

# PodcastS3\_JoelEdwardGoza

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

america, people, white, book, community, life, nation, fifth ward, king, trump, reparations, world, joel, happening, christianity, houston, progressives, church, question, realities

## SPEAKERS

Joel Edward Goza, Omkari Williams



Omkari Williams 00:20

Hello, and welcome to Stepping Into Truth, the podcast where we take on the issues of race, gender and social justice. I'm your host Omkari Williams, and I'm so happy that you're here with me today. Hosting this podcast is such a joy for me, I'm privileged to speak with people who are out in the world making a difference in their day jobs, their programs, their art, their activism. If you would like to support me in doing this work, you can do so for as little as \$3 a month by becoming a member of my Patreon community. You can go to [patreon.com/omkariwilliams](https://patreon.com/omkariwilliams) and sign up. There's also a link on my website [omkariwilliams.com](https://omkariwilliams.com).



Omkari Williams 01:03

My guest today is the author of the book, *America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics*, one of the most illuminating books I've read in a long while. Joel Edward Goza is an author, speaker and community advocate. He brings a rigorously researched and community based perspective to understanding our nation's racial crisis. Before focusing on writing, Joel worked in urban redevelopment and community activism for over a decade. His first book, *America's Unholy Ghosts: The Racist Roots of Our Faith and Politics*, received a star review from Publishers Weekly, and endorsements from the National Book of the Year Award winner Ibram X. Kendi and New York Times contributor Khalil Gibran Mohammed. His current book project is tentatively entitled, *Rebirth of a*

Nation: Reparations and Making an Anti Racist America. When not working, Joel spends his time pestering his wife Sarah, daughter, Naomi, and son Samuel Roger as they enjoy their life together in Houston's fifth Ward community. And it is my great pleasure to welcome Joel to the podcast. Hi, Joel, how are you?

 Joel Edward Goza 02:21

I am doing well. I have been looking forward to talking to you, Omkari.

 Omkari Williams 02:26

Oh, me, too. I'm super excited about this conversation, especially now with the timing that we have. So let's just jump right in. Because we don't have all day, although I'm sure you and I could probably talk all day.

 Joel Edward Goza 02:40

Hopefully, won't be the last time.

 Omkari Williams 02:41

Hopefully not. So when we first connected about having you on the podcast, I thought that we would mostly be talking about your book and how you've so clearly elucidated the role of three white British men born even before the founding of America, Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith, and John Locke, in creating systems that are foundational to our country's, systemic racism. And we're definitely going to get to that. But in the wake of the election that we just had, I would love to start this discussion by talking about what this election has revealed for us. I mean, we just had months of protests in the wake of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others. I mean, months with people of all races in the streets protesting, and it honestly felt to me like maybe we have turned a corner. And then we learned that more white women voted for Trump this time around than last. And that was so disheartening to me. So I'd like to start this conversation by getting your take on that.

 Joel Edward Goza 03:45

You know, I'm in your shoes with kind of the the mixed emotions. You know, when Trump got elected, one of the things that was very concerning for people was how many Democrats didn't show up because they thought that Trump had no chance of winning.

And yet what we learned on this last election was that there was perhaps a lot of Republicans that had sat out who would be ready to support Trump. But they didn't show up either not thinking that he had a chance. And then when we realized that Trump was really the fight of our nation, all of America showed up in a very powerful way. And, you know, there's so much to talk about with what we can learn from this moment.



Omkari Williams 04:26

Yeah, I think the thing that surprised me, I knew that there were a lot of people out there who supported Trump. I mean, that was apparent to me four years ago, even before the election, and he's built on that base. He's given people permission to sort of openly spew their fear and their vitriol in a way that was not socially acceptable before. But I found it really interesting that white women who, in my mind have lost so much in the last nine months of this pandemic, I mean, they've lost jobs. They're home with their kids trying to educate their kids and still trying to somehow keep their families together with less financial resources for many of them, I found it really interesting that that number of white women supporting him went up.



Joel Edward Goza 05:26

Yeah, I mean, it's terrifying. You know, I remember. So my daughter is now in the first grade. And after the election, you know, she was still really concerned about going back to school because of the germs and this, that or the other. And one of the things that, you know, we told my daughter, was that now that she was going to have a president who cared whether or not she lived or died, and that together with science, and with the new president, we were going to fight to keep her safe, you know. And to think of this election from the perspective of parents, you know, it's really troubling, that so many white women come out and still support Donald Trump.



Joel Edward Goza 06:08

And, you know, I just couldn't help but thinking, as we, as I was watching the election results come in on Tuesday night, just how powerful segregation has continued to be to make white America lack any moral understanding. I think without a deeply, deeply segregated community, it would have been impossible for so many white women to vote for Donald Trump. But within the context of a segregated community, when you look at kind of the wells that women can drink from within those communities, it may make a lot of sense that they were ready to double down on their stance on Trump in a very heartbreaking way.



Omkari Williams 06:55

Would you speak more about that, and what those wells are?



Joel Edward Goza 06:59

Sure. So I have white women in my family that I love very deeply that voted for Donald Trump. So this isn't a thing that is outside of intimate circle for me. I mean, this is, you know, my family is a Trump family, and what they know of the world, they know exclusively through the lens of white, very conservative Christianity, and Fox News. And when these are the wells that you drink from, the world looks fundamentally different.



Joel Edward Goza 07:35

And, you know, as I and I'm sure, we'll get into a little bit of my of my story, but I think without very specific things happening in my life, I may have voted for Donald Trump. Because the worldview that I had, as a very white conservative Christianity made a whole lot of sense to me within a segregated context. It wasn't until the segregation in my life fell that I was really free to look at the world in a different way, and realize that the way that I once looked at it, in no way harmonized with the realities that I began witnessing, as I became part of various communities throughout my city here in Houston, Texas. But segregation is the story of the white imagination on these issues.



Omkari Williams 08:26

That is so interesting. And what a clear way to put it. I've never heard it described in those terms. But that makes perfect sense to me, as you say it. So you went to divinity school, and you come at all of your work from a faith perspective. And in your book, you reference the Prophetic Black Church tradition, and your alignment with that tradition, rather than the white evangelical tradition of your upbringing. And I would really like for you to talk about the Prophetic Black Church and its relevance in the conversations that we're having around race today.



Joel Edward Goza 09:06

Right. Well, the Prophetic Black Church is almost as old as the struggle of racism in America. And when I think of the Prophetic Black Church, what I'm thinking about is the church that was born under slavery, often having to meet in secret having to keep their activities, very private, very reserved. But it was a community that emerged in a faith that emerged to protect Black dignity with a very dehumanizing world. As the civil war rages

on, and the Emancipation Proclamation comes, the war ends and reconstruction comes. What ends up happening is the Black church can come out of hiding. And what happens within the Black church is that it is food for the soul.



Joel Edward Goza 09:49

But it's so much more than that. It is the care for the free community. It becomes the training ground for a generation of political leaderships. And so it begins this holistic fight for equality for African Americans, that is mind, body and spirit. And it is that the church that has kept that holistic perspective that travels through the civil rights campaign that forms an Ida B. Wells, that forms a W.E.B. DuBois, that forms a Martin Luther King, Jr. That forms a William Barber today, that still has the wisdom that I think that our country so desperately needs. As we fight for racial justice in our nation. What has become clear to me, I'm working on a book on reparations right now. And what has become clear to me is just, you know, regardless of where people stand on religious matters, you know, and I don't write just for Christians. I write for atheists, agnostics, you know, whoever. You know, I am a Christian, but I try to write for all people, is that white supremacy is a spiritual sickness. And if we don't deal with the very soul of our nation, we will fail to bring the type of justice that we're giving our lives to achieve.



Omkari Williams 11:07

Yeah, I mean, that pretty well says it is there is this critical piece that we seem to consistently be missing. And something that really stuck out to me when I was reading your book is that you speak about Dr. King as perhaps the only truly spiritual and revolutionary genius that our country has ever produced. And you write about his belief that there were two phases to the fight for civil rights. And I would really like for you to talk about those two phases and the import of the second phase in particular, as we work to change policy, not just hearts and minds, and specifically, you reference the concept of evolutionary change versus revolutionary change. So tell us about those things. Yeah, absolutely.



Joel Edward Goza 11:57

I think that what I say specifically in the book, in order that I don't dismiss it, the other geniuses that our nation may have had done is it is only the only spiritual and political genius,



Omkari Williams 12:08

Yes, sorry.



Joel Edward Goza 12:09

that our that our nation has has ever, ever produced because I think that, you know, Malcolm X is a political genius, you know, for sure, other folks are political geniuses. But there's something unique about King and what I try to argue in the book is that when we think about King, so often, and I don't say this, you know, directly in the book, but our understanding of King has been formed by Ronald Reagan. And what Ronald Reagan did with MLK Day was he formed an understanding of King that would harmonize with the colorblind age. And so he formed a vision of King that just talked about holding hands. But that didn't talk about justice, and reparation didn't challenge America, on its militarism, and its materialism.



Joel Edward Goza 12:57

And so there was this very tame version of King that I had in my mind when I moved in to Houston's inner city, Fifth Ward community. But when I got back to King and started reading his original writings, what I realized is that when we think of King, who we should be think comparing him to, are folks like Galileo, and Einstein, folks who fundamentally changed the very way that we see our world. And when you get to the two phases of Kings movement, the very first phase is fighting against segregation. And it's changing the laws that allows for this type of participation from the African American community in our nation. And yet, after he achieved some of the greatest civil rights victories in our nation, what he realizes is how woefully insufficient those victories are, and what I'll write is that for King, his own victories started to just feel like small steps rather than these large strides to freedom.



Joel Edward Goza 14:00

And so he'll move into Chicago, he'll go into these other areas, he begins to get much, much, much more radical, demanding not only the right to vote, but equality in every area of America's life. You know, one of the things that he'll write is he'll say, you know, when this nation was founded, we were considered 60% of a person. We were two thirds or three fifths of a person, right? From the three fifths compromise. He says that the value of African Americans in America's life has only decreased. He said that as I write this, today, America only considers African Americans half a person of everything good in life. We have half of everything bad in life, we have double. And so he had just this powerful

imagination, to really see what was going on in our nation and to really be sickened by what he what he witnessed, but to have the courage to tell us what he saw. And it's a very interesting testament to our nation, that the people who were most intimately involved in the Civil Rights campaign feel like their work was utterly rejected. When as a nation our national consciousness is to think that we actually embrace the works of King when we, in fact, rejected his revolutionary brilliance.



Omkari Williams 15:21

Wow. I mean, really! Wow. That is such a different perspective than the one we ever hear in school,



Joel Edward Goza 15:35

Yeah.



Omkari Williams 15:35

or in conversation.



Joel Edward Goza 15:37

Wow, you know, John Conyers fought really hard for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, you know, and John Conyers, for those. He was a representative from Michigan. And he spearheaded the fight for Reparations. And John Conyers, is spearheading both King in the work for Reparations, because it's all part of one move movement. What Reagan was able to do in a very brilliant way, was to appropriate King for his own issues, so that King can harmonize with the racism of Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Bill Clinton, rather than in the radical vision of John Conyers.



Joel Edward Goza 16:15

And, you know, part of the work I think today that is going on is really trying to recapture the radical edge that King had, because it is something that I think that we need desperately today. So when we think about evolutionary change versus revolutionary change, talk about that, and what that means, right? So on the heels of the civil rights movement, what ends up happening is rather than embracing this revolutionary change, that King was calling for, we embraced evolutionary progress.



Joel Edward Goza 16:49

We embrace Nixon's Age of Law and Order, thinking that we can just take very small steps and kind of improve the trajectory of where we're going. And you know, what I'll write in the book is it looks like, for a while, you know, particularly when Barack Obama becomes president, that we were able to evolve to become the people that we hoped we could become. And yet what happens under Obama's presidency is we realize that rather than making progress in many of the most important ways, we are still stuck in the quicksand of America's white supremacy.



Joel Edward Goza 17:31

And one of the things I'll write about is that it's during these times of crisis, that we have an opportunity to fundamentally change some of the big assumptions that drive our life together. And the difference between evolutionary progress and revolutionary progress is how deeply you are ready to question the very fundamental assumptions that hold your life together. You know, so, Newton and gravity, Galileo and a circular world, like these were paradigm shifting changes. And in America today, we need paradigm shifting politics that really questions the foundation of our life together. And how is it that we can address the racism of our past in order to pull out of that racist past and anti racist future? And it's only by questioning some of our core commitments that we can really begin to do the work to rewrite our life together.



Omkari Williams 18:41

This seems like a good time for you to tell a bit of your story of how you got to where you are now from being the son of a pastor, in the southern baptist tradition.



Joel Edward Goza 18:56

Yeah. A Deacon, the chairman of the Deacons.



Omkari Williams 18:57

I'm sorry, a Deacon.



Joel Edward Goza 18:58

Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting. You know, if a Southern Baptist boy grows up to become a writer working from Fifth Ward, you knew things in his life didn't go as planned, right?



Omkari Williams 19:11

To say the least. And just for the listeners, the Fifth Ward of Houston, is the demographics on the Fifth Ward is that it is 45% Hispanic and Latinx 43%. Black and a bit under 5% white, so you are definitely in the minority in that community.



Joel Edward Goza 19:30

Yeah, for sure. And it's, you know, it's the historical African American community of Houston. You know, we were formed right after the Emancipation Proclamation. Barbara Jordan comes from Fifth Ward, George Foreman, the Ghetto Boys, you know that's Fifth Ward. So it was not where I anticipated landing up. But what ended up happening to me was that I myself came into this moment of crisis. You know, I was undiagnosed diabetic for a long time, I lost my job. I had to drop out of school. Just a number of circumstances kind of coalesced, and put me in a position to really begin rethinking my life.



Joel Edward Goza 20:09

And during that time, I had a friend who was teaching at an inner city school. And he encouraged me and some friends to move down here into the Fifth Ward and just to become a part of the community. And so that's what we did. And what I realized very, very quickly was that everything that I had believed about race in America, about poverty in America, was fundamentally wrong. And so I had to begin trying to understand my world, from the ground level perspective of what I was seeing in Houston's Fifth Ward, you know.



Joel Edward Goza 20:44

So I had to start questioning, you know, how is it that we can make billionaires, but we prove unable for working mothers to be able to afford to feed their family? What's going on to make this really happen? How is it that we can place a man on the moon in Houston, but we are unable to educate and feed and clothe our children? How is it that we can have churches like Lakewood that can save so many souls without creating any type of prophetic rage at the injustice in our city? And so, you know, I write America's Unholy Ghosts really trying to analyze the big assumptions of my own life, my own cultural common sense. And how was it that that cultural common sense, produced the type of realities that I was seeing day in and day out in Houston's Fifth Ward?



Omkari Williams 21:37

That's so interesting, because most people live in communities where everybody looks like them. No matter what Americans think, the vast majority of Americans live in very segregated communities. And it is so difficult. You know, we like to think of ourselves as these big hearted, generous people who will help anybody else out. But when you can't imagine yourself in someone else's circumstances, it really creates a wall. And I think that people don't take seriously enough the implications of the walls that are created simply by the fact that we don't experience other people, people of other races in a day to day way that shows their humanity and allows us to show our full humanity as well.



Joel Edward Goza 22:33

Yeah, and this becomes, you know, one of the things I think that white conservatives and white liberals have always held in common, was the ability to know everything without ever knowing Black people. And what ends up happening is that our understanding of what we need to know, is completely divorced from the type of relationships that are necessary to know anything that's worth knowing. I don't want that to sound too circular. But basically, you know, we have kind of like this, we have a fact and stat based society. And we have a form of understanding our world that is very divorced from the type of deep, diverse intimacies that we need in order to see our world and one another, more truthfully,



Omkari Williams 23:23

One of the things that you talk about a lot in your book is the idea that there is no way to really meaningfully be a person of faith if you are not connected to a broad swath of people, including those at the bottom of the socio economic the bottom of the entitlement ladder.



Joel Edward Goza 23:54

Yeah, for sure.



Omkari Williams 23:56

And I find that really interesting, because I think that people don't understand how important that is and the ways in which it impacts us. And I would love for you to talk some about that.



Joel Edward Goza 24:09

You know, so growing up in the Southern Baptist tradition, we had our set, we had our our Sinners Prayer, you know, where we asked Jesus in a heart for him to come save us this, that or the other and what became very important within Southern Baptists life but not just Southern Baptist life, really white Christianity in general, was knowledge of the right formulas. This is how we get to know God, you know, whether it's the Sinner Prayer, whether it's the Creeds, but we felt that we could get to know God without getting to know his children. And so if the God that Christians serve, if his identity is fundamentally as being the Father, and if you don't know that Father's children, there is a very real reality that you don't have an in depth knowledge of that Father. What we can know about a father without knowing his children is very, very, very limited.



Joel Edward Goza 25:01

And, again, this cuts across ideological divides. Because one of the things that white Christians and white liberals had in common was that they felt that they could know God without knowing or learning. And I have to stress them learning from the Black church. You know when, so I graduated seminary, you know, many moons ago. But what was interesting looking back on it is that I can't name a substantial white theologian in in America's history that has ever really learned from the African American tradition. The most notable white theologian that ever learned from the African American tradition was not from America, but it was from Germany. And that was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Black church proves transformative for Bonhoeffer, and yet this readiness to learn from African Americans was not a readiness that the white church, whether liberal conservative, ever deeply embodied.



Omkari Williams 26:08

That really strikes me because I think that certainly I never thought about the linkage between white Christianity and the structure of our democracy, as it applies to race. It just never occurred to me.



Joel Edward Goza 26:27

Right, right. Well, for for America to become the America it became what was required was to convince white Christians that this was the way that we needed to go. And so you never could do political work in America without convincing significant sections of white Christians that the racial work we're doing is in harmony with their Christian faith. And to do that, what ended up happening in America is we had to change fundamentally what

Christianity was always about. And so you know, there are a lot of debates, you know, whether or not America is a Christian nation. Those who don't think that America is a Christian nation have a lot of evidence. You know, those who want to argue that America is a Christian nation, they can find evidence as well. You know, what I wanted to ask in America's Unholy Ghosts was a little bit different of a question. What I wanted to say is say, "Okay, what if we said America was a Christian nation?" Let's ask what type of Christianity America has. And what the type of Christianity that America had, and that America has today, was first a Christianity that was very comfortable with the institution of slavery. And that evolved to become comfortable with every form of white supremacy that ever landed on American soil. And that is still true today, in both progressive and in conservative circles.



Omkari Williams 27:57

Can you expand on that? Because I think it's a really critical point, and it's easy to lose it without the specificity.



Joel Edward Goza 28:07

Sure, sure. Absolutely. In slavery times, you know, what ends up happening is that Christianity gets reduced just to soul salvation. Why do we have to reduce Christianity to soul salvation? Maybe I'll pause and just tell the three lies that I see shaping white Christianity.



Omkari Williams 28:28

Okay.



Joel Edward Goza 28:30

So the three lies that I write about in the book is one that people can know God, without knowing the broken and the abused of the world. That's the first lie. The second lie is that true Christianity is about soul salvation. The third and final lie was that one can be indifferent to injustice, with no threat to one's intimacy with God. Even though in biblical terms, that's the very epitome of what hard heartedness is. And so in, in the times of slavery, America's leading theologians were often slaveholders. People like Jonathan Edwards, who would literally write sermons on the back of a receipt that he had from one of his slaves. By believing that Christianity was only a spiritual thing it allowed white Christians to justify their faith to put people in chains. And then as that evolves, the

Christian imagination still doesn't take on more of the prophetic edge of Scripture.



Joel Edward Goza 29:38

And so when MLK is fighting for civil rights in the 60s, he really sees his work as in part a work on racial reconciliation within the church. Believing that once white people truly see the suffering of their Black brothers and sisters that they will will join in on the work, and that they will stand in solidarity in order to transform our nation. And what he will later write is that the greatest mistake that he ever made in his movement was in hoping that white Christians would change. And what he writes is, that what has become proven, is that white Christians are more white than they are Christian. A book is going to be coming out about that, from one of my friends, very soon. But as we get into the time that we are today, one of the things I think that we had failed to really understand is how it was the politics of both white liberals and white conservatives that made Donald Trump possible in the first place. And so when you look at the political trajectory of America ever since Ronald Reagan, we have been Ronald Reagan's nation. Whether your name was George Bush, or whether your name was Bill Clinton. And that whole movement comes to a crescendo with the election of Donald Trump. But when you look at Trump, and you look at the policies that he pursues, it's very much like what Ronald Reagan pursued. And it's very much the law and order rhetoric that Joe Biden helped bring about, that Bill Clinton partnered with. And so we we find ourselves today in a bipartisan crisis, where I think both parties have to deeply, deeply inspect their souls.



Omkari Williams 31:36

So where do we go from here? What is it that you feel we as a country, that we as people who consider ourselves progressives and consider ourselves to be struggling for social justice and equality. Where do you think we go from here?



Joel Edward Goza 31:58

Yeah, and that's, that's a great question. That's the title of King's book, right? In his final book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Community or Chaos?* You know, again, you know, there's this book that has become pretty influential. For me, there was actually a business book, it wasn't, it wasn't about social change. But the title of it was called *Immunity to Change*. And what becomes clear, in the book is it says, basically, so much of our life and our inability to change is anchored in the big assumptions that shape our life, and that prohibit us from becoming who we could become. Now, when you look at that through a political lens, until we are ready to really deal with the sins of our past, there's not going to

be a hope for an anti racist future.

J Joel Edward Goza 32:52

So in 1955, when they kill Emmett Till in Mississippi, the authorities in Mississippi try to place his body in the ground immediately, so that the world will not see what Mississippi does. Because what Emmett Till's body was, is Emmett Till's body was a hallmarker to an entire way of life. And what ends up happening is that Miss Bradley, Emmett Till's mother, is able to outmaneuver Mississippi, and she brings his body Chicago. And what ends up happening in Chicago, is she opens up Emmett Till's casket, so that the world will be forced to witness what is a hallmark of the American way of life. And I think the work that we have before us is the work to keep the caskets open.

J Joel Edward Goza 33:45

So, and I see this in work such as the 1619 project in the New York Times that really helps us to deal with the realities of our history. Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative, trying to open the caskets at the age of lynching. And I think, you know, from the perspective of white progressives, we've got to start opening our own caskets and see how it was that we participated in the realities that touch ground to break Black bodies, and that never stopped.

J Joel Edward Goza 34:20

It is not going to be enough for progressives to be able to critique Trumpland. The work has to go deeper than that. Even from a Republican side of the aisle for people who are less progressive, they to have to see how the policies that they have supported have fundamentally crucified Black lives and our nation. So a number of of people that I think voted for Trump that I know, did so holding their nose. Not saying that Trump was the ideal, but you know, they would talk about ridiculous things such as the Supreme Court, you know, but it is no coincidence. that Donald Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, their first decision, sends a Black man in Arkansas to death. You know, that's what ends up happening with Republican chosen Supreme Court justices. Just as liberals have work and seeing how it is that we got here. conservatives have that work as well. And the truth of the matter is, is that, you know, you can't hold your nose and act as if you're not doing an evil act when you're voting for something that is absolutely unredeemable, absolutely unredeemable. So, you know, it is, within this context, if we can sit with the caskets open from our history, I think it is at those points that we can learn to see where our fingerprints touch these bodies, and how we can get into an atmosphere to really create a readiness to begin rewriting our lives together.



Omkari Williams 36:01

That is such a beautiful description of the work we need to do. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for that, that is beautiful description. Unfortunately, our time is getting short. And I would like to ask you to leave the listeners with three simple actions that they can take in support of racial equity.



Joel Edward Goza 36:30

Three simple actions. Well, one of the things that I think becomes really important right now, you know, in kind of staying in with the themes of of keeping the casket open, is to begin to self examination that is necessary, and try to understand what it is that has brought us to this point, you know, so deep self evaluation, deep national evaluation.



Joel Edward Goza 37:00

Then the question I think, becomes, within that self evaluation, to be able to try to name the gifts that have been entrusted to your care. And to figure out the ways that those gifts can touch ground in marginalized communities to bring about greater and greater justice. The truth of the matter is, is that the gift sets that we need to make Black Lives Matter in America is very wide ranging and very diverse. And yet, largely, I think that we have fallen short of our ability to be able to recognize our gifts and, and to align them to the need to the work that needs to happen. And I think that that has to keep on going.



Joel Edward Goza 37:47

And then my final word, I think, for racial equity, you know, we got to talk about reparations. The time is here, for us to really dive in and to figure out what reparations can look like, in in thinking about reparations, I think what we've got to understand is that reparations are no work of racial justice. Nothing that we can say, will ever provide a silver bullet. And so with a world without silver bullets, we have to be able to find the communities and the spiritual resources, the intellectual resources, we need to simply stay in the saddle. Knowing that the fight before us is a very long fight, that will claim the best of the lives we have to live.



Omkari Williams 38:33

Okay, I mean, I'm literally sitting here just thinking. This has been amazing. This has been such a deep, meaningful, profound conversation and I am truly moved. And I am very, very grateful to have had the opportunity to speak with you.



Joel Edward Goza 38:56

I'm so honored to be with you. I'm so honored, all the best to your work in Chicago. Chicago's near and dear to my heart. I'm a diehard Bears fan, I did school in Chicago, but uh, but yeah, I'm honored to be with you and certainly hope that we'll be able to reconnect in the near future.



Omkari Williams 39:13

I hope so too. Thank you so much, Joel.



Omkari Williams 39:21

We are living in a precarious time in this country. Under the Trump administration, the forces of hate have been given free rein. It's going to take time and hard work to repair the damage and to move us forward. There are days when that truth feels deeply discouraging. What I can say though is this, there are millions of allies and accomplices ready to step up and to do the work. And our responsibility is to keep doing our individual part and know that it adds to the collective. As Dr. King said, the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice. Thank you all so much for listening. I will be back with another episode of Stepping Into Truth very soon. Until then, remember that change starts with story so keep sharing yours.