doing this for years. A couple of them were working with manuals, but most seemed to be working from memory. They started to pull out the transmission to d'arian verdaire, which is this this long hose-like part that allows the scooters transmission to function. And once they pull it out, they'd close up the central cover like nothing had happened. No chaos, no destruction, just pure, unbridled malice. It was so specific and planned, I'd never seen anything like it. And as I was watching them work, it just started becoming clearer and clearer what was motivating them. I firmly believe that the pigeons did not want to harm the Vespa drivers, no. It became very, very clear as I watched them, that they were determined to harm the Vespa corporation itself.

- Hmm. All right, and Suzy, what led you to believe that the pigeons would want to destroy the Vespa corporation?

- Well, it was a mix of things here and there, but mostly it was a large banner reading Death to Vespa written in pigeon dander that they hung from the front of the store.

- Hmm, yes, interesting. Did you have any indications of their motivation to commit these calculated crimes?

- Not initially, no. However, after interference from Italian police, and Agenzia Informazioni Izz-he-crazi Interna, sit down talks were arranged between the pigeons and the Vespa company under, you know, the eye of the Italian government and all that, you know how big brother is. Documents were recovered from the recycling bins of the Vespa headquarters, indicating that the root of the conflict, apparently in 1996, it had been that the pigeons had sent a letter to the Vespa corporation requesting consideration to be the mascot or the promotional image for Vespa. Because see, after doing some research on the prominent Italian car brands like Ferrari, the pigeons were disappointed to learn that the car brands across the country had been using animals for their logos for years, but never pigeons. While the pigeons felt that shooting for a major Italian car manufacturer might be too ambitious, they thought that

a scooter might be you know, a more realistic way to be seen in transportation images across Italy. And you know, initially, the Vespa corporate offices believed that the letters were pranks, because much like I was, they were attempting to figure out how the pigeons would have gained access to written language, in this case, Italian. Did you know that pigeons are bilingual? I can't believe, they're bilingual, it's the most bizarre thing. But after having it brought to their attention that the letters were in fact legitimate, the Vespa corporation came to the table for peace talks.

- And were the talks successful? I mean, were the pigeons selected as the new mascots?

- Uh, no. No, they were not. After the dangerous and, dare I say treasonous actions of the pigeons, the Vespa filed the Italian equivalent of a restraining order against the entire species. And when the pigeons attempted to defy it, they were informed by the police that new pairs of avian-specific handcuffs had been designed to combat them, should they choose to act with ill intent again.

- And does there remain peace today?

- Yes, ma'am. Thank goodness, there does. The pigeons play dumb again now, you know, searching for crumbs and sitting on rooftops. But we always remain aware. We always remain aware of what they're capable of.

- Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today, Miss Houston.

- Oh, of course. It's been my pleasure.

Susie Houston is the author of *I Was the Bread Cumbs: Surviving the Italian Pigeon Escapades*, available today at any hardware store where bulk sunflower seeds are sold.

What happens when a bird crime is not historic, but brewing right on under our noses? This is the question that the Australian government is currently grappling with, as they work to combat what some have been branding the Emu Cold War. In order to better understand the current government actions being undertaken to combat this quiet threat, one must revisit the history of emu-human conflict in the only nation that serves as both a country and a continent. The beginning of the conflicts between humans and emus can be traced back to the early 1930s, with the onslaught of the Great Emu War,

arguably one of the most famous series of bird crimes. Beginning in 1932, farmers across Australia committed to the eradication of emus destroying crops and farms across the country. During the course of the annual migration, nearly 20,000 emus inundated small family farms on the western coast of the country, consuming for-profit crops with a ravenous hunger. Civilian militant efforts were undertaken, with many farmers attempting to apprehend the emus by their own means. As their efforts proved unsuccessful, farmers turned their focus to the government, requesting aid in the form of an armed militia, which was quickly delivered to the Western Australian farmland. Sir George Pearce, the Australian Minister of Defence, was under the impression that this military effort would eradicate the emus for good, allowing the land to return to good agrable condition, and freeing the farmers from their feathered foes. However strong the government efforts, the emus had a different plan. The birds formed small resistant pods, making them harder to target for an armed official, utilizing guerrilla warfare and efficient movement to bring the Australian Government to their knees. Despite a second attempt on their lives, the emus remained resourceful, ultimately defeating the militia with their speed and cunning. While many marked this as the end of the Great Emu War, the lasting effects and heightened tensions between the emus and the Australian government have remained for decades, with a constant threat of emu retaliation an ever-present reality for many Australians. The Emu Cold War was first recognized by the Australian Government in late 2006, with the death of zoo-keeping icon Steve Irwin. Founder of the Australian zoo in Queensland, Australia, Steve Irwin was regarded as one of the foremost leaders in animal conservation, often leading the fight against deforestation, and working to rehabilitate endangered animals across the region. While many knew Irwin for his show, *The Crocodile Hunter*, far fewer understood the critical role that he served in brokering peace talks between the Australian Government and the emus across Australia. Upon his death, a new period of unrest began to take hold, marked by both the veiled and blatant threats from the emus to return to the Western farmlands and wreak havoc as they once had. Chris Crikey, a zookeeper at the Australian zoo, has been attempting to lead the next generation of peace talks, founding Humans for Emu Reconciliation in an effort to reach the emu populations across the country in conversation. The

following sound bites are all taken from their interview with Australia's popular morning news program, *Fair Go, Australia*.

- I was really inspired by Steve growing up, and also the direct impact of the Great Emu War on my own family's farmland. I feel like now I'm in this incredibly unique position to make a difference in brokering peace between the emus and the people of Australia. Right now, we're in a time of conflict, but I hope that soon we'll all be saying good day to reconciliation.

While Chris remains hopeful, Australian officials are not so optimistic. Only months ago, the Australian Parks and Wildlife Service began establishing what is now being referred to as the Emu Berlin Wall, a barrier established to effectively prohibit the migratory patterns of the emus West, in an attempt to keep them from consuming crops on the western shores. Chris, and many like them, fear that this barrier will only serve to further the hostility between the two groups.

- Listen, I'm not trying to get political here, I just believe that every emu should have a right to migrate within their natural patterns, and I don't think that should be a controversial political statement. We can't just keep saying no, no worries, mate to this whole conflict, and putting up this Bird-lin Wall is doing just that. Our government is claiming that it's to keep the emu safe, but the reality is much more complicated. In sweeping this conflict under the rug, we're only escalating it more.

When asked about the report that the emus had gained access to homemade weapons, including egg-shooting machine guns, Chris made it clear that while they believe both sides have committed wrongs, they are not an emu apologist.

- Right. Well, the fact of the matter is the emus have done wrong in the past. There's no doubt about it. But if we reduce this conflict to the actions of one party, it's simply spreading human-biased misinformation, truly. Anyone who thinks this is a one-sided conflict is a few stubbies short of a six pack and that's all I'll say about that. Right, yes, the emus are armed. Yes, the egg guns that they've developed have severely injured three military officials. Yes, the emus have started to watch Quentin

Tarantino films and, yes, we're slightly nervous about the ways in which they might be influenced by cinematic masterpieces like *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*. But at the end of the day, the government needs to aid in the peace talks, not abet them. I understand the impacts of the emu conflicts better than anyone else. Crikey, my grandfather's farm went out of business after the emu war. I think that that motivates me to want to work even harder to broker peace. It's clear to me that nothing will ever be achieved through violence.

So what does the future of the Emu Cold War hold both for the emus and the nation of Australia? Reports from behind the emu Berlin Wall indicate the emus plans to recruit other bird species, including the kookaburras, to help them carry out their plans for mass farmland domination. While some of these reports have been disputed, insider sources say that the emus are capable of multi-species recruitment, and have been known to interact with koalas and kangaroos as well. While the future remains to be seen, fear still holds strong in the hearts of Australians everywhere, as they wait to see the next move from the bandits of the outback.

This has been *The Secret and Troubling Life of Birds*. Thank you so much for tuning in. Tune in next time to learn more about the ways you can work to keep yourself and your community safe. And until then, stay vigilant out there.

HOST:

And we are back. I am Angie Lang. This is How to Create Like a Professional, I swear. Now I hope you had a good break, good listening. Thought about all the steps in the previous segment. Did you call somebody? Did you examine yourself? Did you prepare for failure and mistakes? Are you ready to show all of your insecurities as we create? Are you a blank canvas? Are you personally a blank canvas? Do you have a blank canvas? And step three was, did you call somebody? Did you call somebody? When you were feeling overwhelmed? Did you say listen, I'm about to dive deep into my

creativity, and I am scared that I'm going to do it wrong. Did you call somebody? Well, I did. I hope you did too. Let's start crafting.

We are going to need some supplies, and I will give you a little bit of time to go and find them. So we're going to need some scissors, some glue, newspapers or magazines that you are comfortable cutting and getting messy and kind of destroying, let's say, really, let's get down to it. And so as you get your stuff I'm going to just look at the magazines that I've got. I went to the thrift store, or the used bookstore I should say. And I got myself a copy of *Harrow Smith*. Okay, this is from, let's see here, it's Number 19. It cost \$1.50, woohoo, so this must be ancient. Let's see. Okay. Oh, here we go. The date is May 1979. Okay, so we got some interesting things to cut up in there. And then I also got a magazine that was twenty-five cents called *Look*. And the date is September 21, 1965. The big headline is JFK, His Finest hour. Again, it says "our sick cities and how they can be cured." Some really interesting conversations are happening in the 60s and the 70s. I would hate to cut this up, but I think this would be really interesting as I create some art. So what we're going to do, I think I gave you enough time to gather some supplies. You can always listen and then do it later. We are going to look through these magazines, I'm going to look through *Look* first. I'm going to, and be, be very messy about it, don't be so don't be so precious about it. Okay, already I see something that I want to cut, it says culvert, it's a picture of a cocktail. It looks like its made with Hawaiian rum is what it says, but I really liked the word. I really like the word, I'm just gonna, hopefully you can hear me snip snip snip away, this is what you'll be doing on your end. Daiquiri, that's what it says. I'm going to cut that out, that's the first thing that caught my eye. Anything that catches your eye, just cut on out. Craft that out. Let's see what else we have here in *Look* magazine. Here's a headline that says, think you can't afford a brand new Baldwin piano. Think you can't afford a brand new Baldwin piano? Well, I can't afford a brand new Baldwin piano now in my current state of living on my own. What do you live in? Do you live on your own? Where do you live? Tell me, send us, send us a message. Hashtag, hashtag I live in, and then tell us where you live, send it to programsound.fm on all of our social media content. So I'm going to cut out, the think you

can't afford, think you can't afford, I like that together. Okay, I'm gonna do it really, so I'm going to go off the microphone a little bit. I'm going to cut, cut, cut. Okay. And, let's do a couple more, craft along with me. Cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, cut. Okay, what else do we have here? Ooh, there's a, there's a stocking, a lady with a stocking. It says "a new kind of stocking that fits your leg like makeup fits your face." Okay, 1965. Here we go. Um, what do I feel? How do I feel, how do I feel. I just like the foot part of it, I'm just gonna cut the foot part. See, anything that inspires you, this is what this is all about. If it inspires you, cut it out. Cut it out. Okay. Snip away, I'm just cutting the foot, right at, I'm going to cut off the ankle. Whoop! It's a bit jaggedy. But that's all right. I can clean that up later. It's just about cutting, cutting away, cutting away. Okay, well, I'm going to continue cutting from this book. And I encourage you all to do the same. This is how to create like a professional, and this is how we do it. We see something, we like it. We cut it out. We arrange, rearrange it, however we would like to rearrange it. And we move on. This is how we make art like a professional. You are a professional. I am a professional. Any one can do this. Get into your creative mind, into your creative body. Just do it. Please. For the love of god, please, we need some art and creativity in this life. Oh, something that says "his kids would rather see Mickey Mouse." Now I don't want the whole thing. I think I just want the Mickey Mouse part. Yes, that's all I want, just the mouse part. So I'm going to connect continue cutting away, and I am going to pass us over to, we need to listen to something else now, don't we? Let's see. What do we have up next? Up next we have, bear with me. Up next, up next we have a Todd Simmons. And he's going to take us through some interesting collections of stories from out in Vancouver. Here we go, Todd and when, um, oh. This. Yes. Take it away, Todd. And please, once you have you have done your crafting, I would love to see your art. I'm going to post my art up on our programsound media page. And I would love to see your art there too. Just hashtag my professional creation. Hashtag my professional creation. Send it to our Instagram, our programsound. Send it to programsound.fm is our Instagram. And if you'd like to send it to our Twitter, programsound.fm that would be fantastic. I would love to see your creation. Alright, Todd, take it away.

TODDROD SKIMMINS - SELECTIVE MEMORY STORY #2, THE END OF COMICBOOKS AND 7-11 RUNS

Selective memory. Interactive multitrack record. Selective memory. Messages from beyond the groove.

Hello, hello, and welcome to selective memory. Let's begin. Physical objects hold and store memories. The act of holding or playing of a record is the catalyst to making, storing, transmitting, and remembering past sensory stimuli. Consider then, how the creation of music and the physical mechanisms involved in its production are also vehicles of transmission and preservation of memory. We will examine how vinyl records outlive us, as our personal stories become part of the story of the record itself. And meshed within the grooves, peaks, and valleys, like fingerprints of lives lived. As a physical record is passed on to another, it becomes a router for an unending circuit of connectivity between people, between all of us, and our selective memories.

Please select a record to begin. You have chosen Pete Rock & CL Smooth, "The Creator," B-Side Two. "They Reminisce Over You." 12-inch single. Released April 2, 1992, by Elektra Entertainment.

The End of Comic Books and 7-11 Runs, aka Hood Shit Happens.

Before I was really officially a DJ, I used to rap. It pretty much started the minute I heard Rock Master Scott's "The Roof Is On Fire" on the radio back in T.O.. I mean, I was hearing hip hop on the radio back then, but once I heard that track, I was hooked. I was young, so admittedly, it probably had a lot to do with the cursing at the end. Either way, it inspired me to make my own little Mickey Mouse raps like, I'm Ty Jeramy in the place to be. And at school, I would take any opportunity to turn a writing assignment

into a rap. I got a lot of extra credit marks doing that though. At that time, I had to tell the teachers, oh, I'd like to do my assignment as a poem, if that's okay. When my mom moved us to London, Ontario, in the summer of grade eight, I immediately linked with some guys who were rapping too. We all put our little groups together and we all made a pretty good name for ourselves in the city. We were able to parlay the local fame into attention from the ladies too. To be real, my other motivation behind rapping. We even were able to walk away with some aiight money. That is when we weren't getting jerked around by the dealers-turned-event-promoters. But by the mid 90s, rapping started moving to the background, and most of us were looking for ways to make some real money. We all knew dudes who decided on less legal ways of earning cash, and it was around that time when some of us came across another opportunity. Throwing parties and DJing. Around this time I was just starting out with DJing, and I wasn't playing out or anything, really mostly only collecting records on the side. My main thing though, was comic books. I'd been slowly building my collection since I got a box of randoms from my big brother. Not as in like, big sibling, as in Big Brothers of Canada. I was about nine or ten years old at that time. He gave me a bunch of X-Men, Power Man and Iron Fist, The Amazing Spider-Man, Spectacular Spider-Man, Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man. Oh, a few DC titles, like Batman and The Outsiders. Anyhow, my favorite, or at least the one who I thought had the best secret identity, was Daredevil. He was a blind lawyer by day and a crazy acrobatic crime fighter with heightened senses and echolocation by night. He's like the last guy that the average person would think to be a superhero. But there he was. He was trained by the best, and even took on Ultron and Mephisto, who was like the herald of the devil. Besides X-Men, Daredevil was my shit. By the mid 90s, I was a long way past getting allowance, but I had little odd jobs, coffee shops, record shops, door-to-door shit. But between late night fast foods, comic books, and now records, money was always tight. I didn't own twelves back then either. Oh, that's Technics 1200 turntables. They're the industry standards, which I couldn't afford. So for me, if my wooden belt drive turntable wasn't working, which was usually the case, practicing meant mixing in my head. I'd memorize the BPMs, that's beats per minute, basically how fast or slow a song is, from hearing the records at the shop or on the radio or on Much Music. And I'd lay

my records out on the carpet in my basement. And I'd build sets in my head. Transitions, mixes, blends, all of that in my head. It'd be like, Okay, I'll start with Pete Rock and CL into LL Cool J "Jingling Baby," into two Big Daddy Kanes, first raw and then set it off after the first version. Oh, then I'd go into Erik B & Rakim "Paid in Full." Wait. Maybe I should start with LL, and then Pete Rock, and then Kane. Oh, no, no, no. I gotta use that intro for the CL Smooth. Them horns.

I just picked up that CL Smooth record, which was the linchpin of my ultimate blow-up-the-party classic hip hop set. That is, once I got some actual practice and a real gig to play at. This was about the time when my boys were getting into weed. Now, I've always been a straight edge, but I've been around people smoking trees since I was a kid in Flemo, so no judgement for me. The one thing that I hated though was the kind of people my sober eyes ended up having to hang out with, all on account of my crew's pursuit of trees. Like, these are the same dudes that go to high school with me that couldn't pass me in the hallway without saying some wild dumb ass shit like, Hey, rapper dude, pull your pants up. But here they go trying to friend me up. Yeah, I know this old-ass NWA song and no, I don't want to listen to you rap along, because you hittin that R a little bit too hard for my liking. I tell you what, nobody likes hearing about black people fucking, fighting, robbing, and killing each other more than suburban ass white kids. No way we'd be hanging out with these herb-ass motherfuckers if it wasn't for the weed. I'd rather go post up outside the club and maybe check for some girls. But obviously there was no smoking in most clubs, except for the downstairs at the Caribbean Club. That was the main spot where the dads and uncles and all the old Gs would go and lime down in the lower level, while upstairs had hip hop shows for the youth dem. That show was always getting raided. Especially once good old Julian Fantino became London's chief of police. Which, by the way, he did after having to leave the Toronto Police force over some very illegal wiretapping business. Fantino showed up in London with something to prove. And he was on his zero tolerance shit when it came to weed. My man equated it with murder. For real. He managed to get a few people we knew grassed up behind that shit. Not to mention, all of us pulled over, stopped while walking down the street, and just overall harassed by

police any chance they got. Fantino's new job? Chairman of the board for Aleafia Total Health Network, suppliers of government-sanctioned medical marijuana. You can't make that shit up. I mean, my man supported mandatory minimum sentences for people who—anyways. You get the point. He's garbage. Okay, where was I? Right. My boys were into weed, so the clubs were mostly a no go. One night we got word of some dude throwing a bush bash. Literally a bash way out somewhere in the bush. This was straight up some white people shit. Middle of the woods, no cops in sight, lots of drugs and drinking. Except for me, I was a straight edge. I wasn't really into spending the night with drunk insecure guys and their white girlfriends whose predilections for black men came sweating out of their pores the more licked they got. Oh, licked means liquored up. There's a little bit of London slang for you. All of that equaled, stay your black asses away. But again, my boys were getting into weed so, of course they wanted to reach. I was like, yeah, I'm good. Let's just go do some 7-11 runs and done. Oh, let me explain. A 7-11 run meant going to as many 7-11s across the city as we could boosting. Shoplifting. I, being the more personable, goofy one, would be the distraction by doing something weird or unexpected, like trip over one of the displays in the front or chat up the person behind the desk. We'd all play our part, and we'd share in the spoils. It was some real community-building type shit. But if you got caught, and we couldn't immediately get you out, you were on your own. And you didn't snitch. Like I said, at the time, I was still collecting comics, as well as records, so Em or Spoons would always get me the latest X-Men, Daredevil, or Spider-Man, none of that DC shit. Now, I'm not trying to absolve myself by being on some, oh, I was just a decoy moral grey-area type shit. Because when it came to doing the actual boosting, everyone had to take their turn. Damn, I feel like I should have said something like, take their spin. Kind of like spinning records? A missed literary opportunity, I guess. Anyhow, it was more often my turn to distract because I was known as the nice guy. But again, not always, this was in no way something I'm proud of. And I teach my kids that ain't the way, and you know, do as I say not as I did. Nowadays, I can't even do that thing where you open and eat some of the thing you're buying while you're in line to pay for it. Anyways. Push bash. Yeah, Em was like, nah, man, let's reach. The guys are cool, and it's gonna be good, it's in a barn. I was like, a barn. What is

that supposed to make me feel better? But everyone else was with it, and I was Mr. Permanent Designated Driver, so we reached. I was glad that I did because it was actually aight. It was a bunch of kids from the other side of town. You know, the side of the town with bigger houses and pools and nicer everything. There were a few people standing around drinking, smoking, making out, whatever. I walked around checking it out. And I actually started seeing some potential. Seems like all of us did, because before the night was over, we got to talking to the guy who was barn it was, and we negotiated paying him a couple bills, that's hundreds, to throw an all-out party there in a few weeks. We needed a crew and production name and somehow we came up with the name Rising Sons, spelled S-O-N-S. It was me, Haz, Spoons, Em, Jiggy, and Steelo. Oh, also Drunkness Monster, Fritz the Cat, and Butter. They were like auxiliary members, as they would be like the graphic designers and the DJs, respectively. The dude whose barn it was, his name was Cracker, he went to school with the more well-off white kids. I felt there was something off about him. He seemed like he was eyeing us up in a weird way. It could also be because one of us, probably Spoons, was chatting up some girl he liked. Though, Spoons probably wasn't really bout her, he just liked the sport. We got Cracker to rent the gear, Technic 1200s, of course, because none of us could afford it at the time. Me and Em would take care of setting up the equipment on the night of, because I myself was super fast at it. I mean like, Rain Man savant with it, if I do say so myself. As well, Cracker got to sell booze, and he got to take all of that money for a lower rental rate of his barn. Come on, man, it was the place where they put the chickens. Me and Em had asthma-type shit going on for like two weeks after that first night. Weeks passed and the night of the barn bash came. We came up with that little tongue-in-cheek name. It was live. We invited everyone we knew. Even some of the hoods and the dealers. They'd be our insurance in case some shit popped off with any of the white boys. There was a huge lineup to get into the barn, even though you could hear the music clear from the ground outside. And of course, Fantino's boys came by. Cracker said he'd handle it. Had it been one of us they had to talk to, it would have been jam done off for sure. They spoke to him for less than five minutes and left without even setting foot inside the barn. It was private property, and cracker's parents were there. Plus, the nearest neighbour was too far away

for a noise complaint. We knew they'd be parked close enough just in case some shit popped off, but far enough to give any idiots driving home drunk a false sense of security. We all went back to playing host, making sure people were chill and the vibes were nice. Though Em told me he saw some dude he had beef with. I was like, yo guy, come on. Just be easy tonight and don't fuck up the money. Em was a hothead. He was small, but he was the friggin black Incredible Hulk. And his fury was as yet unmatched. Man, I've watched Em put it a damn knot in a dude's head over nothing but some harmless shit talk. No matter what I said to him, though, I knew he'd only listen if he really felt like it. Everything was running nice. You know, Butter was playing some jams, even some of the other DJs who were there were loving it, and it looked like it was going to be a good night. That is until I noticed our big mistake. We were so busy thinking of the experience, we didn't once think about who was handling the door money. It was Cracker. I was picking up bottles, making sure no one got tripped up, muttering to myself, these friggin white kids really just dashing their bodies on the ground, man, I should just let one of them bust their damn head open. Just then I looked over. And who do I see? None other than Cracker taking the record box full of door money, our door money, up to his house. I knew what was up. It seemed like Cracker clearly saw some potential too. I don't know who I told first, but it took no time at all for all of us to be right up on his door. I have no idea how, but Em kept his cool. After a short exchange of, you know, what the fuck are you doing with our money, and some reh reh reh about, oh, I was just organizing the bills to make it easier to count, we decided that even though the party was a long way from being done, it was time to settle up. Em and Spoons went inside the house to take care of it. I kissed my teeth and told Jiggy, man, I knew something was off about this friggin guy. Jiggy said, so what do you want to do about it? I just shook my head, and just went back to playing host. About 30 minutes later, Em and Spoons came back with the money looking unimpressed. Based on our headcount, the split was like, real life, like a grand and a bit. That fool Cracker took his rental fee, and even had the nerve to try and strong arm them for more. Again, I'm not sure how Em kept his cool, but they pushed back, and apparently Cracker backed off a little too easily. Probably because he had already taken out his bonus. The night was still bumping, but none of us were in the mood anymore.

Dejected, we split up the money, and I tried to lighten the mood and said hey, anyone down for a 7-11 run? No one even cracked a smile. Jiggy said something to Em and then walked over to the bar. Everyone else went off to do their own thing. I saw my ex and I asked her to move the car to the back doors behind the DJ booth. She was giving me and Haz a ride home. My spidey senses were tingling. Some of the hoods were getting restless. The vibe was shifting. I went to the back of the barn by the DJ booth to pay Butter. As I made my way over to him I tripped on a bottle. I didn't fall, I caught myself, but I was bent. Next thing you hear, the sound of glass breaking, and shit popped off. Two fights broke out. One deep in the back of the crowd where the bottle broke, and one over by the bar. In no time, it was chaos. The place was about to get wrecked, which meant that cops were about to show up, which meant it was time for us to be out. My crew parked back behind the exit by the DJ booth, so we all got out quick and we went our separate ways. Me and Haz took a ride with my ex in her parents big, beat up Volvo hatchback. We ducked down as we passed the cops on our way back into town. Luckily they didn't follow.

The next day I got a call from one of my boys who came to the party.

- Yo, that jam was nice still.

- Yeah, man. Thanks for reaching.

- But yo, you know what the cops were out looking for you guys afterwards, eh?

- Us, why?

- Some one of them bro guys musta threw a bottle and some hood almost got licked in his head in the back of the room. He boxed the white boy down for it. That's how the first fight started. The whole time, I'm here just chatting up some ting at the bar, and I look up and out of nowhere I see Jiggy just drape up some necks man. Shit just went crazy guy.

- So they want us over a fight?

- Nah, once everyone cleared out, the equipment was gone, guy. Twelves, mixer, lights. One speaker cables, gone. I heard Spoons got pulled over but he didn't have it so they let him go.

- Well, sounds like Cracker's gonna have to play detective or go pay Mr. Tom Lee for the gear.

- Yep, I hear Em's cousin Ty found a mixer in the bush somewhere on the way into the city. So you know he kept that shit. Cracker is vexed man. That's like a grand for the two decks alone. He said it must have been your friends, but mad people heard how he took your money. He's talking about coming for y'all.

I kiss my teeth, totally unfazed by the threat of Cracker coming at us.

- Well, you invite hoods and hood shit happens.

I hung up the phone and checked in with the crew to see if anyone ran into any problems. Spoons and Jiggy were all good. Haz caught a ride back with me and my ex, so I knew he was cool. Steelo saw the first fight that started over who threw the bottle.

- Yeah, it was some bro guy.

And our boy Em. So I hit him up.

- Yo, Mr. Bruce Banner what's gwanin'?

- Yeah, guy, I'm chilling. But that bottle almost licked me in the head. Plus my hand's a little sore, but Cracker got his two so it was worth it.

- Yep. I was just making sure nobody got stopped by the cops after we broke out.

We talk some shit a little bit longer and I said we'd link later on in the week. You see Em got Jiggy to roll up on that dude at the bar and start a fight. It was the guy that Em had beef with. And Em knew it wasn't one of the bro guys who threw the bottle that almost hit him. He knew because it was me. And while everyone was panicking, well, I told you, I'm Rain Man fast at setting up equipment. But I'm even faster at tearing it down. I went over to my records, still laid out on the floor from two nights before, I took out the new Pete Rocket CL Smooth single with the Creator remix on the B-Side, and placed it on my newly-acquired Technic 1200 turntable, and started prepping for that first gig. You see everyone had to take their spin.

That was the official beginning of my DJ career, and it was the end of comic books and 7-11 runs.

It's time to dip dive dip
You might break a hip
To the sound that's legit
I've come to make a hit
I usually bust scratches with my man, C.L. Smooth
But, I decided to get wreck on this groove
As I provide the slide
You're going on a ride
I know the weather's nice
There's no need to play the outside
Guess who's on the flyer
The man of your desire
Pete Rock and C.L. Smooth all the honey-dips admire
Beats are rough and rugged
Pete Rock is the creator
Now I'm busting raps while switching cross-faders
Making sure my sound hits from here to Grenada
Honey gave me skins, man, I told her friends I ate her
But, wait up
I save this subject for later
But, it's time to catch wreck with the creator
I'm addicted like a stoag
Not into vogue
(Yo, Pete, there's a girl on the phone)
Tell her to hold 'cause I'm busy kickin' rhymes to the rhythm

Fortified with soul 'cause that's what I give `em
Honeys form a line form a line 'cause I always seem to capture
Beats made of rapture
Rhymes made of rapture
Far from illiterate
Always seem to get a hit
If you try to step to this
Don't even consider it
Skins when I want 'em
But, only when I eat 'em
To set the record straight, Ill be damned if eat 'em
Call me Pete Rock
I make the girls flock
And if you want a beat like this, I got them in stock
So, flow with the flow
Because you know I'm good to go
As I proceed to get wreck on your stereo
Not an imitator
Just a crowd motivator
But, it's time to get wreck with the creator
Now, C.L. Smooth, cut it up like this
Now, I'm'a take a try
And get a piece of the pie
If they give me one sec
To get some wreck
Never filled with anger

A good body banger

If you try to step to this you'll get hung on my hanger

Before I say good-bye

Suckers gave a good try

But, point blank you just can't see this

My word is beneficial

Pete Rock is the issue

And I know you know my style is official

I might give a scratch

(Yes, cousin)

Or I might kick a verse

Either one, I can't be seen

Honeys call me tall and lean

And if you want to stick around

I'll show you what I mean

Not an imitator

Just a crowd motivator

But, it's time to get wreck with the creator

It's time to get wreck with the creator

Get wreck with the creator

The creator

C.L. Smooth, get busy

This concludes your selective memory program. To continue your journey, please select another record.

Cracker.

HOST:

- I think that junior high school dances are where I sort of learned that I wasn't cool. I didn't, I didn't have like illusions that I was cool. Like I didn't ever think about myself as like a cool person. But there's just something about when you get to like, your first junior high dance. And you know, the music is loud and the lights are low. It's really like a kid's first clubbing experience. Kind of just like, school-sanctioned grinding. And I think my first hint that that kind of lifestyle wasn't for me is when the DJ just kept yelling about putting your hands up in the air, and I felt like there's nothing on the planet I'd rather do than not put my hands in the air. Even raising them like, elbow above shoulder felt extremely uncomfortable. And I was leaning against the wall, just watching my classmates dance, and be close to each other and be uninhibited. They call it a dance, but it's just a lot of bouncing and running and giddiness and I could see it all so clearly, but kind of from the outside. There's this microcosm of these sweaty, you know, teenager bodies just letting the music kind of control them, and I didn't know how to let it control me, so I just watched, kind of wished. When I close my eyes, I can still kind of remember what it looked like. Seeing everything moving around in front of me so fast. Seeing people I knew, people I didn't know, paradigm shifting. But then sometimes when I close my eyes and remember it, I'm alone. Suddenly, all my friends and the chaperones and the DJ who's just one of the kids' uncles, they all kind of start to just shrivel and disappear. And one by one, they all sort of blink out of existence, just kinda. And they're gone. And I know that that's not what happened. I know I walked home with Quinn, after the dance, and I, and I know that I still had a Canadian history with Ms. Williams the next day. I know that I wasn't alone when I was there. But in my mind's eye when I can remember everybody shrinking into these tiny crumpled little forms of themselves until they popped out of existence, I was alone. Maybe it's just the way I felt, I don't know. I was a moody preteen and everything was a metaphor. But suddenly the whole school gym transformed around me. What was cacophony and sound and colour became nothing. Emptiness. Because as long as I was on the outside of all of that, that's all I would ever be. It's all I would ever have access to. And there's nothing. It's my greatest fear come to life, because I'm alone. Undeniably, unequivocally. Equivi- equivica- unequivocally... I feel like there's a b? Equivibic- equivi-

equivi. No, there can't be a b. Unequivocally alone. The music never stops, though. Even when everything else is gone, I can still hear the.

But even when it's only me, I still can't put my hands in the air.

[Music]

- Here I am in a dream that's taken me way back. Wow. Where, I know this place really, really well. I know this basketball gymnasium, except it's all covered in streamers and balloons. Oh, and there's a DJ. Oh, looks like I'm the first one here, at the school dance. That's fun. Ah, school dance. I hope Dwayne comes. I like him. He's funny. Makes me laugh. He's so dumb. I wonder if I would dance with him if he asked me. I don't know, though. So weird. I've never danced with a boy or girl or anybody before. What if I don't know how to do it properly? Oh my god, everybody's coming. They look so cool. I like my tearaways. I just got these. I begged my mom to get me these. I look good. Oh my gosh, it's Dwayne. He's, he's approaching me. Oh my god, he has a rose. Oh. I want to say thanks, but I can't speak. I'm so nervous. He wants to dance with me, say something. I can't say anything. Oh. Oh no, he's melting into jello. Oh, no, Dwayne. No, everybody's turning into jello. No, what's happening. Where am I? Oh no. I don't know what to do, why is this happening? Oh. Get me out of this dream.

Jacqui Du Toit - Social Weaver Podcast EP2, Karan & Noor

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Social Weaver podcast. My name is Jacqui Du Toit, and I am your host, your storyteller of the day. For today I'm going to share with you the magical tale of the Social

Weaver and what its purpose was. And then we're going to meet some wise young souls who are going to share with us their wisdom of the day. Are you ready? Are you ready for a beautiful story? Yes. Then let's begin with our magic words. Once upon a time...

The Social Weaver is a beautiful, tiny little bird found in the Northern Cape, a province in the southern regions of Africa. The bird is tiny with a sharp beak. And the bird is known for building the largest nests in the world. These nests are built in acacia trees or on telephone poles that can sometimes house over 100 different species of birds, as well as some predators. These birds are known for bringing community and weaving together a safe space for other birds to come in and find a home and a community. It was through this bird that I was inspired to also have the tattoo of the bird on my back. Being someone who loves to travel and spread her wings and fly, I saw myself as this little Social Weaver bird. And through the arts, and what I do in the art of storytelling, I found ways to build community with other little birds who have also been traveling around the world seeking community. And it was through the art of storytelling that helped me weave these beautiful stories together. I do hope that you enjoy the next few minutes in listening to these wonderful stories as much as what I did.

- My name is Karan, and I am from India. I am a 25-year-old, independent, jobless guy who is looking for any like, you know, job that fills my ambition, and I'm looking forward to a happy, healthy life in Canada. That's it. It's been two years almost. Yup. I love it here. I swear, yeah. The weather sucks sometimes, but um, yeah, it's like, it is good. It's really good to live in Canada, I swear.

- And what is your, what do you find is your philosophy of life when things are hard and like the weather's really crappy, and you want to go back home?

- It's not like, that I have a philosophy or something. But I have always believed in manifestations and for missions to be true. I mean, if something you're working for, and you're trying hard, but you're not able to achieve it, does not mean that you're a failure. It always mean that it's not the right time for that thing, maybe you just manifested a little, and you just give like those messages to the universe, it

hears, and they're gonna answer you back. And you'll get what you want, eventually. Definitely, you have to work for it. You just cannot sit idle and ask for anything. And just, you're going to get it. You got to work for it, you got to prepare for it. But I strongly believe that manifestations do exist and you get what you want.

- I love what you said, you have to work for it, but you also said, you have to work for it, but you also have to prepare for it. So do you find that that's the same thing?

- Kind of. Preparing is something like a prelim. Like, if you have to, if you're in the kitchen and you gotta make some dinner, so you got to do the prep work, you just cut the veggies and you know, prepare the, you have to get your dishes ready, everything. And then you work on that thing, you cook that thing. If you're baking a cake you have to get the raw material first. So that's the preparation, and once everything is done, it's in the oven, that's working.

- And then you have to trust the oven to make sure that... it's like trust the universe.

- Definitely, yes. It's gonna be good, yeah. And of course you're gonna get the flavour what you've added in, you know? So it's not gonna add something automatically, so whatever you have you prepared, you've worked for it. And if you believe in the universe, it's gonna give you back. Definitely it comes back. Thank you.

- Thank you for sharing. What a great philosophy. I really enjoyed that. I believe in manifestations too, what you said. And the reference to cooking food, right?

- Exactly. We eventually got to go home, have some dinner. Or, whenever we just wake up, we need some breakfast. And every time we're just like thinking about food, and yeah, yeah, that's great. It's just, you know, everything just came into place. The food example. Yeah.

- That's perfect. Thank you so much. Thank you for sharing.

- You're welcome.

- Do you have anything you want to share?

- Um, nothing?

- You can just introduce yourself, if you'd like.

- I'm Noor, I am 22 years old. I've been in Canada for about 10 years now. Yeah. I'm a student. I am working towards my career, towards my ambitions. Yeah, I'm getting into it. Just looking what I'm here for. Just looking the purpose in life. Just exploring new things. Yeah. I'm just going by what's written, destiny. Yeah. So just figuring out things.

- Are you happy with what you study?

- I am actually, yeah. I got to choose what I do want to study. I'm doing business information systems. So I'm working towards it.

- And what would you say is like, your philosophy?

- About life?

- Yeah.

- I don't know actually. Honestly, I do believe in destinies. I do believe that things come to you, yourself. You, no matter how hard you want something, it's just, you gotta, you know, what's written for you, it's just gonna come to you. What's not meant for you, it's just gonna, you know, it's gonna eventually be taken from you. So you just gotta wait for what's there for you, in life.

- And enjoy it.

- Exactly, exactly.

- Thank you for sharing, guys. I really appreciate your time and sharing your knowledge.

- You're welcome. Thank you.

- Thank you.

HOST:

- Thank you, Jackie, our Ottawa correspondent. Weren't those interviews inspiring. Well, I hope you took the time to examine your soon to be obsolescence in the world. But enough about you and your outdated operating system. We are interested in getting to know our remaining contestants. We've heard what makes them irk, now, let's hear what makes them happy. Devil, Prince of Darkness, I presume your happy place is hell yet, my producers told me, surprisingly, that it is not true.

- Yes. Never judge a book by its front. As the saying goes. It's true to assume that of me, but I got depth. In fact, I love poetry. Dante's *Inferno*? One of my favourites. Let me level with you. The physical place of hell? Sucks. It's like living your whole life in Sumac, Yukon where you dream of the sun hitting your skin, warming up your frostbitten insides, only to then vacation in Aruba, sweat through your gigantic oversized ego, and come to terms that you are not a snowbird. You can't winter in the South.

- Yes, I can imagine many of our listeners can relate.

- If you can imagine this, this is my happy place.

[organ music, singing]

RICHARD LEE TRANSCRIPTION UNAVAILABLE

HOST:

I experienced today the feeling of being wildly free. In a space full of normies. It was terrifying, violently zapped out of nothingness. I experienced pure freedom. But I was forced to be controlled, contained, denied, shut down. The body I was in. It was suffocating. I couldn't breathe. If my vibration cannot explore the extremes, the absolute still and acceptable trait on Earth, and the violently chaotic, a trait less desired but still necessary, then I have no life. The normies have this spark within them too. But I questioned that when their faces were grey and their bodies were still. I questioned what life they had within, what vibrations they were allowing to live free. I observed complete compliance to the respectable manners of the time. Devoid of eye contact. Energy of abundance poured down in the direction of the pesky handheld soul-sucking machine. What would happen if my electric volt caught their eye? Would I provide your world with colour? Maybe freedom? Would I turn your pewter grey outlook into canary yellow foresight? Imagine, taking up more space than the corner that you occupy. You. Look into my eyes. Shed your pewter. Embrace the canary.

Deivan Steele - Little Things with Great Love

You're listening to *Little Things with Great Love*. I'm Deivan Steele.

The violence started on a Thursday evening. Ethnic Indians were being attacked in the streets, their vehicles stoned right in their own neighbourhood. It was Durban, South Africa, in 1949. The age of apartheid, or literally, apartness. Native Africans were carrying out racially-motivated attacks, and the Indian community was struck with fear. One Indian family, the Moodleys, were fleeing their home. Palani, the father, rushed his children out, as rioters ran through the neighbourhood attacking Indians on site. One of the older siblings had a truck parked in the next yard. If they parked it on their own property, they were scared rioters would burn it. The younger siblings, seven or eight of them, not understanding what was happening, or why they were leaving, were piled into the truck. One of the family's older sons, Chowi, grabbed the important family documents, including their birth certificates, stuffed them in his coat pockets, and ran for his life. While the younger children in the truck drove away to find safety, the rioters chased after Chowi. As he struggled to outpace them, they managed to tear away his coat with all the families documents in it, or so the story goes. He escaped with his life, but everything that identified him and his family, everything that said we are here was lost forever. That night, the Moodleys were forced to sleep on the police station floor. And as Palani lay on the station floor that night surrounded by his large family, fragile, but all alive, he must have been thinking things his young children could not understand. Where could they belong? Did nobody, black nor white, want them there? What was going to happen to them? And what if they didn't get so lucky next time? It wasn't fair, what had happened to them, of course. But who was out there to say they cared? That their people and problems mattered? In the riot's aftermath, the Moodleys eventually returned home. Their house had been damaged in the violence, but not as badly as others. That's because the Moodleys

domestic help, who lived in the basement, was himself a black man. And he told the rioters that he was the home's owner, and that he rented it out to other blacks. So it was spared the worst. The 1949 Durban riots took a massive toll on the Indian community. 142 deaths. Not just Indians, but of all races. 1087 injured, thousands of structures damaged, and three hundred buildings burned completely. Countless unrecorded cases of looting and rape, and 40,000 refugees created in three days. These numbers only begin to capture the long-term damage of the riots, damage which caused a wave of suicides in the Indian community, and years of families falling apart. Harassment, reprisal and discrimination. The riots not only defaced and displaced. They erased. But Indian South Africans weren't going to go away that easily.

- That's lot of vegetable, yeah, you don't have to use two. But for your recipe if you want two cup, you have...

I'm in my grandma's kitchen in Kijipuktuk, the Great Harbour, or Halifax, Nova Scotia. The traditional home of the Mi'kmaw, Halifax has been home to my grandmother since she immigrated from South Africa in the 60s. Today we're here to cook badjias. These crispy, golden, deep-fried bites are vegan and gluten-free. They're crunchy on the outside, pillowy soft on the inside, with just a bit of spice, and they make for irresistible finger food, the kind where you plan to have three or four but end up scarfing the whole plate.

- So how long did these cook for?

- A few minutes.

- A judgment thing? You have to look at the colour?

- Yeah, look at the colour, you'll see what I'm doing.

But as far as I know, grandma's recipe has never been written down. Today we're here to change that. And don't worry if you're not writing this down, we've made sure to attach the recipe with detailed instructions in the show notes. So first, you'll need some ingredients.

- I'm going to put two onions, and this spinach, and some green onions and coriander.

Now it's time to get a large pot, turn up the heat, and get out your frying oil.

- I'll get out, I'll chop up the rest of the stuff.
- So how much oil do you put in?
- You need quite a bit otherwise it won't cook properly.
- Enough to cover the whole thing.
- The whole thing, yeah. Two small, medium onions. Two cups of spinach, or whatever. If you don't have spinach, this was my idea, nobody's. You put one cup of sugared iceberg lettuce. I surprised people in South Africa with all my different ideas. Where do you come up? I said I try.
- Once you have all those crunchy ingredients chopped up, it's time to dice up a jalapeño pepper. Half if you don't like much spice, all of it if you like it medium, and if you really like a good kick, make sure to add the seeds. Time to add the ingredient that really makes it sing.
- This is cumin. About one teaspoon.

- One teaspoon cumin?

Spices hold a special place in my family's history. Not only are they a part of our cuisine, of course that's true. But grandma's father Palani Moodley was, among other things, a spice merchant.

- Why did he go to South Africa in the first place?
- Because he was what they call it in dangerous? In dentures?
- Indentured labourer.
- Labourer, yeah.
- So, what...
- He came by the boat. White people used to come and deal with my father because he mixes it the way they want it. They'll stand there and watch my father do it.
- So do you think because he had all the spices that was easy in your home to have all the spices you wanted, and that's why food was so important?
- Always different families use different spices. What I have, all my sisters will laugh, because this is basic for us.

With his various businesses, Palani and his wife Mariama supported their growing family, which would eventually swell to 15 children.

- Can you tell me what it was like growing up in Durban in your family? What kind of house did you live in, and what was your schedule like?

- Okay. We had a very large house with four bedroom. Very old fashioned, but very nice house. Big house. The yard was very large, it was like a farm. But in central Durban.

- Did you have any animals?

- Oh, all kinds. Except cow, and. We had rabbit, duck, birds, pigeons, turtles, everything.

- So you would keep those, and then.

- As a pet.

- As a pet? Oh.

- We didn't eat.

- You didn't keep any to eat? Okay.

Grandma remembers celebrating Diwali every year with delicious feasting.

- Divali. All we do is light lamps, clay lamps all over the window, all outside, decorate the whole house.

Always big, always fireworks. Food is galore. It was like a buffet style. They put it outside on the lawn.

We all bring everything, and everything would be so much. It's a big celebration.

But that childhood innocence would come to an end. As South Africa's white government developed the set of policies and laws modelled after ideas in Canada's Indian Act that would become apartheid.

- So what do you think it was like being Indian in South Africa at that time?

- It was okay. You didn't know any better. Then gradually it got worse.

- Mr. Prinsloo, what is the basic philosophy underlying apartheid as a way of life?

192. Liquor Act. Indians may not serve liquor, nor work in the liquor trade.

- It started with a protest march by some 400 native women on the police station.

1927, Women's Franchise Bill. No Indian women are allowed to vote.

- The general principles of British democratic government form the basis on which South Africa is governed.

1927. Nationality and Flag Act. Indians are not considered South African nationals and cannot become so by naturalization.

1934. The Slums Act. It claims to improve living conditions but actually expropriates Indian property under the guise of sanitation.

1937. Marketing and Unbeneficial Land Occupation Act Number 26.

1937. Transvaal Asiatic Land Tenure Amendment. Indians are prohibited from employing whites.

1943. The Pegging Act. Indians cannot acquire or own property in areas reserved for whites for three years. When those three years are up, it's replaced by the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, lovingly called The Ghetto Act of 1946...

1949. Prohibition of Mixed Marriages. **

- Indians cannot purchase lands from non-Indians.

** A marriage between European and non-European may not be solemnized,

- Indians are granted permission to elect three representatives to the House of Assembly and one senator...

** and any such marriage solemnized in contravention of the provisions of this section shall be void.

- so long as those representatives are white.

1950. The Suppression of Communism Act. The Communist Party and propagation of communism becomes illegal. But really this bill sanctions punishment of groups the government sees fit. Among the many, many people imprisoned because of this law, is Mandela.

1948 and 1950. The Group Areas Act. Separation on the the basis of race becomes mandatory for property ownership, work, and residences. The new boundaries created for areas cut through existing boundaries and led to the evictions of thousands. Indians are forced out of the central city where they operate businesses.

1950. Population Registration Act. All South Africans must racially classified...

1953. The Separate Amenities Act. **

- as white, black, or coloured. The criteria for each was based on appearance, social acceptance, and descent, including measuring jawlines...

** This creates separate public facilities for different races, including water fountains, washrooms, and park benches.

- or buttocks, shoving pencils into curly hair and asking them to shake their head, and pinching people to see in which language they said ouch.

Schools are segregated, hospitals are segregated. Every aspect of life is designed to create distinct tiers of society.

- But when you were a kid, you didn't really think about that sort of thing?

- No, nobody thinks about it. Nobody has the money. And nobody worries because that's how you live. See, the people say, why would I move? I have been living here for so long. And it's dangerous, and everything else. But because Papa got money from other people to get out of the country. We couldn't afford it.

Thanks to the help of a wealthy patron, my Papa was able to leave South Africa to earn his PhD in England. Here was his chance at finding a better life, to find a better future for his children.

- I was afraid at that time. Somebody come and rob you, stab you, break into your house, and all that. You have to always look over your shoulder. And I said why? Why do we have to go to different school? Kids go to this school, and that school. You know, we all should go and I know from reading that in England, it's not like that.

And so a few years after Papa had gone ahead to begin his studies, the whole family packed up and left South Africa for good.

- How are you chopping the onions, just roughly?

- Roughly. Just, you need good pieces? Not fine. I chop one medium onion in five, and then just chop them up.

Now that all your veggies are chopped, it's time to make a batter.

- That's the chickpea flour.

- Oh, that's the chickpea flour.

- You buy that.

- Where do you buy this from?

- Walmart. See, I don't measure, but I told you two cups. Quarter teaspoon baking powder. Quarter teaspoon baking soda. Salt. I put in tasty pinch of sugar. That's it. If you put extra water, you just add a little more flour. Cold water, eh? Not warm water.

A splash of cold water. For grandma, arriving in London must have felt similarly, after a lifetime so far lived in the global south.

- So when you visited London for the first time, was that your first time ever being outside of South Africa? So what was it like flying in a plane?

- Oh, flying in a plane alone. But also, it's so large you don't know what to do and all that. Papa met me there and all. But then after that, you get used to it.

Not long after, Papa graduated and pursued job prospects in Canada. Eventually, the family settled down in Kijipuktuk, or Halifax.

- So when you first moved there, in 69 or so?

- Yeah 70s, early 70s, yeah.

- So, what was happening?

- People were throwing eggs, and only in my dining room. We didn't know where it was coming from.

Then when the police was there, he found out it was coming from across the river. Somebody on the tree there, up on the tree. That's why we can't see people. It's dark, right? So they used to throw it. I don't know why. I don't know why. And I said because we are Indians?

Grandma worked hard at several different jobs to support her children. Her and Papa divorced. The children grew up. New cousins were born. Old cousins passed away. South Africa's apartheid policies crumbled. And the Republic of South Africa was born. Nelson Mandela became its first president. The world moved on.

- First I'll mix all this. And break the onions. Not too thick, not too thin.

- So you just put it in the water, for...

- Yeah, about half a cup I put now.

Fast forward to the present.

- We move on to other news tonight and to the Coronavirus and news this evening that the dangerous South African variant has now been detected in a patient here in New York City at a hospital here...

- Canada has detected its first case of the South African variant of COVID-19.

- Tonight, the South African Covid variant spreading in the US...

- Covid fatalities have skyrocketed in recent weeks. Overworked and exhausted, and if they could say, they cannot keep up. Manufacturers of coffins are working overtime to make up the shortages and meet demands.

Traveling back to South Africa becomes more and more difficult for grandma as the years pass. The pandemic makes it even harder. Earlier in the year, bad news came with every phone call. And in the last several years, much of Grandma's generation has passed on.

- Yeah, I get lonely because people don't visit unless you invite them. But I like the lifestyle that you live here. Nobody bothers you. People don't come unless they call you. And if people need out, they'll call.

- So do you feel connected to South Africa? Or do you feel like it's very disconnected?

- No. I'm still connected to South Africa. I miss them a lot. I call often. And, yeah. Sometime I think, why am I here?

Finally all the ingredients have been mixed together, the batter's been made, and it's time to fry your badjias.

- It's ready.

- How do you know that the oil is ready?

- See it came up when I put a little bit? It came up. If it didn't come up, then it's not ready, the oil not ready.

- So you just drop a little bit and see if it floats and starts to get crispy.

- Otherwise, you can put chopstick there and see if it bubbles.

Using a teaspoon drop in a dollop of your mixture into the oil.

- Ah, that sound is great.

And just like that, something small but revolutionary has taken place. For as long as humans have been displaced, or otherwise left behind the place they call home, they've been carrying on their traditions, re-mixing them, and teaching them to younger generations. They've been carrying out little acts of remembrance, one bite at a time, for something that's been lost. I asked grandma what happened to her childhood home.

- White people took over. Group Area Act, they call it. They took over the house, asked them to move out.

- So who would live there now would you say?

- Nobody lives there now. It's a highway, like.

- But it's been torn down?

- Yeah, all the houses torn down, yeah.

Grandma is just one person, someone who was caught in the winds of history which were far beyond her control. And there are no monuments commemorating what happened to her. But we have food to remember. We have food to share, and to pass on. We have these little monuments that say, we were here. And we're still here. History cycles on, the world keeps spinning, and it's hard to keep up. But at least we have the good times with one another.

- She goes to Sackville. To play Dragons and Dungeons.

- Dungeons and Dragons?

- Oh, Dungeons and Dragons, yeah. D&D, she say. I'm going for D&D.

- Yeah. Both my roommates and I used to play D&D.

- Oh. What is it? It's a game?

- Yeah, it's a game.

- Oh.

- It's like a game without a board. It's sort of hard to explain.

- Like charade? No.

- Not like charades, no.

We can only keep going, day to day, dish to dish. We're only little drops in the ocean, and one drop can't turn the tide. So maybe we should focus less on doing great things. Instead, we can do little things with great love.

You've been listening to a short audio documentary, *Little Things with Great Love*, written and edited by me, Deivan Steele. Special thanks to the team at programsound.fm for helping me share this story, and to my grandmother, Rata, for her generosity in all the little things. We've included a detailed recipe for badjias, including tips for troubleshooting, so you can check that out and bring some of grandma's cooking into your home. We've also included a few recipes for quick, delicious sauces to dip your badjias in. Again, I'm Deivan Steele, and I hope great food and great love are in your future.

HOST:

- Our listeners are eager to hear from the elusive, maladroit Army Armstrong. What could possibly make you happy?

- Um. I'm a nervous guy. Naturally. My cousin says it's because I was dropped on my head as a kid but I don't think that's true. Happiness seems overrated. Maybe it's because I seem to never reach a place of um, that. Happy. But there was one time when I was in grade three, I was in Mrs. Kimmer's homeroom. There was a guinea pig. The class named him Stewart. Terrible name for a pet I thought. But I seemed to be the only one who paid attention to the little guy. I cleaned his cage and everything. I let Stewart out of the cage and stretch and play. I gave little Stew a voice and I played pretend with him. Cops and Robbers, hide and seek. I think little Stew was my only friend for a while.

- What a story. And where is little Stew now?

- Yeah. Well, he's dead.

- Ouch. That must suck.

- It does. But that is my happy place.

- I think our listeners are primed to play hide and seek with you now. Shall we play? Army? Count to 30 in your little Stewart voice of course, giving our listeners the chance to hide.

- Um. Well. Okay. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18...

- As we have given our listeners the opportunity to hide, the end of our time has come. But the fun and festivities do not end here. The Devil and Army here have not yet revealed to us their hell on earth. So that leaves you, the listeners. Make your guesses and send them into our Instagram at [programsound.fm](#), or our Twitter at [programsound.fm](#). Correct answers will receive a recorded message from all of our contestants. Thank you all, and whether you're making your first cup of joe or turning in for the night, just know that your personal hell is not as bad as you think.

END