Speaker 1:

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

This is a podcast that centers the voices of Korean intercountry adoptees adopted people are the true experts in adoption. I'm Camie Lee, and I was also adopted from Korea. Our voices are often silenced by adoption agencies, our parents and society that wants a feel good story. This is our take back.

Christy Zaragoza:

I would just immerse myself with all these activities and do anything to not be at home. one, because I didn't wanna be there with my dad, and two, I didn't wanna be there with my mom.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

In this next story, we'll hear from an adopted woman named Christy Zaragoza. You might know her as a board member and event planner extraordinaire of the Association of Korean Adoptees in San Francisco, but most likely you don't know her in this way. Now, here's Christy.

Christy Zaragoza:

my name is Christy Zaragoza. My pronouns are she/her. I'm 30 years old and I currently live in San Francisco, California.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. So where do you wanna start your story?

Christy Zaragoza:

Oh, I don't know. Where do all of our stories start? I guess in Korea, right? <laugh>?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. and I understand you're going back. Will this, is this your first time back?

Christy Zaragoza:

No, this will actually be my third time going back to Korea. but my first time going with somebody the first two times I went solo. So I'm excited to be able to share and eat Korean food not just by myself.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. And you said your husband, right?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes. Yeah, it's gonna be his first time. We've been practicing Korea Korean on Duolingo, which is really fun. And for a moment he was getting better at vocabulary. I was, and I was like, no, this cannot happen. So I'm trying to keep up <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So what's your husband's background?

Christy Zaragoza:

His name is Jesus. He's from Mexico. And we met in college in Santa Barbara.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So he is a Mexican immigrant. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>,

Christy Zaragoza:

He's from, yeah. Okay. He came here when he was like 15 or 16 went to high school and then went to school and then met me <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Was it? Yeah. Was there any, did you feel like a kinship with him? Just the fact that maybe someone also that is bicultural.

Christy Zaragoza:

we talk about that sometimes. We talk about how crazy it is that he is just in general. Like he's from Mexico, I'm from Korea, and we just happened to meet each other in this college town at the same bar that we had mutual friends and then we met. so we think about that a lot. But I think maybe I had a kinship with him because he was from Mexico and, you know, grew up in the States at an, at a later age. but I don't know, there may be some relation there. I'm not entirely sure, but probably <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

How does it feel as an adoptee? You know, we're sort of, because we're adopted, you know, no choice of our own, that we were, you know, we're given citizenship vi vis-a-vis adoption and, you know with your husband's, you know, circumstances and how he came to America.

Christy Zaragoza:

I think it kind of varies because some people can come to this country under like extre extenuating circumstances. Like he just overstayed his tourist visa and then became undocumented cuz he stayed like after the fact past that. But it is interesting to think about. I honestly, I think a lot of similarities because it is, it's just by chance that I happened to come to this country and then get citizenship, right? And then there's also cases of adoptees who come here and their parents don't fill out the right paperwork and they don't get citizenship. So I think that I, I think being adopted and thinking about that has made me really empathetic and sympathetic to people who migrate to this country and don't necessarily have the documentation or on the journey to get that documentation because it could have been any of us. yeah. And

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Do you identify as an immigrant? Christy?

Christy Zaragoza:

That's a tough one. I like do, but then I feel like I can't claim that, right? Like, I did immigrate to this country, but I was a baby and it doesn't feel like I, sometimes I feel like I can't claim that, but I technically did immigrate here, so I don't know. I think at a like higher level I do, but then I also feel like an imposter sometimes because I wasn't raised, like, I was raised like an American. I think as adoptees, it's weird too because we're technically first generation immigrants. Like if you look at the definition of it, like, so, but then we don't really identify with first gen immigrants or even second generation immigrants. Like chi like, like a lot of my friends are second gen immigrants, and they, I don't know, like a lot of the familial struggles that they have, I don't necessarily find that I do because I just don't have that pressure. so it's an interesting thing where it's like, oh, we are first gen immigrants, but in reality we're probably, I don't know, maybe feel more like third gen where it's like we're so far removed from our culture because of our situation. it's definitely an interesting to think about <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I love your name. and I'm, do you get sort of weird looks or, you know, people are expecting someone else?

Christy Zaragoza:

Not any different than when I had my white name. I think that was even more so because now that I'm older, it's like, oh, well she's probably married, but when you're like 15 and your, your name is Christy Billings, I think it's like, oh, okay. Or you know, you don't really think about it, or not necessarily you don't think about it, but it's like, oh, I wasn't expecting that. but now it's just kind of like, oh, okay. Like that's fine. I'm of age where having a different name than what I look like is Okay. but yeah, having like a white name growing up, but looking like this definitely was, I think that's something that all adoptees can relate to.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So do you guys, how long have you been married?

Christy Zaragoza:

we've been married for two years.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Are you excited to, to your husband, you know, to show your husband Korea?

Christy Zaragoza:

I am super excited. it was so funny because I was like, I kind of just do a lot of things on a whim sometimes. Like I'm a very calculated planning person, but also I like am kind of to the wind about a lot of things too. So when I was like, oh, we're gonna go to Korea, I just bought the tickets and I was like, Hey I just bought tickets to Korea, we're going. And he's kind of like, okay, <laugh>. but I've been sending him videos of like all the whatever influencers that you see, like going to convenience stores or eating Korean food, and I'm like, this looks so good. Like, I can't wait. he was like, oh, when he found out that I bought the tickets, he's like, are there, are there Mexicans there? And I was like, oh, maybe like a couple, but I don't really think like a lot. Maybe in like [inaudible] or something. but you're gonna be like a standout there. So

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Christy's adoptive parents are white. Her mother adopted several Vietnamese children domestically during a prior marriage. Here's what she had to say about her family.

Christy Zaragoza:

It's, I think it's kind of like full circle in a way. I think I find it really funny. So when I moved to San Francisco, I lived in the Presidio which is an old military like land. It was I think owned like the Spanish had like, what do you call custody, ownership, whatever of it mm-hmm. <affirmative>. and then the US military took over. but it has all these old buildings and they're all old military style housing. A lot of the buildings were built in the 18 hundreds, so it's just like very old. but a gorgeous place. I think it's a national, it's like federal land and it's just on the tip of San Francisco. But when my parents came to visit about a year ago, they said that Ty, my older brother, had flown and the first place he landed in the country was the Presidio. And I was like, oh, I lived there. So it's kind of funny that, you know, I was living on this land that was like the first place that my brother had like came to, and he was a baby. And it's interesting because she said that she saw him on TV and she wanted to adopt him. Like they showed video of these babies coming from Vietnam. And she wanted to save him, I guess.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Is your mom Christian?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes. My family is very religious. very, very, yeah, very religious. when they adopted me, they were in their early forties, so we had a pretty big age gap. and I think that made it really tough for me growing up because one, my mom was just super religious. there was a huge age gap. She didn't really, we couldn't really connect or she didn't understand what it was like to be a younger person at that time. and her views were very old and outdated. I would even say that it was probably like being raised by somebody's grandma at that time because of her religious views, I think is just like a whole, just so antiquated and just even like a generation further than what, than what it was like.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So do you feel like it definitely got the impression that there was this kind of sa savior mentality going on?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes, definitely. When I got older, I reflect a lot about it. I've gone to therapy for many years and you know, definitely have the thought and thinking about why my parents would adopt babies and think about the way that they treat us and talk to me. it's definitely a lot of white saviorism. I think it's a lot of reflecting and boundary setting on my part that requires me to just love them from far away there because of the, there's a lot of just turmoil and trauma for me growing up. there were some things that happened to me when I was a teenager that I don't know, this is the part where I wonder if I wanna get into detail because I know it's gonna be shared publicly but also wanna voice my story. So,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. Okay.

Christy Zaragoza:

It's always that well, tricky decision.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. What do you, how do you feel? Do you feel like you, do you wanna just say it and then we can take it out? If you you can can think about it for a day.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I would like that. Okay. so when I was younger, probably around 12 or 13, my adoptive father molested me. I found videos of myself naked in the shower on his computer, and I confronted him about it when I was younger. And it's kind of blurry to me. I don't really remember a lot of how I dealt with it, but I do remember confronting him and being really pissed about it and him saying, I won't do that again. and him trying to like skirt out and say something like, oh, I was trying to do something, but that didn't, it was just all bullshit, right.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

trying to make up something. Yeah,

Christy Zaragoza:

Exactly. And after that, I just didn't really know what to do. I internalized it a lot. I think with the, that coupled with how controlling and restrictive my mom was, I really internalized that and thought and like punished myself about it for a long time. I tried confronting her and telling her about it, but she was already so controlling and basically if I did anything that wasn't the way she would've done it or thought about it, it was wrong. so I didn't really have an open path or place of communication with her. And when I did try to tell her about it, she just kind of like dismissed me which I think is also indicative or prescriptive of how she thinks about any concerns that I have and why we don't talk anymore. so that was really, I think that's like the root of it is that she continually dismisses my, she just continually des dismisses me if it isn't who she wants me to be. and that's sounds so

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Invalidating. Yeah, it sounds so invalidating.

Christy Zaragoza:

It's, it's a lot. And I think that's a lot of the turmoil we had. So I had played a long, like, I, how, how should we do this? I, you know, I was really depressed. I had an eating disorder for like six years. I don't really remember a lot in high school, I think because I just blocked it out. and I was just really not in a good place. I was in a really restrictive home. Everything I did was like walking on nails. I was in trouble for every little thing. you know, it was like, it was like little things like, you can't go hang out with friends if your room isn't clean. But then I would, you know, say I was, I would just immerse myself with all these activities and do anything to not be at home. one, because I didn't wanna be there with my dad, and two, I didn't wanna be there with my mom.

I didn't really have any safe space with my family at all ever. So you know, I hung out with friends, I was in band, I did sports, I did all these other extracurricular things just so I wouldn't have to be at home as much. so, but, you know, I didn't do that great at the end of high school. I didn't really have a lot of motivation. I didn't care and thought that I could just get by with school. and so I went to community college for two years, was like, wow, I need to get out of this house. I need to get out of this like town for a while. And I was able to transfer to Santa Barbara and move out for the first time, which just completely changed my life perspective. I felt like I was finally free. I worked two jobs and went to school and was really happy to kind of like be on my own for a while.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Well, Christy, I'm so sorry to hear about your story. And you know, I'm a, a, a child sex survivor, sex abuse survivor as well. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> did, can I ask, when you said you were molested, so there was touching involved, not just the photos mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Christy Zaragoza:

Okay. Yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And then do you remember it stopping or did it continue for a while or is it all a blur? Did you

Christy Zaragoza:

It was, there was one time in particular and then that's when I was like, absolutely not. Like I will, I confronted him about it immediately and then I also never put myself in a position where that could happen. at least I tried. Right.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And when you went to your mother, what did she, what was her reaction? Was she, was it to blame you? Was it to, you know, just try to bear, bury it under the rug?

Christy Zaragoza:

I think it was probably more of the bury under the rug or just question me like, what are you talking about? Like, that doesn't seem real or Right. I don't, yeah, I think we fought a lot and yelled a lot. And I don't remember bringing that up specifically to her, but it was probably just a huge gaslight.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

She knew what had happened.

Christy Zaragoza:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

It's often difficult to talk about one's adoptive parents and especially in family dynamics of abuse and passivity, adoptees can feel a sense of guilt for exposing parents, even if they caused harm. Sometimes emotional and physical distance is the only way to express oneself. Christy messaged me after we finished this interview. There was still more she wanted to say about her mother.

Speaker 5:

I think I said something along the lines of I couldn't go out if my room wasn't clean and it doesn't really show the impact or severity of the control. My mom would exert over me and how she parented. She took me to the doctor to give me a cervical examination to see if my hymen was still intact. This was after my adoptive father molested me. I hadn't even told her yet. So I was just laying on this examination table, reliving what happened to me with my mom crying and shaming me for having a broken hymen. She found birth control in the bathroom. I wasn't taking it, but I had it just in case I started having sex. And we drove to Planned Parenthood and she made us go in and have me confirm that they had seen me when she found out that me and a long-term boyfriend had sex, she had his whole family come.

And we sat in a circle in our living room and she made him promise in front of both of our families that he would never do that to me again. After I moved out of the house. She would follow me and show up to my work unannounced to make sure I was covering the tattoos I had so people wouldn't think poorly of our family. And after our conversation, I felt bad, like I was villainizing her because it's easy to make the villain out of someone when it's clear their intentions are to harm you, but it's muddled because I don't think hers were, the trauma I had from the sexual abuse is obvious in your face, easy to explain and understand. But the effects I still deal with today stem from her ignorant and traumatizing parenting methods that in her mind was how she was trying to protect me from all these sinful and worldly forces. And I think that's even more sinister because it's abuse in the guise of love, devotion of protection when really it shows how little she thought of me as a person and more so her God-given property was there.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So it sounds like you really just focused on not being at home. outside activities, keeping busy, all just sound like probably ways to distract yourself from the pain that you felt or not feeling safe at home. Were there other people that you felt safe with or other parental figures at that time that you kind of gravitated towards?

Christy Zaragoza:

not really. <laugh>, there were maybe some people at church that I kind of felt close to, but I never really had anybody that I felt like I could confide in. One time, I, after my mom found me throwing up I, I had gotten to a point where I was just wasn't really hiding it anymore. I would sneak around and like binge eat and then purge. but I wasn't really hiding it anymore. I think I was just so just fed up and tired of it. And she was like, okay, well maybe let's take you to therapy. So we went to therapy and I was like, oh my God, maybe finally this person will like, this will help my mom get me off my back. Right. Because she was just, everything I did was under a microscope. and I finally felt good. I was like, maybe she'll like talk some sense into her or let her see, see it from my way. and the first thing she said to me after we left that therapy session, she was like, I can't believe she wouldn't let me listen to what you were saying. And I wish we had found a Christian

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

When you're a teenager. So your, your parents saw or had you or you were able to see a therapist or is that something you, you sought on your own?

Christy Zaragoza:

That was like a one time thing. and then I felt bad because it cost money. And then I was like, well, I am better now. I don't need to spend money. and we don't, like, I don't, I don't need this. Like, it's fine, I'll just stop talking about it. I'll be okay. I'll do what you want. I'll live your rules and that's it.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Was there anyone you could tell that this had happened to you at the time?

Christy Zaragoza:

No. No. I don't think I told anybody about anybody about it. until college. So almost like fi eight years after, I'm not super proud of the relationships I had after that because <laugh>, I like just emotionally couldn't handle it. I shut down, I would get close to somebody and then immediately push them away, ghost them. I'm sorry it was bad. but I was also a teenager, so, you know, you can't feel too bad for not being super emotionally mature and responsible at a time like that. but I think it was hard for me to like develop intimacy with people and trust them and feel close to people. but I think that's also just me in general. but I don't know if it would be necessarily related to that or if it's more of the whole adoption thing in general.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you hate men?

Christy Zaragoza:

No, I didn't hate men. no, I never really hated them for that. I think it definitely helped me lean more into like feminist ideology looking at systems of power and structures of oppression. I think that it helped me lean into that a little bit more to understand why things like this happen. but I don't think I ever had any like, hate for men.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I felt like when you were talking, it sounded like you yourself were just going through the motions too, of just survival.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah, I think after that, a long time I was just surviving and then I made it to college and I could actually kind of like take a step back and figure out who I was and just get that space away from family both physically and like mentally. it's kind of weird. So after I came back from college, I moved back to San Diego and I lived with my parents for a while. That only lasted like two months before I was like, I'm out. and then I lived in San Diego for a while. I would still go and like visit them. We'd, I'd see them like pretty frequently, maybe like once a week because I worked close to there. so we would, they would come visit for lunch or do other things, but I kind of never, I still had that just like pit feeling, like I had to live a double life essentially.

you know, my mom would be like, are you going to church? Are you doing this? she hated my tattoos and even before I left for college, she was so controlling and overbearing, she was like, you need to get that removed. So I did because I just wanted her to stop like bugging me about it. so I went and did a re a removal session for a tattoo that I had gotten, which ironically was like spurred and for my grandma, my mom's mom. And so she always was like, you need to get rid of these tattoos. It was always just something that was out of her control that she hated that I needed to change about myself. And so, you know, I was like hiding my tattoos. I, you know, wasn't living a Christian life, so, you know, but in rather than having that struggle or turmoil with them, I was just like, yes, I'll just tell you anything you wanna hear. and then finally I think one day I was just like, I can't do this anymore. I can't live inauthentically just to please you. And that's where our like turmoil and struggle really started, or not really, but, you know, came to light.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you, when did people in your family find out?

Christy Zaragoza:

they didn't find out till maybe a couple of years ago. how did that happen? I posted on Instagram. Oh, you I posted on Instagram. Yeah. I finally, I, like, I had talked to my therapist about like a lot of it. I think just in these last couple of years I've really been able to talk, even talk about it and share it with people. And even then, I don't really do that a lot with some, like even some of my close friends, I just don't really talk about these things. But with therapy and, you know, I think a lot of the healing is just acknowledging that this happens and moving forward from that. It's been a big part of my journey. It's taken a long time, a lot of therapy to get to a place like this, so <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

yeah. And how, what are some of the things that have really helped you in therapy? Is it just being able to talk it out?

Christy Zaragoza:

I think a little bit of, of all of it. I think approaching things head on and working through them. I'm not shy when it comes to problems or issues. I think the only way to really work through things is to hit it head on and work through it. but also giving yourself time, space, and grace to feel what you need to feel to not shut down those feelings. even if they are uncomfortable, if they suck and you don't want to exist you know, I think it's important to have all of those feelings because that is what makes life so lifey. Is that a term? I don't know. were

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You ever suicidal? Yeah.

Christy Zaragoza:

I was when I was younger and I think I had a lot of suicidal ideations, honestly, for like 15 years. I worked with, I went to a therapist when I was in San Diego for a while just to talk about my trauma and worked through that. And then when I moved, I didn't have connect, like time with her. and then when I moved to the San Francisco and the pandemic, I, you know, I think a lot of us looked inward and I realized like I've had suicidal ideations with me probably for like, my whole life. and I was like, well, that maybe that's not the healthiest way to approach any, anything, you know, so working through that a lot and now it's not as frequent.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

how do you or what saved you

Christy Zaragoza:

<laugh>, this is gonna sound such like a bad answer. but psychedelic drugs? I think the first time I did those, it really helped me realize that I don't know, it like hacked my brain into feeling serotonin and dopamine in a way that I didn't know was physiologically like capable. and from there I kind of had like a click in my brain when I was like, wait, if these are just chemicals that can alter how I feel and view the world, then what can I do in my life to achieve that? You know, like, what can I do to like get that without taking drugs or something? so I think that like, that really kind of spurred me into like, wow, there's a different way of thinking and a different way of life. if everything in my life is just me experiencing it from my brain, then like, what can I do to, to do that more often?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So you mentioned serotonin, so it's almost like some, you had like some blockages and so like some happy space was opened up that you didn't know was possible in your brain. Mm-hmm.

Christy Zaragoza:

<affirmative>. Yeah, I think I just like never really lived with that like, feeling before. And it didn't really happen for me until I was like 17 or 18. and then I was like, wait, this can exist and it feels great. And where has this been <laugh>

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And what kinds of stuff were you taking? Like

Christy Zaragoza:

The first experience was M D M A, and then I've like Molly or ecstasy. So it's a lot of feelings of like, euphoria, a lot of happiness, feeling connected. and like with music you get to go and like connect with other people around music or a shared experience. so that was really cool.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So you would go to like a lot of raves

Christy Zaragoza:

raves and concerts, yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Mostly. And like music. Were you really into music? I could see you being really into music.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes. I love music. I was just at a show last night. so yeah, I think What kind

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Of mu what kind of music do you like?

Christy Zaragoza:

I like a lot of things. I'd probably say mostly into like electro indie rock, hip hop, r and b, those top five. Those are my like top five.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So maybe that is what helped you through some tough times is just being able to have this kind of euphoric release.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah, I think I wasn't, I'm not like a very I don't think I would say I'm like a substance abuser. I like dabble. yeah, I definitely enjoy taking things like shroom, sometimes acid, but not so much anymore. Now that, you know, I'm a little older. I just don't really necessarily need those types of experiences. I think it's super I think it has helped shaped, helped me, helped shaped how I see the world and view other people and treat other people. yeah, I think when you realize that like, we're all just existing on this planet and we don't really have control over how we get here you know, I think it just really reminds you to like, be nice and don't be a dick.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you ever blame yourself or do you ever blame yourself still for what happened?

Christy Zaragoza:

Oh, I blame myself constantly. I held a lot of internal blame and guilt and everything that had happened would always be my fault. It wasn't even just any, it was anything, you know? And I think I carried that a lot. and it wasn't until recently with recent work with my therapist to realize like, you aren't responsible for any like, unearned guilt or shame. but I was raised to believe that everything was my fault. I was raised to believe that I should be guilty, I should feel shame for everything. And I think that's a tie of like one, the very religious aspect of growing up and feeling that like religious guilt for sinning, but also with the extreme beliefs from my mom that literally everything is a sin. I think that that really doubled down on that feeling of shame and guilt that I carried for a really long time.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Did you know that other adoptees were also s also suffered from abuse in their adoptive homes?

Christy Zaragoza:

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I think When did you first learn that you weren't alone?

Christy Zaragoza:

it was actually after listening to your podcast? yeah, I think it's funny you, I think a lot about like making my way to the Korean adoptee community. and it's like a, I laugh when I like, think about it. I'm like, I feel like it's like a three step process, right? You like realize there's other adoptees. You Google it, you find your podcast, you listen to a few episodes and then you're like, oh shit, I wanna connect with people in real life. And that's like the three step process to getting to like <laugh> the adopting community. At least for me it was,

I was gonna say, I think that's just the, like, the internal struggle of like, do I share my story? Do I get it out there? Because I want people to know if they're listening to this, that they're not alone because I felt so alone growing up. you know, and I think a lot of us do, like we just don't really have any role models. We don't have people that are in our corner. We don't have people on our side. At least that's how I felt, even though I was connected to all these communities, I never really felt like somebody was like, I just wish there was somebody that was like, wait, like talk to me, like, are you okay? And I think I would have that face of like, I'm fine, I'm fine, everything's fine. But in reality I was like, everything is not fine. and just trying to like keep that face and, and safe face. Did you have

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Trouble trusting people because of being a survivor? And how were you able to trust like come to trust your husband?

Christy Zaragoza:

I mean, I trust people in general until they've wronged me, right? Like, I don't vibe with that. I wouldn't say, I just think I don't, I didn't really get close to a lot of people, you know, it'd be very superficial, like easy, just like have a relationship with. But as far as like disclosing personal details or letting people get close to me, I'm not that type of person. I think even for some people that probably have known me a really long time would be like, there's always just a part of you that I just don't know, I think mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

so you're conscious of it that you are guarded

Christy Zaragoza:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Oh, definitely. Yes.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

why did you wanna get involved with the adoptee community?

Christy Zaragoza:

I think overall I just wanna create a space for people for adoptees to get together and have community. I think it's super important for us to be together, get together because we're all searching for in a way when we like connect with each other. We're also finding parts of ourselves. we are in a unique place in history where there are so many of us that don't necessarily have a way to connect with our home country. We don't fully may not fully connect with our, the countries that we were sent to or live in. so we're just in this kind of third space, right? We're not one or the other. We're kind of, or in this abstract space of identity and being. And I think it's important for us to get together and be able to create and make memories and share with each other.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. You, so you said you're 30.

Christy Zaragoza:

I am, yes.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You seem like an old soul. You seem way beyond <laugh>.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. I don't think this is, this is probably not my first time. I don't know. Living, who knows?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Do you feel like pe have, do people say that a lot? Like you seem older than

Christy Zaragoza:

30? I've gotten that a lot, even just growing up. I don't know if it's, cuz I was just like forced to grow up early, right? Like fast or if I have an old soul, who knows? But I, I have heard that before. Yes.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

You know, I, I, I totally relate to with being forced to grow up faster than sort of normal. And I think one of the things that really, like I was really pissed about was I was forced to see like, you know, your parent is supposed to be like in your corner and you're like, you're forced to see somebody in a really dark way. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> at, you know, at a, I was 12, so like 11, 12, so at a young age. And that people, there was a dark side to people. And I think that, I think that was hard to see as being so young, like someone that's supposed to love and care for you. So

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. Somebody that's supposed to be in a caretaker role it's hard because it's so, it's such a weird place for me now because I actually talk to my dad, but I don't talk to my mom. but I think it's because he has made an effort to try and be in the kids' lives, whereas my mom is really narcissistic and can't get past our shortcoming. Like, she's just not able to connect. It's now that I'm older and have tried to reconcile with them, and like, I really did try, you know, but I just don't think my mom is emotionally available or able to have a relationship like she wants, which is sad in a way.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Do you think there's some abuse in her background?

Christy Zaragoza:

maybe like, probably physical and like emotional more so I think a lot about why my parents would treat me and my siblings the way that they do treat me. And while I don't condone their behavior, I am able to kind of take a step back and look at the way that they were raised, right? Like, their parents were all products of the depression. they were all, they're all, they're boomers. So, you know, it's more like you're disciplined physically. You don't talk about how you're feeling. There's a lot of repressed feelings and you know, like, listen to parents, this is the authority. so I think that's a lot of why my parents are the way that they are. It doesn't excuse their behavior or the way that they treated their kids because that's their own doing. But I can see why that that is how they like raised us.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Have you forgiven your dad?

Christy Zaragoza:

I think, I think so. I think I've, I've moved past, past that. I don't harbor that res no, I still do harbor that resentment, but I can say that I have accepted that. Forgive is such a weird word. I don't know if I forgive him, but I accept that it has happened. And yeah. So maybe, no, that's my long way of saying no, but it's a journey and process. Right? <laugh>,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Why do you, why do you wanna still have a relationship with him?

Christy Zaragoza:

I mean, it's not, I think about this a lot. I'm like, why would I even wanna, like, have a relationship with people, but it's like out of the caretakers or, you know, like parental figures that I do have. He has been the most consistent and at least shows up for me in a way that is barely just the bare minimum. And I think I, it's not inhumane of me to want that, right. To want to have some sort of parental figure or somebody. and even though he is the bare minimum of it it's still there.

Speaker 3:

So Yeah. You've, you've reunited.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes. so to backtrack a little bit to, to lead up to that story I first went to Korea, maybe like a year or two after college. I just wanted to go see what the country was about. you know, like what's the big deal of being Korean? so I went and booked a two week trip by myself. Stayed in Airbnb, what, like 2014 I think. Okay. And I just wanted to go explore and, you know, see what it was about. and booked a flight and went for two weeks. And I went and stopped by Holt when I went there because I had always had access to my papers. I

Was like, you know, you get, we all, like, a lot of us have our papers where we're like, okay, this is who I was before I came to this country. Maybe there's some semblance of like my real true identity or who I am. Right? but when you get on the Facebook groups, you start to see, well, like the adoption agency had papers that were different, or my story was completely different than the story that was fabricated and my papers. So I was like, well, what if my papers aren't right? Let me go to the adoption agency and see if anything that they have on file is different. but it wasn't, I was born in 92, so I think by then they had their documentation down. It wasn't as like, oh, baby found at fire station or, you know, abandoned baby, that's it.

Or, you know, fabricating some story. and I was like, okay. But I had a feeling that like the caseworker there had additional papers but wouldn't let me see it. And I think it had the identifying information about my birth mother. And that really pissed me off because I was like, if you have it right there, like, why can't you just show me? But they were like, oh, if you wanna see the contents of whatever you have to do an official birth person search through the government. And I was like, but it's right there. You have those papers right there, why can't you just show them to me? Right. but in Korea, it's, it's

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

A consent. Yeah. Yeah. They have to get the consent mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.

Christy Zaragoza:

so that's kind of what spurred me to be like, well, maybe I do wanna find out like more about it. well,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

What Christy, how, what gave you a clue that they had more?

Christy Zaragoza:

because there was physically were things whited out? No, there was just like physically more papers there than what they were showing me. And she was kind of being a little like, ooh. You know, like, just like, I could like sense that there was more there. Yeah. And I was like, well, that's not fair. <laugh>. that's so

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Infuriating when it's like in the manila folder right there.

Christy Zaragoza:

Right. It's like, can you just just flip it, turn it, like, I won't say anything. Just fucking just do it, you know? but, you know, it was fine. I did it, whatever. and then I, I had got home for my trip and I had thought about it. They were like, well, do you wanna do it now? And I was like, I don't think I'm ready for that. So I didn't. and I was co like talking to, I think it was goal as well. but I eventually ended up doing it directly through the adoption agency. and like sent the birth person search. They like physically, I think they is the telegram. Yeah. They like faxed it or something. Yeah. I'm like, what year is this? Like, this is like by the, by then it was like 20 14, 20 15. And they're like, we need to fax something.

And I'm like, what the fuck is that fax? Like, nobody does this anymore. and I had sent it out and then at the time I was working two jobs, I would wake up for like a 7:00 AM shift work until three, and then work like five to 10. so I was getting up early every day, and it was probably like five in the morning. And I'm like, waking up, grok scrolling on my phone, checking my email, and I see a res reply from Holt and it reads something like, hello. Like, hope all is well, we found your birth mother. And you know, like, she called immediately after she got the letter. and if you wanna talk, like, send pictures and a letter and we'll translate for you. And I was like, oh, wow, this is crazy. And then I went to work Wow. And went on my day and just kind of was like, okay. I, they found her like, she exists, you know? So we wrote letters for a while. Must have been, huh?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

There must have been so much emotion. I remember. Like, did you feel like a mix between happiness and sadness?

Christy Zaragoza:

No, I think I was more just in shock. I literally remember going to work that day and I was like, yeah, I found my birth mother. And people were like, oh my God, that's crazy. And I was like, is it <laugh>? Like, I was like, oh, I, I guess so. Like, it, it just didn't really like hit me, hit me. And then it took me a little while to write the first letter. Cause I was like, I don't even what to say, you know, like like what do you say? Just like, hi, this is me. I'm happy I'm healthy. Like, who are you? You know? but I sent the letter and I got the first letter back. and my story was totally different than what was on the papers.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

What did they say on the papers?

Christy Zaragoza:

So on the papers, I think it says that my birth mother met my birth father. They use this word by chance which really struck me as an interesting choice, reflecting on it later. they said that like, yeah, like, oh, they met the birth father. Like, she didn't know she was pregnant till she was seven months, like pregnant with you. And she like, he's just not in the picture. And I was like, okay, that's fine. but in her letter, one of the first things she says to me and shares with me is that she was raped and she didn't know that she was pregnant with me. and I was like, oh, okay. <affirmative>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. I kind of guessed when they said that by chance. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. It's kind of trying to soften it. Wow. How did that make you feel?

Christy Zaragoza:

I really struggled with that for a while because you'd, I'd always thought of like, okay, well, you know, like the difference in the stories, like that's okay. But I never thought that would be mine. Right. and I think it was just hard for me to come to the terms with that. I remember one night after going out, it was just me and my husband in the car and we had been drinking, we're out. And I was just like, really? Like, I just remember like, just bawling in the car and being like, I'm a rape baby. You know? And I think that was really hard for me to accept initially. and I did hold maybe some feelings of like anger, shame yeah. Like a lot of anger and shame.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah, for sure. <affirmative> did it some way. Did it initially were, did you feel like it gave you more empathy towards your birth mother for having given you up?

Christy Zaragoza:

Oh, definitely. I mean, I already understand. I had already understood like, you know, why women in Korea gave up babies. I think a lot of it is just one, like the stigma against unwed mothers. there's, I'm assuming little to no reproductive health or services there, right? That would allow for people to take any preventative measures or actions that are after. and it's also pretty religious. So, you know, abortion is out of the, out of the answer. so like I, I understood that. I don't think I ever held anger towards her. I think I always recognize that like, shit happens. You know, like you just, you can't keep your baby. That's, it's gonna happen. but I think I just felt more angry that that had happened to her. yeah. Like, fuck this guy. You know? I was already mad that my dad had done what he did to me. And then I have this like, birth mother and birth father, but this guy like, is also just a total piece of shit too. You know,

We actually wrote back and forth probably for like a year or two. and I had a friend who would translate because the translators that the adoption agencies had, just had a lot of mis meaning. so it was really nice for my friend to be able to share and like translate it out with a little more emotion. I think it helped me like see where she was like riding from. but she was actually pregnant with my baby brother when she had first, when we had first like connected like, you know, email wise. So I didn't hear from her for a while. but I found out that I have two half siblings she had from a previous marriage after me. And then she just had a baby. Well, just had a baby at that time. Had just had a baby.

he's like seven now, I think. so it was crazy to see pictures of the half siblings. Her daughter, I guess my half sister, she was maybe like 17 or 18 at the time. And she sent a picture and I was like, oh my God. Like, this looks like me when I was a teenager. Like, that's crazy. so we had like been emailing back and forth writing letters and then it was just a couple years later, like 2016, I think, 2017, I was like, you know what? Life is too short for us to not acknowledge that we both exist, you know? or like, life is just too short for us to not meet again. And my goal was to hopefully allow for both of us to acknowledge that the other exists and that we're real. so I booked a flight and I went by myself again. And this time we set up a meeting with the with whole at a satellite agency in John Ju. and I traveled around Seoul, went down to Busan in Juju for like a week and a half. And then I got up really early one day, took a bus to the train station, and then took a bus from the train station and then walked in the rain to this satellite office in John June. And I get there and I'm tired. Did you say

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Walk through the, did you say walk through the rain?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah, because mine was too nervous to take a, I was too nervous to take a taxi because I didn't know how to communicate with people. <laugh> and it,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Unless it have been So was it like a K drama? I mean, just so Yeah,

Christy Zaragoza:

Emotional. It wa yeah. I was just like, well, I'm waking up, I'm gonna go see my birth mother today, like <laugh>

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And then walk through the rain to meet

Christy Zaragoza:

Her. Yeah. I walked through the rain and I'm like, you know what, I'm just gonna suck it up. I don't wanna walk in this rain. I'm gonna call a taxi, call the taxi, try to get him to like show where I was going. And then he drops me off at a McDonald's <laugh> and I'm like, oh man. So I walk a little bit more and I find the place. It's fine. I was pretty like Google map savvy. I would like look it up when I had wifi. This is before I just didn't really do the data plans and I was there. So I would like Google everything extensively, map out my plans, screenshot everything so I would know where to go. and then I could still see the little dot on the map, so I would be fine at least navigate around. so I, I could get to the office, but I get there and they have no idea why I'm there. And I'm like, oh my God. I'm like, did I get the wrong day? Like, ugh, like this is not good. Like, I didn't have service, so I couldn't do Google Translate, like barely. It was like really slow. and I'm just like, I'm here to meet my birth mother. And they're like, what are you doing here? Like, we have no idea. And they like, put me in this room. And I'm just like, oh man. Like, I don't know what's next. and they were like, no idea.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Oh, you must have been, must have been a pit in your stomach, just the anxiety.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah, I think I was just so tired. I was like, I, we'll see what happens, right? Like I'm here for the ride and finally somebody comes in and they were like, oh, like we know why you're here. I'm like, oh, thank God, because nobody else did. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So they're like, oh, actually, like, they're like translating back and forth right in Google and they're like, oh, like we're, you're actually in this other office. We're doing construction, so like we're in another building, like, you need to go to another building. And I was like, oh, okay, cool. So I like get my things and my backpack, roll my rolly bag, and I like walk out of the room and I see this woman standing at the, at the window looking just as confused as I was being like, I'm supposed to be here for something.

And the people at the window are like, I don't know. And immediately I see her and I'm like, oh my God, that's my birth mother. And I just start bawling and she sees me from in the room and she starts bawling. But it's kind of awkward because we're all trying to transport to another like, building. So we're just standing there looking at each other crying and I'm like, oh my God. Like, like, you know, like, you like idealize this. Like, oh, like you're gonna meet, they're gonna walk into the room, like you're gonna hug. It's gonna be emotional. And it was really emotional, but we were just standing there like crying and like with these other people and we're like, oh my God. Like that initial part was just like, okay, here you are. <laugh>. Wow. So you knew when you immediately Yeah. Cause I had like seen pictures and stuff.

okay. So, but I, but I was like, there's only one other person that could be there. but I do have a funny story. So before I had like gone there, I was like tweeting. I was like, oh, like thinking of things I'm gonna ask my birth mother. you know, like, what's your favorite pizza? Do you like Beyonce? Just like funny, like random things, right? To to use humor to kind of cope with how big of an emotional, monumental, like, meeting this was. Right? So just keep that in the back of your head. And when we were emailing back and forth, I wasn't really sure if I was gonna stay with her or not. I was like, if she, she had offered, but I didn't really know if that meant like, yes, stay with me. I didn't wanna like impose cuz she had a family and a baby.

And I was like, okay, I don't, I don't know if she is like, I can easily get a hostile or find a place to stay if that isn't the case. Like it's, it's fine. Figure it out. And like, we're on our way, right? Like, we have that initial, very emotional but kind of awkward gathering meeting in this like, building. And we're walking, she's like, oh, like we can drive to this other building. It's maybe like a, a three minute drive away. And she just like, immediately grabs my bag, puts it in her car, and she's like, you're coming with me, basically. And I was like, well, I guess that's it. Okay. And we like drive over. We have like a translator. It's fine. and I'm just like, I think we're both in shock. And they're like, okay, use this hour to, you know, use this translator service.

like this is it. And I'm like, okay. I don't remember anything I was gonna ask you at all. so it's kind of like quiet, like, just like random, like back and forth questions. but then we go out to lunch and she like drives me there and she like, she has like limited English, right? She's like, oh, do you like, like she's able to ask like, do you like this or that or something. And she goes, do you like music? And I'm like, I love music. And she's like, okay. And she turns on her rate on her stereo and guess who was playing

Speaker 3:

Word? Everyone is.

Christy Zaragoza:

And I was like, are you kidding me? Like, and I was like, this is like, I was like, that's like one of those moments when I was like, is that real? Did that just happen? Like, you know, Beyonce is an international superstar, but the fact for me to jokingly be like, do you like Beyonce? And then for her to just be playing that already, I was like, I think this is, yeah, I think this is my mom. Like <laugh>,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Well, like, oh, so that was like her, it wasn't just random radio, like she had had

Christy Zaragoza:

It? No, she was like playing it. Yeah. Like before I had even gotten in the car.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Wow. and so that was about seven years ago.

Christy Zaragoza:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative> five years now. so then she just takes me back to her house. I meet her husband, I meet the baby. He's so cute. He's just a toddler. He didn't really know what to think of me, but by the end of the trip he was like, sad to see me go. but we were able to just hang out in John Drew for a week. It was so nice just to like, have that time. We like ate food. She, you know, like we got to go, like, travel around the area. the baby was in daycare, so it was just us, which was really nice. but I remember this one moment when they were like, FaceTiming the grandparents, and I don't like, I, I'm still not entirely sure if the family knows that I exist. When I had asked before she said that they didn't. but when I asked again, she said that they did. So I'm not really sure where that stands now. but I remember like them FaceTiming and like being really happy to see the baby and you know, like talking to the baby and I was in the other room and I was just like, that could have been me, you know? and I'm like, here I am, like feeling jealous about this little baby. I'm like, he's just a baby <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Yeah. I could see that with the baby. Like, everyone's so happy, you know, the baby. Cute. And, but that you were perhaps still a secret or,

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. Yeah. So that, yeah. So that was some interesting feelings to have. but overall it was just nice to be able to have that time and space with her. it brings me a lot of joy to be able to share that I have this relationship, even if it's like very minimal, right? It's just like, it's totally, I always expect it to be different or that I should be like, I don't know. I just, I think from my relationship with my adoptive family, I feel like I always have to tiptoe around them and I don't get joy, you know, like talking about my experience with my family and what it was like growing up. But I think I feel like I get this new chance with my, like, birth mom and my birth family in a way. so it's just like a weird feeling to have. And I almost feel guilty about it. Right. Like that I get to have that type of relationship.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Well, I feel guilty,

Christy Zaragoza:

But I shouldn't. No, I feel bad. I, yeah, it's like, it's like I get these like thoughts that if like, my mom heard this right, she'd be heartbroken because she's like, I raised you like you're my child. Oh,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. Like a loyalty, you know?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. Yeah. but then at the same time I'm like, no. Like, it just was never easy with, with you and with my birth mom, it's, it's a lot. It's just easy, right? It's not like a clashing of two different people. It's like we're of the same cloth.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So you feel it like through just genetically and whatev, biologically you guys fit together.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. It just feels a lot more natural. And that brings me like a lot of peace,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Even though I can be

Christy Zaragoza:

Able to feel that

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Even though you don't speak the same language, really.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. There's no lang like, yeah, like we I think like activity wise, it's like similar. I was like, what do you like to do? She's like, I like to eat, cook sleep, have fun with friends, listen to music. And I'm like, I love those things. And like, like, are we, I was like, are we related? Like, wow. You know, like, so I think I, it's interesting to see like parts of my personality that are also in her, and I'm like, oh, that's where I get this from, you know?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Wait, are there like non-verbal things too?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes. okay. So fun fact about me is that my pinkies are like tiny for my hand. if you see me in real life, you can see them. It's not one of my proudest features, but like, you can, you can see like, oh, wow, my pinky is just like short, right? Oh, yeah. But it's not be, it's not because my finger is little. It's because my hand dips down. Oh. So if my hand were normal, like a little, like straighter here, Uhhuh, <affirmative>, it would be higher. But one of the things I noticed is that my mom has the exact same pinkies. Oh. And I was like, it's not my, it's not me, it's us <laugh>.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Wow. That's gotta be just, I don't know. I don't ha I haven't had experienced that, so, but I just can imagine just seeing these kind of physical connections that you have.

Christy Zaragoza:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

I mean, does she feel like your mom like, or is it still like just a stranger, strange lady that is nice to you, <laugh>?

Christy Zaragoza:

yes and no. I like, I don't think it's very, like, it's not like, oh, this just some random lady. Right? It's like, that is my, my mom. I don't even, now I struggle with being like, that's my mom, you know? Cuz like my adoptive mom, I call her like she's my mom. Yeah. But I feel like I always have this distinction of like, that's my birth mother. Like but I don't necessarily have that. I don't know. Yeah. It's like a, it's not one or the other. It's an in between. As is much of a lot of what we've talked about today, <laugh>,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

How did you feel when you called her Oma for the first time?

Christy Zaragoza:

Oh, I don't, I don't know if I actually did.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay. You haven't said Oma. Maybe

Christy Zaragoza:

Like, maybe like in, like, cuz we like message each other on cacao. Like, I'll eat or make Korean food and I'm like, look at this. Or like, okay, she'll send me pictures of like, the baby or, or different things. But I'm never like Oma like, you know, I just don't, I don't know. I haven't gotten there yet.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Okay.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Does she call you by Christy or does she call you by the, her, the Korean name.

Christy Zaragoza:

So I don't even think that the Korean, like the Korean name that was on my papers is not the one she gave me. I don't even think she had like, gotten to give me a name, but when we were together, she was like, oh, I don't like the name that they gave you. Like, this is your name, but I already forgot it, so I'm, don't talk to me about that. I, it's similar.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So hold, so Holt gave you a name.

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. Yeah. But she calls me by Christy, but it's like, it's spelled out like Korean, so it's like <foreign>, you know, like, yeah. Yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Are you excited about having this relationship with your younger brother? I mean, he's seven now, right?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. I'm nervous, honestly, because before he was two or three, and like, by that age it's kind of like whatever, you know, like, they're so young, but now he's a little bit older and I wanna, I don't know. I hope that that could be the case, right? Where I have a relationship with a younger sibling but I don't necessarily wanna have expectations that are too high, right? Like, it is what it is. And I, I'm not gonna be able to change that really. Like, if we are able to have a relationship, that would be super cool, but I'm not gonna be like, oh, I'm gonna go to Korea and my little brother's gonna love me and it's gonna be super great and we're all gonna be happy, right? Like, and I'm, I like, I'm more realistic about things and wanna set expectations for myself so that way it's not like I'm in over my head, you know?

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

What do you, what are you hoping for this trip? Because you're about to go to Korea? understand,

Christy Zaragoza:

I know I'm gonna get a lot of good food. I'm definitely gonna stock up on the Korean beauty products. but I'm also really excited to just like, hang out with my family. And I am excited about potentially, you know, creating a relationship with my little brother because he's seven now. And for me that means like he's old enough to be like his own person, right? but I am curious to see what that means for me in relationship to the rest of the family. Because before when I visited, he was only two or three. So it's easy to be like, oh, like if the family doesn't know about me, then it's easy for the baby to be like, oh, that's like mom's friend or something, right? But now he's older, like, what does that mean for me in relationship to the rest of the family when it's like, oh, that's my sister. And they're like, what do you mean sister? Right? So I'm curious to see what unfolds from there. Life's crazy, you know? There's never gonna be a shortage of thing of terrible things that happen to us or things that happen in the world. And I think it's really about dealing with those things. I don't know. Like feel your feelings, live your life, be joyful and do what you can to make this life better for yourself and for the people around you. You know, like life is always gonna be hard and tough and all we really have is each other and how we experience life.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

how can people get ahold of you? Are you open to getting messages?

Christy Zaragoza:

Yeah. Feel free to slide in my dms. I'm on the Instagram, B i l l l y y y. I'm active on the A K S F Facebook page. If you're not in your communities, but you want to like, just stop lurking. Just come, come meet other people. It's, it's really great. and we're a lot of fun, so,

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

And da da da. If you wanna plug your event, your gala event.

Christy Zaragoza:

Oh yeah. We have our 25th anniversary event in December. it's gonna be a lot of fun in San Francisco. It is on December 10th, so we hope to see you there. It is semi-formal, but you know, like a little fancy with a pinky up. and we're just gonna have a fun night of dinner drinks and celebrating AKASF (Adopted Korean Assocation San Francisco) for being around for so long. yeah.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

So they can buy tickets on your, they can go to your face, your website or Facebook page or,

Christy Zaragoza:

Yes, we have a public Facebook's probably the best place to do it, even if you're not on Facebook, you should be able to find the event. and then ways to purchase and register for the event are there.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Thank you so much.

Christy Zaragoza:

Thank you, Kaomi. Thanks for having me on and sharing all these stories. It's the work you're doing is super important and incredible.

Kaomi Lee / Adapted Podcast:

Thank you, Christy, for your courageousness. Thanks also to Jae Jin for our theme music. If you'd like to hear more, go to jaejinmusic.com. Thanks. Also goes to past and present patron supporters. Your support has sustained this podcast and is keeping it strong. There's now 122 adoptee interviews that are part of what I hope is a permanent archive in some news. Before we close out the show, I'll be in Korea. At the end of this month, I'll be talking to Korean journalists about the podcast, including 27 interviews that have been translated with your help into Korean. Some of these interviews will require a translator. If you're able to help support this media effort, please go to patron.com/adapted podcast to become a patron. Or feel free to message me if you'd like to make a one-time donation. We'll have another episode out in two weeks. Take care.