



Library podcast

Arjun Singh Sethi discusses 'American Hate'

[00:00:05] Welcome to The Seattle Public Library's podcasts of author readings and library events. Library podcasts are brought to you by The Seattle Public Library and Foundation. To learn more about our programs and podcasts, visit our web site at www.spl.org. To learn how you can help the library foundation support The Seattle Public Library go to foundation.spl.org

[00:00:35] Thanks so much for being here. I'm special brand and I am the literature and humanities program manager here at the Seattle Public Library. As we begin tonight I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered together on the ancestral land of the Coast Salish people. We would like to honor their elders past and present and we thank them for their stewardship of this land. Welcome to this evening's event with Arjun Singh Sethi Matt Ramlee SOI Giang and Neila Sollee and Shakuri tuen car Caral Sari Shakuri presented in partnership with Elliott Bay Book Company. Thank you to our authors series sponsor Gary Clunis and to the Seattle Times for generous promotional support of library programs. Finally we are grateful to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Private gifts to the foundation from thousands of donors helped the library provide free programs and services that touched the lives of everyone in our community. So to library foundation donors here with us tonight we say thank you very much for your support. Without further ado I would like to welcome Karen from Elliott Bay Book Company to introduce tonight's speakers

[00:01:45] Good evening and thank you to the Seattle Public Library and also to maps and care Muslim Americans of Puget Sound and the Council on American Islamic Relations who are helping coach present and get word out about this event tonight. So this evening we're going to want to have a speaker and the speaker is going to be followed by a panel discussion and I'm going to read some some brief bios of all of the speakers so you'll have a little information about them. So our featured speaker tonight is writer and human rights lawyer Arjun Singh. He's based in Washington D.C. He works closely with Muslim Arab South Asian and sick communities and advocates for racial justice equity and social change at both the local and national levels. He holds faculty appointments at Georgetown University Law Center and Vanderbilt University Law School and President Lee cochairs the American Bar Association National Committee on Homeland Security counterterrorism and the treatment of enemy combatants. He's here tonight with his book American hate Survivors Speak OUT. Published by The New Press in which he documents the effects of hate crimes on people's lives and these hate crimes and the people and their families share their own stories with you so it's quite quite interesting and very personal account about the ways in which hate crimes affect us. So the people targeted by hate and subject to bullying discrimination and violence come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and include immigrants refugees queer people and people with disabilities.

[00:03:38] Our panelists this evening are Matt Ramlee from the Papa Lakota. He's the editor and writer for the online native news site laugh's real Indians and our inspire. He's also the author of The Seattle Indigenous Peoples Day resolution and in 2014 he was awarded Seattle's individual human rights leader award. Sawyer dzong is a senior partner at change lab and she's been active in the progressive movement for at least the last 30 years working as a journalist. Legislative staff community organizer and progressive grant maker she's written and researched and organized on issues of immigration police accountability welfare and progressive philanthropy. Also here tonight is Neila Afzali and she is the executive director of the American Muslim Empowerment Network at the Muslim Association of beaubs at Sound. She's a board member of the Faith Action Network and a steering committee member of the Washington immigration Solidarity Network. She was named one of 27 teens most influential people by Seattle Magazine and recognized as a rising star. Multiple years by Washington law and politics. Also joining us tonight is Corey Tounkara from the Northwest Detention Center resistance. So without further ado please join me in first welcoming Okun to the Seattle Public Library.

[00:05:26] Hi everyone. I'm Arjun Sethi. Thank you to the Elliott Bay Book Company for supporting this event. Thank you to the Seattle Public Library for hosting us. I want to start by just acknowledging that I know there is a lot of pain and grief generally in this political moment and there's a lot of fatigue sometimes in talking about these issues. So thank you for being here. And thank you for being here on this particular day. For those of you who heard the news or watch the news some of the worst forces in America were on full display for the world to see whether it be sexism massage and rape culture. So in many ways I know it's an ask to generally be here and especially be here this night. So thank you for your courage and thank you for your bravery and I hope you will leave this conversation informed and empowered.

[00:06:27] The United States was built on a hate crime.

[00:06:30] The decimation and destruction of native communities and was furthered on additional hate crimes including slavery Jim Crow and mass incarceration but it's nevertheless a fact that hate has spiked during the run up to the 2016 election and under the Trump administration. I'm a community activist.

[00:06:55] I work closely with Muslim Arab South Asian and sic communities and that's what I was hearing in 2016 and 2017 that hate was spiking in every facet of American life and the workplace the classroom public life. And so I thought it was important to take to the road meet with survivors in their homes. Houses of worship community centers and document their stories and that is what Americans hate. Survivors Speak OUT. It's the introduction Scituate's this political moment. It talks about the emboldening and the inciting of hate. In Donald Trump's America the conclusion lays out best practices to address hate to address state violence. The body of the book is otherwise 14 testimonials from people who have been directly impacted. When I initially set out I thought to only include the most searing examples of hate violence in the book. And then I realize I would be doing a disservice to impacted communities because eight manifests in so many forms which is why in my book you will

find stories of bullying vicious cyber trolling vandalism and our sense of houses of worship and regrettably in some cases murder. Let me also revisit the word testimonial because this is a question that I get often.

[00:08:24] What is a testimonial. How did I decide on this form. There is an overwhelming sentiment among survivors of hate in the United States that their stories are trafficked that the media is interested in click bait and they don't have an opportunity to actually tell their stories in their own words which is why I traveled across the country went to places like Tulsa Oklahoma Whitefish Montana Victoria Texas and wouldn't meet with survivors for many hours sometimes over a period of days would record their interview. Transcribe it usually transcription was anywhere from 10 to 50000 words and then I would shorten it into a three to 5000 word essay. That again was entirely in their words that in some cases was slightly reordered to make it accessible for a reader and a book. And I will tell you that in many ways it was an experiment. When I hit send on the 14 draft testimonials to all the survivors in the book I feared that they would come back to me and say this isn't my story. I give you thirty thousand words you give me 4000 words. The way you've ordered it doesn't give primacy to what's most important to me. But fortunately every survivor in this book and ours was noted in the introduction.

[00:09:50] The survivors include native voices queer trans Muslim sake refugee next undocumented. Every single survivor came back to me and said This is my story.

[00:10:01] Thank you for including it. And one thing I'm doing as part of the book tour as I'm trying to incorporate survivors in community conversations across the country so that they can continue to tell their stories and continue to stay connected to really what they experienced.

[00:10:20] With that I'm going to go ahead and jump right in. Read a few of the stories from the book. So you have a sense of what it is I was trying to accomplish and some of the folks in the book the first testimony I'm going to read from is Osma OBU K.A. a small although Kaiya was the first Syrian refugee to ever be resettled in Boise Idaho.

[00:10:45] And she talks in her testimonial about how she experienced all kinds of hate and discrimination. Being a refugee being a muslim and being a Muslim who also wears or her job. She also talks about how her young son was the target of a hate crime. And here's her recounting that episode again in her words in February 2016.

[00:11:08] My son came home one evening with a terrible bruise on his face. He told me what happened. I was with my friend and a big American guy came up to me and asked Are you Muslim. I told him yes I am Muslim. Then he punched me in the face and I cried. My friend then called the police. My son was very clear still I thought he must have done something wrong. As refugees were always afraid that the police or the government will send us home. Even when where the victims all was made clear the next day when I received a call saying that my son was in fact the victim of a hate crime I don't want to say much because my son is still young but everything changed for him that day he became less trusting and it was harder for him to make new friends. One day he asked me Should

I lie. Next time if people ask me if I'm Muslim. Should I tell them I'm not. I told him he should be proud to be a good Muslim and proud of his identity. I hope he listens. I went to the last hearing in the court case because the judge asked for a statement. I told the judge that the man in the courtroom or hurt my son wouldn't learn love and respect from a jail cell. He needed to be educated. He needed to learn that we are refugees who ran away from war that we seek safety and don't want to hurt anyone. I told the judge that I had forgiven the offender and that my forgiveness was an example of how to respect and love others. The judge nevertheless sentenced him to time in jail and community service.

[00:12:49] I read that excerpt because it really shows a trend that I saw among survivors that they're open and willing to have difficult conversations in some cases they are practicing restorative justice in the most carceral state in modern history. The next story I'm going to read from is Taylor dumpsite Taylor Dunson is an African-American woman who took the bold step of running for student body president at American University in Washington D.C. last year. This is a university that is five miles from the White House. The day that Taylor took office nooses were found hanging across campus.

[00:13:34] Here is Taylor reflecting on that episode and what collective liberation looks like. The entire room erupted when they announced my victory. Seeing the freshmen yell and excitement because they had a precedent that look like them meant the world to me. I won by just 129 votes. I was sworn in on April 30th 2017. The very next morning on May 1st bananas were found hanging from nooses made a black nylon rope and at least three separate locations on a U.S. campus. The bananas were marked with the letters a K the abbreviation for the historically black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha of which I'm a member. Grainy video footage shows a person in a stocking cap hanging them between 4 and 6 a.m.. The FBI and DOJ are investigating it as a hate crime. I decided to put out a statement that first day because so many students were terrified. I said that we would get past this together and that all members of our community should feel safe and welcome. I reminded them of the words of Frederick Douglass. If there is no struggle there is no progress. I also told them that being first. In other words being the first African-American woman to ever hold the title of student body president at American University was never easy. This is the end of her testimonial black women have always been at the forefront of civil rights and solidarity work in this country. I'm proud that black lives matter was founded by a black woman and I support their vision.

[00:15:13] When black people are free we will all be free.

[00:15:18] But I think we should push ourselves even further. We must remember those who were at the intersection of various forms of marginalization including black queer and Black disabled women.

[00:15:29] Only one the most vulnerable among us are free will we all be free. Only then will we rise the next story I'm going to read from is Jannette scare.

[00:15:42] Jeanette Vizcarra is an undocumented Latin neck's activist who was one of the first undocumented activists to take immigrants I should say to take sanctuary at a house of worship during the Trump administration.

[00:15:57] And this is about her decision to take sanctuary and again reflecting on her future. In early February 2017 my children and I gathered around our dinner table. I told them that men in uniform might come to our home and take me away. Lunette 12 Roberta 010 and Zuri 6 looked at me and listened they knew we were different from other families. I'm undocumented and they were born here. The only way I could stay safe was to take sanctuary at a local church and trust that the government would honor the sanctity of the house of worship their father and my eldest daughter Tanya who's 26 would take care of them. I gave the children explicit instructions. If somebody knocked don't open the door if somebody entered Luna Shenfeld Roberto should run to the refrigerator and call the first person on the community contact list in Zuri he should run to the bedroom and close the door. I feared for their safety. I didn't want to leave my family but I was scared that Immigration and Customs Enforcement would tear us apart. Jeanette who is no longer in Sanctuary who has status is here. In this final passage reflecting on her future as I continue this work in the years ahead I know that I will experience racism and hate but I will press on because I want a better future for my children.

[00:17:26] I also know that one day I may be forced to leave this country but it won't be without a fight. I will protect what I've earned and build. I will protect my family and the loving community we enjoy. And if I am deported I will hold my head up high. From the day I arrived more than 20 years ago I fought for what I believe my children will continue this fight long after I'm gone. This is our home. One of the things that is very striking about Jannette story is that it shows the intersection between hate violence and state violence. When Jannette took sanctuary at the First Unitarian Church in Denver and she was there for four months and she talks in that testimonial how she thought she would be there for four years the entirety of the Trump administration. She talks about how when she was in sanctuary the church received threats to blow up the church.

[00:18:22] All because they had given her sanctuary going to read from two more testimonials.

[00:18:28] Alexandra Brodsky is a Jewish American activist civil rights lawyer a survivor of gender violence. She was viciously cyber trolled on account of being Jewish American and on account of her work on behalf of survivors. I won't say much more. I just want you to think about help freshmen and Alexandras testimony is considering what you heard today on full display in the Supreme Court.

[00:18:59] In the days following the election I stopped the national hotline run by the National Women's Law Center which students and families could report incidents of discrimination in school we heard a similar story. Time after time girls were being groped on the playground by boys claiming that if the president could do it so could they. In a 2017 report the National Women's Law Center reported that more than one in six girls ranging in age from 14 to 18 had experienced harassment. Since Trump's election women aren't safe in schools workplaces public life or online boys and men across the country are parroting the president when I was in school which in Alexandra's case happened to be you know I remember survivors expressing trepidation about coming forward because they feared that their abusers would retaliate. Their abusers were wealthy white boys or young men whose parents could seek legal counsel and quickly attack the reputation of a survivor and discredit her story. They feared speaking out because their abusers could be the congressmen senators judges CEOs or presidents of tomorrow. The campaign and victory of Donald Trump

confirmed their worst suspicions. The last testimony I'm going to read from him that I'm going to wrap up and turn over to our extraordinary panel is serrata swang Serrat swang is a queer activist a Cambodian refugee who is the executive director of an organization called the Providence Youth Student Movement based in Providence Rhode Island.

[00:20:42] A few days after the election Serrat walked into his organization's office in Providence and found that the equipment had been rearranged. Knives were stabbed into the community desk and a noose was hanging from the ceiling.

[00:20:57] One of the things that makes Serrat story so extraordinary is there an abolitionist organization. So they decided not to call the police. And here is a brief summary about that decision.

[00:21:11] We also decided not to call the police. We are an abolition organization and believe in the abolition of the police and military think of it this way. We came to this country because of US militarism. Then we got here and were targeted by state violence like the surveillance the school to prison pipeline police brutality mass incarceration and even deportation back to our home countries. The police and military posed the greatest threat to our safety and dignity. So why should we call them in our time of need. If abolition was one of our values we had to stick to it in this moment. So here's the thing long after the media loses interest.

[00:21:54] Long after the public moves on the front lines of protection the frontline that support survivors are local community activists local community activists like the ones you're going to hear from today. So I would encourage you. After the discussion to speak with them figure out a way to get involved because they do really important work and ultimately they were also my gateway to survivors.

[00:22:26] The last thing I would say actually I can't. It's emotional for me.

[00:22:33] Maybe in a little bit but with that why don't we go ahead and turn over to thank you so much and thank you everyone for being here tonight.

[00:22:50] I have known Arjin for a little bit and I just want to say I really respects not only the work that he has done to write the book and to put it together but the way that he's gone about this tour with his book he's made very specific attempts to reach out to local communities and local activists to connect the stories that he documents in the book with local struggles wherever he's going to. So you know I really want to commend him for that. Not every author does that.

[00:23:20] And you know as heavy as the topic is I did read the book.

[00:23:26] And I just want to say that's you know with every story of violence you know these words hate's and crime and violence. There are also stories of redemption reconciliation love agency community. And that really comes through so powerfully in the book. When I first picked it up and

started to read it you know I have a sort of trepidation about what would what would I find in those pages.

[00:23:54] But what was so heartening to me is you know as he writes in the book he says a single hateful act can reveal the worst in humanity and the response the most compassionate.

[00:24:07] And so with this panel of my friends here this evening I Wałęsa want to invite us to think about as we connect the topics of the book to what's going on locally in Seattle. Those themes of not only hate and violence but also reconciliation reconciliation and our own agency.

[00:24:25] So without further ado I'm going to turn it over to start with a Neila and sort of go down the line if that's OK. And we've heard a little bit about you. One of the things that I was so moved by when I was kind of researching and learning about the work that you've been doing is that you munity have been faced with such extreme examples of hate and violence and hostility. And yet in the face of that you've chosen to turn outward and to sort of do this rural road show and to go into communities where you knew that you may not be welcome where you knew that there may be stereotypes of you and your people and you've had conversations and you've also educated people about what the multibillion dollar industry is that's driving Islamophobia today in this country. And I wonder if you can just tell us what is the scope of this problem in Washington state and some of the work that you've been doing and the impact that it's had.

[00:25:24] Thank you so much for the question. Thank you so much Professor set for your book for your compassion for your willingness to share these stories and really highlight some of what's happening in our own country in our own neighborhoods. And I have to start by saying that I myself have not been a victim of a hate crime of the nature that you describe in your book but I know many survivors and I also know that there are survivors in this room right now with us and families of survivors including some people that I could point to here. So I know that this is can also be very triggering. And again as you pointed out Professor Sethi just today's watching the media the news today has been a very triggering day for a lot of other people who have been impacted and many multiple different ways of sort of violence in different ways. So I want to acknowledge that for me personally.

[00:26:11] One thing that has been powerful is and I think Arjun's recognized this is when you see these individual acts of hate the overpowering overwhelming response of compassion and solidarity and love and unity. That's what gives me hope and strength and inspiration. Like when our mosque the mosque that I'm with was attacked twice in less than a month. We had the neighborhood we had the wider community show up in response. Show up in solidarity show up with compassion and really prove that love is far greater than hate. And that's really essentially the message of what I'm doing with both helping educate people and then also help build that kind of solidarity help build the coalitions that we need and mobilize each other to take action to prevent these kinds this kind of hate. Because what I often tell people you are these individual forms of hate. They are often the symptoms of a much deeper problem and that deeper problem is racism is Islamophobia is sexism is homophobia. All of these underlying roots of the hate crimes themselves and trying to address those

underlying roots is part of what the work that I do and I have this poster over here that gives a little sense of the Islamophobia industry and some of the individuals the groups who are behind and the funding that is promoting this kind of Islamophobia because as I tell people it's not just generalized prejudice against Muslims.

[00:27:30] There is an intentional propaganda effort. There is an intentional weaponizing of fear and manipulating people to try to create divisiveness to try to promote things for political gain for profit gain and for other reasons. And it's really incumbent on all of us as people to recognize that to understand it and to take action against it. That's what I'm trying to do on this road show that we do. Me and Pastor Terry Caila we've been going to smaller towns across Washington state and really help educate people about the Islamophobia industry about these forms of hate and and the attempts to create hate and divisiveness and really try to build a narrative of love and unity really try to show that love is far greater than hate. Show that that facts are much stronger than the fiction and the fear mongering that these groups and individuals promote and show that faith is far greater than fear. I get to live that every single day and I get to try to work around helping others recognize that and really build those narrative so that we can work together and sort of cooperative ways to challenge that fear that hate that misogyny that sexism that Islamophobia that anti-Semitism all of these things are related.

[00:28:38] And helping people understand the interconnection between these various forms of hate and really the kind of role that we can play. And one final point as as Professor Sethi recognize you know one other really dangerous part of all of this hate is the state sponsored role in it the institutional forms of Islamophobia of racism and other forms of it. Right. And really recognizing that when it comes to anti Muslim bigotry and bias the institutional forms the state forms of Islamophobia are actually some of the most dangerous. Whether it's coming from the Rodrick at the top or laws that are in place anti Muslim legislation whether it's the Muslim travel ban whether it's surveillance programs informant programs registries all of these currently exist and have existed. And to recognize the role that they play in promoting a culture of hate. And they're not just against Muslims that's why I try to help people understand. Islamophobia does not just hurt me it hurts every single American. Every single one of those of us who cares about sort of our democracy our values our civil rights our liberties it hurts all of us and it's incumbent on all of us to work together to challenge that so that we can all be safer and live better lives.

[00:29:47] Thank you.

[00:29:47] Naylor And I should say as moderator and I'm sort of in the unenviable position of keeping time. We do have a short amount of time with such incredible speakers and so I will alert you when you have about 30 seconds left in my time.

[00:30:03] You were great. You just do whatever and Neila just to do that. And we're going to also ask each speaker to share with us their ideas about what's been effective what they're experimenting with what they see as having an impact in the second round of questions.

[00:30:19] But Shakuri I wonder if you know in this Trump era we've heard so much there's been a lot of attention paid to the kind of relentless attacks on immigrant families.

[00:30:30] But I think that very few people know and understand the conditions that people face who are incarcerated whether it be in prisons or jails or immigration detention centers. And so I wonder if you can and also some people don't understand how long it's been going on. Right. It predates the Trump era. So I wonder if you can share with us your own story. And then also a little bit about what the Northwest Detention Center resistance is doing.

[00:30:57] Hello. Thank you very much for having me here. I do work with the Northwest Detention Center resistance. For those of you who don't know the immigration jail that we have here is located in Tacoma in the industrial area where no houses or apartment buildings or anything where people live. So was completely away from residential space area and for good reason. It's what you call a two person fight where is the site where it's located where the soil is toxic the pollutants in the air. So that smell that smell when you go to a coma is chemical. So also this past week we've been just all over the place because Monday there was a fire. Three hundred meters away from the detention center where it was scrap metal that caught caught on fire and they said it was because of a battery that combusted. They didn't evacuate any of the detainees. They didn't tell them what was going on. They could smell it and they were asking like what's happened to him. But nobody told them anything as they were evacuating people who lived in that residential areas telling them to close their doors and windows and don't go out. Meanwhile the detainees are inhaling all the smoke. There's also been a second because there was one this year already a second varicella outbreak where seven pods have been I wouldn't say as active but they've been exposed to excessive impacts.

[00:32:22] About 400 people who have been in contact with varicella which is the virus that causes chicken pox and is not as bad when your kid but when you're an adult it becomes shingles. So it was way more comfortable and very easy to catch. You can catch it by contact or even talking to someone in the same space. Also we have people going on hunger strike because they can't get medical care. There's a guy in there who had a hernia hanging outside of that abdominal cavity. He had to hold in his hand and a surgeon agreed to do the surgery and I just wouldn't let him go. So he had been you know trying to deal with that. And we were fighting with them back and forth about just getting him like a belt to put on keep it down or he was on the top bunk. He kept asking to go to the bottom and they wouldn't let them go to the bottom bunk. I don't know if you've seen the jail beds but there is no ladder so he'd have to try to have a hard time getting up there.

[00:33:22] So that's the thing that's going on with them. I personally am experiencing some things because my husband is there and he's been there since January of this year. And he was diagnosed with a tumor on the right side of his neck. We told Rice when they took him he had a surgery date to get it removed and a surgeon agreed to do it we have insurance. Everything was going in. I made him miss his surgery date. So he sat in there until you know it got bigger and bigger and bigger and I complained and complain and talk with them and got the medical records and do all these things. So they finally let him have the surgery in April April 27 of this year. But they didn't do any of the aftercare patients things that they were supposed to get him like physical therapy. So his arm is disabled

because they waited so long for that. They recently found out he's losing his vision. So he's going blind and there's nothing that can be corrected with surgery. So it's not like glaucoma or cataracts or anything like that. So he's definitely going to go blind. How fast and when. We don't know.

[00:34:28] He has glasses now that he wears before he went in there he didn't have any glasses. And now he has asthma as well which is ironic considering the pollutants and stuff in the air and heart failure. So my husband's been in there this long and his health is declining fast. And we go out and we talked to the mayor's office. We go when we talk to the Congress office when we talk to CNN and everybody is just like it's a federal issue. But I'm saying it's a humanity issue. Everybody deserves to have medical care and it doesn't have to be 5star medical care. But if these people are this sick let them out so that they can heal. So that's the thing that I've been going through right now with my husband besides being separated from him and the bills and he gives the kids are in therapy. I'm in therapy and I'm on medication my kids are 7 and 9 and they have been diagnosed with PTSD.

[00:35:24] You should just to be clear the Northwest Detention Center is privately run it is privately run and yes it's privately ran by GEO Group and they have several prisons private prisons across the country. Ice is the boss if you will of the facility. And that's another thing that gets me because when I talk to I said I'm like oh we don't have anything to do with that. Go talk to these people. You get the run around of that. But yet it's privately owned and they get to do whatever they want even I gets to do whatever they want. They don't have a boss.

[00:35:58] So I have no one to complain to.

[00:36:01] We're going to come back around and ask Corey what we can do about this problem. Matt a lot of times when we think about hate violence we think about people who are attacked because of some aspect of their identity. And I wonder if you can help us kind of expand that idea. Two forms of colonial violence that create conditions that are conducive to violence particularly the effects on indigenous women and girls. And if you can tell us a little bit about that just kind of expand our concepts of how we think about violence.

[00:36:36] Mottaki it be Sunday why stay and not that use up the waakye. I want to turn to my GOP y'all will slow. High Yellow Wakey. Charles trembly. Wakey. Donna Harrison Tokar Sheila can talk a bit too good they won't Pilla to took a was still. Then we Cha-Cha. We all Pilla now all we chuck Jojo Duwamish are Yachty Duwamish chicky or Sharqiya y'all. Well good evening. My name is Matt Ramlee. My Lakota name is Waak Yowah and I am from standing rock.

[00:37:17] Live here in Seattle. First and foremost want to give acknowledgement to the Duwamish people for whom's land where guest on. I'd like to thank you for the good work that you do with your book and bringing this issue out as well as to the other panelists. My heart goes out to you and your family. Prayers for you and your children and your husband and you good Saturday.

[00:37:42] This is quickly Sawyer have known for many decades now since we were out on the streets right out here protesting WTO so next my wife. And thank you for that question. I really

appreciate the expanding of the ways in which we look at violence in terms of the kind of regional violence and being the one that's thrust upon Makaha our grandmother earth of which who which is are all of ours first mother. Before we jump into that though I do need to just share briefly since were in the lands of the Duwamish you know it was an 18 60s that the forerunner of this Seattle City Council when the government was formed and it passed its current first set of ordinances and laws ordinance 5 which was which was one of the first laws that this government passed banned any native peoples from being allowed to be in the Seattle city limits. This was followed which are predominantly Duwamish in Squamish peoples. At that time that was followed by a period all the way up until 1910 where colonial occupiers vigilantes were going around to longhouses of the Duwamish people roughly 96 of them and they burnt them down. Longhouses a massive structured could hold about a hundred plus people in it so the one exception they made in their ordinance banning native peoples from city limits was that if you were considered a worker of a colonizer then you were allowed within the city limits at a certain time. That exemption was put in because of the brothels that were down here in Pioneer Square which was predominantly Native women Duwamish women who were placed into brothels. And at that time the city was taxing them. So Seattle's well did not come from Amazon.com or any of the other tech industries.

[00:40:04] Seattle's wealth is built on settler colonialism the theft of Duwamish peoples lands and from Native women why I appreciate the question of violence against when she McCall is that settler colonialism is about the colonization of moving into indigenous lands removing indigenous peoples to access those resources for the benefit of settler colonial communities. The United States is not a post-colonial country. We are still living in a under settler occupation colonial occupation and if you look at where all the conflicts that we had with the United States from 514 92 on to now to this day is has been around the removal of indigenous populations to access our lands to gain access to resources to benefit their populations. The other thing that she said. Obviously there's massive violence and genocide that took place during from 1870 to now 30 seconds. And wherever you see it to this day the resource extraction taking place is predominantly on indigenous lands. The fracking the mining and wherever it takes place what follows is these massive man camps we're seeing this in that a Dakotah region where our people are from when BOQ and oil show was discovered about 10 years ago and these man camps men from around the world come and work in these man camps and the next thing that happens is the disappearance and the theft of indigenous women who are being placed into these Manc camps. We have a what's called Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and where thousands of native women have been disappeared oftentimes in these mass camps. And so wherever you see violence against Earth the violence against women the violence against indigenous communities follows.

[00:42:22] Thank you thank you Matt. Maybe in the next round we can share some resources where people can learn more information about what's happening.

[00:42:33] Arjun I know for all of us this is an emotional day I can say for myself I you know shed tears today had lots of anger lots of emotions kind of up and down so I really thank you for acknowledging that right off the bat when you started I wonder if you can just share some reflections

based on what you've heard from these panelists about the relationships between the work that they've described and the problems that they've described and your experience of writing the book.

[00:43:00] I don't think that we can separate state violence and hate violence. I think there are. Some

[00:43:08] I think hate is part of this country's deep and I think you are absolutely right.

[00:43:14] It's a mistake to call the United States a postcolonial country. We are colonial even if you think about what we do internationally Guantanamo Bay is and always has been a prison for Muslim men extrajudicial drone strikes disproportionately impact Muslim majority countries. Climate change has hit the global South the hardest with six of the 10 countries most impacted and

[00:43:43] Africa. There we go. Sorry. So I think we need to talk about the international component as well. And really I mean if you're thinking about an intersection between state and hate violence in some ways at least in the context of this administration it's almost kind of intuitive it's common sense if the president as Nilda pointed out is going to ban Muslims and refugees it's going to have an impact Cajun separate immigrant families deprived folks of lifesaving healthcare is going to have an impact all the time to everyone else. But the one sort of sort of story or factoid I will give you if you've ever run into anybody who thinks that policies don't matter or rhetoric doesn't matter. Let me give you a very concrete example. This is from the book in December 2016 sorry summer 2015. Donald Trump on the campaign trail said he was going to ban Muslims from entering the United States that day.

[00:44:40] A pig's head was out was found outside the Al Aqsa Islamic Society in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. The spokesperson for that mosque tells a story in this book. Fast forward in January 2017 and one of his first acts as president. Donald Trump signed an executive order banning Muslims and refugees from entering the United States that night. A mosque in Victoria Texas was burned to the ground. Both of those stories are in the bowl. Rhetoric matters. Policy matters and more so than anything so does history.

[00:45:16] Thank you. And so I want to shift a little bit. I think you know we've we've all known and experienced in various ways the challenges of this moment.

[00:45:26] I think we also yearn for sharing of ideas and lessons learned and sort of observations about what is working with what is hopeful in terms of how to shift to these times. Right. So one of the things again that struck me about the book is even if people were attacked for one aspect of their identity whether it was their faith or whatnot the response again many times or as workers as parents. As as people of multiple faiths as people who cared about their communities as siblings raised as survivors of violence. And so I want to invite us to end thinking about sharing how things are you know how you're seeing things that are hopeful or things that are working to kind of also think about. Are there other ways that we can identify with one another. Right.

[00:46:18] Are there ways that in this moment we can build and forge new bonds of connection and kind of affinity with one another as human beings who really care about ending violence. I'll start with you and Neila.

[00:46:32] So I will say that I'm very much a hopeful optimist kind of person optimistic kind of person. My faith teaches me that. And I firmly believe that I tell this people all the time that as bad as things are right now and they are pretty bad I mean you heard several examples here. And we all know from our own lives and what's happening all around us we know how bad things are.

[00:46:53] But as bad as they are I tell people this all the time. It is an amazing time to be alive right now to be here with all of you to be sort of in this moment present together because never in my lifetime have I felt that I have as much power to make a difference as I do today. The words and actions by every single one of us here I believe has a far greater impact in the future of our country than ever before at least in my lifetime from my perspective. I firmly believe that sort of the coalitions that we're seeing the unity of the people coming out in solidarity learning about each other connecting with communities that they may have never connected with otherwise. All of that the movement in the streets the people showing up in mass all around all a variety of different causes. That gives me so much hope and strength and inspiration and allows me to continue doing the work that I'm doing every single day. So I really want to put that clear because I know we heard a very heavy sort of component from so many different stories and so much of that has happened and continues to happen. And I'm not sort of downplaying any of that negativity. But I'm saying we absolutely can be and are part of the solution and that's what I focus on the I focus on what we can do and there so much that every single one of us can do and all you know ranges from things at the national level to here at the local level. And I really tell people all the time the two things that I would especially emphasize personally are sort of education and engagement educating ourselves and each other helping sort of raise awareness about all of these various issues about these stories using the stories as a way to help build action help sort of motivate people to act right using the stories those personal connections.

[00:48:38] Because a lot of times people will hate something they don't know or somebody that they don't know. And when you help connect those people and build the personal connections when they have a human face connected to a community a marginalized group. It is a lot harder for people to hate. And we have many examples of this happening and what is happening all around us especially here in the greater Seattle area. If you don't know if some options and ways to get involved to educate yourself to build those personal connections. We have a resource table over there with maps. A map that has an action sheet. There's the Care Action sheet as well on combating Islamophobia. There are coalitions all around there or groups like Seattle indivisibility second. WASHINGTON immigrant Solidarity Network Faith Action Network. All of these groups are ways to engage and educate ourselves and each other and just being here today is a sign that every single person here cares and I believe the count it's about 60 people here. That those of us here we have so much power and potential and if we unite us alone can change the world. I firmly believe that and I'm sort of all about action and working together to sort of create the kind of change that we all want to see array's

[00:49:52] Shikari. ROSE So moved by this story that you shared with us. Please tell us what we can do in this room to support you and your family and support the broader work you're doing.

[00:50:02] Thank you again for having me here I really appreciate it. As you were saying education part is the most important. I think a lot of people here don't know that that place even exists or what's happening inside. So that's important. We like to attack the system is very broken. So that's not very hard to do a basic medical care. It's something that even the poorest people in our country have. So attacking that is what we're trying to do at the Northwest Detention Center resistance. But as individuals I would write or call our local officials and tell them that you know what's happened in there and that you're not going to stand for it and be continuous about it during the winter twice is great but doing it all the time is even better. We call that a call to action. So even call the detention center itself it'll make them do something. They only do things when they feel pressure or they feel like there is tension on them. Then they kind of clean it up a little bit but I don't want them to clean it up a little bit. I want it to be calm completely so calm in your state officials telling others what's going on.

[00:51:12] I mean if you're not sure you can always go to the northwest this is your insistence on Facebook and there's also a Web site just googling. The link is there. And then right now we have a petition. It's a national petition to end ICE's contracts with individual jails and prisons. So what they do is they go they go grab people and they put them into the jails temporarily as a holding before they ship them to the northwest detention center. And it's possible because in Idaho they lost their contract. There's a lot of people from Idaho coming up here to Tacoma because there they lost their contracts with the disenchant or the jails there. So it's definitely possible. I've seen it I've seen other cities happening as more people are caring. Unfortunately it's people being separated from their parents for people to pay attention. And now there's an outcry for Esther here in our own backyard because people are sick. It's a crisis and we need that help. So call complain complain and call. Get on your nerves. Matt

[00:52:21] Please tell us what we can do to support the work that you're doing with the murdered and missing indigenous women campaign.

[00:52:29] Yeah I first want to comment on I feel the same way in looking at the sort of cross movement cross community work that has really taken place over the past several years. I even rate here in Seattle a couple of years ago a few years ago we launched a little movement to go after a Wall Street bank called Wells Fargo and to get the city to divest because of some investment in the Dakota Access Pipeline while we were doing that. We were very deliberate in the campaign to draw in folks who were opposing immigrant detention. We're very deliberate in bringing in the folks who are fighting the new no new youth jail in private prisons because as was mentioned GEO Group runs and Geo Group is funded by the likes of Wells Fargo and Bank of America who are not only financing but profiting off the exploitation of our lands the exploitation of our communities. And that movement became a global movement that has seen the divestment of over 20 billion dollars from the fossil fuel industry and because of what they are doing to communities around the world. So there's a lot of amazing cross work even though the work done in Tacoma that detention center sits on land that was

stolen from the people and right next to that facility not too far away. There is an effort to put in a massive fracked gas plant and I want to say two weeks ago or so the callup tribe and others linked up with folks working against the Northwest Detention Center and ended a March showing joint solidarity and opposition to it. I'm also hopeful that when my wife and I went back to standing rock and to see the people literally around the world who were showing us support.

[00:54:37] I mean the Lakota people there's only 100000 of us and when we took that fight against Ducote access pipeline we were getting support and solidarity from people around the world. We were there on the weekend when all these former military vets came out there and I got the opportunity to sit on the drum and sing them in. And honestly it made me pretty teary eyed watching these people from around the country coming in to support us in our head men who you know he welcomed them saying Welcome to the fight. Natives have been in for the past several hundred years against this own government. So things like that are very hopeful to me in terms of support. I'd like to invite everybody out on October 8th. You know about five four or five years ago another kind of movement we launched here was to abolish Columbus Day on the local level. You shouldn't be a federal holiday that recognizes a man who started the transatlantic slave trade who conducted mass genocide against Native Tejanos and celebrates colonialism. So we started an effort here locally to abolish it on a local level. And so now Indigenous Peoples Day we celebrate all day long and I want to invite everybody to come out and celebrate with us. You can come out in the meantime a Daybreak Star get a traditional Coast Salish salmon feed see Aztec dancers Tejano dancers and much more. And everybody's welcome. So you know it's little things like that we can do to chip away at that kind of a set or a colonial narrative and celebrate ourselves celebrate our beautiful resiliency and the fact that we're still here.

[00:56:30] Thank you so of course we wish we had more time but we did want to open it up to all of you for some Kewanee.

[00:56:42] I think we have about 10 or 15 minutes.

[00:56:46] I'm going to call that 15 minutes for a question and and there's so the question was that I see like a private medical go see my husband. So the thing about that is that ICE has control over who's sees them and who deals with them. So no we're not allowed to do that. And they have a clinic in the house that they claim is good enough for them to be seen by so they don't need to be seen.

[00:57:17] They gave the same answer with faith leaders. We tried to get a faith delegation to go and they said no no we already offer religious services to them.

[00:57:23] So yeah it's very difficult and I think particularly difficult with these privately run immigration detention facilities to get people inside the questions.

[00:57:35] So the question is is it about education or cultural change.

[00:57:40] So thank you for the question. I think it's a valid point and maybe I should clarify that. By education I don't necessarily mean a formal education but more like helping educate each other and raise awareness. You know one way to do that is simply things like the power of the potluck as Pastor Terry calls it. Right. Just getting people together and you could describe that maybe as culture rather than education and either way I think it's important. I think it's also important for people to recognize the narrative that exists in our country because it is built in part based on the culture that we see as American culture as opposed to a broader culture that includes all of us. You know for instance a lot of people are not aware that American Muslims have been part of our country since the very beginning that estimates are up to 10 to 30 percent of the human beings who are enslaved from Africa having been Muslim. People don't even know that they don't think about that when they think of Muslims today. Right. So I think it does include both.

[00:58:31] It includes the education in terms of awareness raising but also helping you understand what it means when we talk about American culture who's included who's excluded why and how do we write our narratives in a way that is far more inclusive than what it has been historically. And that part of culture change it's on it's incumbent on all of us shifting the narrative reclaiming the message and reclaiming even things you know like the term patriotism. A lot of people are opposed to patriotism because they see all this negative stuff happening or they see our foreign policy and I understand that. But at the same time we lose the fight we lose the battle if we just give that up entirely. Instead what I'm very big on is saying no no no I'm a patriot. I'm what a patriot looks like because I care enough about my country that I'm willing to go out there and fight for change and fight to reach the aspirational ideals that I believe in. That's the kind of narrative change and cultural change that I think we need to see more of.

[00:59:26] Yes.

[00:59:28] So the question for Arjin is how do you create a safe space for the people you were interviewing for the book that you wrote.

[00:59:37] So there's no one size fits all formula. As I mentioned at the end of my remarks my gateway to survivors was predominantly community organizations. So I did reach out to local folks in Portland who I knew were in touch with the family and in some cases including in Portland local activists. In that case one was present in the meeting and that made the girls comfortable. I think in some ways it's actually kind of profound that you know you're visibly you know a sick man who asking me the question and I'm a sick man because I will tell you this is something I've been thinking about recently. I do think that my identity was in many ways a passport and gateway to survivors because folks look at me and they know that I've experienced it to just by seeing me. And I think that matters. And I think that helps. I think there's a lot of listening involved. I think there's a lot of trust involved. I don't want to spend too much time but I will say specifically with Destiny Mangham and William Mohommad the two young women in Portland. The book is the first time they tell their story together. And on Saturday and two days we're doing a event together at a mosque. And it'll be the first public appearance they've done. You know and it almost didn't happen. I went to Portland we had scheduled a meeting and they didn't show up. And I kind of faced a test do I push and I didn't I just let

it be. I just sent them a follow up note and said I'm here for a couple more days. I reached out to a few more local activists and said if this can be arranged great. And it worked out.

[01:01:19] So in some ways it was sort of just kind of a process of listening it was sort of a function of my identity really quickly before I forget. I want to let folks know that we have to also extraordinary people in the room who I met this morning. Teresa her father in law was actually the victim of a terrible hate crime and lost his life some years ago. And I met her this morning. We also have race in the audience and he was shot just weeks after 9/11. And then later created an organization called we've got a world without hate. And one of the first campaigns that this organization helped lead Togba restorative justice was trying to make sure that the person who shot race and murdered others and violent hate crimes after 9/11 wasn't executed by the state of Texas because he believes in forgiveness and restorative justice. I just wanted to to point the two of them out and I had the pleasure of meeting them both this morning.

[01:02:28] Ok we have time for two more questions.

[01:02:32] So where can we find out more information to most effectively advocate if we want to call the Northwest Detention Center.

[01:02:39] Course I don't have any papers with me from all in my car. I can show you my phone of course. We have a number and we don't really tell you what to say but aggression is absolutely not what you want to do. You can say to them we know what's going on. I've heard this and this is happening you guys need to do something about it and they can't really you know they might get mad at you they can't match you for coming at them in a respectful manner. But it tells them that people are watching him we're watching you. This is a community of people and we're watching you. So do something about it or you know get out. And that's basically what I do to them all the time is I out them constantly. So I always go to them respectful and if you don't get to call you don't write a letter to the senators or the congressman or you know they do have some power. A claim that they don't and quiet is kept. I was told that some of them get some funds for their donations when they run for for office so money is always a motivator.

[01:03:47] So is embarrassment so always go respectfully.

[01:03:52] Always Absolutely because it brings attention to it. Let them know that what's happening is not a secret.

[01:04:00] So I just want to share that. There is a Web site.

[01:04:03] It's W WW dot and W.D.. See resistance dot a G.

[01:04:11] And there is some there is a call to action and there are several phone numbers and people to call there.

[01:04:19] And there's a bunch of information on that Web site and there should be a petition the national petition should be on there as well for people to sign to end the contract between ICE and the jails. It's not us that date. We do do it every single month and now we have two locations because we do it at the SeaTac location and we do it at the Tacoma location in its current location is where my husband is the SeaTac one is more of a jail than the immigration center. And that's one of the places that has a contract where I is that holds people where they send them to we notify everything on Facebook. Right. That's basically what we do right now when something happens like the hunger strikes. That's when we become more active when we start posting OK we're going to go this place this day and this time to keep people posted on us because mostly everybody has a Facebook.

[01:05:11] So Facebook website Facebook.

[01:05:15] Hopefully yes. Yes last question.

[01:05:20] Thank you.

[01:05:21] The comment that it is important to include black people black voices like faces when we're talking about just discussions of hate in America. Absolutely. Yes. Thank you. I think Corey wants to respond.

[01:05:34] There's something that I'm glad you said that because this is really important to show people that what they show in media is not what actually happened in reality. The tensions are there a way other country cultures and people from other countries that are in that facility that are also suffering. It's not just Mexicans it's Indian people they are people from Germany. I was shocked when I went to see my head. And I saw them coming and I saw about four Caucasian people I was like that's not what they would tell me what's happening. Absolutely. So that's super important too it breaks down the barrier for those that aren't as empathetic or sympathetic for people because they don't look like them. That's a great barrier to knock down. Well if you don't care because they don't look like you there's a person right here that looks like this person. Two of the people that was on hunger strike for 30 days were Russian and they don't speak English. We kept trying to send them attorneys there to talk to them and you know get to see what's going on with them and talk with them.

[01:06:31] But we couldn't get an attorney in there because the detention center wouldn't let us have lawyers visits because they threw them in solitary confinement.

[01:06:41] There's nothing like actually going into the detention center into prisons. You know to really see what's going on and who it's impacting not necessarily what we're told.

[01:06:51] So I wanted to just thank everybody who came out tonight and everybody on this panel Arjun for your brilliance for your commitment for your integrity and to the Seattle Public Library and everyone who supported this event.

[01:07:04] And I just want to leave us with them another quote from from Arjun's book which I thought was really lovely which is really how you and which as you say we will teach them to forgive and reconcile because empathy and tenderness are inmates to who we are. We will build community and thrive.

[01:07:21] We will press on just like we have always done. So with that

[01:07:34] This podcast was presented by The Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to The Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.