Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Welcome to Adopted podcast, season six. My name is Kaomi Lee, and I am the host of this podcast series. Our kickoff episode is a live recorded interview that took place September 17th in Koreatown in Los Angeles as part of Association of Korean adoptees, San Francisco's annual Bay to LA event where folks in San Francisco caravan down to Los Angeles and the adoptee groups from both communities get together and learn and laugh and Nori bong together. And it's, it's a great time. I was invited to host this live recorded interview that you're about to hear, and it's presented here, mostly uncut. So if you were unable to make the Bay to LA event this year, this is the interview that took place so that in a small way, you'll get to attend as well. And here we go, right into the interview with Nick Greenee. He is a leader with the A KA S F group. welcome to Los Angeles. Everyone.

People came from, I don't know, like five or six different states. There was Arizona, Washington, of course, Cali. Those are two different states, north and south. No, just kidding. <laugh>. And then you know, I'm from Minnesota. I think there's some other people who grew up in the Midwest that are Yes. That are here. So Texas, Woohoo, Arizona, James Straker, Arizona. Awesome. So you guys, thank you so much for being here. And I wanna give a big round of applause too for the A KA S F crew. Nick and Christy, they, they worked constant messaging for months to get this, to put this together, and wow, they found a great space and they put together a great day for you today. So thank you so much for coming. And Christian, do you think, what's our eta five minutes? We're good. Okay. So with that we'll get started. This is the first ever live audience recording of adopted podcast, and it's going to be season six launch. So give a thank you for coming and yeah, let's start off with some music. Christian.

Jae Jin:

This

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Is our theme song by Jay Jen. You can find his music on jaejinmusic.com. He's a Korean American singer songwriter, and he starts off every podcast episode,

Jae Jin:

The song Rising from Below. I keep running, I keep running to a place where no one knows is Big Sky bigger than we know. I keep running, I keep running. Like I've got nowhere to go.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Welcome to Adapted Podcast, season six. just for a little introduction, my name is Kmi Lee. I'm based in St. Paul, Minnesota. But in 2016, I started this podcast from Korea. I had an idea to, I had a Fulbright to go over to Korea and to interview Korean adoptees adults who go back to Korea and hear about their experiences and their stories. Because around 2016, you know, I thought there wasn't a lot that I heard about what's it like to move back to Korea as a, an adult Korean adoptee. And I wanted to hear more. And so I got the chance to go over there and I got the chance to start a podcast. And so that's really the genesis of the podcast. And now it's been going for, we've had five seasons. nearly 120 adoptees have been interviewed. I've continued the podcast now in the States where I am now based. And we've got Nick, Nick Greenee. Nick why don't you start off with, you know, your name, your age, and what you do for A K S F?

Nicholas Greene:

Sure. So my name is Nicholas Greenee. I am 40 years old. And I'm a board member for A KA S F, and I've been very actively involved for the last year.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And how did you get started with a AKA S F?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, so it's, it's kinda interesting. like when we do events and we meet with other cats and new events I get very fascinated with like, new people that join and how they found out about it. for me, I'm, I actually think it's a cat in San Francisco that did Jiujitsu and she recommended me checking night out, and that was like five years ago. So when they did an event five years ago, and I wasn't really bought into it, but I said, Hey, why not? You know, I kind of wanna peel the onion layers of what it's, what is to be a cad, and they did a potluck. And I also bring that up because the first event, I feel like is the most nervous one. I mean, it's like, it's not easy getting it out of your shell, even to meet other people like you. so I think that really stood out. Excuse me. So after that event, I sort, sorry, one

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Second. And Christian, we can, we can kill the music. Oh, thank you

Nicholas Greene:

It's got a nice jingle.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Water. Water.

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. No, no. so it might have been some of the soju last night. So, <laugh>, why am I saying that?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I don't, I don't think of you as a drinker at all. No, no. Oh,

Nicholas Greene:

Thanks. No, no. This, it's this leather face. So yeah, I turned into a grape or turned into a tomato. So anyways I had a really good time with the event. It Isabella very welcoming space. And then a few years past, I just went back to normal life. So during Covid, Alex Woo at a K s F, he's a past president, he's through what's called Sogi talk. It's like a virtual, you know, virtual happy hour. People can, you know, drink, you know, cheers virtually, you know, say what's on their mind. And it's a really nice thing because, I mean, co covid to me has been a challenge with everyone in mental health. And I find that doing that felt really good. You know, I just, however I want to try and characterize it, it was just a nice warm feeling, and it felt like it something wholesome for me.

because, you know, to me, COVID was tough with just, you know, soc being social. So from there I got more involved, and then I actually said, Hey, why not? I get, you know, let's do a Soji talks at my house. So I actually, I think the first like, mini event that I threw and again, like a lot of these adopt events, it's like formal, but it's organic. So it's one of those things where, I mean, Kathy from Texas was in town, and Stephanie's like, Hey, come over. Let's do a barbecue. And like 12 of us came. So it's really one of those things where, you know, everyone can be a leader, but you don't always have to be formal. You can always set something up on your own. So I did, and we had, actually, that's when I first met Christie and others. So we did a virtual event. And then I think it's just a lot of it's organic and I, a lot of the faces I see here are people that I've seen involved too. It's it's really one of those grassroots things where you just, you know, it's, it's a great space to get more involved in, you know, bring people together. And it's not, you know, it's, there's no pressure. And it, it's always been a fun process.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

One of the questions that I, that I ask, and I'm very curious about why people do things in life, and I think that's the fundamental question I wanna ask you, is, you know, you dove, you dove into the adoptee community, now you're actively, you know, helping to put on spaces and experiences for adoptees. Why do you do it?

Nicholas Greene:

So I, I think people kind of gravitate towards certain things. You know, we have our strengths and weaknesses. I think I, I, I thrive off of, you know, setting certain social things up. I think that the key word, you know, this is Nick Greenee's sort of, you know, vision of things, is that, you know, every, every community has like a tribe. It doesn't have to be a cat community. It could be like rock climbing. so why do I do it? I really enjoyed inter, you know, interacting and rallying and working with, you know, our tribe. you know, in Jiujitsu, it's very, actually Brazilian Jiujitsu is very similar to the cre adopt community. it's a very welcoming space. Everyone's equal. it's a safe space. It's something where being different is embraced. it's a, it's a, it's a very, very, I mean, there's, it's like you could write a novel and it could go on and on about how much the topic of tribe to me is important. And I see like, you know, these great things that come out of it. And like, I'm, I'm peeling down your layers because I'm, I'm still new. First time I went to CAN conference, you know, I've never gone to Ika conference. These are all like, huge things where I realize like there's, it's a really deep rooted community.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Why don't we take it all the way back to Pre-K Greenee. What can you tell us about your origin story?

Nicholas Greene:

Pre-K Greenee, like, like, where was I born and where did I go from there? so my Korean name's on Jinsu. interestingly, again, it's like peeling nine layers back. I thought on Jinsu was my real name. But the, the last name on is I think like the pre fixture, the, the town area. You know, where I, where I was found. Jinsu is fictitious too. My birthday's fictitious. So origin story, you know, I was adopted at one and a half years old through Holt. and I tell you, I always think, you know, like, we have very interesting lives and it's, it's more, people can see it through a certain lens. But I, I always find the funny things about, you know, like the whole adoption process with me. one is back in the eighties I'm not sure how it's done now, but it was like literally a, a picture book, you know, where they like, you know, they just look at babies and, you know, someone, a family chooses one.

my my mom said, I look like a little Buddha baby, and that's how they chose me. So I was like, oh, you know, he was really cute. Like, oh, he looked like a little Buddha baby. And I, I still am. I just, you know, it's, it's called a beer gut. yeah. Oh, oh. And then the other funny thing is, when I got older, actually, like when I was 30 my mom, I think I was drinking whiskey with my dad and hang out with my mom. And my mom's like, you know, you weren't our first choice. I was like, what? And she's like, yeah, you know, like we had, we, we fo we picked one, but you know, it fell through, but we're glad we got you. And I was like, are are you serious? Like, you know, maybe

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Joking a aside, there's more to this relationship than we get to in this interview. Next to ask Nick about his parents' background. And he said his father is Irish Catholic,

Nicholas Greene:

And my mother's Jewish, and sh e grew up in New Jersey. So very interesting background on both sides of my parents and religiously, actually, they made a decision to become Unitarian Universalists. I'm not sure if anyone's heard about that. It's a very interesting concept with religion.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Can you tell us more? What is a Unitarian universalist? Just a short

Nicholas Greene:

Sure. if you, if you kinda like, focus on the words like universalist, it, it's, it's a way of, it's almost like a religion that accepts all religions. It's, it's very kind of hippieish, if you will. but you know, the concept of it is great, which is, you know to be open-minded and accepting of, you know, different, different denominations.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And Nick, did you have siblings? Do you have siblings?

Nicholas Greene:

no. After they had me, I think they're like, we're done. I, sorry, I just, so

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You're an only, you're an only

Nicholas Greene:

Child. I'm an only child, yeah. Yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Wow. Now I'm kind of understanding that <laugh>,

Nicholas Greene:

I thought, I thought this supposed to be serious. Oh,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Oh, now I'm only child. Okay. And so

Nicholas Greene:

You like, looked at me funny.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Does that mean you were, tell us a, a little bit if you don't mind talking a little bit about your relationship with your parents. Did, do you feel like you were close? Were they much older?

Nicholas Greene:

Sure. my parents, I'm 40, my parents are 75, so they're a little older. When they adopted me my upbringing was pretty good. You know, nothing, nothing outta the ordinary. I think I had a lot of normal challenges that adoptees have, like middle school, high school, trying to find your tribe or trying to, you know, be, you know, being the chameleon and whatnot. but they're, they're good. They gave me a lot of a lot of support, a lot of unconditional love. And I, I'm very thankful for that. You know, I kind of recognize how difficult that can be or what a big leap of leap that is because my cousin has adopted two children domestically and one is with autism Asperger's. So it's really interesting to see my cousin go through that process.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So would you say you're, you're pretty close to them, or have been through the years? Yeah,

Nicholas Greene:

I would say we're pretty close. There's obviously that teenage angst to where, you know, I rebelled a lot and, you know, went against, you know, you know, didn't listen to them when I should have I'd say coming to term, you know, just being a good sign in terms of bonding closer with my family and my parents. It was more in my mid late twenties, you know, I really started to appreciate you know, where, you know, my upbringing and you know them as parents.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. And growing up, what kind of group of kids did you fall in with?

Nicholas Greene:

So like the East Coast is very homogenous. It's like very high percent of Caucasian. I, after 10 years old, I went to, I moved to the Bay Area and I lived in the Peninsula, so it was really diverse. so, you know, there diversity there was really good because, you know, it's not like homogenous. but I did find myself hanging out with minorities a lot. You know, there's always like the jocks and that. And then there's sort of the, the Asian rice rocket racers Fast and Furious 24.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So there was like an, an Asian like boy crew that you hung out, or?

Nicholas Greene:

yeah. Rice boys. no. Yeah, I mean,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Or what is a race boy?

Nicholas Greene:

A, a rice boy. Oh, rice boy. Yeah. Oh no, it's, it's probably a colloquial term. any, I mean, anyone know hear about like rice rockets, right? That's right. That's, yeah, VIN Diesel. So yeah, I had that thing where, you know, people, you know, I, I went to raves you know, like went to races.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you wear like the neon? Oh, I, I did,

Nicholas Greene:

You know, like I beat, and I'm not even married cuz I'm a kid, you know, it's like, why are you wearing, why do they call the white beat? So yeah, I did the whole Asian thing. The whole a z n thing. had a Honda Accord, I lowered it two inches. My mom was so mad at me.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Oh, did you soup up your Honda? I souped

Nicholas Greene:

Up my Honda Accord.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Like, did it have like, it

Nicholas Greene:

Had a, I love

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Raving so sticker on it, things on it, it, it,

Nicholas Greene:

It, it, it was lowered let's see here. It had a raving sticker on it. I had, I didn't have the exhaust, but it got the, the, the big thing that makes it looks like an exhaust, you know, like a big pipe thing for like, like 15 bucks. And it's like, yeah, I like my exhaust. Like, you just put a little tip on there. They don't need to know that. Yeah. But it looked cool. I mean, okay. To me.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did the, did the girls like it?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it had really good gas mileage. Yeah, it did the seatbelt thing and

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Well, you, you would tell them it, it gets good gas mileage and

Nicholas Greene:

No, it just, it did come

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And they'd be like, take me away.

Nicholas Greene:

No, if I did a road trip with 'em, it's just like, oh, hey, you know, anywhere you want to go. Cuz you know, gas is cheap, but this is the, the nineties, I'm old.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay.

Nicholas Greene:

We can keep this serious if you want. it's,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You know, no, no, no. The captain. No, no, no, no, no. so you, so you, you moved, you and your family moved when you were a teenager to California? Yes. Okay. And so growing up, it sounds like it was pretty Homogenously white in, on the East coast in Massachusetts.

Nicholas Greene:

Yep.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And so how did you, how did that affect your own kind of identity? I mean, it's a, it's a time you're a teenager, you're trying to figure out who you are and what you stand for. And, and so how did it, did you feel like a lot of us end up feeling white growing up? Did you feel?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, I, I feel like when I was in the East coast, I was really young. I didn't really notice it. I do remember cuz maybe this is a Korean thing or nature nurture, I got in a lot of fights, like throughout school, like middle elementary school, middle school, high school. I remember I still remember this, some, some black kid called me a gook and I got in a fight with him and another kid, another time. This is like elementary school. And a funny thing is I didn't really, probably didn't even know what the word meant, but it just sounded bad. And then someone called me flat face and then I got in a fight with them. So the temperament thing is interesting cuz you know, my parents are like pacifists. yeah. And then ever since then, I just look in the mirror. I'd always turn my face in the mirror, like just a, like, maybe they have a point, you know, they, you know, I don't have much of a bridge on my nose, so it's f kind of factual what they were saying. You know, I, I punched them for, for saying a fact. You have a flat face. Like, oh, dare you tell the truth. Like,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And did you ever hear from that kid again?

Nicholas Greene:

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did they, did they stop bullying you?

Nicholas Greene:

No actually, yeah. I'm kind of a bullies bully. I, I don't like it. I don't know if it's like a sense of righteousness. you know, cuz I always feel so my, my philosophy is like, bullies that bully people, it works on nine out of 10 people, but there's gonna be that one person that doesn't work on.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah, I have a, I I'm just curious, who here was called Flat face

Nicholas Greene:

Really?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

As a kid? What about GOK? Interesting. Yeah. Yeah. So it, it's happened to a lot of us. So a lot of us can relate to, yeah, myself included. did you have a, so it, it, it seemed like it was, you know, you were being teased for being Asian Korean, but when did, so when did it start to feel that you felt good about being Asian?

Nicholas Greene:

Oh, like embracing my flat face. I mean, you know, it's not bad the world's round, but it might be flat. the Asian thing, I never really dug into the Korean culture. I think it's funny cuz I'm a late bloomer. I'm really getting more involved now with like, chuuk and understanding a lot of, you know, the stuff about the food and our identity. before that really, I just, you know, never, it never really minded it much. but I think maybe it's getting older. I've learned to be fascinated and appre and appreciate certain things and really invest in wanting to learn more. It's like kinda like going to a museum and there's people that just kinda walk through the exhibit and then people that really spend time and like wanna learn certain sections of the exhibits.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So what, you know, as a lot of us have this kind of, you know, cause you have this quote unquote white name. What, can you tell us a funny example of, you know, people not believing that you fit your name?

Nicholas Greene:

Oh, interesting. Yeah, actually I was talking to Amanda on the way here about that. and I'm curious cuz people hear me have similar stories about the name thing. So I remember when I was in my mid twenties, you know, suit and tie you know, job interviews where you go in the, you know, the hiring manager's office, you get interviewed. So Nick Greenee, and then there was like a David Lee. So they call, so they called, this is what's interesting cuz you know, like, the face doesn't lie. The eyes don't lie. I walked in, they said, Nick Greenee, I walked in and they thought I was David Lee. They're like, oh David Lee, you're na you're the one after Nick Greenee. They said, no, no, I'm Nick Greenee. And the person, like, when I walked in, they were like, excited. And then when I, they found out I was Nick Greenee, they got deflated. They literally was like this, like, oh. And it was a terrible interview because they were just not invested. They, it's like they already made their decision. They were just like,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay, they wanted to hire Nick Greenee, or they

Nicholas Greene:

Thought, well, the name, the name Nick Greenee, and it's like a Caucasian,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You know, so they were, they were expecting a Caucasian person.

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, yeah. No, yeah. Parents should've called me Chad. Chad, Chad Greenee, you know, Chad <laugh> Well, so it's just interesting because I, I saw it firsthand and it like, you know, sometimes you misread things, but that, that situation, it's like

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You didn't misread. He

Nicholas Greene:

Was so deflated. And it's like he didn't care. He's just going through the motions of the questions and it's just like, you know, like, yeah, we'll call you back. And I was like, terrible. It was like, you know.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

How did you feel at the time? No.

Nicholas Greene:

Equity.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

How did you feel?

Nicholas Greene:

I, I think like a duck. A lot of stuff, well certain things trigger me, but, you know, a lot kind of beats off my shoulder. It kind of comes with the territory. I think we, you know, being adopted, like a being Asian is one thing, right? Where in society kind of, you know, like for example, man is more less masculine, right? And we're seen a certain way. but the Asian adoptee things like another layer of trying to figure out and navigate that. And I think you know, we all have coping mechanisms. I think from my, my dad's Irish side, we kind of laugh it off, you know, that's why got jokes for days. <laugh>. Sorry, sorry.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And humor. Humor is, is a way to, to cope too. It's a way to, you know, sort of deflect something that might be painful.

Nicholas Greene:

The greed.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I wanna talk about, so you got into martial arts. Was that like as a recent thing or did that start early?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. I feel like we all have certain passions that we go go deeply into, and it just becomes who we are. I used to break dance and then as I got older I mean, it's really tough on your joints. So a break dancer friend of mine is like, Hey, you know, jujitsu's really fine. You should try it. And then there's just certain hobbies you do where, and you could tell like where some peop people do things, they're like, it's all right. And then things where it's like, it's like a, like a snap, you know, epiphany. So GG two is like that to me. It just, you know, I could, I could do it all day. I could geek out on it. you know, it's like almost near obsession, but it's, it's a great, it's a great community and great sport.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And did you, you know, I wanted to ask about, you know, being an Asian male growing up and, you know, having either, you know, your physical body, you know, being teased or you know, about the way you looked. Did you feel like getting into martial arts was a way to, that you could become strong or that you could defend yourself? Or did you feel a need to project a certain strength?

Nicholas Greene:

It, it, it's funny. I mean, so I mean, I, I'm sort of being like a sales rep for it. Like, jujitsu as many practical applications and can mean different things to different people, right? They're, and I see it with people that join. There are people who like, you know, we do self-defense classes and there are women who are like, look, I live in San Francisco. You know, I, you know, like I, you know, I'm afraid of being mugged. And, you know, it is that type of, you know, parts of the city. And jujitsu really helps him feel comfortable and confident if something bad happens. They, like, confidence is a word and always is a word, but really being confident because you feel it in your bones, it's good. I mean, there's some real, like, I really mean it. There's certain female jisu practitioners that are like a hundred pounds and they're, they're more greedier and tougher than me and I'll roll with them.

So self-defense aspect, there's health, right? For me it was just, it was, it's fine. It's like, you know, it's a fine way to socialize with people and do an activity, you know just, you know, fitness and also it's a human puzzle, right? You're trying to submit your opponent. but there's a lot of applications and sometimes they overlap. I mean, I've gone up and down a weight, but jiu-jitsu, it's helped me. Cuz if you do something you love physical activity, it's so much easier to get in shape or be healthier. I mean, I got to, there's a period where I got, I went from like two 10 to 1 67 cuz I, and it was easy just cuz you do something you like, the momentum keeps growing.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. I wanna change gears a little bit to and I understand that you went into law enforcement. How did you decide to go into that? Was that a natural occupation choice?

Nicholas Greene:

I think I hear like people change their careers three to four times in their lifetime. I think that was a bigger, that was a major career change. Before that. I was in healthcare pretty deeply. I worked at Stanford, U C S F Kaiser Permanente. So, you know, I, I got burned out a little bit. I was doing clinical research and I just, you know, in my twenties. So what's interesting is, I think my dad did a citizens course at the city hall where they teach, you know, citizens who wanna learn like a night course. And I joined my dad and I was like, oh, interesting. You know, it's, you're helping the community, you're a public servant. So I did that and I, you know, went the police route. And

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

With your dad?

Nicholas Greene:

No, no, no, no, no, no. Oh, we, we did the citizens academy together. A

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Citizen academy. So it's like a volunteer course. Yeah. In the evenings. Yep.

Nicholas Greene:

Yep. But that's what got me to take the next step of applying.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

What were you, what were you drawn to about that?

Nicholas Greene:

I mean, you hear all the machismo stuff like, you know, you get a gun or you know, like you, you know, man in uniform stuff like Richard Gear or you know, like stuff like that. But it was funny. It was for me, it was more, I think I was like, you know, we all have our jobs. I think I was getting really kind of hamster in a wheel, like being in an office whole day.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. You were looking for something different?

Nicholas Greene:

Yep, yep. Out in the field.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. So what was that like?

Nicholas Greene:

It was, it was interesting. Like I mean, police now is very different than it is then for context, we were just using tasers and body cams. That anti-police sentiment was just starting then. It's really weird because it started right when I was leaving as a cop. I've never been spit on before until then. Now it's like normal. Like people are very anti-police. I've had people, well, I'm just giving context, but I mean, you know, not all the negative stuff, but I also remember, you see, you see every walk of life you get exposed every walk of life. And it's interesting cuz it really exposes you to human beings. So, you know, you take, you take all these, these in, you kind of understand how to like sive through how to understand humans better. Because I'll tell you this, like, I've had parolees be like, like from bank robberies and stabbings be more respectful to me and com, you know, because, you know, they're older.

They went through that in the past and then, you know, a male Karen would literally be like, how dare you pull me over for going through two stoplights and jump out of this car? Because it's like how the audacity of me to do that. So it really kind of shows you different sides of human beings good and a bad, but also lets you glimpse into like people's lives, which is a big, it's a lot of responsibility because you know, I've seen, I mean the, you know, I've been in sexual abuse cases like child sexual abuse. You see that dark side of people. You also see a lot of good stuff. You see, you know, like families that are down on luck. Yeah. There's, there's, there's quite a few stories. Some of 'em I can't really tell on this podcast, but interesting things about people

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I wanted to ask, so is the, is the donuts thing a real thing? <laugh>?

Nicholas Greene:

Well, I saw the donuts over there. I started, I started drooling. Cowie and I are both drooling.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

It's not a donut you didn't like?

Nicholas Greene:

Oh, oh, they're no, I, I'm non-discriminatory to donuts. You know, I'll, I'll pull over any donut driver. I might even, I you know, Hey, if anyone, anyone wants to give me a donut, I I won't, I won't say no <laugh>. It's down there on the, by my dog. My dog probably ate him.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

What? You have a cute dog too,

Nicholas Greene:

Just like his owner.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

<laugh>.

Nicholas Greene:

Sorry.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay, come on. <laugh>. Nick, so I mean, we all kind of as assume police work is dangerous, would you say, like what percentage do you think that you were, you know, you spend your time in really doing some really dangerous stuff and is a lot of it just kind of routine patrol?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, that's a really good question. I'd say a lot of it is just, you know what it is, it's like a California earthquake, which is, you know, what earthquake's gonna happen, but you don't know when it's gonna happen. But you have to be aware, like, like prepared for it. So, you know you pull over a lot of cars, you know, looking for, you know, someone with drugs or whatever. most of the time it's not, or, you know, every once in a while, you know, you could do like a night shift and just go to call to call to call and then, you know, like drunk person at the bars and then maybe one outta 10 of them, this has actually happened. It's like a drunk toning guy and it takes like six of us to wrestle him down. And you know, so it, that that's the way I kind of see it. It's a lot of things that turn into nothing. Like we actually do a lot of late night, like 3:00 AM like, you know, like, like building alarms most of the time, like a chipmunk that set it off or something. But you have to, you, you really have to clear the building. Like, you know, like, hey, there could be a robber. And nowadays actually, it's like a lot of stuff's happening more. So

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Do you feel like, was there ever an incident incidents that you felt there was racism towards you? Either from either someone you were helping or from other people on the force?

Nicholas Greene:

Oh, that's a, that's an interesting question. police is interesting because, oh yeah, this is a public podcast. It's a, it's a great, it's a great organization. There's a lot of harm harmony, I'm, I'm kidding. I'll, I'll keep it real. there's a lot of old, it's like fire departments. There's a lot of old school skull and bones, kind of good old boys club, you know, sort of people that identify with each other. And it's like, you know, you'll be you, you'll be treated okay, but you won't be treated like it or seen as equal or given the same opportunities. you know, the departments, I've, you know, the department I've worked with, I've seen a little bit of that. And I really mean that because, so I went to San Jose Police Academy and I was, and like, I, I was very ambitious.

I was very driven. I was very focused. I had a, like a, you know, kind of see I was young, so I saw the world a certain way and like saw the better people. Like, you know, the glasses half full. So when I was in the police academy, I was the class president in topping class. And it was like the first time in leadership when I, when I got on the field with the department, you know, they, they're not, not a lot of self favors. You, they treat you a little bit differently. I feel like they have, they're golden boys, you know? So it's, it's kind of disappointing to learn that, you know, especially coming in with so much Heidi ideals. But there's a lot of police friends I talk to and like, you know, it's, it's, it's always gonna be like that, you know, it's just, it's, you can't fix that. That's also why that there's a lot of companies that have deis, diversity, equity inclusion groups. At least they're trying to do something about it.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you ever feel like you had to sacrifice one identity for another? For example, you know, there's a lot of history of Irish people of Irish descent going into public service, like law enforcement, fire. Did you feel like you got acceptance if you said, my name is, you know, Nick Greenee, you know, my fa my dad, my dad's Irish. And, you know, did, did you feel like somehow you, I don't wanna say use it to your advantage, but did that help you sometimes to get acceptance with some of this old boys club?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, I, I tried like during the morning shifts, I'd, you know, eat Lucky Charms in the morning in front of the sergeant, you know, just, you know, I'd be like, Hey, D ddc Leprechaun three, it's on sci-fi channel and just didn't work. They just kinda looked at me weird. I thought it was, I was trying to wrong with 'em. But yeah,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Same Patty's day you were out there with flying the flag?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, I, I poured Greenee food coloring in their beer. I was like, yay. And then they're like, you roofing my drink? And I said, no, no, it's spreading the joy main, but okay. jokes aside, no, not really. I think also like the police departments are much more diverse now. Like there's more women on the force. They intentionally try and like get more Spanish speakers like in LA pd. So never really felt a need to do that. There are probably departments in parts of the US where it's like maybe one African American out of like a hundred people, where that's more, that more matters, right? You're gonna stand out more. But luckily California is pretty diverse, so I never really felt like I need to do that.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

What, what city were you policing?

Nicholas Greene:

mountain View.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Where?

Nicholas Greene:

Mountain View Mount Mountain View. Mountain

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

View, okay. Where's that?

Nicholas Greene:

So it's now where Google is but it, yeah, 15 years ago it was mountain View is like a, like a mid-size city of like 75, 80,000 people.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. So you were issuing tickets to the Tech bros and

Nicholas Greene:

Oh yeah. Yeah. <laugh> and their Teslas, yeah. Turn your car off. Oh yeah. I say electric car. My God. Sorry. Yes. Yeah, I'm such a idiot. Idiot. <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. Okay. I don't wanna stay too much on the, you know, the the serious stuff, but I do wanna ask because when did you leave the force?

Nicholas Greene:

2008 or nine.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Yeah. And so, you know, the events of 2020, George Floyd, how did that impact you as a former officer?

Nicholas Greene:

it, it's interesting because I still have a lot of police friends that I keep in touch with. San Francisco, San Jose, some, the Bay Area departments they're getting reamed, like, you know, just some of 'em have been like, there's something in the news where an officer got grazed or shot at and and is it's actually someone I went to the academy with. So there's this more, there's actually a good friend of mine in Oakland PD where she wants to get out and it's, it's really tolling, it's talking to them firsthand. it's really, I don't know how they can do it. That's why like some departments that have like 1100 people like Oakland, San Jose, esf, they're down to like seven or 800. Like they're short staffed. cuz everyone's leaving everyone's, you know, and I don't blame 'em.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. And I suppose you could maybe, you know, that scenario of whether people aren't you know, new recruits aren't being trained or well, or there's lacking or there's this, there's or there's some bad cops in the system.

Nicholas Greene:

So there, there's a there's a executive level or what's the best way to put it there? There's someone in a good friend of mine at one of the large metropolitan departments pretty high up that I talked to. And we, you know, we very close friends. We have coffee and we chat and he and I talked about it because he was actually like working on their use of force policy cuz of the George Floyd thing. Every department's now challenged with trying to figure out how to mitigate risk and, you know, dangers to when they, you know levels of u levels of force. I mean, they get really involved. They have lawyers that they work with trying to figure out the right escalation of force without overdoing it when they handle suspects. Cuz George Floyd is really tragic, right? He, you know, everything, it's on video too, but if anything the, I mean the, the silver lining is that it's, you know, it, it prompts departments to reevaluate their approach on use of force, right? It just brings more better awareness to the issue.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. what, and what would you say now that the, if you could pick out one thing that being a, a cop has taught you in life?

Nicholas Greene:

It, it, it's, it's kind of interesting cuz I, I know this is like more, you know, like it's going down the rabbit hole of police, but it also ties to about human beings and adoptees, I think we all have really different backgrounds. Like, you know, like we share a lot, but we're so different, but we're the same. I know you're like rolling your eyes like that, that doesn't make any sense. <laugh>. But I think, you know, the, the places just let me realize, like, you don't really get to know someone until you really get to know someone like, you know, be part of their lives, talk to them. you know, I'd see people get in fights and you know, you actually listen to 'em and you know, there's, whether they're right or wrong, you know, it comes from a place. So I think you know, being out there and being exposed to different people, it's, it's helped me kind of understand, you know, like to look for reasons to be fascinated and like meet people and learn where they come from.

Cuz I think that society now is like pretty close-minded. I'm, you know, I'm not trying to compare to like, previous years or generations. I just feel like it's a tough thing where, you know, to make a better world, this is the time for people to open, you know, the bond more to really get to know each other more, you know, than just kind of close off. Because I feel like, you know, I mean, you look at kids in school, COVID has really thrown them off, right? They're not, they're not classrooms socializing. So I'm sure if that makes sense. I just think it's important just like getting out there. Like this is also why this event's great. Right? Lot of people from different states. Everyone I've interacted with one way or another these are really good friendships, really good connections we're making. I'm glad you came, you know I'm learning more and more that the LA community's great. I mean it's, you know, I've seen you guys at different events and you know, the San Francisco one two can conference, right? definitely want to go to ia. It, it's just peeling these onion layers back of like really good people and good communities. You can use that as a sound bite.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Thank you. I wanted to, I've been kind of looking at your tats here. Can you describe what you've got? Sure. At least what you wanna tell us. Yeah,

Nicholas Greene:

Of course. so these are adoptee related tattoos. And it's kind of interesting because on Facebook, you know, people share a lot. Actually. It's really cool. Like Ryan and Ashley have like Korean adoptee tattoos too. Some of them, they'll have like, their, their case number or their, you know, their Holt number. some of them do like, you know, cultural stuff with Korea. Kathy just got a beautiful tattoo, you know, she, yeah, she'll be on your lower back though, you know, you know, girl <laugh> you wanna show it? No, it's super cool. Aum. So Kathy? Yeah, she's got like the, the hard thing with the fingers. I always thought that was like an Italian thing. Like, okay. so, so these are Phoenix's, so Phoenix is,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

They're, they're, oh, Phoenix.

Nicholas Greene:

Phoenix, yeah. like, you know, like rise from the Ashes rebirth. So to me, like being adopted, I mean it ha you know, it's different. It can be challenging, but I, I'm biased. I think it's one of the best gifts ever because it challenges us to like really find ourselves being like a, like a soul searching mission. S e O U L double entendre. So, so Phoenix is like, you know, we have a second chance of life, you know, we're reborn, you know, we from the ashes. So I have a a full Phoenix here a full Phoenix on my chest and then a full Phoenix on my back. So I have three Phoenixes.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Wow. Okay. And I always kind of wonder when somebody does like the full leg but then leaves the other leg completely bare. Is that just because to, it's like future? Or is it kind of like you like to just do one leg?

Nicholas Greene:

my, my credit card maxed out. Okay. So, so I I I was gonna do a full body, so

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

It's future real estate.

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. The tattoo artist is like, oh, you know, like, aren't you gonna do the rest? Yeah. I'm, you know <laugh>, I bad credit. yeah, actually, well the problem now is I'm really starting to get all my body tattooed. So it's either go, go big or go home. hashtag Texas. but,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And we all know which one you're going. You're, you're going big.

Nicholas Greene:

I I think I'm done.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Oh, you're done.

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. I don't know. Cuz the thing is either if you go all the way, you're gonna get a full body suit, which is like here to like, everything. And then I don't know. That's, that's a good question. I, I don't know if I want to go full zero to 100. Okay. If you get a tattoo, I might, if you get a,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

We'll get one together. Yeah. In, in Ktone.

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. Yeah. The Divine Sisterhood of Yaya Sisters or whatever. That's great movie. It could be Sister Bros,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

<laugh> sister, bros

Nicholas Greene:

Sos. We could be sos isn't Korean last name. So we could be

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Bros. Sisters,

Nicholas Greene:

Bro. Sisters Briers, BS I, I I'm sorry I'm ruining your podcast.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Here's the season six. Well, you know, I'm, I can edit all this out, so Oh, oh,

Nicholas Greene:

Oh yeah. Okay, cool. Whew. Okay, cool.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah, the knife the're. The chopping block. Okay. but Nick, the idea of, you know, full disclosure, I don't have any tattoos. So the idea of tattooing your body and is it a feeling? And I, I really think that's interesting that you're seeing it as you're tying it to being adopted, but also a rebirth or make, I don't know. Do you feel like it reclaims something for you?

Nicholas Greene:

I think it's just symbolic. I mean, it's very artistically nice, meaning you do, I do the 10 year test, which is like when I'm 50, 60, 70. Well, I still like it. you know, so it's artistic. you know, it has meaning. It's, it's, you know, I've, I've waited 10 years to get asked about this so I could tell people, so, you know, this, my horoscope came true. but I would say tattoo wise yeah, it's symbolic. It's meaningful. I, I, I like that a lot of adoptees get tattoos because it's, it's kind of like, it holds special value to them.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And have you been back to Korea?

Nicholas Greene:

I have not returned, but I'm actually going on Sunday to through a, a program to Korea for two weeks with 15 other adoptees.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

How are you feeling about I feeling nervous?

Nicholas Greene:

I'm excited. you know what? I've been asked this a few times. I'm, I'm not sure what to make of it. You know, I think I've gotten good advice from others. So just keep an open mind. I like to itinerized everything. and you know, I have a list of things I want to do when I'm there. the other cats do too, but part of it I think is just getting there, absorbing it and just kind of seeing where, where it takes you, you know? Cuz it's, it's a new experience. it's like visiting the country you haven't been to, it's like, you know, you have to kind of get a feel for it before you really understand, you know, how you want to, you know, experience it. But I think, you know, certain things like dmz hiking actually fascinates me that they have hiking there, like good hiking, you know, a lot of calls for arts. the, the Umma Park, the, I think we wanna try and do that. The, the, the park where they have like the, the memorial

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Memorial to adoptees. Yes. Yeah. Right. And, okay. Yeah. Do you, do you feel Korean nick?

Nicholas Greene:

I feel like I feel like I kind of fit both boxes. I feel like we are forced to become chameleons because we're, you know, kind of white. We're kind of Asian, but we kind of fill this gray area. But I think that's what makes us unique is we kind of build out our personality based on, you know, how we were raised, where we were raised, our friends, our family. I think you met my dad, like, you know, I, he

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Came to con it, it was hard to miss. It was hard not to see you guys, cuz you had the both like the Hawaiian shirts on. Could have been.

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. And I had a mustache and he's a real gra pba cuz he's got a Fuman shoe. So just, you know, I do this, he goes like this. He does yeah. Yeah. He's the captain now. So.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Well, and you obviously are very close, you know, you, you guys, you know, your dad came to the Con conference in Denver this year with you and you guys were inseparable. It seemed like. I saw you guys together even singing Nori Bong together, <laugh>. You did. So how, what was it like being with your white dad in, you know, a predominantly Korean adoptee space?

Nicholas Greene:

So, you know, first timer to that, I mean, it's like any first timer here, you know, I don't know really know what to make of it, but then it's whatever you wanna make of it. and my dad takes risks or, you know, he, he's not afraid to get out there. and so this is what stood out to me, right. And I need to ask him what stood out to him because we reflect a lot. when we were there arriving the first day, we could see adoptive families with their adopt, you know, adoptees young. Like some are like their teens, some are like twenties or so. So, and you know, people were just kind of settling in. So we saw an 18 year old cat with her mom, and she was young and you could tell, I could tell like, you know, this is her first event ever.

So she was very, very like, you know, nervous, kind of just un uncertain. And I think about that because that my first event for A K S F was like that. So we were hanging out with some people like, I think Gracie from San Diego, but it is either me and my dad were like, Hey, you know, what's your guys' names? Come on over. You know, like, where are you guys from? And then I think it was just nice because, you know, you always look for something common and, you know, I could only imagine what it's like for a family to go to an event like that and not know anyone. So it was also a nice reflection, like father and son, mother and daughter. I was like, look, we're in the same boat. You know, like we, we can be nervous together. Ha ha. You know? Do

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You think, but do you think your dad took away something that he didn't, you know, do you guys reflect together? Does he take away something new?

Nicholas Greene:

he's an interesting, he's an interesting guy. I think that he, am I

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Dancing? What's hard to say? We don't know. He's not here, but,

Nicholas Greene:

Right. did you,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you take away something new from that experience?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. I liked how they had a lot of sessions that touched on different aspects of being adopted and everyone has a different experience being adopted. So what's funny is, like, some of them didn't resonate with me. Some of them did like, you know, like the, there's a birth search topic where people shared their, you know, what, it worked and didn't work. I was taking really good notes on that. That was really interesting. also sets your expectations for expectations. the other one was, there, there are breakout groups where just a lot of stuff on like interestingly like identity and coping and mental health. And they're actually a few, they're closed group sessions and it's a safe space. I really like that they did a great job allowing people to open up and cheer things without any judgment. but there were some younger adoptees where, look, I could put myself in their like, they're like 20, 21, man.

I mean, you know, that age, you know, there's so much change and just, you know, trying to find our way in life. I think I'm glad that they got, I think what stood out is, I'm a latecomer to the game, but to see people in their twenties get involved in adopt community, I'm like, oh, I, I definitely would've taken advantage of this. I think that there's a lot of goodness that can help set you up for kind of navigating life where, you know, the earlier the better. And I, I, I saw some sessions where it was really helpful, like, you know, like they opened up about like their, the good and the bad in their life. and they were young too. And I was like, perfect. You know, like, I'm really glad Khan put this together cuz otherwise they'd be brewing on it for years. They wouldn't have any way of outlet or way to support to talk about it.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Do you regret in a way that you maybe started on this journey later in life?

Nicholas Greene:

I mean, I have no, I don't really have too much regrets. you know, I think, I don't think that way. I mean, or, or I have like I, I deal with it my own way and I think it, you know, it lets me handle it well. but also it's, I think it's like it's, I think like Tommy said it well, like, you know, the jujitsu community serves things to different people for different reasons and you know, they get what they need to get out of it and they can come and go. Right. But also, like jiujitsu, it'll always be there for you. Like, it's kind of nice. Right? So I, yeah, I guess I, I wish I got more involved earlier, but at the same time,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

It's a nice analogy to the adoptee community is what you're saying.

Nicholas Greene:

Yes. Yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You can get what you want out of it.

Nicholas Greene:

Yep. It'll always be there for you. You know, it'll always be there. That's a nice comforting feeling. but it's, as far as like, you know, I think it's like when I did my first event and then three years passed and they got involved again, at the time I wasn't involved. I wasn't invested in the community. I was like, you know, preoccupied with work or other things. So I wasn't ready for it. So timing-wise, I feel like this is, hey, if it plays out this way where this is the time where my investment in it and my interest in it is that way, that's, that's how it goes.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. And next year you're moving to Korea.

Nicholas Greene:

Oh, interesting. No <laugh>. I'm just kidding. It's cheaper than San Francisco. Probably. <laugh> $10 coffee.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

<laugh>. Okay, last question and then we're gonna actually open up to the audience. Yeah. so you get to grill Nick with anything I missed, please don't. But if you could give some advice, I mean, it doesn't sound like you have a lot of, you second guess yourself much or like you just kind of roll with it, right? But if you could give 16 year old Nick some advice, what would you give him?

Nicholas Greene:

Don't put that pill in your mouth. Oh <laugh>, no. 16 year old Nick I had a lot of teenage angst. I was kind of a angry Korean you know, I was a very rigid person, you know, just, you know, there wasn't any gray area I'd kind of commit if I was angry. I wouldn't be able to be open, more open-minded, 16 year old nick. maybe I would just plant the seed like, hey, cuz the identity thing and adoptee thing is in for every different, for everybody. like, look, you know, the, again, the, the importance of understanding what a tribe is, like, you may not understand it now, but just try and try and like, keep that in mind as you grow out in the world. Because I think tribe is one of the strongest things that can help, you know, with you.

And like in, you know, me, mental health building good friendships, you know, go not going down the rabbit hole of like, you know, like the negative things in life. I really feel that. And again, like there's a lot of parallels here. The jiujitsu communities a lot like the CAD community, right? It's a very wholesome community. We're here for each other in many ways. It's for the good and the bad, but it's a very real, like, it's a, it's a very solid, like a, I really want to use the right word. like not wholesome, but it's hard. Like in jujitsu mean this too. It's really hard to find things like this where you bond with people in such a, such a profound way. I've done other activities, I've had different friendships, different hobbies. It's very rare that you guys find this type of friendship.

And there's, and there's, and it's not just because we're adopted, there's just a lot of layers to it. It's a journey. So I think I, I, I appreciate that because as I get older, you know, like I've made mistakes, I've been bad groups, I've, you know, done bad jobs, you know, maybe chose the wrong friends. I see. I, for me, I see how good of a community this is, and it's rare you find this, right? It's one of the greatest things I, I'd almost it to like, a lot of different cultures and different communities, like ours is pretty darn strong. And I think that that's something like, I'm almost like a evangelist or like a, you know, like the biggest advocate I want everyone to know, you know, like any adoptee that's like, on the fence about like, like, you know, like you're missing out, you know, it's like free ice cream <laugh>. That, that's, you're like, you're doing good, Nick, until ice cream. Just like ice cream.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. Everything in moderation. Oh,

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. Kept ice cream.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

No, no. I'm just, I'm just kidding. Okay, well thank you so much Nick, for sharing some of, and I know there's probably so many more layers. but we, and let's, let's break it out into the audience. Anyone have any questions or feedback for Nick or

Nicholas Greene:

For me? Criticisms? This is a roast.

Sarah Massengill Harris:

Hi Nick, can you say your name? Hi, Sarah. Yeah, my name is Sarah. I'm from Los Angeles. And I just had a question about your trip coming up. Are you going with a group or are you going, or what group

Nicholas Greene:

Or, so, so it's the re Korea program. We're going in a cohort of 15. there's a, there's a some, there's a few San Francisco adoptees, some in San Diego, and some in from Europe.

Sarah Harris:

That, that's awesome. Yep.

Kimberly Kaminski:

Hi Nick.

Nicholas Greene:

Hi Kim

Kimberly Kaminski:

I'm Kim. And I just wanted to say thank you, San Diego from San Diego. Everyone should come to San Diego <laugh>. And I just wanna say thank you so much for just answering all the questions and for being vulnerable up in front of everyone and letting us in to see kind of who you are. It's really awesome. So I really appreciate it and thanks, Kay. Yep.

Nicholas Greene:

Any anytime and soju's involved,

Cathy Pitt:

<laugh>? I'm Cathy from Texas, and I would just like to say for your first trip be open. and I think that it's gonna be a very fast and furious trip, so be prepared physically, mentally, but at the same time this probably won't be your last trip. I'm going next year, it'll be my third trip. And I've done the tourist thing and so I look forward to doing the, the type of trip where you just kind of go wherever you wanna flow. The KTX is simple. Kakao is your friend. but be ready to understand that once you go there, you don't ever, or for me, I don't have to ever question who I am and who I'm, where I'm from. I mean, it's just there. I mean, I was excited when I saw Asian people on the West Coast, <laugh>, but when you go and see other Koreans in Korea, you realize that you are just, you are where you're supposed to be. And you can't look back and say, oh, I wished I could have been here all my life, because that's not gonna take you forward. So just be prepared. It's gonna be a great trip.

Nicholas Greene:

Thanks Cathy. I like that. Like, you know, probably gonna go back. I feel like I feel on my bones, or that's just arthritis. Who's next?

Kimberly Kaminski:

I got the microphone again.

Nicholas Greene:

Hi Nick, I'm Jodie. Hi, Jody from San Diego. I had two questions. Well, first thank you for sharing. that was really great to get to know you that way. I, I feel like I related to a lot of it especially the, the, the rice rocket races in Berlingame <laugh>, because I was there back then. families, everything. I grew up in Walnut Creek, so that's why I know the, that area. Anyway do you know any of the other Korean adoptees that you're gonna travel with? And do you have any goals for your trip?

Nicholas Greene:

Good question. so Kim Langworthy's from San Francisco. it's someone I know Jae Lee from San Diego is going that I've known before. She was at the last Bay to La event. some new people that I got to meet before the event because I traveled to LA and San Diego Law for work is Dusty Glassner and Florence. She's like a French kad that lives in the Bay Area. So the rest of them, and it's, this is why, you know, it's great. We real, we're already bonding. Like we have a, actually it's a lot. We got like a, like a Facebook group chat. We have an Instagram group chat, we have a WhatsApp group chat, <laugh> and we have a Cout talk group chat <laugh>. And now I have to monitor four chats. I've been chatting too much, but, but yeah. But it, it, it, I've also heard that, that's great. Yeah. Really good friendships. Yeah.

Jodie:

And then any goals for your trip?

Nicholas Greene:

And then any, any goals for your trip? Oh yeah, I literally have adhd goals. I, the reason why I'm doing is I'm getting older and so every year that passes I feel like, you know, my, I might not have opportunity to meet my poten like my birth parents. So the goal is to real, like my goal is just to really do as much as I can on this time around a search. Cuz I, you know, I wanted, I wanna look back. I don't wanna look back and say, I wish I really committed more. I really did a full out search. and then other goal is to, I think be a Korean, just to just kind of, you know, like I think we're gonna meet DavidK we're going to do the night markets, we're gonna walk around town, visit, visit some of the cultural sites. To me it's just, I just want to like day in the life of a Korean so I could kind of get that immersion thing. Just that, that's a win for me, you know, just, wow. Back in Motherland, like where the shot's at

Nick:

<laugh>. Just want James.

James Straker:

Hey Nick.

Nick:

Hi James.

James Straker:

Hi. Thank you both. I really like how you were talking about finding meaning, you know, and how that really played a lot in your life and it reflects in your tattoos. And I was wondering about the I image, like, I liked how you were talking about the meaning of that and how it reminded me how, you know, in every like, hero's journey, there's an origin story, but we kind of didn't have that, right? So we sort of live in this fantasy world where we create our own origin story and we call that normal, you know, it's just who we are, right? So I was wondering about the three, like why three Phoenixes? Are you getting more? Are you get, is is that the number? Oh,

Nicholas Greene:

I, I couldn't afford four <laugh>, but, but, but I, I do want to say <laugh>. No, I'm just kidding. I do wanna say the origin story is interesting when at the same time, if you remember Clark Kent Kal, Superman, it's adopted. That's right.

Yeah. it's all about the farm boys farmersonly.com. Oh my Luke, Luke Skywalker. That's right, man. But the three tattoos, I'm not sure the, I mean, tattoos, it took five years to, to really muster up and say, I'm gonna do a tattoo from a, and the first one was my back one. And then I think, you know if you do more than one tattoo, like, you know, you could do like small ones or start to build a theme. So I started doing a theme of like, you know, I just, the artist is a friend of mine, he's very good at Phoenix's. And so I was like, you know, let's do another, let's do another one. Let's roll a dice, see if it's one to six. And you know, like let's just, you know, cuz

James Straker:

So there could be a lot more someday maybe. Yeah. I'm not sure. Like a thousand cranes. A thousand,

Nicholas Greene:

A thousand cranes. Oh yeah. I just do a little,

James Straker:

I'm just trying to give you ideas, you know, it's like,

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, yeah. No, no regrets. Yeah. Totally <laugh>. But someday. Yeah.

James Straker:

Thank you.

Nicholas Greene:

Yep.

Nick:

He's been waiting. Oh,

Nicholas Greene:

He's been waiting.

Joseph Kim:

Hi, I am Joseph from Los Angeles. Hi

Nicholas Greene:

Joseph.

Joseph Kim:

The question I had for you was about sports. I know you did the jujitsu, I also did Jiujitsu a long time ago. but sports for me was a way to take control of my life because of all the other things going on. And I was wondering if you kind of got that type similar migration?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah, actually during Covid, you know, jiujitsu is like basically a Covid incubator cuz you're sweating each other's mouths. so meaning during Covid we couldn't train anymore. so, you know, they did virtual, like Zoom instructional. it made me realize when I didn't do jujitsu, how cranky I got and how balancing it was to do a sport. So just to be productive and yeah.

Joseph Kim:

And something similar I think goes along the way is actually it's not similar, but you were talking about growing up what's the word I'm looking for? Were you forced into situations where the everybody else tried to migrate you towards other Asians? Cuz I personally, I rebelled when people try to do that for me.

Nicholas Greene:

yeah. you know, I think for me, I just kind of, I feel like I'm that like miscellaneous person where, you know, like I don't fit again. Like adoptee is like, you're white, but you're not white. You're Asian, but you're not Asian. So I feel like I kind of like the universe kind of like, kind of unraveled in a way where my sets of friends were, I mean, one was like finished, one was black, there were some Asians, but we're all the minorities and you know, we're kind of that, you know, if you see the jocks and all like, you know, the thespians and, you know, all that we're we're kind of that crew that was just kind of miscellaneous. And I think that just kind of happened by default. but I don't, I don't know if I mean, I don't know if my parents or, or you're saying like friends or anyone or classmates like that,

Joseph Kim:

Classmates friends. Like they always tried. Maya actually hometown was only 7,500 in Iowa. ah, we actually had seven other adoptees in my hometown. Really? Yes. most of the people tried to pair me off with the other Asian the Korean adoptee. And we were always friends, but I just, I felt wrong and I felt like I was being cornered.

Nicholas Greene:

I mean, it's like when my mom tries to set me up on a blind date, I'm like, mom, just leave me alone. She's like, no, no. Yeah. It's like, it's like, you know, it's like part of it, you, you feel that encroaching where it's like, I'm not a chess piece, you know, to kind of get me like, you know, if I want to meet that person, you know, I'm a big boy so I, I dunno if that resonates with you, but I, I never experienced that. But my take on that is like, you know, whether, whatever the intention is, like, I don't know. I'd rather do things my own way than have someone be like, you know, try and push me over to them.

Joseph Kim:

Yeah. I avoided Asians until I was 30.

Nicholas Greene:

Ah, we're not that bad. <laugh> mustache.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Well say sorry. And one thing that struck me is, I think, are you trying to say also that you're being miscellaneous is now like a superpower for you?

Nicholas Greene:

Yeah. The power of ambiguity. <laugh>, I don't even know what it means. well I just think that we're all unique people. I mean, just, you know, the, the adoptee experience isn't, is not a plight. It's sort of like a, it's an, I'm not saying like, who am I to define what good or bad is. It's an open, open canvas that allows us to paint things, however we want to paint it because we're kind of both worlds.

Leslie Griep:

Hi Nick, this is my name's Leslie and I'm from Oakland. And my question is about, you talked about being someone that's fairly new to the community and then in the last year you've taken a leadership role in the group in San Francisco.

Nicholas Greene:

I never said that

Leslie Griep:

<laugh>. And so, but with those of us from the Bay Area know that you have, so my question is, how has your perspective changed from someone who is fairly new? and now you've thrown yourself into organizing and putting on events and you see the community in a different way. I'm gonna guess than you did as maybe an announcer. You're going to Korea, you're, you've gone, you've gone to conferences, you want to go to ia and, but, but now your role is different. And so I'm wondering how is your perspective on the community, has it changed? And what how thinking about the community and what, what we are, who we are, what we can do, not only, only you're in this different role.

Nicholas Greene:

Interesting question. I'm fascinated with how big it is. 200 thousands, a lot of people part of me recognizes like the ones who are active like us here, the ones who have found, found it and understood it more for what it is as a community. I'm also curious like, like there's so many that are probably missed or like not, you know, like there's, there's a lot of potential to capture more cuz we're actually pretty, I mean pretty large. for me, and I'm still learning as I go cuz it's only been a year, but then I hear things like they're Korean camps and, you know, these birth search programs and stuff like, you know gold corot, these things have been around for like decades. Some adoptee groups, I mean they pay a lot of homage. A K S F is gonna be 25 year anniversaries this year.

there's a lot of deep roots to this. And to me, I'm like, I feel like I'm only scratching the surface, but I see it's a, it's an incredibly strong network. we, Kemi and I talked about this like last year was like one third the size. I think Lisa like Weed Oregon, maybe another state. This one's huge. Like this is this is more like me and Chrisy and others we're in awe or I'm, I'm definitely in awe cuz I'm like, wow. And it, yeah, it's, it's a powerful, it's a powerful thing. I dunno if I directly answered your question because I like, what do I see with me? Or

Leslie:

You can answer whatever way you want. Processing. Yeah, it's, it's fine. You can just

Nicholas Greene:

Go with whatever comes to mind. yeah, I think it's grown a lot and there's a lot more potential. That's what's kind of interesting. It's already like, has a lot of energy and a lot of growth and has deep roots. And what's interesting is that I kind of, I kind of wanna be here five, 10 years ago in like the next generation a AKASF you know, millennial, you know, y Gen, whatever comes in and does it. I I can be like proud, proud grandpa and be like, give me my sogi shot <laugh>. So, yeah. it's a good feeling.

Emily Shewmaker:

Hi Nick, I'm Emily from Texas, California transplant. I, I I wanna just reiterate what a lot of people have been saying and thank you for sharing your experience and for allowing yourself to just be vulnerable in a space like this. and can we thank you so much for hosting this podcast. It's, it's been very enlightening in a lot of different ways. so my question to you, as somebody who has parents that identify as white a lot of the times as if we are adopted very young, right? And if we're talking about the whole nature versus nurture, a lot of the way in which our parents see the world in a whitewash sense becomes our own truth unintentionally. And in those spaces where we start to become just kind of trapped in this whitewashed echo chamber. At what point did you find yourself really pulling away from like, the mentality that your parents had for who you were versus actually who you are as a person now?

Nicholas Greene:

so I'm aware of that influence from parents because of how they're raised in tradition and, you know, cultures. I don't think I was inoculate. I don't think I was really, my household didn't really have that type of environment. But I definitely understand those environments where, you know, you, you start with a bias or sort of a certain way of seeing the world. my parents are kind of odd, oddly very hip hippie-ish. So, you know, you wanna, you wanna be an astronaut, be an airplane, you know, like it, so I, I think I never had that challenge, but I, I could definitely see, I mean, maybe like, whereas like in Texas where it could be like that, I mean there's, you know, I mean this also comes down to like, I actually think that this is an interesting topic about nature nurture and how we're raised and like, you know, like, again, like Irish Catholic, right?

And then my mom's Jewish, like there is a lot of stuff culturally with how like, you know, my parents are progressive, but at the same time I see certain cultural things come out, like Irish Catholic guilt, that's a real thing, you know, always feeling, you know, like you're, you know, guilty, you know, and just sort of that like burden, right? It's, it's actually, it's like self inoculated like feeling that they've done through religion. But I don't, I don't want to go with her too much. But I think that that's important to think of because part of it's awareness, you know, like we want, we, you know, we may not even be aware of it until like we really recognize it and then we can try and figure out how we navigate that.

Cathy Pitt:

Thanks

Nicholas Greene:

Nick. Yep.

Cathy Pitt:

Can I add for that, even though she's not asking me the question

Nicholas Greene:

Separation church and state

Cathy Pitt:

For my text girl I'm like, Nick, I didn't necessarily have that whitewash or at least wasn't aware of it. But I do know that through con there was a lot of that brought out and I, and I found myself thinking was I, was I not this, that and the other, but I, I think for the individuals that did, you know, or just either be this or don't, you know, or don't be accepted I really think this is the kind of group that you have the conversation. This is the kind of group where you, if it's a healing that you need or if it's just a touch of, hey, I relate, that's where we move forward. And I think that if we don't keep that momentum growing, then we'll just kind of fall by the wayside. And any other adoptees that get adopted will not necess. We may be the ones to make that change. And if we if we don't support each other and we don't try to relate to each other then what are we doing here?

Nicholas Greene:

Agreed.

Cathy Pitt:

Yeah.

Erik Kemp:

Oh, hi. I'm Erik from, recently, I recently moved to Los Angeles from Denver, Colorado, but woo. <laugh> Go Broncos. No. any <laugh>

Nicholas Greene:

Uhoh

Erik Kemp:

In any case? once again, thank you both for being able to have the space. It's great to see so many familiar faces and faces that look like mine, <laugh>. But in regards to I, I guess the Korean American and adoptee community and, and identity and who we are as, as you said, Nick, a tribe, what would you like to see in the future and what would you project, and this is a question for both of you, I guess, if you feel inclined to answer, but like, what would you like to see in the future, either personally or systemically with Korean American adoptees specifically?

Nicholas Greene:

it, it's good question. It's still hard to tell because the con conference was very eye-opening, right? Like, it really touched on a lot of areas that people that are very important. Like to Kathy's part about, like, I I figuring out things about ourselves that need to be addressed or, you know, traumatic things. Also things that we may not even know about, right? You know, sometimes we don't know or we don't know. and then, you know, I, and again, it's like, you know, there's, I'm peeling back onion layers. there's IA is interesting to learn about, right? That, you know, cuz it, and then here, here's another thing. I think like, I think it's kind of interesting. It's great that IA unifies and kind of like, you know, chose an umbrella of all these adoptee groups, you know, that are tied and they've done huge gatherings.

So what fascinates me is that ICA is already thinking about how they can recreate these types of like systems or like community groups and like support networks with other adoptees because you know, like there's not as many Korean adoptees but Chinese adoptees that fascinates me. They're already thinking how to like, take what they've learned and apply it to like, you know, other countries or other, cuz there's always gonna be like a country where there's a recession or a war, right? I I like that. Or that's progressive. That's already thinking ahead. It was my idea. Sorry. Oh, sorry. Don't you could, you could cut that out.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Oh. yeah, I think maybe we should kind of wrap it up and give people a, a break before the, the film screening. But I just, you know, as to answer quickly, you know, I think a lot of, of us, you know, having, are having discussions about sustainability and, you know, how do we continue to, you know, obviously there's a need. We're all here and there was something that you decided, I'm gonna, I'm gonna click this box, I'm gonna get in my car and I'm, or flight and I'm gonna come here. And you're very intentional at being here. And it's, it's, it's awesome that you guys took this, made this commitment out of your schedules to be here. And I think, you know, there's, there's, there's a reason, you know, whether you guys have the answer inside why you're here. And, and I think, you know, it's for folks like, you know, I try to do my part with the podcast and try to, you know, contribute and, you know, I think everyone here is, is contributing their, their efforts and, and I'm just amazed at how just organically the, the networks have grown in the ver the ecosystem I heard talked about last night.

And that's really fascinating to me. But also it just shows that there's a real need and, and also as someone who contributes, I think to the community, I also receive from my contributions I receive back from y'all too. So you know, I think, yeah, what is our, what is the, you know, I think these groups are very good about getting someone sometimes who are, you know, they're curious and they come through the door and they wanna see what it's all about. But, you know, what is our charge to try to create ecosystems and communities where people come back, where this is a place where, you know, it, it, it sustains and I think that's, you know, a conversation that people are having, smart people are having and you know, it will continue. So and this is, this is a way it, I mean this is a very sort of organic thing.

I think that's happened. And even though this is like maybe the third year, third year, third year, but I mean, that already shows. Like, look at the, the, the, the amount of people that, you know, it's growing. So, I mean, I think that's, that's saying something. So thank you all for being here and be sure if this has inspired you to share or you have some thoughts about today or you wanna share a little bit about your story, feel free to go into our share Your story booth and, and let us hear from you. Yay. So thank you. Big round of applause. Thank you.