Kaomi Lee ([00:00:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EzJediumgFFQ5ldulx9QOZZw3wXIJA-FrmM-iNU3XIrtfrEEjY-hOsciJStbaN6j_ZyWGIF_oXX3r7XLis7SG_4YnnM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2.93)):

Welcome to Adapted Podcast. It all starts now.

Peter Savasta ([00:00:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JYA2SGVe84qJ9p_tHh5TozHN9d4mlyc4qEdd7nus1Dt0PQNzIZZOjKHi-bJNJCnuBTqKZyOzcybN3nvjL5zTWaUp1i8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=8.02)):

Jokingly, once I had said to him, "Oh, I think, because you're mixed race, you're one of the whitest guys I've ever been with." And then, he just went, "Well, so are you." (singing)

Kaomi Lee ([00:00:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sli6rqnOXYYvWufJ2BNXHzc0EWnqmz5WmRNNykBQ-hhI4rc7pnrH5S8c3uGu5Mwt6tE9fGTaZZX5Y4kJmyDI7ZJZhAg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=25.16)):

I'm Kaomi Lee. Thanks again to Jae Jin, who is supplying our theme music this season. jaejinmusic.com. You can catch him on all the streaming sites. He's terrific, so check out his work. In this next episode, we're going to meet Peter Savasta. If you're a Korean American adoptee and haven't heard of him, you should, not just because he can make a mean Italian-heritage meatloaf, and he can.

Kaomi Lee ([00:00:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8TLA2qB5fs3f_lGpTDzQDnX9rp95BXThgbAH0O1FJ9f1mMzENFwn78bNrpmKRDbaRUg5EKyxuKOtkIaz_lz8B16a0JE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=53.27)):

But because, in the '90s, he was one of those involved along with Hollee McGinnis to form Also Known As in New York. It's an adoptee advocacy nonprofit that's been a landing and launching pad for countless transracial adoptees. He was also an early mentor to many KADs. And he did work to support gay adoptees at a time when he often felt alone. So here's Peter.

Peter Savasta ([00:01:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NQxMvRfP38ZOZPTzJYV7qr3qqsXC-nPzPBG3pUa8Uk1lDz-eI19sO9zG-eJla8ueBQLTstuKKONdUkjOK204blXzHyE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=82)):

Hi, my name is Peter Savasta. I'm 46. My pronouns are he, him and I live in Honolulu, Hawaii. I guess I was adopted. And I was born in South Korea in a city right outside of Seoul. And then, I was adopted at five months of age in 1976. I was raised in Queens, New York by an Italian American family. Yeah, I guess that's the start.

Kaomi Lee ([00:01:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VowCNdNbKuXdgptC-A6ln-J08ZId5_BmEIPynVePvSL1QW7qLfW4ILcM49lmH6AfSRbOf7o7NQAlrJlcmIaCBrFrFfM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=115.69)):

Can you bring up the Queens accent if you ...

Peter Savasta ([00:02:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=occy-mQU_pgiJbJpYx2BLOMXju5Ut_wzc8alrt3niEjROmJSRLs1SHOmU8jf_l9QbJJKR4fVMcoL-OpwyexeH1YqvYc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=120.19)):

Oh, I got to have to think about it. I mean, when back in New York for my niece's wedding a few months ago, I kind of just slipped into it, like code-switching.

Kaomi Lee ([00:02:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NBVFDZj3sAA6Afk8QS5pxxrGnL_7NowtFvz-nWwpeyZQq7DEFZ0iCWf7vxKXj1l7zbh33wUE_O21U46_f9frychditA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=131.98)):

What are some of the things that are ...

Peter Savasta ([00:02:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4gqt1W201Okq9NTv0eW2ISd8tzhqmrR0hhxK8WUKMYQtM9a2KWu2OORGwLcERFaCmal8_gYD35Q9mDAbhCZ31S0eQUw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=134.77)):

Well, I would say, "Not for nothing," or, "Not for nothing, but that's crazy." It's not even fully there. But if I'm on the phone with someone in my family, it comes back a little. And then, at this wedding surrounded by everyone from Queens, it just ... My husband was incredibly ... I don't think he'd ever see me go full New York or full Queens. And I think he was just like, "I don't know this person."

Peter Savasta ([00:02:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v0KL_P0Qd5xIHDvOGn48bLXDLRxnlpZu0pFjJbKb4UOYriGAwwK6qOT13DgqSkzKJ-8qGGpDnulAQoXeoq5qoI8LNnE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=165.87)):

He actually said to me, he goes, "You're laughing in ways I've never heard you laugh. You're talking in ways I never heard you talk." And I guess seeing that kind of accent come out of Korean American's mouth, it's a little disconcerting for people who don't see me normally, I guess. But I do have it. There's certain words that I still say.

Peter Savasta ([00:03:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DpkkL1paTXTq5W6lSZYzC9L2sbc7PxLjN9PZc2lI32neGHgRyPqfxsI1mDvaRQZHqkmSpKoX9VoS23p1x_p3QQL4axI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=194.8)):

In college, I got made fun of a lot. They're like, "Oh, Peter, can I borrow your pen?" Yeah, it's in my drawer." And they're like, "You're what?" I'm like, "It's in my drawer." Like, "Your drawer?" And I'm like, "Oh, yeah, I guess there's an R at the end of that."

Kaomi Lee ([00:03:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=D5YrI2W24T--gbUDVrMM8aCvqdQR4zteZzKX-Bh2CxiR-4a84QnBIdTr675kJyKILv02QtWkjfDgYMz7kANfMxzGOSY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=212.23)):

Yeah, because it sounds like you've ... Yeah, to talk to you now, it sounds like it's vanished or airbrushed out. I don't know. But yeah, so I think I would be shocked too, if you started to go full Queens on me.

Peter Savasta ([00:03:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lO7cyaAP0otOyaHA9rOrrsMndddBKz8KlZROzDpTSboj_AygfeQTKkkkOqeTdDb-s65QJSt72LDJ4mDMH6oOKKYN7Zk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=232.69)):

I think it's something that happens when I'm really tired, or I drink too much. And with the drinking part, I think it's more as a party trick than anything else.

Kaomi Lee ([00:04:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SzQAJb4kexIRogHzE91PsJ_DUIAddcqUiHSEF8Q84kiQ8pv94dVX3Do_Sw8AO7qiIdSScFy0UvddJwrkect_TuwaI1c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=248.13)):

So Italian American family. Were you the only adoptee? Do you have brothers and sisters?

Peter Savasta ([00:04:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ob90AZCjOxvqGJ_fkU3HfHTDzTo7Talh_yy5N9yBh4niAgjF6G07S8nV94wQf2j4q49SxJAQtyTdbHk4zRrqCeyrga0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=255.37)):

Yeah, I have an older brother and sister. They're not adopted. I have an older brother who's 10 years older than me and an older sister who's seven years older than me. I was the only adoptee and I was also the baby of the family. Yeah, they're really good people. We've been getting closer later over the few years. We weren't close in our young adulthood, but we're coming together now a little more, yeah.

Kaomi Lee ([00:04:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4O2vCRBuGmlqYG7ytSN51iqDY0OIOTL0BUP-ri_GwNSfji74QfelljtVRkEnJkoOiyt3Amjwh3T96QeO9oJQj1Wnn00&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=294.85)):

So growing up, because that's quite a big age gap, they were probably out of the house and quite ...

Peter Savasta ([00:05:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UjJ3EECgya0JhMYn3rSN3BwwTDJsKzUYVdw69LmJW0z87Ph2g3XVCIJRI0xzHLBfgSIzBUVzTpcxlmwL39zfnt9NNbU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=304.25)):

Yeah, when I was a kid, my brother and I were really close. He was sort of my best friend. My sister, she was the middle child. So she was doing her own thing. But they were around. But I don't know, because I can't really compare, because I never had a sibling my age. They were around. And my brother would always take me out to museums and stuff because that was my thing. And luckily, New York has a lot of museums.

Kaomi Lee ([00:05:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SXSVSFcLPxOGburr8QGh8kLdxqPgtGsrtvq0iJX3uAzUY7psjMAAfu7GZSkfN3mZF0V21jHYQbY3wqDelZ4i_-UrvmI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=335.47)):

Did you identify really strongly at that time with being from an Italian American family?

Peter Savasta ([00:05:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XWzzqIbUMiqcliUISk80WFohwMBETa5q2wmr-A4dAIaSyWjkc-rVDdF1kh8g1hDceOizTVQO_4Fl8I7zrbvZdHNn3f0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=343.53)):

Yeah, I think I did. It's funny, because in public school, I went to public school, we had a language requirement. And from elementary school, we started learning foreign languages. I was in the Italian class because I was taught a heritage language. So Italian's actually sort of my second language. And I still remember a bit.

Peter Savasta ([00:06:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3fxGeUAINWI8T_Dcu1hyK5IDh2LZPDH9LH0_xHFtYlzt5yNb08mKc-S3eEKEPEGY9jbmmAMF3xPpLgbd8o8YqOb3Nl4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=371.51)):

So if I go to Italy or I meet Italian people, I can kind of get by. I'm not quite conversational and I've forgotten a lot. So I don't conjugate verbs anymore. But yeah, and then, Korean is something that I picked up later on. I went to a magnet school for science and math in New York and it was about 40% Asian at the time. Now it's a lot more.

Peter Savasta ([00:06:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XIN5gikzXRQByEUtbzoffBre2s8YYPlWR129wc096xBwYAHX4sByFkOhlzeJ6RzK_RPRqeiHPWOKEWy0U3yX2Yu8WHY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=399.59)):

And out of the Asian population, maybe half were Korean. So I started to learn a little bit from friends. And then, later on in college, I hung out a lot more with Korean Americans and started picking up there. I've never learned Korean formally, but I think I know enough when I go to Korea, I can get around as a tourist. I know foods, I know directions. I know when someone's yelling at me. So all the-

Kaomi Lee ([00:07:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7eUdJ_K9QJ71XVkA3yOjOXCqV5nwvQDZkzEmRxCb6S6Aht9Rn-zkCC5f5iiqWBhO2clbg0Tk8qf-pBybMQoOIsiO2z4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=430.84)):

You know the swear words.

Peter Savasta ([00:07:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UPXZvy5KRa1cVY3py3Y4r6UBugWnj6wnHNphsbTztzNbQv3VyL0IrFGnwpLAz-hersYe30xb9LtaFtWvnAxd0TQpKVU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=436.55)):

Yeah, but Korean is so formal in its language, the different levels of formality. And because I was taught by friends, I speak kind of informally. So when I'm speaking to older people, or people in Korea, or that I don't know, I won't really be so open about trying to use Korean words because I know I'm going to insult someone by using the term or the wrong formality tense. The honorifics, exactly.

Kaomi Lee ([00:07:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KgPToDW8KhqTahaBeBtAbE9dMqBHXPk-7im6s1nQc8tM2BU90K_v7Nnn6XwzLtfHXnaAYAUXRO4cSJzjGoI_r7e4wFg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=467.38)):

You've had a different experience than a lot of us where it sounds like you grew up around more diversity. It wasn't a completely white environment, right?

Peter Savasta ([00:08:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8DNH4n27lvI3tt92BqrWvwlzTaDAtYz_Ow1JpBejTZ-tKWlkcfIvFuCmuSTeRZmIDB657bbDchMKavY9DA8yMOBakew&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=484.98)):

It kind of was. It's funny because New York is incredibly diverse, but at the time where I was growing up, the neighborhoods were still kind of segregated. So I grew up in a very blue-collar, Irish, Italian neighborhood. And I really didn't get to experience that diversity until I was in high school.

Peter Savasta ([00:08:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Mwr6jjJf_A04usZmkImBQJJop6VAS5CXmR8q6sCHHDUV2Xss2AQ1ASdyWusrV9XmZOJBAhAGMznDHtAOwDj-1yKMquU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=506.05)):

Before high school, when I was in junior high or elementary school, I had no idea there were so many Koreans living in Queens. We knew about Flushing. We knew there were a lot of Asians there. I didn't know the difference between the written language, so I just assumed it was all Chinese.

Peter Savasta ([00:08:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jhkV7w3RmADYPBVU1ycCnyHeGwhFTuQG_QbUdbwmxbJVjquU4DLGsMuSQoj2VKtWkATsGI3WkuWToNlze2qL9j1l7dc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=522.84)):

And then, in high school, I got to get ... Actually, the reason I chose my high school was because it was really diverse. It was an hour-and-a-half commute each way by public transportation. I wanted to go to the school, because I remember I went to the open house and the teacher ... Not the teacher, the principal gave the speech where he said, "If you want to be a jock, be a jock. You want to be a prep, be a prep. You want to be a nerd, be a nerd.

Peter Savasta ([00:09:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NM0c7pBnk3sMuT6A8HLaAaHQIAkkHo8M-JNGgcpa3V_dNf3PBEvEfmpvCXZrVvpQ54mGpNBU9MyRxS5CDD3WlPJQBZM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=557.37)):

"If you come bouncing down the halls of this school on your head, no one's going to freak out. No one's going to call you strange or weird. They're going to go, 'Wow, how do you do that?'" And that's when I knew, I'm like, "Oh, yeah, this is really where I want to be." And I remember my mom, she was like, "This is so far away. It's in the middle of the Bronx. How are we going to do this?"

Peter Savasta ([00:09:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kqmQSjh_MUNOKKgj9Qm4DisPZEehV9zoVFNdTcMYffWz3CE4aL6s7GqUnW7SQfNUcnE1techspd35xCBE2VNrPm52Yk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=585.41)):

So we ended up making it work. And there was a bus service that took kids from Queens to the school. And I did that for four years, and then I took public on the way home in the afternoons. So it worked out. And I think being around other Asians, I think gave me a more authentic place to come from about what Asian Americans were and who they were.

Peter Savasta ([00:10:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3GAzQPMe1YJZlWqEq01-mHoBeCkBksaAd9HKNrfwOYMMGj5OS4RPV9oLDgaG-IU_cm0bKjiKyEZlaX2Xa7ertFE1iUw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=615.01)):

I mean, I still didn't feel all completely accepted or totally integrated into that group, but I think it gave me a more solid place to start from when exploring my identity. I remember taking the subway home and there was this magazine called A. Magazine. It was called A. Magazine Inside Asian America. And I remember someone pulled it out on the subway and everyone was like, "What is that? It's a magazine with our faces on it."

Peter Savasta ([00:10:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UMQ8vfopdWP9e7POHdVsnu2EVPotV-4Xgq2SMWiXhdijLkTHIc0-4E94Nl9FT007HVzsr8GViJhREUaIFVkHh3o9i9o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=645.73)):

I just remember it was being passed up and down on the subway car and we're looking at it. And we're like, "Where is this published?" And then, we looked at the bottom and it said Mott Street. And we're like, "Oh, it's a New York thing." So it gave it even more ... We got even more excited. Yeah, so I definitely think I had the stronger foundation to build from.

Peter Savasta ([00:11:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GQPWFOpansb2xv902lMDPv1eqnueDgGikWGDvXhP-u__O-RVnTIzPpKRY6wKpq_QXm2-PiRTxjDEek9IYC0UdY1YYU0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=669.71)):

And then, I had Korean American friends in high school. How they tried to get me to learn language is, they'd bring in these worksheets that they took from this Sunday school Korean classes at church. It was just the same as English ones. They had these little dotted lines where you draw out the strokes of each Hangul character.

Peter Savasta ([00:11:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gHPmah5MoYARcK2AIog7WdeE5O1afdnaRxkFIvjHrrftPhunkREH_6ZzXBAPX4JjoS812KMdAKPEI8OzKuYWs8cH1mg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=691.88)):

I remember the first word I learned was [Korean 00:11:33]. And I just remember my friend going, "Pa." Really just going, "Pa, strong P [Korean 00:11:38]," which is pants, which is a really odd thing to remember now. But yeah, I think when I started to really explore more about my identity, I didn't feel that trepidation a lot of other adoptees feel. "It's so foreign." Just that initial scaredness.

Peter Savasta ([00:12:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=d9FFs_b8dS2_ci2gaZQb_fBTbFrbTtCqlEswBsmz34zxv0Aq_hyTqPIqvxT8JaomdGce-n46R9YP-F4EjwJbJyHRUMo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=727.14)):

And then, in college, I had gotten involved with the KSA there, the Korean Students Association. And then, also, weirdly because it's after I came out, I got involved with the Korean Christian Fellowship there. But I've made friends there I still have today. But it was weird because I kind of went back into the closet to explore this identity.

Peter Savasta ([00:12:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YOw65lMK-DkVfs7vqE4jifSMigqGQ-l056gRBJh8LqfD76U3noQTzSt6Uz6F2xQIzZyEqMVESaWLAPE3rv5_kr6Lv04&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=748.62)):

And then, after I had come back to New York City, I found this whole group of gay Asian Americans and gay Asians in New York City. So that was another landing place where I was able to explore who I was and who I want to be.

Kaomi Lee ([00:12:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mQ3FPS1a8WK2G-IbuutPGJNf9qsQhaAepGJS0EDO6mZjznXQTsPZIAb0bgVOpmlg5CbF5_DPS9bKlNpAlSis996upQI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=769.89)):

It sounded like you were exploring, as you do when you're young. You're exploring all the different ways in which you identify and feel part of a community. Did you feel like the other ... When you were in the high school, the other Korean American kids, do you feel like they accepted you? Did they think you were a little bit strange? Here you had this white family. Did they treat you as a white kid or ...

Peter Savasta ([00:13:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UsjvsKhwRkfSoz66nc53yndYd631aPDakuM3LdDgiMn0Qxhq1_FW9TpE2YRGQEaLsfSuAEfEVfvHuGYegpztTIfSgGY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=804.35)):

That's a really good question. I can tell you in high school, it's definitely where I started to drop my accent. So maybe. I do remember some of ... My high school was kind of weird. There was no it group, because it was a really large high school. It was about 3,600 students. So there was maybe about 800 people per grade. Is that the math right? I'm so embarrassed.

Peter Savasta ([00:13:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_Qx_GdE2AynHQI9mDRyfFbFF9Cp7gsrldcOsE9X1pZiIEQNUNB8HO0Y4Oxa-GfO750SDoobmCiHOH4M4Ig7Dwv0Jk18&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=834.76)):

I met some of my classmates for the first time in college at orientation. And I'm like, "Wait, you went where? You went to Bronx Science?" It's like, "Oh." We were just meeting. Yeah, but it's funny. Well, one, we didn't have a football team, so that meant we didn't have bullies. So that's-

Kaomi Lee ([00:14:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=O_l-E2C9xiUJuSAKOHZfjF1xFhanMybKuQrZ1y4QhgKr8m-ANKhNbMtxLS-xMxoai82yzdDuMS49rR5CB5iO2WBVsjY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=857.25)):

You didn't have jocks?

Peter Savasta ([00:14:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MR4xhRlSoKJKnNxUc4UkTSRRUbopvZu7yBOGmKFQUdtdGHZDuZikoA2_yCIj2K-fW8CARPacPpL9eATFtCcXcxdNlow&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=858.8)):

And the jocks we had, they were doing it for their college applications, right? So it was a different place. But I mean, the school itself, there were so many different groups. And in those groups, you had the popular kids and then the not-popular kids. So you had, there were the groups of Asian. All the Koreans kind of stuck together. There were popular Koreans and there were everyone else. And it's the same with all the other kind of high school groups. There were the nerds, yeah.

Kaomi Lee ([00:14:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sjRZ8H0tB1jGWbo2ibm9W_tFLd4MTy8bOvbivzIhZaQb-e_itNSj8Y2FdaY8x6sd36q6FpexhbNNeJ-5NWxSbz5oHPU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=891.79)):

You saw the Korean kids, and were you like, "I want to be a part of them"?

Peter Savasta ([00:14:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5fTrTUz76w_tKmATg37ZGaBAMq8dfQ-_gyJZgqMElTEmZO2t2V31E_WHb3Bw-ID50hp7dlYEmkKJRXb9C73tkqcC2w8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=895.55)):

Yeah, I think a part of me did. I didn't really hang out with them. The groups I was mostly with, we were all just normal kids. We were all from very different backgrounds, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic. I remember we used to walk around Washington Square Park, and people were like, "Hey, United Nations kids." That's kind of what we looked like.

Peter Savasta ([00:15:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3i3IbXOBHbv33YZHyRGbYC7_b8Gno87_mw9NrBlIZnlcCMvpvfc6bb8nIeteUJRuzazLm8eWRX-ek6ImOdUA7coUetE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=924.23)):

But I do remember talking ... I remember one guy calling me a poser because I had ... Everyone at the time was wearing these over-the ... cross-your-chest messenger bags, like bike messenger bags. I finally got one because they were really expensive. And I remember one other Korean kid calling me a poser. But that's okay. He later dropped out.

Peter Savasta ([00:15:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1oHHp6iLhGeKHKzd7OSNLBvAVPKwHRNPeBc7ARW4bM4PVH3p1gynCYV_vTmpZntZiGiWxkNK6VQg21VI7MmDztnHR3A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=948.73)):

I definitely felt that I had to strive, because I did feel that sometimes I felt inauthentic just because I didn't have the same background as everyone else. I didn't grow up in an immigrant family. And I definitely didn't have the cultural background. But I think, later on, especially in my early 20s, I think I realized I am authentic. It's just that my immigrant story is very, very different.

Peter Savasta ([00:16:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CwQ0xAfeTOHUbMj7AIrBbEVECYPJdeBvLqpf-LZ6JS0rqMvsrPgqNqsX_mhEyYxzavNbVLOJ5aIa-OF8ounlml4fiao&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=979.39)):

And I think, at the time I had seen there were about 2 or 3 million Korean Americans in the US at the time. And looking at the figures of how many adoptees there were, which was about 200,000. I'm like, "We're 10% of the population. We're authentic and we have every right to be seen, and seen as a part."

Peter Savasta ([00:16:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tw81S0x8M1_kIKBsJ6vuYo8dGt5y0Rk2xBlOkLk95kGsNs1-RfnMJVCd5qm5PFbjI2XAAOzhsAOuBJI6DJ63h5s29CU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1001.06)):

But conversely, being in Asian American groups, thinking back now I realize is that I brought a lot of whiteness to that. And when I mean whiteness, I mean that mainstream kind of American thing. What I realized is that these places, these groups, these spaces were refuges for Asians to come together and not have to be on guard or not have to code-switch. They were just places where we can just be ourselves.

Peter Savasta ([00:17:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fAbRgkc7Ynw-KK6RPsO-RsGwy5zj8Kst6d5QwkJcvWn6IbOZVowfJIk54KGIUip6IC47KeAi3GZPHQq27wPq12Hx3pk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1035.96)):

So I remember I started working ... I was a part of a group ... or a series of groups called ... It was a queer Korean group. It started with a group called Chingusai, which means amongst friends. And it was mostly men, and then it kind of fizzled out. And then, another group started called 2ban qk & y, which is 2ban is Korean for a second type of person. There's [Korean 00:17:45] which is the first type of person, which in slang in Korean kind of means straight. And then 2ban is second kind of people, which means the others, like us.

Peter Savasta ([00:17:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3ttUqwcj6SlciNK7G8HkrckIJMrWySCkr7YfvRleejOgHNtkcHeIDhumr48XtEtQi3VHrSLvNWE59UBHJfCS00b8Yac&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1075.15)):

I remember just going through workshops there and I knew things. I just saw things that I was saying was kind of making other people uncomfortable. And I think coming back, I had to check that. I'm like, "Oh, okay." I first had to learn how to shut up, because I was just walking in there with this white cisgendered male, like, "Oh, I have an opinion and people need to listen to that." And I-

Kaomi Lee ([00:18:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4q8UpmGMNWhAlSwVfnPIPfK0RMDPC2gEyDY2WxmnH8LADf3xhsjAenmOLjl0GmtnNuhfnz5xs4oV8MzF_9u9eVYPveA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1103.75)):

What kinds of things this whiteness? Give us some examples that-

Peter Savasta ([00:18:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3Q0iXScYIf35rFvdo217ltSVAN3Xd3aE14BiMS45Nezf-osohNWaWICLhgRawKzNj3mG6E-B4X8wKnxpcxskn-Jvi94&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1106.51)):

Oh, well just if I examples an opinion of ... If I didn't understand on something, then that couldn't be the reality of it. Or it couldn't be true, which is something that I was experiencing coming from my own family sometimes, that I was kind of bringing in.

Peter Savasta ([00:18:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UA-Mg4yHk6OfXZoViaWhsGNlRpN4L7PAvZJS_D8fU4IIERw6DJOSGaaXka574L14im9S6--AVI_kNhlsXTGqbg9yVM0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1120.47)):

I think one of the things looking back is, at one point they did this discussion session where all the women on the group sat inside inter circle and did the talking. And all the men in the group sat on the outside and did the listening. It was queer a LGBTQI+ base. And that's when it was like, "Oh." So the women were talking about these things and I'm like, "Oh," like a typical cisgender male's like, "Oh, that's an easy fix to that problem. Why don't you guys do that?"

Peter Savasta ([00:19:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=i_1sI12RORYiiB-GGXepVVl0CBiqtFjoUWfAajuRZnPNujoIlM8bdMONqYVEUB0kblPL8GI7pVNAlaUXWcwK75_1Vyw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1148.65)):

And everyone just kind of glare it at me. And I'm like, "Oh, okay. That's not the point." And then, later on ... And it took me years to figure out what happened ... I'm like, "Oh, no, no, they were doing that as a gift to you, so you can listen. They weren't presenting a problem or anything in front of you. They were sharing their lives with you and sharing their experiences with you. And that was the point of the whole exercise, not ... "

Peter Savasta ([00:19:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cpq7L0NYKbGrsOpbfCtHaIAGcDTbVEoU0iRWABmybokVBPp9n7X-G2HTskyAYM6TYEqP3uDy8L4dSQxNsYeiM0U2fl8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1175.66)):

I think, for me, it was like, "Oh, you want to go in there and you want to be a problem solver or whatever." So that's sort of where I started to learn. It's like, okay, what are you bringing into the spaces? And it wasn't that I had to stop the being who I was. It changed the way I would be in a space that sometimes it's okay to go into a space and be accepted as a passive participant just by listening, just by being supportive and learning.

Peter Savasta ([00:20:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=b9L6fai1EX_iWAXuufMRPAaRriTx6f-FMT-QIYjlt-WiVwDNI3sEjYGmVphVmlSit9aEvR38dVBKmBFwDPOGXUEwrjY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1207.49)):

That's how I learned how to be an ally, that acceptance isn't always about laying everything down about who you are and having people love that. I hope that makes sense.

Kaomi Lee ([00:20:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=30bs4kxPFzVkDorkN_2S2VvD7VTgwO3p6nhROvB_x0c3YNIFRRKMXWYY-sBHlahmw0OMBvDryk0hIzaI0BZJOpQAL1M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1221.6)):

Yeah, I was just thinking ... And obvious ... I mean, I'm straight or hetero, so these questions, I hope they don't offend. I'm just interested. And one of the things I wondered is, when you talked about you found an Asian gay community, was it important to you that they be Asian? Was there something ... Is it different in just a gay, queer space in general, versus one that's sort of grouped by race where it's ...

Peter Savasta ([00:20:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AvH0zhvJA4Nsi0Xqda2aPLLIN80M0y9scvcWLvyBorM04MkhiFW33jVl_4EuSV7b0-wMWytFko6ojf2cvKrHDD2Ox-c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1258.46)):

Yeah, actually, when I came out, I came out towards end of high school. I had gone to this youth support group at the gay lesbian center in the Village. There were adult facilitators, but we're all between the ages of like 13 and 22 maybe. And we didn't segregate ourselves. But I think some of the friends I've carried from there are definitely the other Asians in that group, because maybe we thought we were cute to each other. I don't know.

Peter Savasta ([00:21:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KVgmoNzTWTlqHEQIfqwvdRgA6aVvPXX3F6mB9Bmc8Z1LqtGhJBU-ORglBM6sp0HIJ3y7_oDz070CXDLUhgiH6jNSG9s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1305.8)):

But I think it was important for me because it was a way I could explore my identity closer to who I was. I think, at that time I was looking for people exactly like me, because as an adoptee, it felt like no one else was like me, right? I'd never met another adoptee my age until I was in college in my early 20s. And I think, at the time, even probably until my late 20s, I was looking for ... Actually probably until my 30s, I was looking for other gay adoptees.

Peter Savasta ([00:22:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=e046nd6Wbnv5PQ9feFA3NrZoJgsnl18Ii0g75crEBGteCdPtOj5nTs0gW_X72ujHCiC7zl4Pkpry9RI9TqUKjtos1qw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1343.37)):

And then, I went to Korea and I met a lot, a lot of women. I'm like, "Oh, but where are the men? Where are the guys?" One part of me wanted just to find other people exactly like me, just not necessarily to lay down my soul and talk to everyone about it, but just to, one, exactly fit in. I think, personally as a person, I just wanted to fit in my entire life. Just have the exact same clothes and just fade into the background.

Peter Savasta ([00:23:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5v4acXwStTRC9dNxjfNtu9IFLpnj9F-cEJAGHIwFxxAM7akWANa2rEdExe6QjlWOnYXBmztRdPQGiFVFBjXX3dxpaZY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1383.06)):

I'd still be a part of a group. I guess that's it. More wanting to be a part of a group. And around the same time I was doing all this being in these queer Asian spaces, I discovered Hollee McGinnis. I was really working more intensely actually on the adoptee space with Hollee and starting AKA New York. She started it, but I was also there with her from the beginning.

Kaomi Lee ([00:23:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NtBTAT-DNSoD2kGHY4MhxWbzhxKLUt_jNPTKRHyDHKGrK-s6HHahVyXmoWy4IsB8xhReOaeRiiJRQXFjiMDw0pcCOT4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1413.92)):

Was Hollee one of the first adoptees you met?

Peter Savasta ([00:23:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2WzZsq7tiO9f0Bp_9VFfX8WDW6RjJpgLRXjSbXsVytozwVq53RirQ4yiwvS1bkCRBZ9yBZI7FeRqpUBHYuYR5W9By6Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1420.33)):

Hollee, no. It's really funny. I think, because when I talk about ... I mean, everything seems kind of separated and disjointed, but the first adoptees I met were through the Korean Christian Fellowship at college. One of the guys at the fellowship said, "Oh, are you coming back out from camp this summer?" And I'm like, "What camp? And he goes, "You don't know about this camp?" And I'm like, "What camp?"

Peter Savasta ([00:24:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s2cnBju-nK0A52CawFFMiMB_2ijpcfLRQooK6YPhKhG9wUQEIxZDu4ERfT3IJKfdPPorIcIV4ywCNqk3QBS25vJJFpk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1445.87)):

It was a camp in Albany, New York called Camp Mujigae. And it was an adoptee camp that all the churches volunteer and take ... They volunteer on the cultural parts. So I said, "No, but I want to go." And I remember I went back up early to go to that ... Or was it late? I stayed late. It's in June or July. So I stayed later and I went to that camp as a counselor.

Peter Savasta ([00:24:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WwZz0dQDB-8UUHIkZgNhZzJDTClBZefD5ofm84GY3KxCr-h8rF52NSV-PfKac3eVWNlwaHaIi5ljuFQ11-4B-KFPRow&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1467.63)):

And all the parents, they loved me because I was the first adults to go to camp, adult adoptee. And I think their oldest at the time, their campers were maybe 12 or 13. And there, I met some other adult adoptee. Not that camp, but a few years later, I met a few other adult adoptees who had come up. And one of them was Hyosung Bidol and he told me about Hollee, who was ...

Peter Savasta ([00:24:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-J87Lw8_q96S0zc8bNd-jROMrxsq82XK5NkfA8AAgkAlu1OVk7gPZ3TgrtmxCGVC5j1Egvu1xLMD_WyoWt95tfAEEVA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1499.67)):

She goes, "Oh, if you live in New York, there's this woman named Hollee who was trying to start a group. And I'll put you in contact with her." It's funny, I got back from camp. The day or two after I got back from the camp, Hollee calls me immediately and she's so excited. It's Hollee. She's incredibly enthusiastic and just lovely. And that's how we started that. We started community building.

Peter Savasta ([00:25:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MsuT0iw4TrKdOoPvPlbJElRvI55D3ij0APLXduw8MCojEKUP9Y9KfmKllEmZ5Hl6hL2Wp8h6IShPFDeWVyucTjjEqLE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1532.56)):

Even though I was there from the beginning, I was the youngest one there. I think I was 20 at the time when AKA started. And I feel like it made a huge, huge difference in my adoption journey, because there were older adoptees who had gone back to Korea, or other adoptees who had tried to start their search or did their search.

Peter Savasta ([00:26:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pNDDzwnBvhcE5P2t9T5x1JcoWusQxtE0xLgwt6j6DXMEyEsNbu3bYZbp4OPDd0ToAyRFX6d6QjdaOWWGrYP1iRclv1A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1560.2)):

And I joke that ... AKA eventually developed a mentorship program with the adults and young adoptees. But I kind of feel like I was the first mentee. I remember Hollee came back from her first trip to Korea, and we were all at our friend's apartment. And she came back and she just told us everything that happened.

Peter Savasta ([00:26:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PQt-lVkWmfj46qg3G8pmcO3ZhYvBl48RczTCv_P7l-yjsn-ASQbdpGZCfPs7-PCyv25o1GjoaLf7wdb9jLj7Ktcc7Fk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1584.52)):

I just remember hanging onto everyone she said and just being like, "Oh my God." I remember thinking, "Oh, is this what mine's going to be like?" She also went through a reunion back then too. And I'm like, "Oh, is this how it's going to happen for me?" And then, a few years later, AKA did their first Motherland Tour. And the way they had organized it ...

Peter Savasta ([00:26:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LwTMup9RQOTCRnPyL_CxyG15Xzq4q9uSvV-ECfUcwfNzgBeCDewNuKEo2SKjALPopFthFpldqi3HVOkLMNNBYfqGE80&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1608.66)):

Mark Fermi organized it and he put ... Two thirds of the tour were adoptees who had never been to Korea before. And the other third were returning adoptees had either lived there or were going back, just so they would be a buddy system. And that was huge. I think we went around Korea, like the countryside. We went to orphanages. We did some cultural things. But it made a huge difference having someone who was there that knew exactly what we were feeling, even if we didn't have the language of words to describe it.

Peter Savasta ([00:27:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hScbLiFyj4kJU-QZQ4Faw_bHowI3q2Faby6jp3rZoQ9-XoQXOby9QMHNmwVnORdD5GRA7RbZcCGp_u1AShX8glSddm8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1645.77)):

And I think, later on, there was a ... I talk about feeling so alone and being so ... I used to do the ... I go to the gatherings a lot, and a couple years I was on the planning committee. And I remember thinking, "Why am I still the only gay guy in this very, very straight space?" I remember us helping someone do a survey. And she was like, "Hey, does anyone want to enter questionnaire answers into Excel?"

Peter Savasta ([00:28:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dZeePG247D-eIG0YypDBwjfuWAbIi0WtvbbDyI1VEjKTTtQEBOnYOyPpvNlx5EyjWIr3w3zoVMUlbS0moZ_FfcTD3uI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1684.85)):

I'm like, "I do," because it was the first time they included a sexual-orientation question on it. And I'm like, "I do." I just wanted to see if there was anyone else out there like me. And I spent three hours doing this. I'm like, "I do, and I know there's confidentiality. I just need to know statist if there's someone else here."

Peter Savasta ([00:28:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=x46LlIsf5BZmkhQdiqiOO-8568hEveT2UaV_QKX3-fBVXqS7tgdf0U6hjF-FWlhPDHqrCcupBAFf1O3qrAjso-Zm4Zs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1708.47)):

Eventually, there was one other person there and I met that person. And then, I'm like ... I had already been going in Korea and I already been going, becoming a part of the gay spaces there too, separate from the adoptee events that were going on. So I took this person ... We got along really well, and I took them to a gay club in Itaewon.

Peter Savasta ([00:28:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=q7sn9chQgsyiGINFs4NiiWyfS-UwNpBSzOH3PBxho7AQZktY0e9BQLLzxgsz5KqIqLFompKDRxlsYoN7vlxopnxENAk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1727.87)):

And this club is kind of famous knowing for having a K-pop set. So we're in this club and they're playing the regular dance music. And then, the K-pop set comes on. And the guys jump on stage and they start doing the dance routines. And everyone's just feeling Korean pride and everything. And I look at my friend and he's about to cry. And I'm like, "Oh, honey, just let it go. Let it out."

Peter Savasta ([00:29:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XktO62seMoBMmmzSUYnPIu-jMGgTq0WFPEKbHagRhWdrVrAFRF3YMvi6daHqfToBmNy3Rdv0-hEbBwOTzg_kYUFvYsM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1755.27)):

And I said, "No, I get this. It's the first time," because I felt this few years before when I first went to this place. "It's the first time that I'm in a positive environment, being gay, being Korean, and everyone is just happy and celebrating it." And I'm like, "These are tears of joy. I know. Just let it out."

Peter Savasta ([00:29:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Din-3sjXl5g1K8uUZ68fJSlHjdVPjS4yv_Mia3avgJi7EGx2e6iRkG75hw8nyfeu9fodvb430RzgJ_0J6wfeVD4bDs8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1777.9)):

So I think the journey of being a being an adoptee, especially being active is, it's those moments of mentorship where you learn. And then, you're able to give back. Not learn, but just take care of people as they take care of you, yeah.

Kaomi Lee ([00:30:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6JNFGd72jWSLLyfYMOcw6RihisIg6xaq_p98hc8D0if6TJZfGihVfMAUu5blBPt10NaXOiKrjAsHtiC8G4xlUninXVE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1803.5)):

Yeah, statistically, there has to be more than one queer adoptee in that questionnaire set. Do you think that historically, or in the early years, that the queer adoptees just didn't feel welcome, or they were so in the closet that they didn't ...

Peter Savasta ([00:30:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bWOIMf8G_umDpqeF-w4KFqKKi0GzDugjabNQkqMnjDuRacrJMtEHbGmZIfY_SRX_jn7pD-uKe66iDl-NWJogY5E8-A4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1829.39)):

I think being an adoptee is complicated. And then, throwing in another kind of marginalized identity into that is a lot. I had those foundations of having a queer Asian space, and then wanting to be in an adoptee space so strongly that I ... And then, being in New York, I think I was pretty fortunate to have those foundations where I can explore them at the same time.

Peter Savasta ([00:31:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=N3PHrCQ3I08rU61cPdOTDZOiTrrDYzlBaskjPlSbKrfnxv6iiXAEU3IafxIv5WRRzd7hoCqxpgRh0RQo7erAAXqhoj8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1860.71)):

And I don't know that I can speak other queer adoptees, but I think just let's deal with one thing at a time. And I totally get that. Now, over the years, there's definitely a lot more, especially the younger generation, guys in their 20s and 30s. It's a lot easier. I think the adoptee spaces also tend to be ... I mean, to be honest, a lot of adoptee groups are guys looking for girls. Not always, but at least-

Kaomi Lee ([00:31:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1w0kVf35hINsZeDHxaKgChJYC4sKjxeMpaMj47iEnaa6NlgpkHSFPJNKRNXqHEg0wK647BIjnFZiVC23STG2UFFP2_c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1897.79)):

And vice versa.

Peter Savasta ([00:31:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=N7R8k9INUFXnhAp8HzQNGwkhnm41NdWPO1XIWfB687nG4exr3PfIh89NKlan00RhnslfMuIjO1XCd2wRPVoosbG9HpQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1898.43)):

No, right. Vice versa. At least when a majority of the groups, everyone was in their 20s, that's kind of what it was. So I think that can be a little off-putting if that's not your goal. I'm not saying it's a bad thing, because I think, in a lot of adoptee groups, it's like, "Oh, here's Asian men who can be non-emasculated," not necessarily ...

Peter Savasta ([00:32:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QxuPQNNmm9Sn6raZ0mU7PzNuWzo67AdP8Ez5CdsF1K0-FekEznq8Dls-UzeZTRUXdsdOnsEPhudaipFupedCp9qlGUA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1924.66)):

I'm not pushing male toxicity or anything, but oh, they're finally in a group where they might be considered attractive, and vice versa. So I think that's what might keep some queer adoptees away. I don't know. I can't really speak to it though because I haven't really talked about it too much with other queer adoptees, but-

Kaomi Lee ([00:32:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7U4SemJeV4q-OukqXSljaKgFkXC7tCZ7Ra-nCxWta_gmhakLoNJZ69itSrhE_yNKqWzNxQSaZGmp-crJ5NZTQhaXbm4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1952.32)):

I think just the times are changing too. These young kids coming up, millennials and even younger, there's just unapologetically queer, and out there, and proud, which is wonderful. And they feel more, I think, safety to do that in today's culture.

Peter Savasta ([00:32:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7vdBzDJXKNxySS1UXW4y5QbeahBSDA8gGhCPbYViuAfS4Xubf1xq2gDF5NxBOqLjOaseKBIzY2g20mzapuqwCw3APQc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1977.84)):

Yeah, yeah. Especially in Hawaii, I've met some older adoptees who are also queer. Not a lot, but I just remember thinking, "Oh, I wish I had someone ... I wish you were around when I went to my 20s. Yeah, I would've had so much to ask." I think it's because there are less adoptees from that generation. When you're adopted in the '70s, you were that first big bumper crop of babies coming over, of children coming over.

Peter Savasta ([00:33:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=n2S5liHKlW2SzUMWbFbSKPe2XMTHUAcYkWGfsyBM6SKEV2hG-D7h4NfMtyZy0ydeojcbz0TLwAj1DxO_FlOQ4FfEQbI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2017.19)):

But yeah, yeah, I think also, a lot of queer people who in general, who are Gen Xers, we didn't have a lot of role models or mentors to look up to because the AIDS crisis had really decimated that. So we didn't really have people who we could look up to, and then they could tell us back that it gets better, because it didn't, yeah.

Kaomi Lee ([00:34:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=baAlt1FzJvPVOIeVK06PhWE7gBFj-VnYubX4IQLaipgfVPCOh_xS6wdV26rBWkOGxLrP7drECP2sTpVYdQyh3dUlJDM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2048.64)):

AKA just celebrated its 25th anniversary. And you were one of the early ones there, leading and organizing. How do you feel about that? That's 25 years.

Peter Savasta ([00:34:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=e7dAio1828ijd3cXR6LT398DxREOtooIwAK7lmnFVaYgiciYS9EV7G_AJcK8CAs-9lxQILx6r6V7Ymw0tXddwlBIh-c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2064.4)):

Yeah, I'd been on the board for the first five years. And I was president of AKA during the first gathering in DC. I feel incredibly proud. I'm also really, really awe-inspired in the way that they're doing really amazing things that wouldn't have even crossed my mind. Everyone who's been a part of it and who's really worked at it has really taken it to an amazing and a whole higher level of anything I couldn't have imagined.

Peter Savasta ([00:35:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7QkX4NOPLSBksyWdzBHVwq8vfu9jeiz11_m8HSy90fM-xbo0Paw561tCudsDRa3Tw8yeoFE211H2vRFZ32gPsK16lTI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2106.73)):

I mean, actually, I haven't been able to go back to the anniversaries the past few years. I think the last one was maybe about 10 years ... Oh, I'm sorry. There's a plane going off. Yeah, I just feel really proud. I'm really proud of what the group has been able to do, especially during COVID. How they've been able to keep up programming.

Peter Savasta ([00:35:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=N7cDl5-5UIIntyGM1dc-d-CdZTx1nvIhC2bVWQfpMD7gXTEPwG5HImSPFBgDdh0F1JwSa4tycqIdls-F5uMNIUx09ZQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2125.41)):

And then, really share what they're doing outside of New York, especially through what they've been doing virtually. Yeah, I'm incredibly proud and I'm just really happy that I was able to contribute to that.

Kaomi Lee ([00:35:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6qWrZ8SOH0qYX-qtWaEwKtj18xDFpbOKWcBxBLBTivEV2nrzY_yvXPYb6Ev0VFeK1GjvnvDNO6-Cg0iYJrBQ-10O70Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2143.15)):

Do you feel like a proud dad?

Peter Savasta ([00:35:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Dp1RLmDG-3TlTEHLKkvKdTo-JIEBrMHBsBmbeTfL87Ye7t1mllxqYr_rkyVdwvUFNksH2kipxV4VrB05XRukBYmO0sE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2147.04)):

Oh, I'm not that old. I mean, proud uncle.

Kaomi Lee ([00:35:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CJNltKS_LoAU_t4wK46YyaC4WWDNdXeic49XUAxn-ZNAtBbxbVsMYVOTQTbI8NLabsGc6g7vyv-wjs9LBJcoXJ6gVYo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2153.8)):

I'm just curious. When you guys set out in, what? The mid '90s or late '90s?

Peter Savasta ([00:35:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2ZB-gvxUvhI6vuAFsVdERnNUzsUdW0oKNNqP4R0XcaP4Eh6XOeOKn6mqIgU_s1UxMNS9hiyT618iRG0ZN0jEWOQ2q3Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2159.23)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kaomi Lee ([00:36:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OGApowaaU9F67mDeUURsPEY3PhWGq0Wf67s1bZ4sxlnJLVVSkPEm0cxoXheB02hbKb-_FC8HkL43kK64KkNoClJy7xc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2160.36)):

When you set out to start a group, what were the main goals?

Peter Savasta ([00:36:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jir7ElTa5NGVdI55HP6RND1hjN5IEa_4l_h0JlAljD8MSZ32w6oevdY-fbrogTHqTiG31eSQKXgWB8g-ey8FUhH0d24&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2169.91)):

We had been meeting every week. We had a core group of people about between 5 to 10 of us. And we would meet every week. And I think like every group, there was drama here and there. People came. People left. And in retrospect, looking back, I'm like, "Did we really have to meet what every week?" And the answer is, yeah, we did because we really needed to be around each other.

Peter Savasta ([00:36:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=q3_w7nMDmtY5LClZhHiPcoINnAg2HeuwBjoagQkGCz5zlQGIAX58W6Ywfr8h58XS8V9Hwzz5g8GzBP7dreJecfDpbEM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2205.62)):

So in terms of the things that we did that we never really set out to do in a mission statement was, to be around each other and just to become a separate not just group of friends, but family. And I think that later on evolved into community building and really creating a space. Back in those days, we had a three-pillared missions. So it was empower, build, and transform.

Peter Savasta ([00:37:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nKn8A2j_uMHEvZLDrHC3NcP3VGG05ONnpgwvcuza51XDsuVWnmCsjzv3QyPyxkKsnE2BOQ82PdsXR1DejiHTnZZ_cnw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2242.27)):

So it was to empower the adoptees and the adoptee community, build cultural bridges, and then transform conversations about race and ethnicity. About what it meant to be American. What it meant to be Korean. Those were our loftier goals. But personally for me, it was about being in a safe space. It was about having a space for our own.

Peter Savasta ([00:37:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sP0TtJ-xPy1hQvP3lVYHO5sYQ73XK1hV1138mA_d4Za2DqDyh-bURrFdfWnNqoLzsosYT41OxJKLJDnOxoyIjahNxiE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2271.81)):

And then, what I think Hollee and the others brought to it was like, "Okay, but how can we use that space to do something bigger and better?" And, "Oh, we straddle the fence between two cultures. We can be that understanding between the gap that two cultures may have." So that was definitely something that was a lot loftier.

Peter Savasta ([00:38:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nLUU8IzF9NHjs15rA1eUwV64vPFUvvDxRHHS3RQn_ckmFrMfajnFUhNSxdxM2lrwA5if3ML76qSj9FR7NY-LhcuM7h8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2298.61)):

And I think ultimately what to came out of that was, adoptees have a voice. Our experiences, especially just in the adoption community in general was, "Oh, we have a voice and we have things to say about our experiences. And this is valuable." One of the things we did, we started a speakers bureau because parent groups wanted us to come in and talk to them a lot.

Peter Savasta ([00:38:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3PFCXyoTiItbgD-u3BYVcBxaAur5XACg79GQLbTJtyWAEmZmTrwA1OnypH1qJkvSNo0_tzKTU7EqeGUJKPLGePB1hZM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2324.71)):

So there was a parent group in a year called GIFT, Gathering International Families Together. And we started doing panels. We started presenting a conference. There were adoptive parent conferences in the Tri-State Area we presented at. Eventually, towards the end of the late '90s, we started getting a lot of interest from FCC, which was Families with Children from China. And their children were, at the time, were still toddlers to elementary school. But they really wanted to hear our voices and what our experiences were like.

Peter Savasta ([00:39:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9klM0Ozi2mQ8qMLKqDUu9mPE-LSxnmikFANLXovOvLtQdHvBJ8zya5bn_Ok6I2jVJMYsXOsjl1dV6cXWLF3_TjIuSTw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2359.51)):

And I think that was really important to us. There were a lot of adoptees who wanted to participate into that because they wanted to share their story and they wanted to contribute, I guess, to have their stories help others. And then, to be a positive change and have a positive effect.

Kaomi Lee ([00:39:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tXjX0vXRV17EiQy4EmUOrUQ7TdYfhuKGSAOPCOYn5njbYOKO6cbiUErkhPleHoNHtzuVVbtpQduIR8X961Whg-9scUU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2389.49)):

Did you feel like the parents were open to hearing everything or did you feel as ... because I've been from that well where you feel like you're sort of put there to justify or to give them a hug.

Peter Savasta ([00:40:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qVuqylj1VgPVpXd__AnQDy06tQR5Ltgq58gdUHHe95VS6Xx7O13tmIG6KkHCX9pJIVHTdY8aIl64OtqSidqULVVi4Z8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2407.29)):

Yeah, there's definitely that. There's those parents' questions that they're like, "I have a child who's this age, who's doing this. And I'm doing this, and this, and this, and that. Is that good?" So yeah, there's definitely a lot of that. I think, definitely, at the time you have to slip in the hard parts with all the good parts. With all the things they want to hear, you have to cushion the things they don't want to hear.

Peter Savasta ([00:40:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FG4y4dxCDCE0Km1WLISHAYNh4IcqVEEPa-ZMrgqZioxYf39K7tad7DBY7N-jH7I3Zps9R2vxaU5PQUIA02kuIqEqa_g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2442.68)):

And I think, for the most part, people were pretty receptive. And at the time, there wasn't much pushback. People weren't like, "That's not true. How can you say that?" But also, at the time, I was in my early 20s, so I wasn't saying things that were too off the mark for them, only because I hadn't experienced them yet.

Peter Savasta ([00:41:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5RTVk94HH1GrMyLdGB6ZZA5HxBYn6eikd89IMDuvCybekhR1S09iaN76QLX5bnDmba5jR43Zry1PXXwZ6yQmPc3uPP8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2470.23)):

The first time I went back to ... Not the first time. When I went back to Korea, at one of the gatherings, I discovered there were some people there who were forming a group called ASK, which is Adoptee Solidarity to Korea. And in some of the sessions, they were asking really, really thoughtful questions about, "We talk about the effects adoption has for ourselves individually, but what about as a society?

Peter Savasta ([00:41:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gltoAYMRpXLEtptFfyTcDbcpXJw0gao8elsnhywKfrtdCYEf5fhIupGCBTGnxMbt6tP4WVR2kfQ3vBpylRYhaHIbPMM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2501.31)):

"What about how this affects the greater Korean society? How this fits into imperialism or American imperialism." And I'm like, "Oh, those are really good questions." And I know a lot of adoptees don't want to talk about it. I also knew these were people who had been, quote, branded the angry ones, right? But I started ... I went to that first organizing meeting after ... Well, not the first organizing meeting.

Peter Savasta ([00:42:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Hc8Ett3ZRQOp_bgKO676IX43GfwVwKN24-sI0kD9jmj_QsE4JYEiKHoEFKPPmTUhfGDIjpsRFdtFWA5gaWOnrjf782U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2532.54)):

I went to that at first meeting they had right after the gathering just to learn more about Korea, specifically through that adoptee lens and through how adoptees ... What they were discovering by living there, whether it was working ... They were living there. They either had done their birth search. They had helped other adoptees through their searches. And then, just learning things I had never known.

Peter Savasta ([00:42:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=taS6IR7dxgd67HItyG2OKEc9IWVKA5xrAwf8txIe4WDzgjZx46OFynOSeOnxWLu0DGh7WqTCcSIYmMyYuN1OQ-z9aBs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2572.72)):

And there were things that agencies had told us about our own backstory that may not have been true, like, "Oh," where there was more to that story than what was on our documents. And that was, I think, when I came out of the fog a little. I'd been in the adoptee groups, but we'd been pretty happy-go-lucky.

Peter Savasta ([00:43:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xf4-vVlRbaKCetJsALTnoann3KrEykPkofVFq7fz1bWpIkKMItlbtmqG-eB_kyGcA5gfa5Vm4r9OGueTieLW48AD2GI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2599.95)):

I mean, we may have had some questions about those things, but those are things we talked about in really private conversations. So to come out of there, it changed a lot. It was that be careful of opening that box of questions for that answer, because it'll just lead to more questions. But yeah, ultimately it was good.

Peter Savasta ([00:43:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Wb4DQwcN-HyFxMweGWnKx8ZmD3bsnJPb-eFKmEDDutSwSZkT0MyvBot1S_NhQ_5rTTmA_e3njzF5ss5ZjEuOWnZEG48&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2630.26)):

I think a part of my searching for self is searching just for your own history. And people ask what it's like being adopted, like, "Why would you want to know all that stuff?" I'm like, "Oh, well, it's like being given a book about yourself with the first part ripped out." And just learning and just really coming to understand what happened there, it was tough to work through. But ultimately, in the end you're better off for knowing it because it's what was true.

Kaomi Lee ([00:44:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SnWv0E2F7djfkF8aXgeikfqEmoyCDNjH2A2ZzQ5zqLsxl2DA9VRUJItNt-gJ7FX1PA0jPZqqjZVkhX56I5Z6A7vq5Ds&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2667.57)):

So as you were talking, it struck me that, do adoptees, do we have movements Black Lives Matter? And to ... I don't know if think is the right word, but have we benefited with ... We've got some language now that we've borrowed like decolonization. And I wonder if that has had an impact on our community and how we talk about our own.

Peter Savasta ([00:44:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bL0Fzd4N-ftOq91fnKvWj6B7aILaYb2_WRyFTQlRE-dTRWlmtaFsiCQ7idP_Jx1_HZ5Vfb-s0JTHtXaH66wPj0tZe6I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2693.73)):

Yeah, I think it's all interconnected. It's all interrelated. I don't think you can look at any Asian American movement in the United States without looking at how connected that movement is to the Civil Rights Movement. When we look at colonialism, Korea is a postcolonial society. I mean, it's a sovereign state. But it's a former colony and it has foreign military presence on its land.

Peter Savasta ([00:45:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FEFhZmDOFq2ruGWez24r1qclSCk-jzyAoBTXH5LhFHfgNZsJraKS1BRxSj47wkdxVwi7YLjbW6MLqB5kgAu5bAL124Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2722.52)):

And that military presence has a complete direct historical start of our own community, of adoption, of orphans, of agencies, of missionaries. A lot of our ... Yeah, from Western intervention. Most of the agencies in Korea started as missions and religious missions. So yeah, it's all tied in, and having that language that I don't know that it was appropriated. It was shared.

Kaomi Lee ([00:46:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RzLIHe4bFoLIFj4RBTbS-GoAOROjOUVNPsYKSq_602gY1hP0x9JNWrf5OQGpi2ZUXCIz0GW1zyxJ4taW6RxBRxJFwXg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2776.66)):

We're almost there, but there's a couple things I was still interested in talking to about. One is being the IKAA, how you got involved with that, and what was the intent of IKAA? Do you think it's fulfilling what it was set out to do? I don't know if there was any lofty goals like that.

Peter Savasta ([00:46:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wchaLGH9EuZQLSpe0z6K4myOVydQtniG8Qv_JWhd57OyasSYs-9tb12E5yhjvAcJN3b39BqsZO07bWDG5M6ZR5Ecz0w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2797.16)):

I think IKAA was ... Well, I wasn't a part of IKAA from the beginning. I was sort of just on the margins there. But I knew a lot of the people who started IKAA just from that first gathering in DC in 1999. So I'd moved to Hawaii in 2001, so that's why I stepped away from AKA. I moved to Hawaii with my spouse. And then, in Hawaii, I just happened to meet, I think, over, God, I hate to say it, Myspace, 2004.

Peter Savasta ([00:47:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=skNLAqyzNKGo6y1QEdTAOjxRe7A1bQ0YS-Ux8rBSp2nC0wslqkHSfQo_uWo48IB3gHyd5k3VPUVlUF_r0zay9a4Pz10&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2836.86)):

I can't remember if it was Myspace or it could have been Xanga. It was a early blogging platform. So I had written ... I had met someone else who was also an adoptee, who'd moved to Hawaii. And she had met another person, who was raised here and that was [Gian 00:47:42] and ultimately [Mijor Kim 00:47:44].

Peter Savasta ([00:47:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vdTRBjyYslefM9OFGgZttyC1ZIcICyqsRnSaifA9qcmUtW2Hl2TkBZn4cvdk6pWXs1MHlC7UcWiyfnRgMJoPDPpughY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2863.58)):

So we had found other adoptees, and we were loosely in a group. And they're like, "Oh, maybe we should do something formal." And after leaving AKA in New York, I'm like, "Oh, no, I'm a little burnt out. I'll buy a T-shirt and I'll host a potluck, but that's kind of it." But we were a group and we came together a little more. And then, we went together as a group to ... Oh, wait, I'm jumping. I'm sorry.

Peter Savasta ([00:48:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4WMe1UcXTStRkeCnDff1ne_LTgwSiWCAZemgJQPBHvi6z5xFT45CdeljtPS6KjoYpHGu42e_pNv-TKZInIJue9_3qHo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2895.33)):

So with IKAA, yeah. I'm jumping a little. So with the IKAA thing is, after moving to Hawaii, I saw there was going to be a gathering for the first time in 2004 in Korea for the first time. So I think the previous one had been in Oslo. I remember people talking, I was like, "Wouldn't it be great if we could do this gathering in Korea, like at the DC gathering?"

Peter Savasta ([00:48:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Q1N_p24cclZ70Uuz-J3kXd7Fnlk2KdZRSVZEsH1Ys2YaPdxOxsc6Oo-hP3qQ9jx11K8SmDKYRKujuWxgeAuC_5YgtLs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2923.12)):

So when it was announced, I'm like, "Oh, I can't miss this. I have to go." So I brought my spouse. I think it was his first time to Korea too. And we had gone there. A lot of adoptees had come with their spouses, and so they had a session for spouses. So I was doing my thing and he was of being there supportive, being completely ...

Peter Savasta ([00:49:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qKi93Qpeq3Ul_o9wF2h5M_mgcyOyeLUUDg28GephlM3_2oMEahjQCoyzQGQf4vrKJGZWu97zyt7FJdYsqWM9fAAwHIs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2954.72)):

I'm sure he felt like Margo Mead ... Not Margo Mead, Margaret Mead, just observing this whole community of people doing their thing. And so he was-

Kaomi Lee ([00:49:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YrfP8sbfvsgELg1Z9UNWvY8ZpMOqSD5evtQ9zm1FC59KCyq6SmCsScv70JUUDcmJ9ir58n2AJNDPOBPkEPI3jFqkDk0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2967.34)):

Were you one of the few gay couples at the time?

Peter Savasta ([00:49:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0cSjajjvOyFu8ENWgz5jmNc5ixoglBHAYcB0TXlgNRVF_VCSoYiYZZJLdQNc-whj0nYv_u7CkoIXHk-kBa7h8YwJjRA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2970.49)):

Yeah, I think there was only one other queer person there. And on top of that, my husband is Hapa. He's half Asian. He's half Chinese, half Scottish, Irish. He was also surprised that he and this other guy, who was Filipino, were the only other Asian spouses.

Kaomi Lee ([00:49:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WZZFTJUL5HwDZjUjc3tdF8Mnk7qC4y-dODAxYSrIhEv6niZik_XjNPOEuukZYHxnBGJMrrYHPIHPwZjmDJT9-V18KJs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2990.39)):

Yeah, it was him and all the white guys?

Peter Savasta ([00:49:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Hlw9w7kakVm88aRY74FhLU49sTKINofI69y5uyhtyY1jyGHLQze2gkrXOZwMySmq1yl2CGm3X60aiFv--NFJYuDDmyQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2993.5)):

Yeah, so he was kind of surprised at that. So he went to a spouse session. And he came back, and I'm like, "Oh, what did you guys talk about? What did you guys talk about?" And he goes, "Well, one," he goes, "they were kind of talking about, 'Is my wife going to change? Is being here going to change my wife, and will she still love me?'" Or more or less things like that.

Peter Savasta ([00:50:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BEm8PdweAwYRdw-4ifHqz_kwjLfmux_JTg46OryIFkVBH0qEDSCupkE3KLxgGMfTj031lJImMEvA_JoOrM1IHdqFLgo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3020.46)):

And he goes, "And the second thing they delicately asked and danced around was, 'Does your wife get angry sometimes, a little more than you were expecting, or more than usual?'"

Kaomi Lee ([00:50:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TIgfmb6oxGvSsiacOplxsPoADNBi0IFOhgygyk2R9LR-aDsRrLPq1qdTSs__C805twkfeX36s4OPCBPIcDJf9-n-E7Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3036.24)):

Does this have something to do with being Korean?

Peter Savasta ([00:50:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eMqFRmY-Ac1ryxwyNO_CPyQSjzEpD_bZ4Qa4dbmLpKgpxYHlwQXkkwJujaGhNN-3YpwOK0bL_eGnugASieYWbwONGhw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3037.12)):

And I'm like, "Yeah." But he asked me, he goes, "Are you going to change? Are you going to stop... Are you going to change and stop loving me?" And I'm like, "No. One, I'm always going to love you. And two, I already been through this. I've been at the previous gathering. This isn't the first time I've walked into a large room filled with other adoptees." So I, "No, I already been through my change," and so that was that.

Peter Savasta ([00:51:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=c6QTCM7TJErv1d0422wksgK1g6qLJ1cfxAhTuWfpvHmMEPNELEPhvX1bQeWWB20D6JZ5GMv8-_Qy5-aAAw-RlarvnSg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3069.77)):

So with IKAA, I think IKAA is really good at convening adoptees together. There's such power in being in the presence of hundreds of people just like you. I think kids who have gone to camps grew up with that. They kind of know that, I think. But for a lot of adoptees who haven't really made that first jump back into Korea or Korean culture, or even in an adoptee space, it's something incredibly powerful. And it's something that I'm really glad is there.

Peter Savasta ([00:51:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o1r5OJhet8Eysovf3_2XkN-dMf2Z33Vm8QB6IVoILDCxtRsSv9Lj99eZkmn2YdgJTcrDVTbvUTIhSB3fg5S_qt2LQIw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3105.09)):

We had started a group in Hawaii called KAHI. And we had gone to Korea in an informal group. We were officially ... We had to name KAHI, Korean Adoptees of Hawaii, and we went in a group. I think the people at IKAA had asked us, they were like, "Hey, there are also these mini gatherings going around. Would you guys be interested in hosting a mini gathering in Honolulu?"

Peter Savasta ([00:52:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Cl1enVVKauE7wWL2743QAkq9CXBM1w37eomTAtDj4BUPRXOyoUhJzlhmFY_qBUsscts7TWcbzH1GSPveIngToVjfXFo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3148.41)):

And the four of us looked at each other and we were like, "Well, what do we have to do for that?" So it involved becoming a nonprofit. Ultimately, at the time, that you didn't have to be an IKAA organization to host a mini gathering. So at the time, we organized up. We had our first gathering. I think that was in 2008. I think we did it in a couple years after they had asked us.

Peter Savasta ([00:52:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wSqs7_t5Mw132FIx8HKVMuXWEIQ5qCKmZNW2ywNZYGl0K5bBQv0ObCfqPVdtRncGjLJKbzMMFlal3lN6qnP3z2r8I-4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3175.41)):

And we had about 100, 120 people here from Europe and from the US. And that's when IKAA, I think was started with the major organizations in the US. So I think it was New York, Minnesota, and Seattle, and the major organizations in Europe. And their primary goal was to initially do gatherings, to host gatherings in Korea and around the world.

Peter Savasta ([00:53:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gsfBfKAeLYYKU1MG8Li4tblUref-sMOV2CKZ8azretaA9KckrfTdm_QNBKB_SheapTXIf9O2LViaxbnzRFydCM6LFyI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3212.72)):

So after we had hosted that first gathering, we were invited to join IKAA. And that's how I got involved being the KAHI representative to IKAA.

Kaomi Lee ([00:53:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aEb-sZOKRc418xMdwWHLQlC5X8Z8HA2JAbie8Xe8sqb-8RZH8TneXzm_9u8BFfU4ayiNWLFYLmG94xZPxwtmIU1rZss&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3222)):

And you were on the board for how long?

Peter Savasta ([00:53:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OfKWBbq_MIuKJH0qPH26QTx5flf0wN41POH8yKlcGICPswalnNxwqfe-T0cb6nICULaf9_m7-lSVDBOWk1y20qHUfhg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3224.37)):

Oh, God. I was on the board. I was marginally on the board. I can't say I made all the meetings. So probably around 2008, 2009 until maybe a couple years ago, yeah. Most of the conversations and most of the activity was really about planning gatherings. And it was about planning the Korea gathering specifically.

Kaomi Lee ([00:54:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4CWEBLyUzjklwxBmw-f5oLB2yFVkVrqvUTmUlAv5-B7rD3VlfPp2-VBs7hBYNK5bkYyiU0PX0otq0iL2gYrDfb0amew&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3250.74)):

I would agree with you that I think what is so powerful is, A, being able to congregate together. Also, I think it adds an extra element too, to congregate in our origin place. Place of origin. But also, really interesting to be somewhere where it's adoptees from 12 countries or whatever it is. And bringing all of those differences, and yet also all having similar ways we bond.

Kaomi Lee ([00:54:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xTnlPM24lAAWILpZo5aS7WwAljQ-Y2EiVQPsUEQVbqBaNEeSvaG2iNmANhZ89MEN15rnvaGCCiCgYfHfNERlU_aeJkQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3290)):

I mean, it really struck me when you see a French adoptee and they look very French, or a Scandinavian adoptee. There's things that ... Of course, we're all Korean ethnically, but I just find that really fascinating.

Peter Savasta ([00:55:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nvHNAmu7_RcHscxnhHqtMvcPwK5FE0-6rdKHMW91bXVoioxEvZxKteaMINLNMBes8pSIVFXKpF7HFX_h4K_6a9-pxX4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3314.23)):

Yeah, I think one of the last gatherings I went to ... After each day, there was a session ... After the day sessions, there's an organized bar trip and everyone goes to a bar. And I just remember, I'd seen the Italians in the corner. And I just walked over and I'm like, [foreign language 00:55:31]. It was after a couple drinks, so I kind of went in there and blurted it out, which I like, "Welcome, Korean adoptees to Korea."

Peter Savasta ([00:55:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=T0Nc4NxgQnaRKNyykaQ3lG7vXInjmfnTczzOQRS9ExWTsGkvxVdgc_U1lHpGQ-ZFIHqrBGKH7T_64IX5MynJ46Enl0U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3344.15)):

And then, I just walked around ... And then, I just left. Kind of went in there, shouted that out, and left. And then, Kim, he's an Italian, he came running after me. He goes, "Hey, wait, wait, wait, come back. They want to talk to you. They're like, 'No one else here speaks Italian.' They want to know why." And I'm like ...

Kaomi Lee ([00:56:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=COyNlHhFh39aY9WNTTrRJlnXNmec2DyY70BaLeSHLXZtsqAP5_R-mxDCd3bh0nyl7rOlDnLL4cUpDZBfsBHGW6eh-wM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3365.95)):

Have you met Stefano?

Peter Savasta ([00:56:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gR9K4OqCl1FugEcSskh1ujGWI3DW8mRcjttRTKFwWNAmL2RSuOrE0e8SOUqAd8pv3e3dd_le-FyiHTjHbkhUAm7Sfo0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3367)):

Oh yeah, Stefano, I'd met. Yeah, really one of my first few ... I think it was my first or second trips back to Korea in the first or second gathering. Stefano and Felix, the French and the Italian adoptee. They were infamous, yeah.

Kaomi Lee ([00:56:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=S5e2EGJF-DWC699KySK-KgdvYbrq6NzZ-phA14ST6ZkCRruwEEc_W1I3TutCUx-baydW1T4RqhrE96qgIG4JMIirnnI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3385.7)):

Yes, I've met them both too. I feel like Stefano ... Anyone who comes to a gathering or back to Korea, at some point, meets Stefano. He's around, and it's just very ... I don't know if it's kind of cliche. I don't know if he plays that up, but it's like the sexy Italian stallion.

Peter Savasta ([00:56:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SOKzobOFMPlulff4cbGp8lNIe2OF0pMsua-4PrIfVjjg0sNtau03o0-SZ_FCwyXSmNwa3IuipMsD_CYl41tn80yYwAw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3414.75)):

We definitely are. Yeah, we definitely are where we come from. I think I'd mentioned to you when I ... The first time I'd seen Kari Ruth, she was this Minnesota adoptee. She was one of the first adoptees I knew, who went to move back to Korea. She had started a group called Minnesota Adopted Koreans back in the day. I think, back in the '80s or early '90s.

Peter Savasta ([00:57:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lBRwM_bifqptUyarTNsWbrWolvoKV8_6HM4w1ognpEEVtzK3ZaFgN67a_d5j1qp7hUCjmq48si9Yb7tBgqjecIMMzNg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3442.99)):

And we were at a conference in LA, this global Korean conference. And they had a special ... It was the first time I think adoptees were showing up with enough critical mass to hold a session. And she got up there and she opened her mouth. And it was right out of Fargo. And I was just like, "Oh, I can't believe people talk like that." And then, I thought, "Oh, okay, well, you have also an accent." But-

Kaomi Lee ([00:57:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HKZw4hMTn8uSztvUmkyWhOShnGNiInXUaAdTQnCTJ75olpll7weuEFe0RFpBfbe-GqZsZQT4btHFbyILgS1hwnlyx7w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3474.09)):

Well, this is interesting, Peter. Would you say ... And I won't be offended at anything you say. Are there things that you can tell it's a Minnesota adoptee? Are we passive aggressive? What is it?

Peter Savasta ([00:58:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uAZFMPzVa_UjXl_HJEXg639NoaFvU4-WFSubZNhy29pxm6ahUh3bjeGzU-PLsVrvNDwnUVphuUwuIYFL9cDgf8-0nI8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3488.21)):

You're usually really nice at first.

Kaomi Lee ([00:58:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yxsCtaQiZWYFT5-xP97RtaCcnc42imQFdyjlUZKnBXslE3SSyFVj1KeN1B2tDqXq9J_3DM-XKYVdL8k8zeRie-JHWjI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3494.88)):

At first, yes.

Peter Savasta ([00:58:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fFS97KU-rX7B5KLOPSDyxf_pm5LxevOi04mvIqKSVn6P_L6XyJlrV8HhFbwdgq9_DMzONxWD5X8VJdpAD4S5ubKYcqw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3495.77)):

So nice that, as a New Yorker, I feel like you're being sarcastic, like, "You're too nice. Wait, are you making fun of me?" But no, it's funny actually. When I meet an Asian, especially a Korean person ... I have a friend here in Hawaii. And when we met, we met at a friend's party. And I could tell he was Korean, and I'm like, "Oh, where you're from?"

Peter Savasta ([00:58:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6ULN2HDvucu0vYJDocjSJ4bfG0AZZ-31WC_MNJs5ClVTn6t1rrOk9EOWVL52FBFyU6JoQJRU4KnU_pKMuBYkEhw6Sdw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3519.4)):

And he goes, "Oh, I just moved here from San Francisco." I'm like, "Oh, did you grow up there?" He goes, "No, I grew up in Wisconsin." And I just went, "Oh, you're adopted." And he was like, how do you know? And I'm like, "Well, it's-"

Kaomi Lee ([00:58:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2jsjse36pigSbxHSgEE29rUjEIlecJ9jNIZF-orN3wC5PZvmS8XVpzyR6ieX2TncvBg7EMONivK6dw8K0n39toOYzIw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3530.16)):

Certain codes things. Yeah, Midwest, Asian.

Peter Savasta ([00:58:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OLVjc65jXEHTmMoLXOz8KCi41TdQm7hpkkdgcbLfeYtzKDP_ODY0jtwmely1IzOulHRrjvimHnqFWmkI9H0Lun15CRs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3533.19)):

And he goes, "Yeah, how did you know?" And I'm like, "Oh, because most Korean I know from Wisconsin and Minnesota are adopted." So that's that.

Kaomi Lee ([00:59:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KsEfNhflHO2DVYF1Ru_Ka23Oww8bRR0VNiohkmFdaEOM58m4DUWla39qEbTFgxJCYMmHofVJRYkMtGCIjHX-qFq4kgc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3542.98)):

And also, coming from Minnesota or Wisconsin, and to know that they went to one of the most diverse Asian places after.

Peter Savasta ([00:59:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JTkFk_W1X92oyYdB285FquIMlrvffik_ihNRRAEDIY92gdFbXZHaM_6BYNxssLJf6VHLwgjOCPeOGmlg54kZtO0hatE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3552.67)):

Yeah, yeah. But what I've learned from my Midwestern adoptee friends, one, it was harder for you guys to grow up. But you also had a community. Everyone always knew someone who was also adopted, I guess, because you stuck out so much. I also learned that there's more than one type of casserole. Just growing up in New York, we just had ... If someone asked me, What's your favorite casserole?" I'm like, "There's only one. It's tuna. I don't know of any others."

Kaomi Lee ([00:59:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=g0-omW_4q664n8ODYiLirI_KPYkvcj3dX7gTqU3kPH_9APv32CK-7ETLjwpK3oVfwhGqhmeKppm3-jIrtibLlprXfjI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3588.21)):

And in Minnesota, it's hotdish.

Peter Savasta ([00:59:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UHDlX6bAcBkod8Rkx6O5_q5yg5RVKlA8A6CezgsjNdmye8aDxda_OfGHLXUdKH1fKEyeResAvMv7weRW4zhwBYiD4U0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3589.28)):

It's hotdish, right. Yeah. But it's funny, we all definitely carry where we were raised and where we come from, because that also makes up a lot of who we are and how we got here. I'd gone on a Motherland Tour. It was one of the first Motherland Tours by Overseas Korea Foundation. And this was in '98. It was about two thirds American and third European.

Peter Savasta ([01:00:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gwkAd2g14ag9JAtyZ9MUD7bvTQ9xVBUk-xqQ1dTRYwkDabO6xbLc35HilOo76uPr1M6aJbKpJ7Q5b8oMNNf9AkRl2Ak&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3624.47)):

And we were just noticing things and we're like, "Oh, how come all the Swedish adoptees are ... All the Swedes are kind of hanging out by themselves. And how come they're all just in black all the time?" We asked us to the Norwegians and the Norwegians were like, "Oh, that's what they do. They're a little stoic. They keep to themselves. They're very serious."

Kaomi Lee ([01:00:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MX88HEfOzIiTXsItBDwFLRnBVEiUyz9iHO4xwoBZ_UnykEM_aFDrL_60To9WfiMzdk5bY4jz7uvsMklj3vB0LdBVef0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3647.1)):

Wait, the Norwegians said the Swedes were stoic?

Peter Savasta ([01:00:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5oCr4gsvW-awAO8HF1T6EA6SIgsueURjRaDCKeaiGCn9yWWF1UiIKgau0QcGBIM21ha2-CQkTTW5f2rMply9Qx4lyvc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3648.92)):

Yeah, and the Norwegians were a lot of fun too. Yeah, they're outgoing, and laughing, and stuff, yeah. Yeah, it was. Yeah, it's always really interesting to see where we come from, and also, I guess, compare notes.

Kaomi Lee ([01:01:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HzICJI93M5mK2_YJXyK_b2xrOW9I7plXXcEduGsrW2cbCRljOic7eFfEN7Bp7TbYsPIfqQxdg-RctD53rH0MZv_WExI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3669.93)):

So that leads me into the last questions I was thinking about asking is, your partner now is biracial. Was it important to you to be with someone who was not white, but either a person of color?

Peter Savasta ([01:01:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0PrwPEKKXEVk962yS-nf_kWPzK3R1WAs7SExhBceS-cE6hEKYGaiKMlddnftLqC6WY67XkSTv7v4hul5djDWXs1-zAI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3689.62)):

Yeah, I think it was always. Specifically, Asian because I think, at least in my 20s when I wasn't sure of who I was or ... No, I was sure of who I was. I was just kind of looking for that outer acceptance and carrying that wanting to be authentically Asian.

Peter Savasta ([01:01:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fWq38D3AWNU6grFSha0MM100_pgxJ-edQfwjdbseQXulCutP-YX3kTGFDbfrgmUP5b9Uk8QPfcg0z0V5n-sC6EqkifA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3713.65)):

I thought that being with another Asian would be ... It was important to be accepted that way. So I was specifically looking for other Koreans to date till the Koreans I dated were pretty crazy. And I was pretty crazy too, so it was like match to gasoline. But also it was my 20s. So that was [crosstalk 01:02:21].

Kaomi Lee ([01:02:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hBDvQ6WgMAmW03dkAwePNnSCRcxwF8xRMu65bFEVixuPrsYtBdzGxLdL00IhZ7G6xBOMLo6pnvAeA2iqpvNcr9vAhTg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3740.62)):

It's like han on fire, right?

Peter Savasta ([01:02:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Y03Z--XZ-DGjg5lUiXiS31p_Ue7pU9SZ3Depv7GHoo0IuZDxeRdx4tkO6fx3DDj3vx7r3hZZqF_cwszXr1Xz6qk590I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3743.4)):

Yeah, it was han ... We had the most amazing fights. We'd have a fight and I'd walk out of the apartment. And then, they'd open the window and we'd scream at each other from the street to the window. And still arguing for about 90 more minutes in the middle of the night. But it's New York, so no one cares. So it was fine. But I think there was a part that was looking for acceptance that way by definitely dating other Asians or specifically looking for Koreans. Finding that acceptance in myself.

Peter Savasta ([01:02:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Y7SS81k6_6QDgMI8zlcP8albmWbuoA0q82PyMZxlzwc8fTQOxKThdPFyskamSp5TcCmUsRnjqVYFu-qFl6jxYFSOF_I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3771.75)):

I think one of the reasons why my partner and I get along so well is that we had that struggle of being accepted because he's Hapa. Having that struggle with having to prove your authenticity. And I think there's something really comfortable in that. When we're together, we're as Asian as we want and we're as American as we want.

Peter Savasta ([01:03:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yfeUEhiXazcHfyEW6DMz1Fb8UdF6XVTnUx00Qh-Jc1KXsg4jwEODgjDDWOqhohSQtOx4GziijywAN9XfzzkDEKoPVCU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3794.18)):

And I'm the one that unapologetically makes meatloaf, and it's our comfort food. And he's also the one that cooks more Asian food actually, because he's got the skills. But I think that was definitely one ... It wasn't something I was looking for. I think it was something I was really surprised about because I didn't realize having that comfort of just being a stupid gay white guy, we can both be that together amongst ourselves. And not always have that place of rest and comfort.

Kaomi Lee ([01:03:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ac8v_1NrBxrC-ckiViKEL6SWQDQXPNKJ0SCOVJpsgy20EnMuAkGZphtRD67_WGM7Ca_VLQYITvL0Au6Z9v_-cwi8oio&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3837.36)):

Well, that's interesting because, as an adoptee, transracial adoptee, and then your partner is Hapa, it's like, you both have these dualities.

Peter Savasta ([01:04:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fmvhU6xexhFAy3akS_crDGoVCmHcCuzKObg6Ncj09VBVdHa6SM3nUMzERp7B4wUumv_IkYBJUIwa3xJ_Lw4MYF1BVkE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3847.92)):

Yeah, jokingly, once I said to him, "Oh, I think, because you're a mixed race, you're one of the whitest guys I've ever been with." And then, he just went "Well, so are you." And then, I was like, "No, that's actually really fair. That's really fair." And you know what? It's great. It's great. And we're great for each other, yeah.

Kaomi Lee ([01:04:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UeazHH_aXQw-19VFr8tbYhDPtzspVXXlvDgtHqqjCNA_FDRjN5D0IGEw3Nghpd15X8EEOX4pfnOV_KWxsYHr1NGf__E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3872.47)):

That's awesome. How many years have you been together?

Peter Savasta ([01:04:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fB_0RTT2jqTU5IQRaDllurfiDJgK4eJmhrtRT8rWWDJdL_kDCmQNuL2qVszB0S8cBqaQfkajTDRG6wsIphrDxI25ZI4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3875.42)):

20 years this year.

Kaomi Lee ([01:04:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=F2AUU2z8pksoJyHhinovhCmiCkSjzlbe_g4lQy1Y1M9fpnDJqgEBqsAc6GBsLSfhEYUWr1cXKdAiR98sPqa_sDzXgOw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3877.35)):

Oh, congrats.

Peter Savasta ([01:04:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mx9VZLI5EfYw1Ao72uVt25h3i5WhhOxO97qE-oXp7lHYcWFRteNw1Rw3YJtkohdKL61L_T-zlpkwU0sC6ytxCy6cDOA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3878.67)):

Yeah, yeah. Although if you were to ask me, it only feels like seven. I think, because when it's good, it goes by fast.

Kaomi Lee ([01:04:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KAH8uSR0yyYYs_Fzok54YQsYzpXDlLq3NO2TOA6Om788rbB5D2vA19i4mjn3ZVJwUxUXlIgBR4lWrw9hkfwgK8MtUaE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3888.45)):

Yeah, and then last I want to ask you, Peter, about Hawaii. I know you had told me the story that your partner was originally from Hawaii. So that's how you ended up there. But I remember I was just in Hawaii for the first time and I remember I just loved it. I mean, obviously, it's gorgeous, but one of the things was just the fact that there's so many Asians, it felt so instantly comfortable.

Kaomi Lee ([01:05:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dr_AWIuVNzo8q9aOQUWPU7t5TkDN9TlXvfQww68f2aF9ABTA05m7O3sgD0fznFyYD8Tsh2r_SOEKFRs5nVGCBTtTxjA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3915.53)):

And in a way that Korea does for an adoptee, when you go back or you live back there for a certain amount of time. I don't know, it's just this unspoken kind of comfort level where immediately, you can blend in. You can look like a local, quote, unquote. You can feel like you belong in this space. And I think, for adoptees, a lot of us grow up, people always questioning why you're there. So how has it been for you being in Hawaii?

Peter Savasta ([01:05:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vtiENtieuiS3oPvh0mTWuwZV7FrnhlJtyYeS12_AvLC0hy7-Tb1dug6smzDZnaOiqG_EbFEQ7rvaXGSE7ajgIBRsx5Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3948.29)):

Yeah, Hawaii's a really interesting place because you can meet someone who completely looks Korean, and their last name will be Smith, and they're not adopted. But it's just a mix, and which side your jeans pull from a little bit more. And then, you can meet people who are white and they'll have a completely Asian last name. And they're not adopted. It's just what their mix is.

Peter Savasta ([01:06:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yv47j2b5aEs5EWqpH2KOR52xQ4lCGuvMg8Z2UsmGp6LwC8y-NXezWZ5t6031EFb9TjANz9iwwU6gzX_0E-9-xyKebog&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3978.04)):

So I think, in one way, living in Hawaii, you're not confronted with, "Who does that name belong to?" that adoptees and other places have. And I've met adoptees here who don't really want to explore the adoption part. They've moved here from the mainland. They love living here because there isn't that confrontation of it, that they can just be who they are.

Peter Savasta ([01:06:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qy8sP0HpjOG5ly82Gaqs13T0tH4tb2y_Aw9wWbXqH0jPysmo5deondRLwrqwTos6xceRSH4i-OsaUpZxbjjQKxjNnmc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4007.3)):

I remember when we were opening up our bank account at the local branch bank, the woman who was opening our account with us, she's like, "What kind of things do you do?" And I was explaining, We're a group. Sometimes it's support group. Sometimes we do language lessons. Sometimes we do all these things." She's like, "Oh, because I was adopted from Korea too."

Peter Savasta ([01:07:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=IpVb4l_ScQjKiCs_rFDwSHdOTUlQzfVX2oAg8kZuUu6SPn3vg5QTU3-K6FG6u5mTcu8QbYtP4bs8GHSPQuUnDjbbI6U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4027.61)):

And I wouldn't have known it because the names. You just don't think to question names. But she was, I guess, ultimately one of those adoptees who just was just totally happy cruising. Not necessarily being around other adoptees or wanting to explore it. And that's fine.

Peter Savasta ([01:07:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sinKPZGXxvHFah6nak_hr17gPpyTbThUcDgZPqxvTnzX3kG95gq6Wutew8HHgGcXptEM59EuKXDuGR7j6r9SCCesk4o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4045.4)):

So yeah, in one way, we can meld in without having to be confronted with questions that are normally asked. When you're asked those questions, you start asking questions yourself. So it's a way, I guess, that it's a good place to, if you compartmentalize things, that you can really do it fairly easy here.

Peter Savasta ([01:07:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cfv3T4DD66E4CdFDnykWBguc5wRyZJOam4aX9f1N5iX1mKHqiBbCa_EHlEk0N2jt7WpVQ76HFN5GtttuuW3J7fsyxAM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4071.9)):

I think, also, being in an Asian ... It's not just an Asian state, an Asian population, it's a mixed Asian population. So there's less, coming from the Asian side, things being less authentically Asian, because Asians have been here for generations, for over 100 years. So there's a little less emphasis on that. And because a lot of people are just mixed all around.

Peter Savasta ([01:08:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BDVtkEqcaZVOveWm2oyQAdh64M-KDj2S4edMMBut8PKx9WmrK5v14vEEfetedsMQSLImCRkMU-jXPsN2S-V4Z2b7dUs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4105.89)):

I have some friends that they'll tell me they're mixed. And I'm like, "Oh, wait, but that doesn't break down into powers of two when you're going back." They're like, "I'm 40% this and 30% that." I'm like, "Oh, wait, that doesn't break down in powers a two when you go back generations." And you're thinking, "Oh, maybe it does and they're estimating." Sorry, that was my dorky side coming out.

Kaomi Lee ([01:08:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=B6ohV9llTz-DZKJUsQQlpVhP9agKk_Q83We7M8RuzpPjE4s0T9thxjbmxpqTcT678uy4Xy-fzN_HAfn4SLn7sTcjBFs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4126.24)):

And as Peter Savasta, do you feel like in Hawaii that people don't necessarily assume you're adopted?

Peter Savasta ([01:08:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=i_80appDJhGEsj4S8DvI_m_-YK7_35Q76ebBlqIeKWJ1t41uqtULAcvZtx8XRNnZ4QQwArWrwMy5pvJ5MI26QdIWG_0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4135.07)):

Because my name is Italian, I usually get looks from other Filipinos who are like, "You're not Filipino," because it's a Latin last name. So they'll be like, "Savasta, you're not Filipino." I'm like, "No, okay, but I'll explain." Yeah, I guess that's the way ... That's my confronting question is, "You're not Filipino." And I'm like, "No, no, no, no, but I am ... Yeah." And I'm like, "But I am Catholic."

Peter Savasta ([01:09:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-bn58dSNEoZmsh-0WmEhqyGtxb9teLX4TSkDLJ-8LwLb3Tz4X4Kf2EqjEGGnX-jD0TH_GGFatIIkKx5bYWznfWVS6aw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4161.35)):

I was raised Catholic. I'm not Catholic anymore, but yeah. Yeah, so it doesn't really come up. And if it does come up, I have to be the one to bring it up. And I have to say, I kind of like that. I kind of like, "I'll share it with you if I want to share it. I don't have to explain it right off."

Kaomi Lee ([01:09:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZXG6l_zMEhymiAIRIecFTC-00sGVz82Cs5S4zNNTGd_ioKDofGZLL4RivhFJjAwFaZ0e8biMxSpOYfHBWRw-tci-NKY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4187.71)):

Thank you so much, Peter, for your story, and for allowing me and us to delve more deeply into it. It was fascinating and I learned so much from you. It was also a pleasure to get to meet you and have some Ramen together in Hawaii recently. Thank you so much.

Kaomi Lee ([01:10:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mApsVv7dleZA2uCt3ULNiWfdHkKbLub1ifzyxbiFkXrW4F7R44RtXZlQflkZBSdBWW0lKd1NS8sN85yYd3Cxpmv6lBg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4207.73)):

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Kaomi Lee ([01:10:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=L0OHntaYBotSm4BdJJ_hUydQ4mreAaDQl6Uy8QQHlP8daOu-O6aJMZld0kL5o4Y0zCSRpkpib8XVfOO_LEL0jmlTqf8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4226.71)):

Right now, we've got a transcription project started where the aim is to make this podcast more accessible by transcribing it. Also, where funds will allow, I will continue to try to translate these stories as well into Korean. But it all takes incredible amount of money actually.

Kaomi Lee ([01:10:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vlhpXFdNjDSfHtSdzUZBab44XtbEp4q1CjpAGLhLYStRj_GYMfqCxAbclWoiNocfGpECiEhPelCiHtvXt9eePNWIhK4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4246.03)):

And if you enjoy this podcast and get something from it, and you are able to contribute and help the work that's being continued here, please consider it. All our thanks. And that's it for this episode. In two weeks, we'll be back with another story from our adoptee community. Until then, be well. (singing)