

SEASON 2: Episode 1 - Indigenous Resilience

Daralyse Lyons: Welcome to the Demystifying Diversity Podcast where, each week, we examine topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

I'm Daralyse Lyons and I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you today from my home, on stolen Lenape lands, utilizing the colonized space of the Internet. If you're living in the United States, like I am, and you're not living on a reservation, you spend your days moving from one colonized space to another. There's no way around that. Which means that, if you're not a person with an Indigenous ancestral history, and your ancestors weren't brought to this country in slave ships, you're profiting from racial genocide.

Morgan Ridgeway: If we go back to sort of the inception of what America is, right it's stolen land and stolen labor...

Daralyse Lyons: That was Morgan Ridgeway. I'll let them tell you about themselves.

Morgan Ridgeway: I'm Black and Monaco, Lenni Lenape. The Lenape people, our homelands are in New Jersey, New York City, Eastern Pennsylvania and the majority of Delaware. So it's a pretty large territory and growing up in Philadelphia, that means I also grew up in our homelands.

So my family has been in New Jersey and Delaware for the, you know, six, seven generations. And so I have a certain attachment to where I come from and a kind of deep knowledge that goes back generations. I'm very fortunate to have that, cause I know a lot of people for a bunch of different reasons don't have those experiences.

Either they have them removed, or there's issues of violence, those histories of, and presence of racism and all sorts of things that prevent people from knowing who they are.

Daralyse Lyons: In this two-part episode you'll hear from six people, five of them Indigenous. You'll hear about the deep cultural ties and rich ancestral histories that aren't told when only the oppressors' side of the story is put forward.

In this first segment, we'll look at invaders' attempts to annihilate Indigenous people, spirituality, culture, and thought. We'll reflect on the direct connections between American individualism and the decimation of natural resources. The intention of this episode isn't to shame anyone. It's to make visible what has been deliberately invisibilized in the hopes that the truth will inspire you, the listener, to rethink some of what you may think you know.

In part two, next week, we'll be exploring ways to appreciate without appropriating from those who came before and shining light on some of the Indigenous teachings that, if adopted and internalized by more people, could be incredibly reparative to this land and all its occupants.

But, before that, there's a lot of unlearning that has to happen.

Simon Moya-Smith: Everything you think you know about indigenous people: drop it, and start over again. Because it's easier for you to confirm the accurate stuff than it is to winnow out all the bullshit, all the lies.

Daralyse Lyons: That was Simon Moya-Smith, an enrolled citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation. Simon is a prolific freelance journalist, an adjunct professor, and the author of the soon-to-be-released book *Your Spirit Animal is A Jackass*.

Simon Moya-Smith: I think that if people really take the time to do the homework, they will be really surprised how much that they have been conditioned and indoctrinated to not see indigenous people and even just not see the truth.

Daralyse Lyons: When I was in elementary, middle, and high school, I was taught a version of history that was a narrative of constant forward progress, settler grit and determination. It went something like this: The pilgrims, fueled by dreams of a better life and freedom from oppression, set out to find a new world and their ingenuity has made America the best place on earth. And, as Simon put it, it was bullshit.

Simon Moya-Smith: A lot of the lies are perpetuated to keep this, you know, little, pretty flowery image of the United States and it's founding quote unquote "founding," right? So, yeah, we also have to look at the language that we use. It wasn't founded. And these aren't settlers, these aren't colonists, they're invaders.

You first have to invade a territory before you can settle before you can call an ISE, but you see how conveniently they jumped straight to the nice little flowery, you know, easy to consume word of "colonist" and "settler." No, they invaded indigenous territories. And through that invasion, it was both violent - physically violent - but also they were voluntarily spreading disease.

Daralyse Lyons: It was sobering to interview Simon during a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was decimating Indigenous populations at disproportionately high rates, just a few days before what's known in the East as the National Day of Mourning and, in the West, as Unthanksgiving. But, before we delve into all of that and more, I first want to provide the space for those I interviewed to introduce themselves.

We'll start with Simon:

Simon Moya-Smith: I'm an enrolled citizen of The Oglala Lakota Nation.

What I do is I attempt to raise awareness of issues that are facing our communities, whether that's on or off the reservation, but also bring, lens and Indigenous lens to topics that maybe don't have a specific Indigenous tie.

I try to bring light to things that affect the communities, you know, murdered and missing indigenous women, the destruction of the land and the water through these oil and gas conglomerates, but also dehumanization in the form of things like mascots and Thanksgiving. So basically one of my friends called me a “bullshit hunter.”

Daralyse Lyons: Charlene Teters:

Charlene Teters: I'm a, uh, a Spokane tribal member. So I grew up in Spokane Washington. The city of Spokane is built on our old village site. The Spokane reservation is about 57 miles away between the two rivers between the Columbia and the Spokane River. It was lucky in that I had very knowledgeable members of my own family, my Spokane tribal side, so I'm somebody who knows and is very connected to my Spokane tribal history.

Daralyse: Charlene is an artist, an educator, and a lecturer whose paintings and installations have been featured in numerous collections and exhibitions. As the former Dean of the Institute of American Indian Arts, she spent much of her academic career working to ensure the education of future tribal leaders, innovators and artists. These days, as she prepares to relocate to the Spokane reservation, she remains a tireless advocate for future generations, and uses her art as a catalyst for activism.

Here's Tessa McLean:

Tessa McLean: I am First Nations. I'm from (Shared Indigenous tribe/land) First Nation. I'm Ojibwe.

Daralyse: Tessa is a Community Planner with a multidisciplinary background. An expert in sustainable energy practices and environmental justice, she brings indigenous knowledge, subject matter expertise, technical skills, and industry experience to community planning initiatives. She is also deeply committed to raising awareness about the plight of missing, murdered, and trafficked indigenous women.

Here's Jaclyn Roessel:

Jaclyn Roessel: I wanted to first, I guess, like in that, um, grounding in who I am as a *diné* or Navajo person, Let me start by sharing my clan.

(Spoke in *diné* native language).

So in my culture, a name that we call ourselves in my community is *diné*. And it translates into “the people,” the name that was given to us by the Spanish colonizers was Navajo. So that's the term that's most and more popularly known. And so I grew up on the Navajo reservation in the Northeastern part

of Arizona, in a family that really - that I'm so grateful for, because it was a family that really promoted, such a strong understanding of our cultural practices and belonging.

And so part of that way of knowing that I've come to understand as being a *diné* person includes our kinship system, our relationship system to each other, and that involves our clan system. So I introduced myself saying my name in English, but also, and more importantly, I shared my clan.

So I am of the Red Running Into the Water People. That's my mother's clan. And I'm born for my father's plan, which is a Towering House People. My paternal grandfather's clan was the Saltwater Clan and my paternal grandfather is actually, was, I should say both German and Scottish. And so my last name is actually German.

I'm from the communities, traditionally, around the red rock area in Arizona. And we believe our client system is really integral to our understanding our relationships to each other.

My work is actually really grounded in what I like to call like "radical kinship." Like the root of our kinship system is our relationality to each other. But in that relationality is the responsibility that we have to each other.

Daralyse Lyons: Jaclyn is the president of GrownUp Navajo, the co-founder of Native Women Lead, a writer, a curator, a coach and a cultural equity and justice consultant. She was the inaugural recipient of the Arizona Humanities Rising Star Award and has been named one of Phoenix's 100 Creatives You Should Know.

Here's Morgan Ridgeway again:

Morgan Ridgeway: I'm Black and Monaco, Lenni Lenape, um, the Lenape people growing up the way that I did. And I know very intimately how important it is to know who you are and where you've come from.

Daralyse Lyons: Morgan is a PhD candidate with graduate minors in queer and Indigenous studies whose research focuses on multitribal communities, decolonization strategies, and queer indigenous theory. They are also an artist who utilizes poetry, creative nonfiction, dance, and mixed media in order to disrupt linear, non-inclusive modalities of history-telling and to inspire themselves and others to reimagine what's possible.

Earlier, I mentioned that this episode would incorporate the voice of one non-Indigenous person. Here she is.

Fern Anuenue Holland: My name is Fern, like the plants. My middle name is Anuenue, which is a rainbow in Hawaiian. And, um, my last name is Holland, like the country.

I was born and raised on Kauai, but I have no native Hawaiian blood.

Daralyse Lyons: Since receiving her Bachelor of Science with triple majors in Wildlife Management, Environmental Science and Marine Biology, Fern has worked as an environmental scientist and ecological consultant. She was instrumental in the development and passing of Bill 2491, a bill which regulates the agrochemical industry. You've likely seen her if you watched the well-known documentary "Poisoning Paradise."

Each of the people you'll hear today sees their individual identity as being inextricably linked to their community, culture, and land.

Fern Anuenue Holland: I come from a mother who's originally from New York, immigrants. And, my father is actually Australian and, on my Australian side, I'm Scottish English and Irish mostly.

I would have been seventh generation Australian born. But I was born here and then on my mom's side, I'm Sicilian, Norwegian and Irish immigrants to New York.

I come from prisoners that were sent to Australia and Irish famine orphans, you know, like, so I come from literally from a 15 year old girl was the, um, you know, Mary O'Day who was sent to Australia as an Irish famine or orphan at like 14 years old.

She was poor Irish and they sent 4,000 women to increase the women in the colonies to marry prisoners and stuff, you know, so I learned a lot about, um, my Scottish side was high likely Highland Scottish political prisoners that were sent away.

Maybe this is where my political upheaval and activism comes from!

I can answer that question about what my genealogy is because I spent a long time slowly piecing together the stories of who my ancestors were.

My dad passed away without ever knowing who his father was. And with really no idea of his - how Australian are we? Like, you know, we didn't really know. He didn't know. And on my mom's side, I, we kind of knew what we were, but, um, I recently was inspired by some of my native Hawaiian friends that can chat back generations and generations of their ancestry to like, understand like "why don't white people know that?" like, I don't know, like, I don't know where I come from.

Daralyse Lyons: She's right. A lot of white people don't know where they come from. And, in my opinion, that's a problem. Separation from the history of white supremacy is one of the mechanisms that perpetrates and perpetuates anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. The sense that individuals have no relationship with the past creates the illusion of separation. It is traumatizing people and the planet.

As an environmental scientist and ecological consultant, Fern was able to explain the direct connections between the exploitation of Indigenous people and the exploitation of land.

Fern Anuenue Holland: The older that I get and the more that I understand, the more that I see the social and power struggles overlapping and crossing with the environmental destruction and takeovers.

Where you see environmental degradation and where you see the impacts of these kinds of things, uh, it does seem to fall more on minority and marginalized communities.

Daralyse Lyons: She spoke, specifically, about the impacts of oppression on Hawaii.

Fern Anuenue Holland: In the times prior to colonization, we were a flourishing landscape where Hawaiians had an incredible model of how to manage land from a watershed base, where it's basically like an, what we call an "ahupua'a," which is from ridge to ridge line and everything in between that encompasses the stream or the watershed. And within those waters, watershed, water was not consumed in a way that would wipe out the system and the stream, but was diverted slightly used and went back clean into the system. And so throughout that Hawaiians had incredible edible landscapes that basically like covered from mountain to ocean.

Beautiful, edible, ecosystems. And all of that was, was destroyed with the diversion of the stream systems and all of that was destroyed with the leveling of everything for sugar.

Daralyse Lyons: We'll return to the topic of environmental racism later, but, before looking at the impacts of invasion on land, I'd like to return to talking about how savage invaders were to the people who were living there, acting as stewards of a sustainable and flourishing ecosystem.

As I speak about those who are, or whose ancestors were, native inhabitants of now colonized land, you'll hear me use the word Indigenous. And, if you're wondering why that is...

Simon Moya-Smith: We pushed back on language like Native American, right? Because we predate America. So how can we be Native American when we predate the idea of America by centuries? OUR elders will say that we've been here since time immemorial. We came out of the soil. Anthropologically, you know, anthropologically speaking, the anthropologists that we've been here for calculated between 10,200 years and 11,000 years. So, however, you look at it. We are the first peoples of this land, but we're not "Native American."

America is just a really old colony.

They didn't legitimately take billions of - literally with a B - billions of acres of our land justifiably. They stole it. Through deception, murders.

And then American Indian is wrong, right? Because we're not Indians. We're not from India, Christopher Columbus, that he's got, you know, on his way to India and happened upon here. And no, we're not Indian.

If you don't know the nation or the tribe that the individual is enrolled in, Indigenous is best. But if you do know the tribe or nation, go with that.

So I would prefer people say Simon, Moya-Smith, an enrolled citizen of the Oglala Lakota nation. But if they don't, Indigenous is best.

Daralyse Lyons: Since Simon mentioned Christopher Columbus, let's talk about America's reverence of a directionally-challenged racist. In 1492, when Columbus accidentally stumbled upon what he thought was India, there were an estimated 5 to 15 million Indigenous people living on the continent now known as North America. By the later 19th century, less than 240,000 Indigenous people remained. So how did that happen?

Invaders slaughtered millions of Indigenous people, raped Indigenous women, stole Indigenous children, and exposed native inhabitants to diseases towards which they had not acquired immunity. And they did so while painting Indigenous people as pagan savages who must be killed in the name of Christian civilization.

I mentioned there being a more authentic history than the one many of us were taught in school. What I didn't mention is that the vast majority - 87% - of states don't require Indigenous history past the year 1900 in their curricula, and that because of the lopsided presentation of history and the inaccurate portrayal of Indigenous people, many of us learn that the quote-unquote "founding of America" was a victory for human liberty when, in actuality, it was *genocide*.

For instance, did your history teacher teach you that the U.S. government authorized over 1,500 wars, attacks and raids on Indigenous people? The most of any country in the world? Mine didn't. And something I find equally atrocious, is that today these opportunities for disavowing false idolatry and hero worship and understanding history in a more comprehensive way are still being missed.

Morgan Ridgeway: I suppose this was around perhaps the end of the summer, at least in Philly where we were talking about statue removal. There was the Rizzo statue and there's the Columbus statue.

And I thought that that was a really interesting moment in time where we were talking about Lenape people again, right? And that this was our land and this that matters. And that we have monuments dedicated to people who have stolen in front of us. Right? And it also was a conversation of connection that we have Columbus is sort of settler colonial statue and Rizzo often, uh, you know, perhaps controversial to say, but certainly is implicated in a lot of anti-Blackness in the city, right?

To sort of say, we need to remove these two people, these fixtures, what does that, what are we telling our, the next generation, right? That these two people can not be here anymore - can not be visual representations of the city anymore. So I think that's a moment in time where I was like, "oh, I hope that we can get to a point where we are actively acknowledging and supporting Lenape people, right?"

Indigenous people in this, in this land, right. The ways in which we have persisted in spite of so many different things. I had hoped, you know, and, and perhaps naively, but certainly optimistically of, of reestablishing or remodeling our education system. Because I think a lot of people in the city don't actually realize that it's Lenape territory.

I don't know if a lot of people even know the name "Lenape", right. As an actual thing. And part of that is because it's been eradicated from our education system. And so how do we reintegrate those things?

Daralyse Lyons: Spoiler alert: those things were not reintegrated. While the Columbus statue will, it seems, be removed eventually, Columbus Day remains a widely celebrated holiday, one which many celebrated just a few weeks ago. That's not to say that all Indigenous people ought to be lauded as heroes, all tribes celebrated and revered, or to disparage the positive contributions Italians have made to the history of this nation. But it is to say that invasion is not a thing of the past. It's ever-present.

Native communities are still experiencing the negative ramifications of unchecked, unapologetic white supremacy that comes out in everything from erasure to murder.

Tessa McLean: I raised awareness about violence against indigenous women, and also raise awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls specifically.

And I have known about violence against Indigenous women for a long time. I'm 32, but I remember being a little girl and seeing like, back home, a big billboard with a young native woman and it had a big picture of her face and it had her name.

And, she had been missing for a while and you know, her family was looking for her to come back home. So I grew up, you know, with like seeing this billboard of this, this woman who was - I think she was 16 at the time when she went missing and I was about 10 years old. So just kind of being aware that, you know, native women go missing and, um, there are really no answers for their families.

Daralyse Lyons: As of 2016, the National Crime Information Center has reported 5,712 cases of missing Indigenous women and girls. Sadly and strikingly, by this same time, the U.S Department of Justice Missing Persons Database has only reported 116 cases.

Here are some statistics that may shock you:

Indigenous women and girls are murdered at a 10x higher rate than all other ethnicities.

Murder is the 3rd leading cause of death for Indigenous Women, and the majority of these murders are committed on Native-owned land by non-Native people.

More than 4 out of 5 Indigenous Women have experienced violence, and Indigenous women are 2xs more likely to be raped than Anglo-American white women.

Despite awareness from all echelons of law enforcement, Indigenous communities remain plagued by inordinately high rates of violence against their female identified members. Tessa told me that lack of communication, poor data collection, and jurisdictional issues between Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies are part of why Indigenous women and girls are falling victim to violence.

Tessa McLean: A lot of violence occurs on or near reservations. And reservations are on federal lands. So the tribal police, which is, um, under federal jurisdiction. And then, you know, if the violence occurs outside of the reservation, then that's within state boundaries. But then, you know, there's these jurisdiction issues like who handles the case? Is that the tribal police? Is it the state police? Is it the FBI? So there's just these different jurisdiction issues.

And there's a lack of collaboration between the partners or the entities and, even the department of justice is aware of this. And they're trying to alleviate some of those issues, but it's just... taking forever.

The other issue with data is. If someone goes missing, you know, maybe the box of the "American Indian," "Alaska Native," maybe that box is not checked.

Um, so they're just an unidentified person that has gone missing,

Daralyse Lyons: The biggest issues underneath all the other significant, yet smaller, logistical concerns are toxic masculinity and systemic racism.

Tessa McLean: We find that, these issues happen around men camps, which are like these energy camps, um, put up where they're doing like pipeline infrastructure, um, and like these camps with like all men, you know, they're, they're not from the community.

They're not from that area. They come in, um, they have no ties, you know, they have no accountability. So we see like rates of violence higher in those areas. Um, so those are. These guys are creating, you know, pipeline systems for us, for our energy. So if we're all needing energy, then we're kind of all part of the problem.

Daralyse Lyons: Tessa went on to explain that media coverage and public support are overtly different based on the race of the woman or girl who goes missing.

Tessa: A couple years ago, a young, like a teenage, white female went missing in North Dakota and the amount of volunteers that showed up to, to search, you know, the land for her, you know, was overwhelming. Like those huge amount of volunteers showed up.

And then in the same timeframe, this young woman, Savannah, went missing and she's indigenous and she was, you know, like, um, seven or eight months pregnant and the amount of volunteers that showed up was *underwhelming*. You know, there weren't enough volunteers. There was lack of coverage, you know?

I think for the, non-indigenous person, there was a reward out for finding that young missing person. And, you know, with Savannah, there was no reward. So that's an example.

Daralyse Lyons: That's devastating. Is it known what happened to Savannah?

Tessa McLean: So Savannah was found, she was, I think like in a ravine, like a, like a ditch, like water ravine and, it was her neighbors who had killed her and they, stole her baby.

So they murdered her because they wanted a baby. So this infant was cut out of the womb and the neighbor, it was a couple, they, um, there was the woman who had created this plan and her partner went along with it. And that was in North Dakota.

Daralyse Lyons: According to Tessa and corroborated by all the data I could find, which was insufficient given the prevalence of this problem, the most dangerous places for Indigenous women and girls are adjacent to Indigenous reservations.

Tessa McLean: Border towns. You have reservations and then a non-native town next door. And there's a lot of violence there against, you know, the indigenous population and for me, I, I still don't understand why that is. Why these non-native towns are so, um, discriminatory against the indigenous populations.

Daralyse Lyons: The question is rhetorical. It's obvious why. As part of the attempted annihilation of Indigenous people, invaders dehumanized them, depicting them as unworthy of empathy, devoid of humanity. That thought process was then passed on from generation to generation and the bodies of Indigenous women and girls are still being seized and violated in the same brutal ways that these men's ancestral forebearers once took and violated Indigenous women and girls and Indigenous land.

Interlude - "Better" by Brittany Monet

There's still a correlation between abuse of land and the abuse of its Indigenous female occupants.

Tessa McLean: Another hotspot for trafficking is in Northern Minnesota and Northern Wisconsin. Up in the Great Lakes Area.

Lake Superior has these barges that come in and they dock in Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin, which are neighboring cities. And, there's high rates of, you know, missing and murdered Indigenous women up in that area too, because of, you know, they're trafficked out on these barges, you know, which that's also a fossil fuel industry up there, up in the north.

So, you know, I think, um, you know, like these energy systems, you know, are related. So it's important to remember.

Daralyse Lyons: It's also important to acknowledge that, while Tessa is invested in these issues professionally and as an Indigenous person and a humanitarian, she also has a personal experience of losing a loved one to murder.

Tessa McLean: One of my own relatives was murdered in 2016.

So I just kind of come at this issue with my own feelings and my own experience.

It was her former partner and, um, you know it got listed as domestic violence and, he was charged in Canada under The Crown.

Unfortunately, they told our family that, you know, you know, we are one of the lucky families who knows who did this to our, our family member. But the court system was very lenient on him just because of, some of that, dehumanization that his family grew up with.

And, the impacts of colonization affected his judgment, they said. So for our family, you know, we're grateful that we know who did it and you know, they were charged and they are in prison, but, you know, just, um, not quite happy that they were very lenient on him and he'll be released very soon.

Daralyse Lyons: The Canadian judicial system acknowledged the impact of colonization and dehumanization on the perpetrator, but what about those who are on the receiving end of that generational dehumanization?

Jaclyn Roessel: There's a study that was released, by Lummi Nation and, in partnership with, the Native Organizers Alliance and the Center for Native Youth. And it's hot. Of the respondents were like over 6,000 respondents.

It was really unique survey in that it was, created by native organizations for native people. And out of the respondents, like one of the things that was cited most across all of the different demographics was really support and improvements of mental health. And this was in this year 2020 ever thinking about everything that we know now

about just the toll that this pandemic is taking the toll of the different racial reckonings and like uprising.

Like this is an incredible, um, year for us to acknowledge and also contend with the fact that, you know, like our mental health is being really challenged.

Daralyse Lyons: Some of those challenges are the same challenges that people of all racial backgrounds have been experiencing, and some challenges are unique to those with a history of having been systematically subjugated on their own ancestral homeland then having the descendants of the perpetrators who set out to steal their land, language, spirituality, culture and resources and are responsible for the murders of millions and millions of their ancestors appropriate and mock what is sacred and special while profiting off elements of Indigenous identities.

Simon Moya-Smith: Facts and opinions aren't on the same level. Your opinion doesn't change how racist something is. When people were making the argument, "well, what's the big deal about, you know, the Washington Football Team's name?"

I'm not going to use the term itself. It's derogatory and it's racist. It doesn't change the name. You know, it doesn't like the Washington Football Team means "dead Indians."

And just because people were like, "well, I didn't mind it. I don't care." It's like, well, we don't care if you care. What we care about are the facts and the facts are: And the facts are there. That means "dead Indian." Also, it has been empirically proven that mascots native mascots harm the mental health stability of children.

So. It's not about us trying to just like rain on everybody's parade or, ruin their good time. No, we're, we're fighting for the health and wellbeing of the next generation of children who are already suffering from intergenerational trauma.

Daralyse Lyons: So much trauma, and so many communities, are impacted in their own unique, yet all too similar, ways.

Fern Anuenue Holland: We're on, you know, Hawaiian stolen lands that were illegally occupied by the United States. Um, actually it was about to be the anniversary of the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii, January 17, 1893. The kingdom was overthrown and, you know, Hawaiian people were really marginalized in their own communities.

Charlene Teters: And we were, taken advantage of. The companies that came in, uh, exploited the land, exploited the people, many of our people are, you know, that lived up there and worked in those mines still are suffering from multi-generational impact from the exposure to the uranium.

Simon Moya-Smith: I remember somebody referring to Rapid City as "the South of the North." Because it's just so hostile to Indigenous people. And they are very aggressive and blame Indians for everything. Racism against Indigenous people may not be obvious and places like Manhattan or Brooklyn or East Los Angeles, but it is pretty prevalent in places right off the reservation.

Um, in many different states, especially in the west. It's extremely dangerous, especially for Indigenous people.

As I mentioned with murdered and missing Indigenous women, police brutality in Indian country, intergenerational trauma, which can lead to, you know, depression, uh, substance abuse, suicide, domestic violence, those things are real things. And now on top of that, we have this raging pandemic through Indian country.

Daralyse Lyons: So can you talk a little bit about how COVID-19 is impacting Indigenous populations differently?

Simon Moya-Smith: Yeah, it's decimating Indigenous communities. Specifically places like the Navajo Nation in Arizona. Because unfortunately, broad swabs of the Rez itself don't have running water or

electricity. And as a matter of fact, it was, proven, you know, this factually, Indigenous people while even the Navajo nation are the most impacted than anywhere else in the United States.

Commercial Break - Vita Supreme, Temple University School of Sport, Tourism, & Hospitality Management

Daralyse Lyons: A few weeks after my conversation with Simon, I spoke to Fern. She told me that one of the devastating impacts COVID-19 was having on Hawaiians was on revealing their lack of food sovereignty. She told me that, without imports, Hawaii only has about six days' worth of food to feed its inhabitants and that, even within that, there remains a disparity between those living in poverty and those with unmitigated privilege.

Fern Anuenue Holland: We also have all kinds of issues now in the fact that we've become this destination for the ultimate rich. And so you see in third, three generations in, um, the people that were born and raised here having very little opportunity to ever own their own home or have any kind of security, um, in their homeland because, you know, even since COVID our property prices have gone up. On the north shore of our island, which was already hugely overpriced and all locals were pretty much priced out of about 30, 40, 50 years ago, you saw 290% increase in prices.

We're in this real, like accelerated period of being bought out of house and home.

That goes all the way back to the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii.

Daralyse Lyons: One of the things that drove home the ideological problem of an individualistic mentality was thinking about the reality that while rich, mostly white, business moguls used the pandemic as an excuse for a tropical getaway and other people were dying of covid, unable to feed themselves and their families, deprived of access to basic medical care, running water and electricity, those with means were checking out while those without continued to act on behalf of the larger American populace.

Simon Moya-Smith: They turned out to vote for Joe Biden. 89% of the people vote, turned out to vote for Joe Biden from the Navajo Nation.

So here are sick people that are inflicted by this, this pandemic, but they still did their part to make sure that there is, that the Nation goes in a different direction away from this orange menace.

Daralyse Lyons: There are fundamental differences in the thought patterns that underlie the philosophy of fierce individualism and the ways of thinking that existed prior to the existence of America, ways of thinking that support sustainability and social responsibility.

Simon Moya-Smith: There's been a difference in ideology since the first white man stumbled our way. You know, that's why in my language, in the Oglala Lakota language, we don't have a word for "white man." Um, there was no white people, so there was no word for it. So we described them and, um, in our language, they're called (Simon spoke in Oglala language), which just means 'greedy.' So they were 'the greedy people.' There was never enough land, never enough gold, never enough women. Never enough. Um, I guess indoctrination or the, you know, this Bible belt attempt to make us white Christians through their campaign called "Kill the Indian, save the man."

Right? So there wasn't enough bodies, whether they were dead bodies or bodies to be stolen away from our children to be stolen away from their parents and, you know, thrown into these, these, um, schools where they were, you know, beaten, physically, but also with these Bible verses, and punished for speaking their languages, you know, needles through the tongue, things like that.

Daralyse Lyons: During my time at school, instead of being told about invaders putting needles through the tongues of Indigenous children, I was given glossy history textbooks that depicted Indigenous people as little more than a footnote. Yeah, sure, a couple of my teachers made casual mention of Wounded Knee or the Trail of Tears, but they provided no context, no emotion, and no empathy. I would never have known that there was a history underneath the history with which I was being indoctrinated if I hadn't sought it out myself. When I asked Morgan Ridgeway about that, they pointed out that colonial culture has infiltrated academia.

Morgan Ridgeway: Academic institutions and that, and that's a broad sense, right? That's that's libraries, that's schools. We're talking college, high school, middle school, like all sorts of education institutions.

Um, they are, they, they function on these kinds of meta narratives, right? That, there's a progression of history. This is what you're supposed to do. This is the dominant culture. And that is all orbited around whiteness. Right? And a particular type of whiteness that has access to money.

And so those institutions repeat themselves or replicate themselves based on other people being subjugated or other people being told they don't fit. Right? Because if other people are said they don't fit, that must mean the dominant culture is true, right? Or is accurate, or it can be uncontested because you sort of eradicate difference to a certain degree.

Daralyse Lyons: Jaclyn noted this same phenomenon, in a slightly different context:

Jaclyn Roessel: So I worked in, museums. Particularly in the beginning part of my career for about 11 years. The latter half of that time, I was in museum administration.

And museums themselves are colonial spaces, right? They are born out of this tradition of exhibiting the other in ways that are, that have been at times extractive, exploitative, exotifying, and... even though I was working in a much more progressive institution, those undercurrents were still there.

I had the experience at one point of inviting my family to an exhibit opening.

And my brother's not being allowed to let in because they were wearing tall tees. And that was considered by the security guards is not something that was acceptable. And there, I guess, was no way in their minds that they can actually be a guest on my list or a guest of the museum for that evening.

And so these are all things that played into this space, um, of making it really hard, isolating difficult, to experience institutional racism, even in a place that I love, um, to, to try to make changes and shifts was something that was really difficult.

It taught me a lot about, the ways that museums are flawed.

Daralyse Lyons: If museums are flawed and schools refuse to teach us what we need to know, what's left?

Jaclyn Roessel: I believe that culture is one of our most powerful gifts.

And, and this is like for all people. So not just specifically for Indigenous people, but really thinking about the way that our culture can really help us build bridges. And that so much of that expression of culture, like comes through like an artwork.

Daralyse Lyons: Those I interviewed spoke about art being an invitation to reimagine the past as well as a catalyst to do something in the present.

Morgan Ridgeway: The textbooks that we have our narratives in a really specific sense, and they're incredibly contained and confined. And, so the work of artists to kind of, bleed - It's this going to bleed past the boundaries it's to imagine a different world. And I think for a lot of non-white people, especially Black and Indigenous folks where our histories are a lot of times histories of expulsion, histories of, of, of violence, of, of murder, of all sorts of things that we have to have tools and methods to imagine different worlds, different possibilities.

And I think poetry and dance and music, painting, visual arts, are those places that we can do that kind of work to go beyond the, the stories that were told and to say, there's another story underneath here.

Charlene Teters: I was part of the international exhibition, in Santa Fe. It's the third, um, Third biennial that's like, and the curator is from west, from Spain and she curated all of these people, artists that represent countries.

And I was one of three American artists and the only native person. So, you know, it gave me a wonderful opportunity to also remind them that I'm not only am I a U.S. citizen, but I'm also a citizen of my Spokane nation. So in the programming and everything, I always ask them to also include my tribal nation as part of my identifier.

And the overall title was called, I'm "Looking for a Place." I'm going like, okay. So to create a piece within the theme of "Looking for a Place" - gosh- that doesn't really make sense to a native person who I know where I come from and this place, every inch of America is indigenous.

Yeah, indigenous nation. So what I did was I created a piece... Um, have you been to Santa Fe?

Daralyse Lyons: No, I have not. No.

Charlene Teters: So in the middle of the plaza, it's gone now. But there was a historic obelisk that was dedicated in 1886. So before the turn of the century to celebrate and acknowledge, um, soldiers, so it was called sol- the Soldiers Monument and on one panel.

"To the heroes who died in various battles with savage Indians." So that was the panel and it was facing the palace of the governor because at this time this was not a state, but a, you know, basically part of the um, the territory of Spain. So, um, "to the heroes who died in various battles with savage Indians" is what the panel said on the obelisk.

And so in 1974, during the Wounded Knee Occupation, um, there were, people who were passing through town on their way to Wounded Knee, went in and chipped off the word "savage," but it's still to this day, you know, until it was taken down - said to the heroes who've died in various battles with, and that chipped out *ch- ch- ch-* "savage," but most people know what that, what it said originally.

So in my recreation, so I recreate this monument and I put it in front of the roundhouse, which is the state capital of New Mexico. And, in my piece it looks exactly like the obelisk, but the only thing that is inscribed in my particular piece is "savage." So it just has "savage" really big on the front of it. And then around the base it says "to the heroes, to the heroes, to the heroes, to the heroes."

So the state legislators who are going to work recognize it. That it's a recreation of the obelisk and they're going like, "all right, to our heroes!" they say. And then they realize, because I'm getting an awful lot of press making this, all that. It's a native woman, who's making it.

So caused them to think: "Who are the heroes and who are the savages?" They start to ask me. And my response to them is "it depends on who's telling the story."

Daralyse Lyons: One of many forms of violence perpetrated against Indigenous people in the United States has been the ongoing attempts to eradicate the stories of Indigenous people.

In 1887, JDC Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and I'm using that terminology because that was the actual, government-sanctioned name at the time, banned speaking in native languages in mission schools. Children were not allowed to speak in their mother tongues and their missionary teachers were prohibited from instructing in it. This meant that, even on native land, Indigenous people were to be taught only in English. And this was again on land that was supposed to be protected.

But US government policies set out to systematically eradicate the Indigenous language with the same ruthlessness with which America's colonizers had previously set out to eradicate Indigenous people.

Since the coming of colonizers, native people have been punished for their expressions of self and culture, including the Wounded Knee Massacre during which US soldiers killed nearly 300 Indigenous people simply because they were dancing.

Fern Anuenue Holland: There was no written language prior to colonization and missionaries, who taught a lot of people like how to read and write really there was, there was not that the Hawaiian language was entirely passed on orally. Which is why so many Hawaiians that do know their culture and do know their stuff can actually chat back to the creation of where they come from, because those things, but, but when you think about an oral language being banned for a hundred years, you think about, you know, it give me chills every time I talk about it, because, you know, it's, it's hard to deny that stuff would have been lost.

It's hard to deny that, that in an oral language where families were banned, those communications, and then, you know, obviously like many other places where indigenous cultures were taken over, you saw smallpox and you saw death and you saw disease, you know, run rampant through the society and, and you combine those kinds of things.

You know, a lot of stuff. You know, handfuls of families held on to these practices and stuff that's been passed on through closets for some of these years, like in, in, in backdoor then in secret.

Morgan Ridgeway: The reality is we don't know, like a lot of us don't know certainty stories are, or have difficulty accessing certain stories.

And certainly, you know, like I don't speak our language and, and that's something that the more that I do this work in history, the more that weighs on me as a, as a person, because it is a, it's a beautiful thing to be able to speak your own people. Right? And to not have that because of all these other things is, is, is really difficult history to reconcile.

Charlene Teters: My grandmother was not only a fluent speaker and an, a, a culture keeper, meaning that my, grandmother was a storyteller and the storytellers within our traditions are the educators, because they're not simple stories.

They really are embedded with lessons about geology and, about history, about morality, about, you know, everything is sort of embedded in these stories. And they are so important within our traditions that they're passed down generation to generation, largely unchanged. These stories were, it was part of her responsibility to pass it on to the next generation.

Of course, that changed, happened drastically with the colonization and the whole reservation system, you know, where, um, because if it's passed down generation to generation unchanged in the Spokane tribal land language. My mother, uh, who is a fluent speaker, was put into a school system that

discouraged her from speaking her own language and, and, acknowledging her own influences, uh, because that was all discouraged because it was thought to be a hinder, for us to progress and to be fully Americanized.

And it got broke, then because my mother was put into a school system that was trying to erase the language, erase the culture, the stories, all the things that make us who we are. Our dance, our ceremony, it was illegal. My mother was a fluent speaker. But, because she was discouraged from speaking it and teaching it, you know, if we lose our language, then we, you know, become just like other people of color in this country. Right? we've been stripped of the things that make us who we are, and there's much, many of our stories that can't truly be understood when we speak it in English.

Daralyse Lyons: Charlene continued.

Charlene Teters: I'm not a fluent speaker.

I only know some, I have a good ear for it, but because I moved away from it for so long. It's, you know, it's going to take me a while to kind of get back to a place where I feel comfortable even speaking some of it.

Daralyse Lyons: This attempt to steal the stories of Indigenous people was part of the attempt to eradicate their individual and collective consciousness. Because, as Charlene put it:

Charlene Teters: We are a people that is connected by culture, by stories and by blood.

Daralyse Lyons: White supremacy tried to spill that blood through violence, to subjugate the rich cultural practices and to strip native people of their stories.

Commercial Break - Demystifying Diversity Podcast, DEI Services

Daralyse Lyons: As a non-Indegenous person, the only thing I can offer is a platform for others to share their stories.

Spoiler alert, this won't be what you learned in school and it won't be linear.

Morgan Ridgeway I think we're taught, um, certainly in this country to kind of think that the past is sterile is somehow like, just points on a timeline that it doesn't have the same kind of emotional capacity that we have in the present. And I think the best thing you can do as a historian to kind of disrupt the system is to refuse linearity.

Daralyse Lyons: Let's start by unpacking one of America's most widely celebrated holidays.

Charlene Teters: Well, because I'm a conscious person and anybody who's conscious of their own history, whether you're native or non-native, you know, this is our collective history, right?

This thing called Thanksgiving, um, you know, if you're conscious and you know, your history, you know, that what we're actually celebrating is the genocide of a people. I always struggle with this, you know, cause my husband is non-native and so we always have, you know, that side of the family that want to have the big gatherings and but you know, I like the foods of Thanksgiving and I like the gathering of people.

But I boycott this. I don't have that dinner on Thanksgiving is just my own personal way of my own personal, um, boycott of the holidays. I don't participate it within my own home.

Simon Moya-Smith: So on the east coast it's called the National Day of Mourning and on the west coast it's called the Day of Un-Thanksgiving, right? Some Indigenous peoples, actually a lot of Indigenous peoples across the U S and even in Canada - they have a different Thanksgiving - but it's a date not to sit around piss and moan.

It's an opportunity to celebrate our, uh, continued sovereignty, it's the way to celebrate our resiliency. We use that data, celebrate our languages, our culture, but also the millions and millions of people who have died as a result of aggressive, settler invasion.

And I think that we have to remember that the narrative of Thanksgiving is bullshit. You have to remember that you've been indoctrinated to believe that there's this kind of flowery story between the pilgrims and the Indians, when it was actually invaders, who were very brutal, very, um, vicious toward Indigenous people. And even back a couple of years ago, I was on NPR and a lot of people don't know they were also cannibals.

They don't know that narrative. So I said if you really want to celebrate Thanksgiving, you're going to have to start by eating Uncle Jim.

Daralyse Lyons: It might be disgusting but it's accurate. Many of the European invaders who came to the "new" world were hoping to strike gold and get rich. So they arrived here and began digging for gold. They didn't plant crops. Yes, as you've likely heard, Indigenous people helped invaders to stave off starvation by sharing food and other resources, but what you may not have been aware of is that, as these literal gold diggers were scavenging the earth for treasure, they'd come upon the burial sites of deceased Indigenous people, rob their graves of any jewelry or belongings and... eat them. I don't remember seeing cannibalism as part of any elementary school reenactments of colonial history. And speaking of which, can we please stop with those plays?

Simon Moya-Smith: Those Thanksgiving plays are the, I mean, honestly, if you're an American kid, one of the first lessons you're going to learn in the U.S. is that it's okay to play another race.

And you learn it through the Thanksgiving play and you have authority figures like mommy, daddy, principal, vice principal teacher, all of them just cheering you on as you're playing another race. And then they grow up to be in their twenties and they're caught playing Indian again, or they're caught, they're caught in Black face.

There are dots to be connected.

Daralyse Lyons: Here are some other dots to connect: we're currently in Indigenous People's Month. On the fourth Thursday of this month, or on the second Monday of October for those who live in Canada, if you are a resident of a place that celebrates Thanksgiving there's a question you can ask yourself. What do you intend to do to be in a non-exploitative relationship with the millions of people who were murdered?

Simon Moya-Smith: It's important for people to maybe reevaluate what they know about Thanksgiving.

Daralyse Lyons: Reevaluation requires engaging with the truth. And, sadly, many of those responsible for reporting the truth underestimate the American public. They think we can't handle knowing what actually happened, or what's still happening.

Simon Moya-Smith: It's like, you know, mainstream white media, legacy media, the perpetuation of things that are false, that are wrong.

So to give you an example, I'm a journalist. But yet when I write a Thanksgiving piece, unless it's in the opinion section, I can't refer to them as "invaders." I have to refer to them as "settlers" and "colonists," or my editor will change me - change the language that I used, even though I'm factually accurate.

And as journalists, that's our job. Our job is to report the facts and the facts are that they invaded indigenous territory. That's demonstrably proven that has been, documented, left and right, but still. In American newsrooms whose responsibility is to report the facts. I can't report that fact in a straight objective piece.

Daralyse Lyons: Here are some more straight, objective facts:

Tessa McLean: The United States and Canada were both founded, by people who stole our land and, the way that they did that a lot is just, you know, just by taking my stealing and killing, and by dehumanizing us, comparing us to dogs or calling us savages, or, just saying that we weren't equal, that we weren't humans.

There are reports where they say like, we're not intelligent, you know, we didn't own the land. So therefore we had no concept of property or, um, you know, that's what allowed them to steal our land.

I think that dehumanization has been passed down for generations and, you know, even 500 years later, we're still experiencing that.

Charlene: There is government policy, U.S. government policy designed to make native people disappear. You know, the forced assimilation policies, the termination policies...

Simon Moya-Smith: Indigenous women are 2.5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women of any other demographic.

Indigenous peoples per capita are more likely to die at the hands of police than any other demographic, but that's because of our small population, right? More Black bodies are murdered. More Black people are killed by police. But because we're the smallest racial minority, these white cops, especially around reservations, are extremely brutal.

They watched the same John Wayne westerns that their dad did. So there's this demonization of Indigenous people, which is also perpetuated by sports mascots. It's always this aggressor, you know, we're not. So you have to never underestimate the influence of influence.

Fern Anuenue Holland: There's a lot of history like where I'm here today at Hanapepe, you know, there's a, there's a lot of, um, plantation history of uprisings aware people were fighting for social justice and the, the Hawaiian Filipinos, particularly that were on Kauai stood up really strong in the early 1920s.

And, um, it led to a stand-off, a protest, a strike that, um, resulted in, in what they call the Hanapepe massacre, where some of the protests there's about 16 of the protestors were, um, murdered and shot by, basically... at the time we were at U S territory. We weren't yet a state, but the Sheriff's and, um, and basically some hunters that were deputized for this purpose to control the plantation, uh, strikers.

Charlene Teters: Unfortunately so common amongst all - all native people have this as part of their history, within their own families where, the deliberate efforts to erase native nations.

Jaclyn Roessel: There are only two states that have comprehensive K-12 native education. In the entire country, right? And yet all of this land was Indigenous land - is Indigenous land and will continue to be Indigenous land.

Simon Moya-Smith: We're the smallest racial minority in our ancestral land.

Daralyse Lyons: Something worth noting is that, even as each of these six individuals were sharing their wisdom and insight, even when reporting factual, verifiable information, each of them made sure I knew that they could only speak from their own perspective.

Charlene Teters: I don't speak for everybody, but I have very strong opinions about stuff that are based on things that have happened to me and happened to my family.

Simon Moya-Smith: Not every native can speak for other tribes.

Right? We're separate, we're separate sovereign nations. But also I'm not a lawyer. I'm not a chef. I'm not an astronaut, not a teacher, you know, a high school teacher. I'm not a doctor. You know, it's like there

are natives out there that can answer specific questions, especially with their communities and their professions.

Daralyse Lyons: As part of her profession as a consultant and a curator of culture belongings, Jaclyn has, at times, found herself in the unwanted role of representative.

Daralyse Lyons: And I'm just curious, how do you personally, like. Kind of reconcile being an indigenous person, and that's a category that's like a larger umbrella, but then also you have this very unique and particular experience and are part of a smaller culture within that. Like how do you kind of navigate those things?

Jaclyn Roessel: It can feel at times, like a little bit of like walking, like a tightrope, because like you're completely right. I can always speak from an "I" perspective when I'm speaking from like my lived experience as a dine person. Right? And, and even that, like, as a dine, cis, woman, like that there is so much about my identity still that like has like power and privilege and like the education that I was able to achieve, like all of that, like it's still wrapped up into that. And so being cognizant of it, um, and.

And then simultaneously where like, especially when you're in a space, when I was on staff, but even now, like I can come into particular advisory positions and still feel the sense of, you know, you're the spokesperson for folks.

And you're like, actually, like I'm not. And like that is like such a dangerous position to place people. And in one that's like really exhausting, like it's unsustainable.

Daralyse Lyons: What is sustainable?

Jaclyn Roessel: I think in terms of a tactic that I tend to choose and where, and one that has been sustainable for me comes from the place of like being grounded in like who I am , somebody who is walking this tightrope

Commercial Break - Request for Questions

Daralyse Lyons: I promised to return to the topics of land and sustainability, or lack thereof, is something that has come more and more into mainstream American consciousness, but care for the land has always been inextricably woven into Indigenous ideologies.

In speaking about colonizers perspectives versus indigenous ones, Simon told me:

Simon Moya-Smith: It's a huge bifurcation in the ideologies.

Right? We saw land as a relative. When you saw the animals as relatives, when you saw the water in the air, I mean, we knew that, and we still know today that the earth does not need us. We need the earth. So we don't hold dominion over it. Right? So it's like very not it's the Christian idea of that the earth is in the animals are to be subdued, for human for man for - and let's be honest, man meaning penis - we didn't see it that way and we still don't see it that way. You know, we're supposed to walk gently on the land because it's a living. The earth is a living relative and you have to show the earth. And the water and the animals that respect, even if we hunt

it wasn't for fun. It was just like all people. At some point it was for survival, for warmth, for food. So we showed it that respect. We thank it for its hide for its coat, for its meat, for his bones. We thanked it because it sacrificed itself for us.

Daralyse Lyons: Tessa said:

Tessa McLean: I just would hope that people would consider like energy resources that we use. How we treat people, you know, contributes to this issue.

Daralyse Lyons: It's true. Today, just as it was for America's quote-unquote "founding forebears," the decimation of land is often linked to the dehumanization of the people who occupy it.

Simon Moya-Smith: When I say environmental racism, I need to, sometimes you need to clarify it for people.

Environmental racism means: for example, when they had proposed the Keystone XL Pipeline, originally they were going to run the pipeline through Bismarck, North Dakota, which is predominantly white. Well, the community, the white people in that town voted that it was too close.

They didn't want, you know, aesthetic. They didn't want to see too many, you know, earth movers. Also, they didn't want to run the chance of it breaking and affecting *their* water supply. So they say go put it down by the Indians.

Fern Anuenue Holland: You see ongoing generational oppression where you see Hawaiians surrounded by some of the higher concentrated areas ... of pest crops and research centers for biotechnology.

Daralyse Lyons: Fern conducted our interview from a project site. She zoomed in from the front seat of her truck. Behind her, I could see the place that, for many, is considered a bucket-list destination and it was with this view in the background that I listened to her speak about the ramifications of unchecked privilege.

Fern Anuenue Holland: The impacts of the 150 year plantation impacts, completely reshaped the landscape. Our native ecosystems were completely wiped out.

Being raised in Hawaii, I'm blessed to grow up in places where we have incredible landscapes, incredible waterfalls, beautiful, rich oceans and, and the concern for, and, you know, and the, the visual reckoning that these areas are being slowly impacted and watching streams dry up in my, in my community and, and watching, reef collapse and die offs happen.

And and all of this brought me full circle to my real passion of restoring the native ecosystems, and what that loss means for a culture that is so connected to the earth, um, in their religious and spiritual senses.

And so to have the loss of the forest or loss of, of what represents so much to, um, Hawaiians, uh, you know, is, is also a form of oppression.

You know, the taking over of the land and the destruction of the waterways and the re diversion of our streams that now, some of which run dry. To accommodate for the diversion of these streams for colonialized infrastructure that really suppresses the Hawaiian people and marginalized them in their own homes and made us completely un-food sovereign.

So, you know, now we, we, here we are 150 years later, we went from producing more food on Kauai that would feed many more of our people that our population holds today to being so dependent that we only have about a six day shelf life of food. And we import 90% of our food to an abundant place where we should have enough water and food to be able to provide for our people.

So you see the perpetuation of marginalization through the conquering of environmental, land grabs and destruction and wiping out of our resources and, and making us dependent on a foreign system that really strips us of any ability to go back to sovereignty.

Living on an island, dealing with an island, we have very limited resources.

I mean, our trash issue is like, next level. Right? So like they've built this all landfill, which is like on the sea level, that would be totally impacted by a tsunami and his, um, and they just keep building up. So we literally are, have a mountain of trash instead of a hole of trash. We have a mountain of trash just kind of just builds and builds and builds.

And with food. I mean, everything that you can see as far as the landscape is, or surrounding me is so heavily modified that there's not even one native plant. Everything that you see at sea level is an invasive species because the entire ecosystem has been wiped out.

And then here we are the wettest place in the world - literally the wettest place in the world - access to great water. And, you know, our groundwater is contaminated by a hundred years of pollution.

So there's all these like, even though Hawaii had some of this Hawaii, the Kingdom of Hawaii had incredible, laws about water protection and public trust, rights and access, a lot of that just goes ignored by the occupying, You know, government. And so because of that, the rivers are still diverted. So like 40 million gallons of water a day is diverted from this white man system.

Daralyse Lyons: If you're wondering what happened to Hawaii as a result of this white man system:

Fern Anuenue Holland: At one point, our entire island was basically a plantation and every single thing that was plantable and level or clearable was cleared for sugar and pineapple mostly.

Daralyse Lyons: After my conversation with Fern, I was inspired to learn more, and then more, and then more about Hawaii. I discovered that "Native Hawaiian" is a racial classification and that Hawaii is named after its Indigenous people. Therefore, living in Hawaii doesn't make you Hawaiian, it makes you a resident of Hawaii.

I learned that the first recorded western contact with Hawaii was in 1778 when Captain James Cook, an English explorer, sailed into Waimea Bay on Kauai. Prior to Cook's arrival, it is estimated that between 400,000 and as many as one million Native Hawaiians were living on the major Hawaiian islands.

Within a century after he first landed, the Native Hawaiian population had been decimated, dropping down to about 40,000. 90% of the population died and most of those deaths can be attributed to the diseases brought by the European invaders. Even after this invasion through contagion, Hawaiians remained resilient.

Hawaii was an independent sovereign nation with an internationally-recognized monarchy and remained part of the global economy, entering into bilateral treaties of trade and friendship with numerous other countries until more than 100 years after that first European arrival. Then, on January 17, 1893, a group of American sugar planters, aided by 300 United States Marines and with the foreknowledge of the US Minister to Hawaii illegally overthrew Hawai'i's government.

No doubt, you're familiar with Dole pineapples. Well, the businessmen and sugar planter behind the illegal overthrow was Sanford Dole, who some refer to as a "sugar baron." Sanford's cousin, James Dole, sometimes called the "pineapple king," began the pineapple industry in Hawai'i.

Something Fern didn't mention in our interview but which I'd be remiss in not mentioning to you is that America used (and continues to use) Hawaii for its Pacific fleet. During World War II, when Pearl Harbor was bombed, the Hawaiian people and the Hawaiian ecosystem was severely impacted.

And it wasn't just the bombing itself that was detrimental. In the wake of the attack, the US government placed Hawaii under strict military rule. Using the rationale that roughly 1/3rd of Hawaiian residents possessed Japanese ancestors, FBI agents rounded up and arrested more than 2,000 people in the first 48 hours alone. Then the military took control of Hawaiian labor, the army imposed a strict curfew, Habeas corpus was suspended, and trial by jury was temporarily abolished. Hawaii remained under military rule for almost three years.

The ideologies that claim to support and advance personal freedom, autonomy and self-reliance have serious consequences. They've cost people, communities and the environment and they continue to destroy. That's not to say that there's not value in the traditions and cultures that invaders brought with

them to the now United States. It is to say that the exertion of those influences by force and the attempts to eradicate what already existed has been devastating for people of color and for white people, too. Later in the season, we'll be talking about the internal alienation, pain and violence that are the inevitable consequences of self-centered, heteronormative, white supremacist thinking. But I want to leave you with the promise that there is another way, a more sustainable way, a way that communities of color have long-practiced. Here's what Morgan had to say about colonialism.

Morgan Ridgeway: There is no possible way to survive that onslaught by yourself.

And I think something that sort of threads through a lot of different history narratives of Blackness of it, of indigenous people is community and collaboration and gatherings, because it was in like, everything else said that your body shouldn't exist. Everything else told you or forced you into a kind of nothingness.

And so our community is developed because out of necessity and there's a beauty in that.

Daralyse Lyons: Join me next week for an in-depth exploration of the beauty and resilience of Indigenous communities and the individuals that comprise them

Daralyse Lyons: Thank you for listening to the Demystifying Diversity Podcast. If you haven't already, please take a moment to like, subscribe, rate and review. And if you'd like to ask us a question which we will try to answer in an upcoming Q&A episode, please call 844-888-8148 and leave your question or comment or visit our website, demystifyingdiversitypodcast.com where you can get in touch, subscribe to our newsletter, and find out more about our DEI trainings, workshops, coaching, consulting and other DEI services.

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The music you heard is "Better" by Brittany Monet.

If you'd like to explore these topics outside of the podcast, pick up a copy of Demystifying Diversity: Embracing Our Shared Humanity wherever books are sold. Join us next week and, in the meantime, let's keep trying to make this a better, more inclusive world.