

Jean-Huy Oral History

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Queer, family, Vietnam war, Vietnam, Immigrant, Vietnamese, API community, Asian, Pacific Islander, Gay marriage, community activism, 2017, Indivisible, API Coalition, COVID 19, Organizing, representation, San Diego, Domestic partnership.

SPEAKERS

Jean-Huy Tran, Yasmeen Obeid

Yasmeen Obeid

Before you start

Jean-Huy Tran

Is it recording?

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, to officially do it. I'll start with kind of the little bit of information I have to say and then we'll start the recording. Is that okay?

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Okay, cool. So, in general, it should be around an hour from now. I kind of wanted us to start a little. Good morning my name is Yasmeen Obeid and Today is May 5, 2020. And I am interviewing Jean-Huy Tran through zoom video call for the UCSD race in oral history project. Can you please state your name, full name, date of birth and place of birth?

Jean-Huy Tran

Hi, my name is Jean-Huy Tran it's spelled Jean-huy, and then last name spelled tran Nancy. My date of birth is November 28, 1976 and I was born in Saigon Vietnam.

Yasmeen Obeid

Awesome. Thank you so much. While to continue forward, I will ask you for a verbal signature for the recording archiving of this interview by reading the following if you can. I sent it in the zoom chat.

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah, you have my authorization.

Yasmeen Obeid

Oh, actually, you'll have to read it.

Jean-Huy Tran

Do you need me to read it?

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah. Sorry.

Jean-Huy Tran

I the Interviewee, Jean-Huy Tran, hereby transfer to the University the rights to publish, duplicate, or otherwise use the recordings and transcribed interview, and any photographs and/or videotaped footage taken during the interview. This includes publication rights in print and electronic form such as on the Internet, the right to rebroadcast the interview or portions thereof, and permission to transfer the interview to future media.

Yasmeen Obeid

Awesome. Thank you so much. With that, we can go to our first question, which is, if you can just share kind of an introduction about yourself.

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I was born and raised in Vietnam, I didn't come to United States until 1990, as an immigrant. So, my family basically left Vietnam during the 75 [1975], all the way until 80 [1980]. We slowly migrated over here by boat. And my mom, my dad and I were the last people, you know, claimed to come to the United States, in 1990. I arrived here in Orange County, just were-- just like most of the Vietnamese folks who came to the United States. It was super new to me.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

I grew up not knowing a lot. Because let's join Lynx(?) shelter in Vietnam because my mom worried about my safety. But when I came here I started exposed to life, not knowing a single word of English at all. So, the will of survival was very strong for me, like I focus in school. Got accepted, got really good grades. I got accepted to. I lived in LA for over 15 years because after graduated from college, I was actually the first person in my clan to have college degree. So, it was pretty exciting new, equal(?), independent living on my own and in LA for 15 years. But I felt like never really fit in so I decided to basically-- got rid of everything on her own. I literally that-- took six months to do that, but, and then moved down to San Diego. But I love my life here in San Diego. Initially it was very much like a tourist perspective --

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- Beautiful beaches, beautiful mountain. And, you know one thing that I never really, really realize how much more in this community I have. I exploded into the activism in 2016, right after the election. So, my partner and I went to the woman March, you know, feeling devastated. But getting there in this huge, giant crowd of like thousands of people sharing the same feeling as I was. Then I realized I wasn't alone.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

Empowered by that moment, I went home and I was like-- I was telling my partner, we got to do more. This is not enough. Like, we didn't do anything. This is what happening to us.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I went in to join in the passport organization, organizing team, but ended up being like, that was the very first thing we ever did. Like I didn't know anything at all, people telling me "go make a banner," I'm like Okay, "Go pass out flyers.", Sure. Like needing a speaker, like, okay, like, everything was just like telling me what to do. And I just did it. No one knew we were behind the scene. But they were actually because we organized, I organized so many-- like a few marches that indivisible network captured me and recruited me in but after that like, I had been-- I still not very happy with it. Any way it was a very white space.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

There's a lot of women [Laughed]. So, my issue were never on the front. Like we always talk about inclusive for the API community they were never on the front.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

With my name in the back, that, you know, I felt uncomfortable in a way that it-- there are other things in the community that I cared about, but Indivisible never really focused on local issue. So, I ended up branching out and working more with community groups, like I showed up. I just showed up, like really. Eventually you start stepping in more once more relationship were build then people recognize who I am and be like I just showed up, like I'm there for the community. So, so, so, I feel like right now I'm finding my space, I found my space in a way, the journey of being in activism, being an activist have shipped me to, to where I want to be, which is local issue. Because I believe that these are the building blocks and we have to start in order to make the longer movement change. And then also, I found the courage to speak up more about a API [Asian & Pacific Islander] issue, because we're so blending in, no one ever talks about us. Political system, organization don't even speak about us. We actually have the lowest representation in, in the government. And it's that like, I still try to see it out on how to build more infrastructure out there. But just, but right now, it's a good space to be in in the beginning, right. So, there will be work to be done.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, Thank you. Oh, wow, there's a lot of background noise. Okay. Thank you so much for that. So, you kind of mentioned a few things I would like to follow up on. You mentioned that-- How old were you when you came from Orange County-- When you arrived to Orange County when you immigrated?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I came to United States in 1990 when I was 13 years old.

Yasmeen Obeid

Alright.

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Got it. Can you share with me a little bit about your favorite childhood memories?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, it's an interesting space for folks like me, because I would consider myself to be a generation one and a half because my mom will be the first generation and the younger generation, people born here will be the second generation, and I'm stuck in the middle. And so, my memory would split between the two spaces. So, in Vietnam, I have a memory, multiple of them, and the one of them that I actually wrote about, you know, we love food a lot. I love foods in Vietnam a lot, like we live on food and eat and eat and eat. So, there is this thing, like there is this guy who would just basically go around and holding the two spec and he just walk around neighborhood and click like, click like, click. When you hear him, you call him come over, and he'll-- you order whatever you want, and he run off somewhere and he bring back a bowl of soup that you ordered. So, we will have like egg noodle soup, and then he was like, you bring and then you eat, and then he come back later on, he'll pick it up and he run off. And you can hear that every other night. And then one day I went to school and you know, there is a big, giant crowd, of people just hanging out. I mean, like, clustered into this area, whatever it is. So, I weave my way into the middle and I saw that men die [Zoom sound off]. I didn't really connect to him, because I never really, you know, I didn't connect that to anything at all. But that night, that clicking sound, were no longer there. Like, I thought it went away, it was saddening a little bit because I never really personally connected with him. But he was part of the community like, you hear that sound, we recognize him, but he never part of it. And so, you it startled me growing up to realizing that because my world was very sheltered, like my mom makes sure that that people always taking care of me, around me. And I've never have to worry about anything at all. And I go to private lesson and I do all the stuff. And so like, so that was my way to connect with my community. Regardless I knew it or not. I remember a lot of other childhood memory, including like growing up with my grandmother mostly. Like how we have three generation dogs of the same line. It's really hilarious. Like, you know my grandmother brought me a puppy she saw black with black bushy tail--

Yasmeen Obeid

Awe [Expressed warmth].

Jean-Huy Tran

We named her Tanya because my mom and my dad went to a Russian play during the communist time and she--, they hated the play, but they couldn't leave, because the communist won't, the communist police won't let them leave. So, the main character named Tanya since (?) they went home, they were so mad, they names the dog Tanya.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

And this Tanya dog had a whole bunch of puppy, all of them die, except for one.

Yasmeen Obeid

Awe [Expressed sadness].

Jean-Huy Tran

Another female just look exactly like the mom, but no one no, and we ended up named her also Tanya. The same thing happened with her generation she gave a bun--, give birth to a bunch of puppies and only one alive and with a male this time and look exactly like his mom. So, he ended up having the name Tanya as well.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed, expressed surprise].

Jean-Huy Tran

Tanya is the name for all of our dogs. He has-- he is so loyal, he had only one girlfriend, which it's only like white puppy dog and they hang out together all the time. Like even during the new year festival when a lot of firecrackers play, you know, noises (?) scare. He would go over to her house and the two of them will hide underneath a bed. Like our neighbors do not know like oh it's our dog, they married to each other, we get it. So that was a lot of memory. I have more memory in Vietnam then I have it here. I have some with my younger brother because, you know, we grew up a part. He came here when I was a baby, when he was 18 years old [18 months old]. I stayed back and so we didn't really connect with each other until our teenage. But a year later he basically joined a Vietnamese gang and run off, doing his own thing. I lived my own life, in just different way. But we have some very good memory with each other because, you know, he introduced me to American cultures. We-- I remember we used to make food late at night. And then he would make some weird stuff. Like we dare each other to eat it. It was like, no, you eat it. I don't know what have you made --

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- "You eat it", "I don't think, no," "I triple dare you", it was like, "fine" and we would both eat together, you know? Just fun thing like that. Or we would rent the entire series of police academy and watch from the beginning until the end, because we complain to each other. Like, we don't remember anything, so we'll just watch the entire thing. We like silly movies like that. So yeah, I mean, despite that we knew each other barely, but I have a memory with him.

Yasmeen Obeid

Thank you. That's beautiful [Zoom interruption]. I hear myself very loudly, I'm not sure why. But, you kind of mentioned a little bit about your brother; how has growing up apart within your family or being part of a transnational family been? Or feel? How did that make you feel growing up and how did it shape who you are today?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, you know, when I was in Vietnam, I knew there another whole set of families on the other side of the ocean. We look forward to you know, letters and gifts and sometime they will send it like chocolates, which I don't really eat chocolate, I don't know why like-- we still look forward to, you did not like, "Oh, I have a brother over there," I had seen a picture and remember it. And it's like a yearning in a way like when I went over there I yearned to be over here in America.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

So, like when we finally got it's-- on our-- immigration paperwork got accepted, right, you know. It is like a whole process over 10 years. I was so excited but still nervous about when we were leaving. And when the plane took off, it was like be eagerly before we left and we went over here but then when we're over here, I look back and right-- I miss being in Vietnam because America not always the same thing like they're still food dishes that I still can't replicate the same in Vietnam. I still miss that. And I still remember like how to stand in line to get the eggs rolls because he's so popular they can only come out one hour today before they sold out everything, like thing like that, I missed a lot. But we adapt, being-- you know, we adapt and we knew that there this whole new private entity that that have to reserve, but does so-- I want to share the story about my name, too. Right.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yes, of course.

Jean-Huy Tran

So, Because it's sort of like a piece of resistance for me. So, I'm knowing that being a US citizen was really important for every single one of us because we recognize that is, you know, a right to keep-- to stay safe here in America. So as soon as I turned 18, I applied for US citizenship. And they were asking me the guy, the interviewer asked me three questions. Now, I remember distinctively about them because one of the question was named five VPs [Vice presidents] and like, dude I literally check take history in high school, of course, I know this. And after three questions, he passed me with a blind color and then the first thing immediately he asked me, "so what American name did you want?"

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed disappointment and shock].

Jean-Huy Tran

I say wait, what? Is this the autom- automated question that you ask everyone now? Like my people have to change our name [Expressed shock and anger]. I recognize my name, has a beautiful meaning in Vietnam, meaning royal right, we mean royal. and so, I was like shocked I'm like no I don't want to marry the name I love my name. I want to change it, but you know why it have to be American name, why cannot be a French name? And I created Jean-Huy literally on the fly and it stuck with me for the rest of my life. But, I always-- every time I talk about my name, I remember that moment so distinctively in this small room with this guy looking white and just like trying to change my identity.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- And later on, people talked to me all the time about how articulate I am which is another form of condescending but then at the same time they like-- you know I recognize you were trying to compliment me but at the same time like "you're so articulate"

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

Okay, but then of course you know there is always a "but," so the but would you like: "Why don't you change Your accent? That way I can understand, so that way people can understand me better. So, I go, hmm [Expressed hesitation]. I had a choice. My cousin who grew up here in US, since she was a child, she's, she speaks English perfectly and she offered to help and I had a choice to make. I could

either get rid of my accent, or choose to keep it and in the end, I chose to keep it because I follow that it's part of me. I want people to hear it and say, he is Vietnamese. It's so clear and loud, and I don't have to deny it, I don't have anything to be ashamed about who I am. I love my language a lot. I think in a way even though I come to United State late and there, you know, have been moment I wonder what that would do. How that would affect my choice in professional career. Because, you know, when when I came to United [US] 13 at the age of 13, I had to learn English.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

And then I have to figure it out, like, you know how to navigate through these things. And so, I already losing time, compared to other people who don't have to worry about that. But then in the end, I'm like, no, it's, it's really part of me. I, I'm glad that I have the Vietnamese language skills because it retained my culture. So, in a way, how does that affect-- all of this affect me is that, you know, I exist in this space, where I don't really belong in America, but yet I am here, I belong to. Some of my activist's friend call this, this (?) or something that. I can, I can send you a correction on that. But it's like you're sitting here, but in your heart, you're in somewhere else.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

Like you're here but you're not here. Neither there or there. And in a way, you know, I'm in this space right now, I am in this moment where I can choose to be comfortable with it, and choose how to use it to the best of my ability. So, it allowed me to connect my older generation, my elders with the younger generation. Because my mom would often tell me all these stories about our, our family history that my younger cousin don't even know, where my niece nephew don't know. And sometime I would sit at dinner table, and be like, you guys know. Our grandfather was, blah, blah, blah, you know? And they're like, really? Yeah, we were over there like, you know, like my mom tell me all these things. You guys didn't understand it, but now I do. So, in a way, I became the historian of the family. I'm glad to have that, right. That ability.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, that's absolutely beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing that. You mentioned a few things that I wanted to kind of ask about. A few times you said, kind of stuck in the middle, between two spaces and then now you elaborated and said a little bit that you existed in this space but your heart is somewhere else can you share with me how that feeling is with you like how do you navigate your day to day life with that feeling rooted kind of in you.

Jean-Huy Tran

So, the feeling is so complicated right like I, like my life is here, obviously. A lot of my work is here but then you know the root called out for being Vietnamese and what that mean like my homeland and then just allow me to be-- navigate through this conversation around war. Like I grew up in the aftermath of wars though, despite my mom sheltering me a lot, but I still recognize. I still remember a lot of things that, you know, like families that didn't have a lot to eat. And in fact, like, Vietnam literally climbed out of the economic depression after 30 years. The effect of war have tremendous effect on the people on the land that it happened on. Something that I don't think Americans really understood it. So, like even in my work, I struggle with it a little bit because I you know, the whole conversation around like how we need to respect our veterans, American veterans who helped to "protect" the country. The what country

really, they protecting? US country. And I am-- oftentimes standing in front of some of my veteran friend and be like, well, I respect you, I appreciate your work, but at the same time as the only token, I can't really tell them that your work has devastated my country. War is all about political game between elected officials between, between the country leaders, but the devastating effects is actually locked on the people. You know, my family, myself is one of the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese people that have to deal with the effect that we left our country, we tear it apart. I can never ask about what would it be like if I grew up with my younger brother? I mean, you have-- we, we knew of our existence but we didn't really know each other and we know each other for one year, who would want that? Like, you know, you-- I look at it, I look back all the time, always wondering what would it have been, what would have been different. So, so it's a painful space to talk about. It is also like, you know, how to beat out like, to communicate with people as well. And even like, you know, political world when we talk with, within the Viet, Vietnamese community, like, you know. Some time I listen to my elder talking about they assist in this as well, and which, you know, I tried to tell them like something about Vietnam, but then they hate-- It's strange because my people they hate the communists in Vietnam, but they love the country. And then they love the Viet-- US, but they recognize that there are racism and it's kind of weird too, and they don't talk about it. So there a lot of these mixed feelings. I'm not sure how to resolve it. To be honest, I really don't. I think that feeling of being in loading, in this, in this space will always going to be there until my generation go away. Because then the younger generation will, you know, will be more at ease because they born and raised here. I don't have any answer to it.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, thank you so much for that [Zoom background noise]. I'm sorry. But thank you so much for that. That was beautifully put and that feeling is real [Takes a deep breath]. Can you share a little bit with me about kind of learning the English language you shared that you came at the age of 13? You didn't know any English? What was it like to learn English upon coming here?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I actually have a funny story to share with you. I literally knew maybe three short sentences when I first came to the United States. Like "Hi", "How are you?" "Thank you". That was it. One day my cousin woke me up and said go get dressed, you're going to school today. Wait? Huh? Okay, so she drove me to the school and she didn't even walk me in, she was like literally telling me to get out of the car and go to school and find my schedule and go to class. I'm like, all right. So, I was wandering around at school and I see every single wall have the flyer with alphabetical, you know of the alphabet and then right next to it is only numbers. But what happened was there disruption on the chain of alphabet, with the two popular Vietnamese last names Tran and Nguyen same with mine, so I'm like, mhmhm, maybe I need to go to that number.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled]. [Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I found that number, I went to the room and I got my schedule. And look at it was like super insane. So, invaded, like they talking AP chemistry and biology and chemistry and all this stuff I'm like, I don't know what it-- what did I do my test quiz. They thought I was so smart. So, I went to the first class I sat there, I was so lost and did not know what, what the heck is going on. Then when they called my name, I went up my turn, you know, because I saw what other people do. And the teacher would sign off on your schedule. And then there was this Vietnamese guy that's standing there, and he was like saying to me, in Vietnamese, it's just like, "I think you have my schedule."

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

What? How do you know, like they're the first person speak Vietnamese to me? And we both looked at it. Turned out he had the exact name as I do, even my middle name! I was like--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

Oh, so how do you tell? He's like "you see over here. It says 12, yours eight}. the, you know, the eighth grade. So, he gave me mine and I'm like I looked at it, it's like ESL [English as a second language]. Don't try to stop them like, oh.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughing]

Jean-Huy Tran

I'm not that smart, yet [Expressed amusement]. So, learning English was, was interesting, but like I said the will survival was very strong for me because I like, oh my God, I need to survive, like how do I do this? So, I submerged myself by watching a lot of TVs. Also, listening to Viet-- I'm sorry, listening to American music. I still remember the first album I bought, it was Whitney Houston [Laughed]--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- Album. "I'm your Baby Tonight", that's the album. And the first single was "Right Here, Right Now" Lisa Jones. I remember all of that, right. And so, I submerged, and I remember reading one book a day. And I went to the library, I checked out some book every single week. In the beginning there was like, no, you can only check out three books at a time. But then they see me coming in and out of the library so much, they were like okay, fine, seven books is fine. You always bring them back anyway. So, I'm like, yes, thank you. But on that note, so the accent though so there another story. I was in band and you know, Music has always been my language as I raised. When I was young, I learned piano. So, coming to the United States was like, with limited English skill. So, you know have, having another outlet which is like music was my language in a way like I speak music.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

But I was in band and then I remember trying to talk to some of my bandmates. And there was one where we were talking about what the communists, and I didn't pronounce it as communist, I pronounced it as communism. And the guy was basically making fun of me, and I was so you know, I turned red. I didn't know what to say. I went home and I was so angry at it too. I came back the next day, I was like, well screw You--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- If you want to help me to learn English, then you should try to help me and correct me instead of making fun of me. And then because I spoke up, you know, he backed down, he realized that and then we became better friends afterwards. So, English have been a weird journey because there are things that's really weird to me, because I don't really entirely get it because, you know, the way I learned English was, you give me an apple and you say, "that's an apple" and I go, "apple". I don't translate in my head. This also explain why I can speak English really quickly because I don't really translate in my head. But if I need to speak Vietnamese, I switch my brain off, and I start speaking only in Vietnamese, and I think in Vietnamese. But my partner say when I dream, I speak both.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed and expressed shock], Interesting!

Jean-Huy Tran

I know like, what! I speak both in my dreams, and my sister confirm this. So, I will take their word for it, I do talk in my sleep. And yeah, so I don't think about translation at all. And, and, and so it's yeah, it's happened. And so, because of that I don't really think about a lot of things. So, like for instance for the longest time when I watch "All My Children," no "Married with Children." I thought to myself, I have a lot of the ahhaa moments so like I thought to myself, roadkill was an actual animal--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled to express surprise].

Jean-Huy Tran

Because Kelly and Al Bundy keep talking about people eating roadkill's. So, I thought like, you know, people eat beef, people eat pork, people eat roadkill's, so there got to be an animal called roadkill's, all of this time. And then, in fact, only maybe about five years ago, all of a sudden it downed to my head and I was like, "oh, anything can be roadkill's."

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

It's because someone was talking about you know, a pedestrian crossing the street, like don't be a roadkill, so I was like "Oh, you mean human can be a roadkill, too" And I was like, "Oh, it's something that got killed on the road." I get it now. I have a lot of those moments. Like, all the time, I will be standing in the middle of the road I'll be like, ahaaa [laughed].

Yasmeen Obeid

[laughed] those are the best moments. [laughed]

Jean-Huy Tran

Speaking English because that's funny [Laughed].

Yasmeen Obeid

[laughed] That's beautiful, thank you for sharing that. Can you describe the house you grew up in?

Jean-Huy Tran

Wow. It's actually a vivid memory, so the house I lived in. It's literally we connected because I was raised in Saigon which is in the first district so it's super urban density and like, all of our walls

connected with each other. The roof is actually made out of this metal painting and so like when the cat running up there, we can hear everything. It's really loud noises. I remember my house with completely tiles that we have to clean. Yeah. And the front door was open like this [Gestured with his hands] and slide out, in and out and we've-- which have to use a big giant chain and lock it from the inside. And then right in the front, we have, we two two like metal desk that my mom would type filling out form for people so we do typing's, I learnt how to type really quickly. The lower floor is-- have two bed, one bed on the left side would be where I would sleep. Eventually, it would-- my cousin sleep on top of me. And then of the other large bed, with a straw caught would be my grandmother Sleep with the main sleeping. And then behind that we have the stairs going up and it kinda like we have a half stair half, half, flour on the second floor that with my mom about sleep and then on the back would be-- I will say my aunt in a way because she actually a friend to my mom but we're so close so she would sleep there. And then on the, on the ground floor in the back would be the kitchen and the bathroom. I remember very distinctly. And in the front, we have this cement, long cement floor ground at the sidewalk where when it rains, I would come down and would slide on it, you know because it was so smooth. That's a tree on the right corner. You know, interestingly, every so often, I would Google the address and it's 203 (?). I remember my address. I google it and when the Picture come up, it's nothing what I remember in my memory. It's like it playing trickle me in some way. I knew that my cousin at some point-- He's the one that we left the house with, at some point turned our old house into a hotel, like a more like a hostel because the first district in Saigon now become the backpacker district, that what I'm told, I haven't been back for over 30 years. And so-- but despite that, like there's so much changes around, I could barely recognize my house despite having such a sharp memory of the way that we live. And everything. You know it's so funny because like, where the stair is, like mid part of the house, we used to have, like a little wooden cabinet where we store stuff in there like neither food and bowl and stuff and everything. I even remember right next to it is a hole in the wall that as a kid, I knew that hole in the wall, and I hid stuff in there all the time. And my mom would never knew, no one ever know, because I hid stuff in there. I remember the hole. So, I don't know, it's like if I come back and knock on the door when-- can I see it, like is the hole still there, you know?? It... yeah. Because when-- I sheltered I was me, you know, at home a lot. I spent a lot of time on the second floor, overlooking through (?) we call it a window, but it's actually like, like a door space. And we took the only build alleged to kind of block me from falling over. And so, I could see everything in the book, the neighborhood behind me. I would usually hang around there on the second floor looking out, doing a lot of coloring, painting, drawing, reading and, you know, just dreaming, daydreaming in there so I-- being alone in the house a lot I need-- I remember so much about how we live.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, that's beautiful. And how many siblings Did you say you had?

Jean-Huy Tran

My brother and sister. I have one younger brother and one younger sister.

Yasmeen Obeid

Got it.

Jean-Huy Tran

My sister is still living in the Bay Area right now.

Yasmeen Obeid

Okay. Thank you, and on that note, can you kind of, you already started sharing a little bit about your relationship with your brother. Can you share a little more about your relationship with your family overall and siblings and what does home mean to you?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, my family's super close, even if I call them family, but it's actually more like an abandoned family. Because, you know, after [19]75 we'd have a lot like a few houses in Saigon. But after the [19]75, when the communists took over, they took most of our house, houses and left us with only that one house that I grew up with. on time allow. And so, my aunt ended up moving in living with us, along with her three daughters and everything, and so I grew up very close to my cousin. And it's a tight knit family, but then when we migrated into US and everything I, you know, I knew, eventually I come over here. I'm still close with them mostly. Yeah, but it's really weird because, you know, I have differences with my cousin in a way because I'm over here and very political, and they're not as I'm like, over here. But when we get close to when we get together, it's like, family, above everything. Like every single person I had already know, like, don't even talk about my family. Like, don't just don't. I can complain about them all the time I want to, If I want to, but--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

But no, and I'll do anything, go over beyond to, you know, to be part of family. Like Shay is a great partner because, you know, they love him they consider him part of family and like, they'll care for him. But at the same time, like he really adopt my family within himself. So, like every single holiday he paid for the entire family. And is, you know, part of that, when we get together we finish, with finish our sentences, like, all the time-- Hmmm [Expressed affirmation]. -- When we play a game, we have to to physically lift each other up, because if white people come and play a game with us, they lose. Yeah, for sure they lose, because we look at each other we're like, "yeah, we talk in code." We know exactly what we're about to say, just by looking at each other. That's really scary.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed]

Jean-Huy Tran

So, like my cousin in law when he come from other part of Vietnam, other part of the United States. For during Thanksgiving, we have to split ourselves off. In order for them not to feel cheated [Laughed].

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

[Laughed] I get along with my nieces and nephews a lot because I practically took care of them, all of them. There hasn't been a kid in the family that I didn't change diaper. Now, they all grew up in college age and everything was like, you know, still, but I treat them with my ego. I took care of them. I taught them a lot of stuff. So even today, they remember all of it, they respect me a lot. And they know that they can always come to me and talk with me as an equal person because I don't ever treat them any less despite they're younger than me, and even today, yeah, this, we have a separate thread right now on social media and it drives me crazy. Sometimes because the conversation moves so fast with us that if I don't keep up now, I come back there will be like 80 messages like

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed]

Jean-Huy Tran

Oh, okay. So y'all decided we can go to Magic Mountain, without me. I'm going it's good. We do that all the time. So, I love them.

Yasmeen Obeid

(?).

Jean-Huy Tran

I'm pretty close to the rest of my family, yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

That's beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing. And I definitely feel when it comes to the messages in family [Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

Oh [Laughed]

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed] You kind of already shared a little bit from this, you talked about the egg noodle soup that you remember but any other special foods that you remember from your childhood?

Jean-Huy Tran

Food, I remembered the Udon, Vietnamese Udon right. So, what they do is they have the thigh of the pork, the pork's thigh. The guy cooks so soft and then he slice the thinnest slice ever--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed confirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- And he put in the bowl of soup, it is so good. But all of our street food, they-- these people recipes have been perfected from generation to generation. And they will come out in the middle street, you know at that corner that their grandparents been doing the business for years, and they come there the same thing with their, you know, carry basket, whatever that is. They walk down and they serve you food and they usually sold out within an hour and a half and then gone and you're like Oh, the next day you have to come out again. I missed that a lot. I missed the, I missed the midnight food, like at the market. We have there and then you just go and-- in the middle of the night, like a bunch of them just right there lit up with their own light and just like, street food. So, they're funny stories. My mom and I had nicknames for some of the vendors. So, there's one lady she Phu, sooooo good, oh my god [Expressed joy]--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- Her restaurant is so dirty. Like, they're so busy, they had no time to clean. So, when we see people spilled stuff on the table, they just swift it down to this-- on the floor. We were stepping over it, it was just like disgusting right. But her Phu is so good [Expressed gratitude], so we call her the dirty Phu. [Laughed]. And opposing to her, about a couple block there is a Chinese guy, he-- Chinese-Vietnamese, and he would have his cart on metal only equipment, metal is shiny and everything. He makes the most beautiful Egg noodle soup ever.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

And so, we call him the, the clean noodle guy [Laughed]. The dirty Phu, the clean Egg noodle. It's like I missed Banh Cuon a lot, so they have this like thin wrapping, kind of wrapping paper, but it's soft, made by rice flour--

Yasmeen Obeid

What is it called?

Jean-Huy Tran

Banh Cuon. So, it's spelled B-A-N-H and then the second word C-U-O-N, and they make fresh, and she literally a block away from where I live. I remember that, I remember at the corner street, cross the street and then half of block, there she is. And and it's right at the corner, where you know, we would go to the Temple, they have the temple right around the corner there. And she made it fresh every, single day. I mean she literally pours right there in front of you and you get it and you eat it, it's so amazing. I have to say, no matter how good Vietnamese food you think it is good, it's not even close to Vietnam.

Yasmeen Obeid

Wow, we're missing out [Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

Totally, totally.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed]

Jean-Huy Tran

Like, these people. I mean, the recipe perfected for years and years and years. Whereas you go to the restaurant here, like, have you ever often noticed like, you open the menu there is like 3 homemade item? Who could make that?

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

So of course, the shop never that good or anything about, like, you know, um, and a lot of those folks they don't really, you know, lack of ingredient to begin with you, too. Right. I think that's a part of the problem. But Oh my God, I can't wait to go back to Vietnam [Expressed longing].

Yasmeen Obeid

Ahh [Expressed joy].

Jean-Huy Tran

I'm hoping to go next year.

Yasmeen Obeid

Really?

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Can you share with me a little about why it's been 30 years since, like, 30 Plus, it's gonna be since you go back?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, they're life, life choices. You know, and obviously trying to survive in America. Like, I was basically put myself through college, like study in high school and went to college and study, and then afterward tried to, you know, try to live like, in LA [Los Angeles] it's not-- it wasn't cheap. And then there for quite a bit, I would talk to my mom all the time about like, you want to go back? My mom said "no, I don't want to go back."

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

"Why? like just go back with me one time" She like "I already left it. I'm not sure if I want to go." And so like, keep convincing her. Put I'm at the point where I'm like, Okay, fine. I'll just go. You know, I'll eat all kind of thumbnail, take photos, so you'll remember it. But I really do want to wish my mom to come, but she hasn't. And then, I think because of all the activism work right now, it's also make me question to start really, thoroughly thinking about my root. About, you know, who I am. I think that I remember, before, it was just memory, you know. And think, Oh, it was-- you know, that how I usually, the kind of food I used to eat, it was a memory, but I just want to finally reliving it. So, I want to go back. And 30 years is such a long time and it's, it really is a good time to do. And so, and also, you know being involved in activism have been so much work, that I never really take a lot of time for myself. And work too, like I, I always work, I used to work. At one point, I worked two full-time job while doing all the volunteer stuff. And so, I never really like, I don't, I don't think I ever really remember of having an actual vacation because every single vacation I work.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed understanding].

Jean-Huy Tran

I work in (?) all the time. And so, I'm making a conscious commitment to myself that next year, when I go on vacation, I literally am going on a vacation. And what would be the best opportunity to do that is with Vietnam, you know. And (?) I'm hoping that we wouldn't (?) that way [Laughed] I could say, finally I can rest for a little bit, I will be okay because the world is you know, affects. We got rid of the monster so we'll be fine [Laughed] we will be fine. I can-- I will be okay to let my guard down a little bit and enjoy my vacation for once. Yeah [Laughed] that's real. Let's-- Fingers crossed all over [Laughed]. Can you elaborate a little bit about the importance of taking your mom and going back to Vietnam with your mom? I cannot stress how; how close I am to my mom. Like my mom is kind of like the heroin in my life. The first one that started everything and you know, because right after the [19]75 my dad got sent to the coun and to the countries in cam and afterwards, he came back home. He was, you know, we discover he was like also addicted to drugs and thing like that. And I barely knew my dad because by the time he was released, I think-- I only know him of like one to two years in Vietnam, and before we migrated. And so, I grew up mostly with my mom, with my aunt, or my grandmother. And so, I seen the thing that my mom had to do in order to to, to keep the family survive because after the [19]75, no one

knew how to make money, my mom did. She did a lot of business in the black market, you know, keep us alive, keep the family fed. She was with the people, she would actually, you know, one of the people who built a boat to ship people out into the international water. She was part of that, all of that.

Yasmeen Obeid

Wow.

Jean-Huy Tran

And so like, I, I have a strong respect for my mom for the way that she is. But despite with fighting everything when I was teenager, you know, not being religious because we're, we're-- I'm born Catholic. My mom to practice all the time. But my mom, interestingly enough, is very liberal. Despite the religious factors. She goes to church every day and everything. She believes to believe in the right for abortion. She believe in gay marriage. Well, not so much believe in it, but she accept it. She accept me being gay. Like she was-- she the one who outed me and like call me randomly one day when I was in LA and said: "Your cousin was talking smack about you being gay or whatever it is. And I'm so mad so I left the party. Because if I'm your mom, I don't say anything about your life. Who are they to say something about your life?" So, So thing like that. So, I only felt that close connection with my mom that I I really wish she would share that experience with me [Experience of revisiting Vietnam]. I want to share with her to see like how much the world has changed, even though it's communist now still, but there's so much changes from the picture that I saw. Why not? Why not one last time? I want-- I really really want her to go. I don't know maybe I will convince her again. You know, at some point, but I want to share that perspective because growing up with her, being so close to her all the time, even when she went to the park in Vietnam to, to (?) practice, I was hanging out with her, I was riding the bike around the park. One of her friend taught me how to draw. I draw she practice-- she exercise right next to me. We-- you know, so-- And even when we came to America, she was working thrift shop sewing, you know, earn 10 cent per line. And I would hang out with her nighttime because you would be scared, you know, sewing alone in the house so quiet outside the bedroom, you know, and so I would hang out with her. I would sleep right next to her, and if she made a mistake, I would help her undo them. And so there's so much of us together that-- and, and also being the oldest son, so every single thing so he called me up. I talk to her almost every single day. Actually, now more than ever, because we haven't seen each other through the quarantine, we'll talk to each other like at least two, three times a day. She call me for the most randomness thing--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

Like, yes mom [Chuckled]. So, I really, really want her to go to Vietnam with me. Part of me want to take care of her always so, yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, that's beautiful. That's really beautiful, thank you so much for sharing that. You kind of mentioned-- Can you explain or elaborate a little bit more on the migration story of yourself and family? You mentioned that some family members came ahead of time, and then you followed?

Jean-Huy Tran

I'm sorry, can you repeat it?

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, I was saying can you share-- elaborate a little bit more on your migration story. You mentioned how your brother came first, I believe, and then you followed. Can you elaborate a little more on that?

Jean-Huy Tran

Okay. So, after the [19]75 my mom worked in the black, black-market. And one of the few things that she did with basically fill boat, and then people buy a seat on the boat, and then they will go out into the middle of water and wait for the big ship come and pick them up and drop them off on one of the island, you know, outside of Vietnam while on the island and then they can apply for the immigration paperwork. So, we knew that we have to leave the country. And so, my mom would purposely ship one- for every single boat, we ship one or two members over.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

So, it's gradually going and everything and then at the time, they, my mom and my aunt, had a conversation thinking that we need to take one of my mom kids with my aunt coming, coming to United State first would-- because they thought that the paperwork to United parent and child would be a lot quicker. So that was the plan. So initially my aunt would pick me. We tried like about, we tried seven time that this-- there are the story of my mom told me over and over, that we laugh over and over all the time. We tried seven time and every single time my aunt and I either fell asleep in the bush and wake up to see other people being arrested--

Yasmeen Obeid

Oh wow.

Jean-Huy Tran

--that we hid away. Or other time we went out into the Indian national water and sitting in the boat and waited and waited and no ship ever come and we have to come back in. So, seven time unsettling but the last eighth time, the eighth time I got sick, so my aunt ended up grab my younger brother--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- and when and successfully they made it. But, so there are a lot of funny story because my house also in front of the police and so I'm in front of the police department and so you know on the prime my mom, very friendly with everybody, with even elected official because they all about bribery so they all know my mom. And so that's how the black you know-- like the immigration paperwork, if you want to get to where you need to, you have to get the stamp at every single scene, at every single level of government. And so, if they see my mom coming in with the paperwork, boom, done! So, they come and hang out a lot. So, one time would I want one guy hanging out with my mom, the police chief or whatever it is, there I was folding little piece of paper boat and I would pull him, it's like Uncle Uncle, I don't know why people would like to go on the boat, so many mosquito bite you [chuckled.] And my mom face turned purple like what is [Expressed shock], the police chief just kind of laugh at it, it's like you know, oh cute little kid being funny. Did not realize that was on the boat. So, we need time getting the most evil mosquito bite. So, so anyway, go back to the stories like that-- how the family was migrated over here. So first my uncle with my my cousin, and then my aunt was a couple's cousin, and my younger brother, and then so slowly migrated over. So, my younger brother and I we not connected for at least 12 years. Pretty painful there. Yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah [Expressed sadness]. And your sister stayed with you and your mom?

Jean-Huy Tran

My sis...? Yeah, my sister was going here a year after we came, came to the United States. So, my younger sister is 16 years younger than I am.

Yasmeen Obeid

Got it.

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah. So now she live in Bay Area with her fiancé. So, my mom live alone.

Yasmeen Obeid

Awe.

Jean-Huy Tran

I know.

Yasmeen Obeid

Is your mom in the bay area as well?

Jean-Huy Tran

No, no. My mom in Orange County. Yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Oh, still, okay! That makes sense. Thank you! And... that kind of takes me to here and college and all that life. So, you mentioned kind of school and just starting to learn English at the age around 13ish, correct?

Jean-Huy Tran

[Expressed confirmation].

Yasmeen Obeid

And then, you said you met-- you went to UCLA, correct? Can you elaborate? [Both speak at the same time]. Go... no, no, go ahead.

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I applied for three school, UCI [University of California, Irvine], UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] and UC Berkeley [University of California]. I ended up go to UCLA because I want to study psychology and it was the second, their department was the second in the country. I think looking back, I would love to go Berkeley but it's like it was perfect space. So much grassroots, so much social activism. I would be perfect there. Anyway, I went in to UCLA, but even then, I have to say I did not really care for it so much, because you have to work, have to also try to figure out how to-- just get good grades. And, I ended up with psychology because it one of the degree that I didn't really have to study so much. I just come in, read a book, and go and pick a path down like straight A, so easily. So, it's such a privilege space, right. Like, I had the opportunity-- I don't think I really, fully appreciated. I remember I live in the dorm, I was cranky as hell because people were playing golf in the hallway at three o'clock in the morning. I would like stick my head out, "Hello. I have eight o'clock in the morning.

Could you stop?" I was involved in student government. I would be dressing up in condom, standing-- [both laugh]. Like, dressing up in condoms, standing in the student union walkway, handing out condoms to people, it's like stupid stuff like that I would do, I don't mind, I didn't mind. And then I remember, there was a protest to, to support, no to against the repeal of affirmative action. I would join in the protest and all that stuff. But it's nothing compared to like, I didn't really pay attention to the quality of the education. There was other part of me like the part of the being in realize, like, you know, hey, I have to work to make a living, to make sure I can pay my rent and things like that. And then, you know, to eat to do things, because the study was never really part of it, it was like the social aspect was there more. So that's my experience. I make some good friends, we hung out with each other a lot. We figured out how to share notes --

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- Good amount taking the same courses, as much as we could. Yeah, it's like I say, it's simple forgetful, is that sad?

Yasmeen Obeid

No!

Jean-Huy Tran

It's like, it's just collage. You like, I have been really rooted in it so much because that's just a part of the reality calling for, like you have to do these other thing like go to work and all the stuff, but we're not really there, fully there. So, I don't know... I think-- I know the more I talk about it, the more I see like (?) privilege. Other people couldn't even get in, like they could totally use, you know, the opportunity much better than I did. But, for what it's worth, I graduated with two degrees, in Psych, in psychology and sociology. And for a long time, I didn't even know how to respond to it either because I worked in the accounting field. And every single interview I went to, you know prospect; The employer asked me like, "why did you--? Like what you study what you're doing, don't make sense! But today, I will say because my back, because of my educational background, it allowed me to understand people about, like, the psychology behind it and see things in a different perspective; more forgiving, more humane, and it helped to deal with, you know, different kinds of people in my professional life, as well as activism work. Yeah. took me a while to come with that answer. So

Yasmeen Obeid

Thank you. You, you kind of-- you started talking about two things. I'm going to start with one and we'll go to the other event. You mentioned your relationship with Shane, the importance of it. And I believe you, you both have been together for more than 10 years? Yeah, Mike. Yeah. Can you share with me a little more about your relationship, how it started and the significance of it?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I've moved to San Diego because of the relationship. Additionally, my BFF [Best friend forever,] and I decided, you know, she is she decided to start a Vietnamese community newspaper down here. So, I came along to help her because I have a lot of background in accounting. So, we, but it didn't really work out. So anyway, along the way, I met someone and you know, I had the option of being away or move out here for that relationship. So, I move. But after four and a half year of doing nothing, but like Kayaking, biking (?) beautiful thing, and then I discovered he cheated on me. So, I packed up everything move out right away. But Shay interestingly enough actually pursued me for a year on online. And every time I was like, No, I'm looking for a friend. I don't, I don't really go to bars, so like, I

don't really have a lot of friend. I didn't really have a lot of friends then. Every time Shay tried to, like, you know, flirt, I was like, no back off. I only, I only looking for friends. I already have a relationship right now. So, when I found out my ex cheated on me, I moved out. So, I was so mad in a way because for a year, like you know, when you in that weird space of relationship when your partner make you feel unattractive, "like wait, was it me?" Like, "what did I do? Like, did I do something better-- Could I do something better? Like why did you cheat on me?" So, I asked all the questions (?). The spunky part of me go: No, it wasn't me. I have always been the way I am like, I've never had a problem to this day. So why he make me feel that way? I was so mad at it. Then you start pulling up my rolodex timeline. I'm available now, you want to go on a date? So, I ended up book three dates, and Shay with the second one. Until today, I told him all the time, I was like, yeah, you're one of my three dates on that day --

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- But, so I met Shay for the first time in person at a coffee shop. It was you know, the tea date, because I had the lunch date, and the tea date, and the dinner date, right.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled in surprise].

Jean-Huy Tran

So, the tea, the tea day, usually something I would say like something unsure, like, you know, just a phase, and then I can't wait to end it, because I have other commitments. But I went and I saw him, this sweet gentle soul. So, my dating history had always been about, like, you know, are you successful? Are you this and that, do you know what you're doing? that I really don't-- I invest a lot in myself that I didn't really want to spend time with someone who don't know what they want or who they are. So, it turned out, you know, it didn't really work out well. Looking back at my dating history, and I'm like, it didn't work out well. So, I'm going to change the way to approaching everything now. So instead of looking for what is good on paper, I want to look for heart, that was it, heart, but a keyword. So, when I met Shay, I was like, wow, he's really sweet. He's really gentle. This made me what I needed, because obviously concerning fact, I got out of a really rough relationship. Self-confident went low, self-esteem went low. So, I'm like, maybe there's something so we ended up taking a walk through the park in university Height. And the more I talk with him, the more I'm attracted to him so it was like, okay. So that very translated into 11 years of relationship.

Yasmeen Obeid

Wow.

Jean-Huy Tran

We lived with each other for 10 years because the first year we didn't. It's have been, it have been up and down, it's beautiful. He's very important to me because he support everything that I does, I do. He not only on the front end, he never on the front because he's shy and introvert. And so most people, most folks don't realize how much of a support I get from him all the time. I come home, there he is you know, the provide that level of stability for me, I can ground myself into because the work that I do is, is it can be a lot, it can be exhausting, and I need something stable and he provided me that. And it's also reminding me to be kind with people because some time like when I am angry, I could say thing hurtful. And I look at him like why did I say that to him? That hurtful like it's a lot closer to home trying to remind myself to be kinder. So, reflection.

Yasmeen Obeid

And when did you meet you? What year?

Jean-Huy Tran

Oh, my God! I have to do math, 11 years--

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

So 20... [Calculates in their head]

Yasmeen Obeid

20..., 2009?

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah [Laughed] okay.

Yasmeen Obeid

[laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

You know, (?) on Facebook, it remind me that, then I remember it.

Yasmeen Obeid

Facebook saves us [Expressed joy].

Jean-Huy Tran

Memories...

Yasmeen Obeid

That's beautiful. On that note, when did you kind of first come out or when did you first know that you're attracted to men for example, or when you kind of found your sexuality. When did you first find your sexuality? Yeah. [When did you find out you were Queer?]

Jean-Huy Tran

I just think, surprisingly, enough when I was in Vietnam, I was very naive. Like I remember having a birth girlfriend. The way that we did was basically like just rolling bikes together and through the harbor, seeing the sunset and it was you know, just like a group thing outing. I didn't really think much about it, even like when I came here. I never really think about much of sexuality, until at some point I get in high school, I start realizing like a certain attraction, but never act on it either. Like I didn't yeah, I only started exploring my sexuality, like in college, for quite a bit I was like bisexual and then eventually just getting harder to be bisexual. So just like you know go to gay club and that was it. But like I've never really explicitly talked to my family about it. Like I don't really bring the people I date home. Normally, I don't. But at some point, when I like-- and I think maybe that also facilitates the whole part of me want to move away from the family--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- because you know that the freedom that I can live my life and never really have to talk about anything. Because I don't find a need to explain me a lot of what I am or whatever it is. Like I think even when I was in Orange County, if I feel like dyeing my hair, I did. I used to dye my hair like every two three months, like I have different color and I would go back to the school and you know, administration office and get the new Id because, you know, like a memory, a different hair color, that kind of thing. Like I do things and even my mom never questioned me because she always allow me the freedom--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- That confidence in me that she never say anything. Like if I say I want to go take art lessons, she says okay, go take art lessons. So, so, so, yeah, I never have to come out. And I remember one time my cousin asked me he was like, Are you gay? Like, I think I am.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Expressed surprise]

Jean-Huy Tran

And she's like: "I knew that all along, but I just want to ask". I'm like, okay. Like, I never have to come out. And I when-- when I was in college it's like, we just show up, like I show up to the LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer] office, join the club. "Here I am, what is it that you do?" So so, the way that I came out to the rest of my family interesting because my cousin and I moved together to UCLA. She was behind in Four years, so by the time-- so the how we, even though she's four years older than me, we ended up going to UCLA together. So, when we get there, and then there were whispering among my cousin, how like, my cousin Vicki might be lesbian, and I'm gay. And that's when my mom caught the conversation and she got so mad about it. And she called me up, and she would be like, I'm your mom. "I don't say anything. Why are they saying stuff about you?" And that moment, I was like, yeah, mom, I'm gay. She's like, "I figured it out. But I've never you know, I don't make a big deal about it." I'm like, "yeah I don't make a big deal about it either". So, I think it's also a blessing, it's also blessing.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Internet disruption] Oh. Oh no... Jean-Huy [Expressed frustration],

Jean-Huy Tran

[Jean-Huy's voice emerges]

Yasmeen Obeid

Hello, hello?

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah,

Yasmeen Obeid

I can hear you. Okay [Chuckles]. I'm sorry, you cut off for a good--

Jean-Huy Tran

No, I was talking and then your, your, you like froze.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, same [Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I don't know how far that was, but--

Yasmeen Obeid

I think you were mentioning the last thing is how like your mom said it's not a big deal and then you said yeah, it's not a big deal either for me.

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah, so in a way, like I feel very fortunate, very blessed and to have that ability to come out with no drama, because I know a lot of folks do and they ended up getting kicked out of their family. Like I know Shay did that he ended up, have to move from Utah and then all the way to San Francisco to reestablish their life, his life. Like-- and then the other thing is like, the way that I have always been with my mom granted me so much confidence and independent myself that I generally do think that I care and no one in my family can say anything. Like even now, like I said, I'm organizing a protest, people will be like, okay, that's Jean-Huy, he does that.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Chuckled to express relatability].

Jean-Huy Tran

Like, oh, he, he far left, it's okay like that what he do. So, like no one in my family will ever sit there to say anything to me. In, like, telling me not to do something because if I say I'm going to do something, I will do it.

Yasmeen Obeid

That's beautiful. And you kind of started talking a little bit about your work and how like you were doing work that wasn't related to you-- what you were studying. Can you elaborate a little bit on like, what was the first job you got? And how did just your work kind of get you to where you are today?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I, you know, I went on financial aid and everything, but it was never really enough. So, I decided to apply for a part time job at a law firm and get to file this like, this way back when internet barely exploded. We still have AOL. Like AIM chatting with no substance to Facebook. I was sitting there chatting with my friend, typing really quick. And so, somebody walked by and they go, "you type really quick, you want to be on this project?" and I am like okay. So, they, we go over all the boxes, and I was supposed to go through all the records and creating the spreadsheet for them.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

And I noticed that there was all the, pretty much 200 check, written among four different people that was it. They go around around circles, so I talk to them, they go, Oh, this is check kiting case, which means that people writing checks to each other all the time, and it can be \$1 amount gets smaller, and we don't know where the money goes. So, I was like, okay, so I went back and did it. And eventually we found the money to recover. Three, \$3.5 million in a project.

Yasmeen Obeid

Wow [Expressed shock]

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah. So that's how I realized that hey, I may have something to do with accounting. So, the rest of my career in LA basically worked with law firms. I work with offering for, for-- like during most of the time, and then I ended up also do accounting so I do a lot of audit, do a lot of studying of the book. And then some clients would like what I seen how my work product, they ended up hiring me full time for quite a period. And surprisingly like I can do the entire thing without a degree. But my experience is like above the GPA--

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah.

Jean-Huy Tran

Like I do a lot of audit all the time and taxing all the time. But at the same time, they do like, you know, setting up the book, focusing on their daily tasks and everything. So that's how I got into it. And so, by the time I graduated from college, I didn't feel the need there because my resume was already growing, and then I ended up working. I mean, looking back I was-- I should have gone to graduate school, my life would have been different. But at the time the need to pay rent was much more real. I ended up keep on working. So, it worked out, it worked out the way it is now because where I'm standing I have at least 20 years in other experience and accounting field. So, I, you know, my resume is strong enough that would allow me to find job quite easily if I needed to. So, yeah, so it didn't really connected anything at all to psychology, sociology [Laughed]. Thank you (?), UCLA. I don't know I paid all that money.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed] And are you currently working in economics as well?

Jean-Huy Tran

I am. You know, two years ago, I actually worked two full time jobs doing accounting one here in Mission Valley and the other one in Santee.

Yasmeen Obeid

Wow.

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah, I left one (?) because this one gave me raise, so I ended up working here, but I'm thinking about having a career change soon. Because, I don't particularly getting along with my current boss so much. Because the guy is like a typical white male, Midwest, like to tell people what to do--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- And accepts no other response. So, I was like, okay, so I do what I can do. But I would love it. If I could switch my career to do organizing and get paid for it.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah.

Jean-Huy Tran

Yeah.

Yasmeen Obeid

Awesome. Thank you so much. And you, you did share with me how you got involved in like community organizing, or organizing in general here in San Diego. But can you also tell me a little bit about some of the instances for example in college that you went to protest or you recognized the importance of speaking out against certain injustices or injustices, in general.

Jean-Huy Tran

So being in LA, being in a privilege space (?), I mean UCLA. The only issues that I felt affected by me, affected me then where the LG, LGBTQA issue, which was the gay marriage at the time. This is a big battle during the 90s [1990s]. I even gone up to Sacramento, a few time, like speaking with our elected official. I got to speak with Barbara Boxer, and I remember forever. I'm like, this is really powerful, like your elected official having conversation with you. I think every single elected official should do that more because it's like the most inspiring thing ever because, folks, think of our elected official are this God on a pedestal, I cannot approach them. For the first time like when I approached them, you like that your people, talk to them that was it. So, it's very empowering moment. And I remember marching up there at some point, Parker Joey gonna show up and we marched around the block that was says like, like, it said, like I'd go all the way up here to do this. [Laughed].

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

And then you know, the battle was super long and we remember like, Davis, governor Davis at the time came back to a lot of us and said he couldn't really support the gay marriage--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed disappointment].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- And that's how it-- he was more comfortable with the word, domestic partnership. And so, you know, the community took it, not what it is. To be honest, like, despite all of that work within the gay community, I never really feel belong to the gay community. Because there was a lot of racism again, gay Asian, specifically, like during that time on social media, on the pickup in the bar thing like that, most folks would, a lot of gay white male, casually said like reference, like how can you argue with somebody in reference so it would be like, Okay.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

--And I was showed up to a lot of party and there would be like Abercrombie and Fitch catalog in their coffee shop and I'm like, that would never be me. This short little guy would never have six pack and all of that stuff over there. Like (?), I didn't really feel belong. I think that maybe that reason why like my activism back then was shorten. And then I focus more on ESP [Education Support Professionals] stuff like you know, school, try to increase more education stuff and education issue around that area. But

when I explode it into the scene here in San Diego 2017 (?) right after the election, so indivisible and then explain how I, you know, outreached into the community because this also another whitespace. What is with all the whitespaces? [Laughed].

Yasmeen Obeid

[Laughed].

Jean-Huy Tran

Who is wanted in there, it's like no one actually belongs.

Yasmeen Obeid

[Exhales].

Jean-Huy Tran

I remember doing the election work walking for Monica Montgomery and there was a call to help to walk-- to get to the Vietnamese vote.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed Affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- Because I speak Vietnamese fluently. I even made a little flyer Vietnamese for her, I printed out and I do my own walk. And then I realized that there are a lot of Asian community folks who live in poor neighborhoods. We're not rich. We're not what people were saying about us, how we not model minority and all of this stuff. So, I start questioning a lot of these things for two and a half year and I look at the Democratic Party, I look at it a lot of government elected official, the level of representation was so low for the Asian community. And I start questioning a lot of things like why not more people running. And I realized that a lot of my friends who are you know, API activists, and community organizer, pretty much work for another organization that don't really pay attention to the API calls. (?) right, like ACLU (?), CBI (?). Do they never really talk about the Asian issue in front of them, but they talk about other issue as well. So, I'm start questioning a lot of these things and I'm like, Oh, so, how do we, you know, how, how can I have the conversation? Try to do better around it? Instead of (?) amount right now is like trying to focus more on on those area, how to build more power structures for the Asian American community.

Yasmeen Obeid

That's beautiful. And are you doing that through a specific organization or making your own?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I-- both--

Yasmeen Obeid

Okay

Jean-Huy Tran

-- So, number one was I'm leading a group Viet Vote to-- which try to increase the voter turnout within the Vietnamese community. You know, and then there, for a bit, I was the president for the API [Asian Pacific Islander] democratic club. But that is so tiny so I, I decided to step off from it because I felt like the political structures don't really speak to my community. And they don't really invest in it. That's highlighted when we have Asian American candidates running for office, there's no support for it. So,

you know, it's not, it's not to say that, it's also to explain the lack of representation as well. But, I am now connected to a larger API community coalition, because we're working on, we're working together to address the issues of the rising incidence of racism, the anti-Asian racism during the COVID time. So, and then, personally, what I've been doing in like, I do a lot of one on one communication meeting with API folks. Like if I see someone on social media with progressive values, I connect with them online. I will talk to them and I will set up mean and build one-on-one relationship. So, so it's both right, because this is a work of movement building building. So, like, I would go do my own, but at the same time when I'm needed to, I have to go back to the group, and we'll figure out what agenda I can move forward with, and supplement with the relationship I build and draw people in, and recruit the people into the work that needs to be done.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. And how do you feel like-- Actually before my next question, do you have five minutes after two, or would we have to end by two?

Jean-Huy Tran

No, no. I'm fine.

Yasmeen Obeid

Okay, thank you.

Jean-Huy Tran

I don't have anything all throughout the afternoon.

Yasmeen Obeid

Perfect, and I guess one question is, like, what fuels you and allows you to continue this work and also how do you stay truthful and rooted in community?

Jean-Huy Tran

Right, so based on what I share with you, I'm extremely privileged to have a job, stable job, well-paid job. I work at home, they allow my schedule extremely flexible to allow me to go do a lot of different basis. I had the opportunity to go to college, which I didn't really appreciate [Laughed] right, but it's there, it still provide me opportunity along the way. So, every day I wake up, I always wondering what can I do more for the community? Because I walk those streets, right? So, I shared with you earlier about how you know, when I first came to San Diego, I seen San Diego is beautiful space in the eyes of the tourists. Not necessarily the way that the people really live. But when you walk into this neighborhood like City Height or South East, you see really this is how the people live. It's not the beautiful beaches with sand, but it beautiful to me because I connect with them right like you know how often if I walk on the street with my co-canvasser and I see oh (?) herbs. No, that would be a Vietnamese house, let me talk with them. This my people, I got it, I want to talk with them, right. So those ground, even though the broken sidewalk is beautiful to me it's raw, this beauty is raw, and this is what I wanted to do, this is what I want to connect with. And, but at the same time, like when I walked away I couldn't help but feeling sad because some of the door I knocked on, the people live packed, like sardines, you know, like like five people live in a one bedroom, house or apartment. Is this just a calling, that calling like how can I do more for my people? And when I go home, I go to my apartment in North Park, you know, have a nice space, it's not, it's not like super fancy. My building is old. My landlord doesn't fix anything. Things are falling apart here. But it's still better than a lot of-- from what I see from other people that I knock the door on. So, so compared to them, I have privilege and how do I share the privilege so I take this privilege and I go and do more things for them. So that what drives me every single day. You already probably know, like, the work that I do, and I do this all the time. I never--

I'm taking a back and say, Oh, you know, question like anything, I just do them because I, I feel like there are a lot of oppression and a lot of things that people don't talk about. They don't want to acknowledge, basically consider the people in my circle, in my spaces, they know like individual faces. No one ever question these things, they can never seen. Like a talk to people online, telling me to go ahead and vote for Biden right now. And it bothered, bothered me so much. And I'm like, but I walked into neighborhoods and people cared about putting food on the table. They don't care about which candidate it is that they have to vote for because your politics suck, you're not speaking to the poor people and you want their vote, so how do you do better? But as soon as I make that comment, I realize that those folks never gonna go to them, those neighborhoods, the poor neighborhood to walk. To see what really like because they only walk in their white suburban neighborhood and see those people talk about the privilege of voting. I have to say privilege, because they have the privilege of voting, they don't have to worry about working so much. They can sit at home and talk about voting all day long, because that's a privilege. The other people don't have the privilege, they have to worry about paying rent on May 1. So how do I reconcile all of this is that, you know, I'm trying to use my privilege, go into these spaces, educated white folks and say, "You're not speaking to the mass." Break it down a little bit, break it-- down your privilege and go and figure out how do you over here visit, how we're going to move the movement a lot better. So, while I'm talking about Building the movement of how-to better economics invested the folks who suffered through those, but they're also another layer of race, racial justice, injustice as well. There is the black folks, my allies I work with, and Muslim folks I work with. And then there now there's another layer as well, which is, you know, the Asian community were lots of privilege, I mean, with more privileged than other other spaces, but we're still getting there, we are still minority. The white folk constantly blended it in, that now, Asian American become a wedge between other minority because, technically speaking, we have a lot of privilege, so we can't really say anything, but at the same time we stuck in here that we never, we can't separate away from the white people. And so, you know, it's up to the people like me, my-- activists like me to speak up more and say, No, no, no. You can't include into the whitespace, because we are not white. No matter how much white wash you want to do, we're not white. They only give the Asian American enough of the pay, but never more, never on-- you know where we deserve. I have, in my professional career, I have always dealt with not hiring based on my experience.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

I've never been able to ask for a raise for the money that I work. Like in my current job, I ask for a raise after five years and they come back to me and say "the business is slow. We cannot give you the rate that you want." But they go around and they find the money and hire someone else for \$50,000, instead of giving me a raise.

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

They only-- they will only give you, me, the Asian American enough, but never the full amount that we deserve. So, so how do I do this work delicately? Right. So, in some spaces, obviously, every single space that I go in, it has to be about anti-black racism that we have to deal with because that's the most, the most severe level of racism that we've seen subjected to any human kind. When we undo that, and we'd be able to undo this, and we'd be able to undo all of this. So, I'm fighting, even though some time, I think about API issue, but most of the time I work on anti-Black issue, because I figured

that if we successfully dismantle the white supremacists and the racism in the most severe level than all of us, we're on the path to freedom.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah!

Jean-Huy Tran

So, there's anger right, that the motivation because there are two people that I've seen that need, need to uplift, but there's the anger because how much more do you need? The woman conversation the woman raised have been almost a fucking decade. How much more do you need? the black community over 200 years, this entire country built based on the foundation of racism, how much more do we need? We've seen police shooting the Black people all the time, how much more do we need? I'm going to share you another something personal, which, you know, now it can go on the record, and hopefully that's going to blast in public, because it needs to go in public. So, I tiptoe around a lot about my younger brother. But the real, but the truthful story about my younger brother is that he, you know, after he came here, we connected. He started to discover the Vietnamese pride. So, he joined gang and so that's the reason why my younger and I are a lot, so separate. He was in a lot of trouble during the 90s [1990s], that the whole movement about three strike, you out. So, he ended up in a very one incident, he was helping a friend who shot a young Mexican kid. You know, he helped his friend to escape. So, all of that happened so he end up getting life sentence. My younger brother and I we barely knew each other because he was already in prison. And my mom would go visit him almost every single week. I had to do all kind of work subjected to this insane level of law enforcement, every single time because, every time I talk to them they always push back and so hard to deal with. And when you do that for for almost 20 years, it's like I'm done with talking to you people, I don't care anymore. I remember the story of my young brother was running, trying to evade, escape or whatever it is, of course you would evade escape, you are hiding from them. The fully was sick to doc and my younger brother all over, when the pictures showed up of course (?) heard this is our people that we love and got beaten by the police. I don't care if he was right or wrong, but the fact that he got beaten so then, so the last-- so my brother got time for all over the place. The last time he got time, he was in San Diego, right down here. Sanderson arcade, Donovan. that's a reason why my mom down here a lot during the last few years and she ended up going through a lot of protests with me because that's what I do and the two of us hang out with each other. You remember the march to vote in 2018?

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah.

Jean-Huy Tran

We woke up on Monday morning with a message from the prison ward that they found my brother hung, but they were able to resuscitate him a little bit, he got transferred to Hillcrest into emergency room. (?) do moving but he wouldn't call me, he couldn't hear. He respond to somewhat. For the entire week, while we're organizing the March to Vote, pulling thing together and then at the same time have to do with this thing. And every single person coming at me and say pull the plug. But have you ever heard of the howl of a mother holding on to her son and begging him to move his finger so that it would convince the doctor not to pull the plug. I don't think I ever erase that out of my head. The fact is that my family entrusted my younger brother into this system, so they can return him back to us dead. There was a lot of question behind the circumstance, why my brother dead, because the day before he actually texting them. On the mobile phone that the prison warden didn't know about. There was a lot in a conversation and I'm like, I don't care what it is, but we entrusted him into your care, that means he have to come back to us, the way that he was supposed to be. So, I'm angry, I'm angry all the time, I'm mad because my younger brother and I never had that opportunity to know each other. We knew he

had life sentences, but you know, there is always that hope that he's going to come back out, maybe we can build a life for him. I'm angry all the time because the circumstance of that, never resolved. And you know the same experience that I always know dealing with law enforcement for the last 20 something years. We call in, then no fucking answer. It always go around in circle and then it was so mad like. So at this point, what I'm going to do is, I have been doing it like put this anger that I have in every single fiber of my being and fighting the system that I know that creates so much hurt and pain and even though it's designed to to help people right to reform people, but it doesn't do any of that it just damaging life and they just spit people back out, and that the community have to fix them. I'm angry at that because that's the only system I know that I can put in a concrete plans and say you were the result of my brother's death. So, to answer your question that what really drives me this day, like I mean, very few people in the activists know because I (?), being Asian, we don't talk about these things, because these are private. But I come more to term when I realized the power of the words. So, sharing them maybe other folks can feel the same way that I do, and they say like, "Hey, I have that too. I have family member also up in that situation." And then, you know, in a way to also explain the feel the feel behind all of my work in the criminal justice system. Because so much freedom during right.

Yasmeen Obeid

Thank you so much for sharing that [Lots of background noise from zoom]. I'm sorry you had to go through that, that's a lot. But I appreciate you sharing. Would you like us to take a moment?

Jean-Huy Tran

No, I'm good I'm good, thank you.

Yasmeen Obeid

Ok. Oh, Honestly, it's been truly a pleasure speaking to you. I think just some of the last questions that I really would love, if you are able to answer is what would you like folks to know about your community? Whether it's the Vietnamese community or other communities that you identify with?

Jean-Huy Tran

So (?) I identify with the Asian American community as well as the Vietnamese community because, you know, my people don't really get engaged in politics. And that's a lot of misinformation. But, you know, I come to a space where I recognized a pain you know, talk about war for a little bit. Like Vietnamese folks ran away from Vietnam under the thought that they run away from communists and so they come here they don't really understand Ide, ideology all that much. Really. Because like they often get confused between socialism with communism and then tried to claim that is so difficult. And so like even though they're against the Vietnamese government, but then they take pride and based on like this weird space try to explain them and so, they're so consumed with that but they don't really address my how they both subjectively over here and the way they voted against themselves a lot because you know the, the funding that they need, they voted against us, essentially, a lot of it. But I come into the space hollering around it because you know recognizing the war has a tremendous effect on them, on their mental you know, capacity and this physically, physical, I mean physically and as well as psychology, psychologically, that they can't really separate that pain. So, you know, despite it 30, 40 years, we still have to create a room, allow them to breathe through it, and gently educate them, whatever that issue is over here. But the fact is, my people don't really talk. They don't want to speak up, they don't do any of this stuff. And so therefore, a lot of times, they also being ignored, and that also explain the lack of reputation as well. So, I-- combating the model minority is very real because even even within the API activist's world, we have some older generation folks who still believe in it, like you work hard you can get you know--

Yasmeen Obeid

Hmmm [Expressed affirmation].

Jean-Huy Tran

-- You get your work and everything. And some time I would be like, you mean you work harder than McDonald's flipping burger? Where-- How far do you think you're gonna get right? So, like a lot of the conversation around, like try to be about how to combat that. I had a lot of hopes in a way that the younger generation, start seeing what we're talking about and hearing this, right. And I'm hoping for more folks to speak up as well. Because I think there is the power of words when we sharing each other perspective, life experiences, then we actually start seeing similarities (?). So, you know, if anybody ever wants to know more about a API community, pick the walk down the street, in the street that we live in, because we're just like anybody else, we have the same concern. We're have variety of different range of differences. I fact API is one of the most controversial around that is like how diverse we are are going from Chinese, Vietnamese, to Korean to Japanese, like we're all so different from each other but being lumped under one big giant umbrella. So, I'm only advocating for more equity, more representation, more inclusive. Like, you know, we all share the same struggle. We tried to show up and do, you know showed up for other? Well, at least the activists that I know show up for each other and we're just asking for the same share of opportunity and equity, you know, and be (?) a lot of the (?) the things that actually hurt us and not really improving us. But yeah, I, that's the one thing and if any API ever speak or have a listening to this recording, I was hoping that they also realize that and connect with their history. Like please connect with your history and remember who you are. One thing that I will always remember like, I do well enough, and I'm so fortunate enough that I remember who I am, that I am Vietnamese, all the of my background of the story that I have, of how I grew up, of the culture that I have with me, the language I retain, if anyone who don't speak the language, please go take a class, the language is the way, the language let us know our own culture. It's so vastly amazing that no other living experience can replicate. You know, if you have the opportunity, if you're privileged enough, go live, go live in Vietnam or wherever that is for a month, three months. Go live there. To know what your people live. How do they live, who they are, what is it that concerns them? And truly authentically speaking from your heart, you know, that with the voice of the community and everything that we do. It's kind of difficult if you don't know your own language right, so yeah, that the advice I have for a lot of folks and I hope I hope things would change in the future for the API community.

Yasmeen Obeid

Thank you so much. Just bringing it back to current, current day. How has this pandemic affected you and how are you practicing joy during this time?

Jean-Huy Tran

So, I have been practice a lot of safe distance, but at the same time like we, the coalition of the API got together like, you know, we invite each other, have a meeting addressing it. So, we were taking a stand, against, the anti-Asian racism right now during the COVID time, because, you know, come back to this, like, don't talk about it. Like when racism hit us, we don't talk about it. And then they just like, ignored it and all this stuff and now like come together and say No, none of this so can, let's talk about it, make it loud, make it on the front, that'd be able to be aware, because history happened before the Japanese went into concentration camps. You know, and all of this happened, like Chinese came here and, you know, were working at the railroad Rebel, on the railroads. Like a lot of these things happening in the (?). And I'm hoping for the younger generation speak up more. And so, in a way, like I have the (?), I have the intention of working to one more the API community. And this is the moment, this is a moment. It's unfortunate moment, but it's still a moment like I find our working relationships very powerful, beautiful in a way that we were able to sit in a room together. I'm sure there are differences among all of us, because I claimed before like API community is so vastly diverse. But we

managed to focus on the single issues that are most important to our community, and be able to drive to work and proudly to say that we're doing good work for the community. And hopefully, my community or our communities will be able to find the courage and to speak up more and say no more racism. Like we're just like anybody else. Like, I don't know why people have to, in a way, it's kind of ridiculous because we are doing the thing that elected official work have to do right, Racism only start from the top, but when you have a White House administration, using languages that damaging, that hurtful to our communities, and then we're like the one that have to stand up and call it out? And it's like, No, no, right. But it's powerful. I'm glad it's happening.

Yasmeen Obeid

Yeah, thank you so much. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?

Jean-Huy Tran

Wow, one thing that I hope and I do this, you know, I (?) when you invited me in to do this interview, I'm super honored. And I appreciate you so much because obviously, I'm asking all the time for presentation and opportunity and an opportunity to speak up my voice and share a message. But ultimately, everything that I do comprised with the work that I do, the single purpose that I have, and probably the single purpose I have in my entire life is set out to live in a way that to inspire other people. I hope that the conversation we have whoever listened to it, please be inspired, inspired to do more, inspired to do more for yourself or for your community, or for the world in general. But be inspired, do thing. We all have only one life and how we're going to do, what we're going to do with that life matters. So that what I want to leave off on the table is inspire.

Yasmeen Obeid

That's beautiful. Thank you so much, Jean, Jean-Huy, I really appreciate you taking the time and it's honestly been a pleasure and an honor to interview you and get to know more about you, and I hope we continue building and working together in the future as well.

Jean-Huy Tran

Thank you.

Yasmeen Obeid

Well, have a wonderful rest of your day and stay safe.

Jean-Huy Tran

You too

Yasmeen Obeid

Thank you. Bye.