(0:00:07) speaker\_0: Welcome to Adopted podcast. Season 7, episode 25 starts now. This is a podcast that centers the voices of Korean inter-country adoptees.

(0:00:19) speaker\_0: Adopted people are the true experts of the lived experience of adoption. I'm Kaomi Lee, and I was adopted from Korea.

(0:00:27) speaker\_0: Our voices have often been silenced by adoption agencies, governments, sometimes even our own adoptive families, and society that is only interested in a feel-good story.

(0:00:39) speaker\_0: Our lives are more complicated than that. Please listen to our stories.

(0:00:43) speaker\_1: Some adoptees have talked about like, you know, "Oh, I couldn't wear the same makeup as my mom or my sisters.

(0:00:51) speaker\_1: " So going through puberty without the kind of intergenerational knowledge that's usually passed down at that age, you know, things that might be sort of trivial, but I think for some adoptees was felt as a difference that was not good.

(0:01:06) speaker\_1:

(0:01:06) speaker\_0: This next conversation I'm honored to say is with cultural anthropologist and Professor Elena Kim.

(0:01:12) speaker\_0: She's the author of the seminal and important book, Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging. Now, here's Elena.

(0:01:31) speaker\_0:

(0:01:31) speaker\_1: Um, I'm really honored and delighted to be on your podcast, um, 'cause I've been a big fan for a long time and you've had so many amazing guests.

(0:01:44) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh, you know, it's just an incredible archive as well.

(0:01:51) speaker\_1: So, um, I am a professor of anthropology at UC Irvine and, um, uh, yeah, I'm the author of Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging.

(0:02:06) speaker\_1: Um, I've also written another book not related to adoption on the Korean DMZ and, uh, its ecologies and, uh, different, um, aspects of the biodiversity that exists there.

(0:02:20) speaker\_1: But as far as adoption studies, I, um, wrote my dissertation way back in 2006, um, based on field work I did with adult Korean adoptees, and, um, that field work started in 1999, um, and extended till about 2000...

(0:02:45) speaker\_1: Well, for the purposes of the dissertation until about 2004 or '5.

(0:02:50) speaker\_1: Um, and then I revised that dissertation into a book, um, and included some additional research that I did between 2006 and 2008.

(0:03:01) speaker\_1: So, uh, the book was published in 2010 and, um, I don't know if you want me to (laughs) say more about it, but, uh, I can-

(0:03:09) speaker\_0: Oh, no, yeah. You could say, uh, um, to familiarize...

(0:03:14) speaker\_0: I, I think there's always, um, adoptees who are m- new to the community, sort of breaking the seal and, you know, they're, they're looking for a lot of resources, um, and so we really wanna point them to your book as well.

(0:03:29) speaker\_0:

(0:03:29) speaker\_1: Sure. Um, yeah, and I would just say, so the book came out in 2010, um, and, uh, it's crazy to think how long ago that was now. But, (laughs)-

(0:03:41) speaker\_0: (laughs)

(0:03:42) speaker\_1: ... since that time what's been really fantastic is there's a whole...

(0:03:45) speaker\_1: And some of the authors ha- have been on your podcast as well, you know, there's a whole, uh, set of scholars, many of whom are also adopted from Korea that have together, um, constituted what we can call critical adoption studies.

(0:04:02) speaker\_1: And, um, so that's been really amazing to see come to fruition, um, because certainly when I started doing my research, there was very little, uh, in terms of, um, anything remotely critical of adoption.

(0:04:21) speaker\_1: (laughs)

(0:04:22) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:04:22) speaker\_1: And, um, most of the studies were, as you probably know, uh, focused on the adaptation of children who are adopted from overseas into White homes and pretty much depended upon the information that, um, researchers got from adoptive parents.

(0:04:41) speaker\_1:

(0:04:42) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:04:42) speaker\_1: Um, and there are little hints here and there of sch- scholars who were noticing some of the, um, difficulties that Korean adoptees had in adjustment, but those little kind of clues ended up getting subsumed under this kind of, uh, consensus that things were great.

(0:05:04) speaker\_1: Um, so when I started doing my research, I was meeting, um, a lot of adoptees who, you know, adult adoptees, who kind of sensed that, um, having some kind of research done that was, um, more focused on their experiences and their testimonies, for lack of a better word, uh, so there...

(0:05:28) speaker\_1: It seemed like there are more and more adoptees, um, who had a sense that, uh, there was more, more of, of the story to tell.

(0:05:37) speaker\_1: And, um, so meeting other scholars, so Kim Park Nelson was a key person for me in, uh, terms of my network of other scholars doing critical research, um, e- 'cause we were both in graduate school at the same time.

(0:05:53) speaker\_1: And, um, as you know, I don't know if she's been on your podcast, but she, you know, she also wrote a dissertation based on 100 oral histories with adult Korean adoptees.

(0:06:03) speaker\_1: So-Um, there was a...

(0:06:05) speaker\_1: There was kind of, like, interesting things brewing, um, around, uh, the turn of the millennium and, um, now things have really blossomed, so it's been, it's been fantastic to see.

(0:06:18) speaker\_1: Um, and I would just add that, you know, I- I- I don't think it's possible to, um, understand what has been a huge sea change in public discourse about transnational adoption, transracial adoption, uh, without acknowledging that the scholarship has, um, provided a lot of the data and a lot of the frameworks for people to, um, grasp that, you know, the experience of adoption is so much more complex than was first believed.

(0:06:54) speaker\_1:

(0:06:55) speaker\_0: You know, I think for a lot of adoptees and for myself included, reading, um, your scholarship, um, really d- you know, validates a lot of our experiences, um, and, and with a critical lens as well.

(0:07:11) speaker\_0: And I was really kind of blown away at some of the...

(0:07:14) speaker\_0: Um, because I think I really related ch- in my personal experiences to a lot of what you have written about in terms of the community and, um, you know, things that were happening.

(0:07:26) speaker\_0: But before we get into it, I wanted to ask you, um, are you second gen?

(0:07:32) speaker\_1: Oh, yes. I should have mentioned that earlier. Yeah, I'm not adopted. Um, second generation Korean American. Um, I was born in Canada, um-

(0:07:43) speaker\_0: Oh, I did not know that.

(0:07:44) speaker\_1: Yeah.

(0:07:45) speaker\_0: Okay.

(0:07:45) speaker\_1: But moved when I was, like, four years old to the New York City area, and so, um, not really (laughs) identified with my Canadian-

(0:07:56) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:07:56) speaker\_1: ... roots.

(0:07:57) speaker\_1: (laughs) Uh, and, um, yeah, so but, you know, my- my parents came from Korea, um, in the early '60s and so I didn't have kind of, like, what if you...

(0:08:11) speaker\_1: If there is a typical Korean American immigrant story, you know, it was not quite that.

(0:08:20) speaker\_1: So, um, but, uh, um, if anything, I think I- I did, uh, have some understanding generationally with some of the adoptees I met about just what, like, American culture was like in the '70s and '80s in terms of race, in terms of the, uh, position of Asian Americans.

(0:08:43) speaker\_1: Um, and also because I grew up in a pretty white suburb-

(0:08:47) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:08:48) speaker\_1: ... of New York City and didn't have a lot of, um, interaction with... I- I mean, obviously my parents were Korean and... But we didn't...

(0:08:56) speaker\_1: You know, we weren't churchgoers, you know, so there wasn't kind of like an embeddedness in any Korean American community.

(0:09:06) speaker\_1: Um, so th- you know, I had a little bit of that to go on, but, um, you know, a lot of the interesting things that I discovered as I was doing my research and started to present it was, um, how much the differences between Korean American, um, Korean Americans who grew up in immigrant families, uh, and the experiences of adoptees, um, you know, how much that difference mattered.

(0:09:34) speaker\_1: Um, so in a way, I- I always felt like I was also writing against some of the assumptions that some Korean Americans, uh, might have about who Korean adoptees are and what their experiences are like, a kind of over-projection, you know, of, um, similarity.

(0:09:54) speaker\_1: And, um, anyway, so...

(0:09:58) speaker\_0: You know, that's interesting because I, um, I know of a Korean American journalist who grew up in the Twin Cities kind of around the time I did, I think, um, i- in Minnesota in very white, uh, suburb.

(0:10:14) speaker\_0: I- I think her parents were academics and, um, so educated and, and, um, middle class and, you know, I think when she- she was asking me, uh, some questions about, like, saying, like, feeling a sense of, like, more like we have the simil- a similar experience, like, "Okay-"

(0:10:35) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:10:35) speaker\_0: "... I grew up in Minnesota and very white and, you know, also felt, um, uh, racially marginalized and racism and all of that.

(0:10:45) speaker\_0: " But I- you know, for me, I was like, it was very hard for, I think, to get across to her that I, I felt like our situations were very dissimilar, but, um, I think she thought they were more similar, um, and I think the fact that having white parents really is a, a different ballgame.

(0:11:07) speaker\_0:

(0:11:07) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:11:08) speaker\_0: Um, and just being raised without any kind of positivity for Korean culture or, you know, interest in your family and all of...

(0:11:16) speaker\_0: You know, just basically feeling like you were programmed in a (laughs) different way.

(0:11:24) speaker\_1: (laughs)

(0:11:25) speaker\_0: But, um, I don't know.

(0:11:26) speaker\_0: Could you talk about what some of those kind of projections are some, um, generations might be coming from a Korean American community-

(0:11:34) speaker\_1: Sure, um-

(0:11:36) speaker\_0: ... about adoptees?

(0:11:36) speaker\_1: Well, I think... Yeah, I mean, one thing I learned from talking t- with adoptees was, um...

(0:11:43) speaker\_1: I mean, some, some of it is based on, like, the perceptions that adoptees had meeting other, you know, other Korean Americans who, um...

(0:11:53) speaker\_1: And I write about this in the book.

(0:11:56) speaker\_1: You know, sometimes, like, you know, looked on adoptees as like, you know, with like, a lot of, um, sympathy and, you know, even, like, um, pity, feeling bad for them.

(0:12:09) speaker\_1: Uh-... uh, but sometimes those relationships might have started off with that kind of attitude.

(0:12:16) speaker\_1: But, um, those very Korean American emer- usually, like, first gen immigrants would become, like, the first connection for adoptees with South Korea.

(0:12:25) speaker\_1: Um, other times would be like, second gen Korean Americans who, you know, adoptees would meet as, uh, you know, in school or in college, and, um, a lot of assumptions about adoptees as being, you know, super white and, um, inauthentically Korean or Korean American.

(0:12:47) speaker\_1: Um, so there was, there was a lot of discourse about that. Um, and I think, you know, even, so I would...

(0:12:54) speaker\_1: I mentioned like, you know, I'd present my work and, um, Korean Americans or even non-Asian Americans would say things like, "Well, how is that different from, like, someone who's not adopted?

(0:13:07) speaker\_1: " Uh, and I think it was just a matter of not really being able to grasp, um, what it was like to, um, have no information or even like tacit knowledge of, um, it not s- not even necessarily like being Korean or Korean cultural stuff, that's, you know, to be expected, but more like the tacit kind of o- embodied feelings of difference that exist, uh, you know, that s- that some adoptees have talked about like, you know, "Oh, I couldn't, um, wear the same makeup as my mom or my sisters.

(0:13:54) speaker\_1: " So going through puberty without, um, the kind of intergenerational knowledge that's usually passed down at that age, you know, and s- it can be very gendered.

(0:14:06) speaker\_1: Or not being able to even like wear the same clothes because of either complexion or body size or, you know, things that, um, uh, might be sort of trivial but I think for some adoptees was felt as a difference that was not good.

(0:14:24) speaker\_1: You know, it's like kind of, uh, encoded as, um, alienating.

(0:14:30) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:14:31) speaker\_1: And, um, so I think, I mean, those things I think are harder for people to really grasp, uh, f- if they don't, you know, if they just haven't thought about it.

(0:14:40) speaker\_1: Um, or if they haven't talked with adoptees and sort of, um, just been exposed to some of the ways that, um, adoptees share these kinds of experiences, either amongst themselves or, you know, in this case with me, or watching documentaries, you know, all the, all the things that, um, have kind of provided more information about what adopted experience is like.

(0:15:04) speaker\_1:

(0:15:04) speaker\_0: And probably, uh, gotten some, uh, information from, you know, just like, you know, just like the general public about adoption which are, you know, a lot of these narratives that we, you know, adopted people are trying to dispel ourselves, um, just about adoption being a-

(0:15:24) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:15:25) speaker\_0: ... um, an altruistic and a- always, you know, positive and, um, life improving, um thing.

(0:15:34) speaker\_1: Right. Exactly. Yeah.

(0:15:35) speaker\_1: Yeah, and I think, I think some, you know, definitely at least at that time and maybe even today like there were a lot of, um, adoptees and also, like I mentioned, when I would present my work, like some older generation Korean Americans would like, lo- literally like almost be like beating their chests, tearing their hair, you know, like so, um, both saddened and ashamed that- that Koreans had to send children for adoption, um, which on the one hand it's like, it's, you know, uh, uh, on some level, um, commendable that- that Koreans had some emotional, um...

(0:16:21) speaker\_1: Sorry, my cat is yowling. (laughs) I don't know if you can hear her. Um, she has separation anxiety.

(0:16:28) speaker\_0: (laughs)

(0:16:31) speaker\_1: Can you hear her? Anyway, yeah, so my husband just left-

(0:16:34) speaker\_0: Is it dinner time?

(0:16:34) speaker\_1: ... to get, to pick up something and get set. (laughs)

(0:16:39) speaker\_0: Oh, I can. (laughs)

(0:16:39) speaker\_1: Anyway, so I was saying, um-

(0:16:41) speaker\_0: Okay. (laughs)

(0:16:43) speaker\_1: You know, on the one hand like, you know, first gen Korean Americans, uh, ha- you know they, they, their framework or their narrative was like, "Oh, we were so poor as a nation.

(0:16:54) speaker\_1: We couldn't take care of you and we're so sad and ashamed about that." Which is also kind of one narrative from the South Korean government.

(0:17:03) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh, um, but that goes hand in hand with the narrative you're talking about which is, "But then you are so lucky to be adopted because we were too poor to take care of you," you know?

(0:17:16) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh, but that's also the narrative that kind of falls apart today when you ask why adoption is still continuing when clearly South Korea is not a war-torn country anymore.

(0:17:30) speaker\_1: (laughs) And yeah, so-

(0:17:32) speaker\_0: Right. And- and should- and does have, uh, the, you know, the means, the state can I think, you know, has the-

(0:17:41) speaker\_1: Oh, completely. Yeah.

(0:17:42) speaker\_0: ... the resources to- to take care of, uh, some of these groups of people but still-

(0:17:49) speaker\_1: Right.

(0:17:49) speaker\_0: ... decides not to, or, you know, in terms of social welfare. But anyway, why adoptees?

(0:17:56) speaker\_0: Um, I suppose your research could've, you know, as you were a- a young scholar could have gone anywhere in diaspora issues.

(0:18:06) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:18:07) speaker\_0: Or...

(0:18:08) speaker\_1: Oh, so you're ask... Sorry, I kind of... I had to go turn on a light. So you're asking about, um, why- why adoption?

(0:18:13) speaker\_0: Yeah, why... Yeah.

(0:18:15) speaker\_2: Yeah, why adoptees? Did- did- did you decide to, um... I think it's... Did you say it started, like, in 1999 at the gathering?

(0:18:23) speaker\_1: Yeah, so I, um, I originally actually thought I would be s- doing research on either Korean Chinese in Manchuria or, um, I had a fleeting interest in doing research in Mongolia.

(0:18:40) speaker\_1:

(0:18:41) speaker\_2: Mm-hmm.

(0:18:42) speaker\_1: Um, and, um, adoption hit my radar sort of, um, accidentally.

(0:18:50) speaker\_1: But I, um, I was living in New York going to NYU and a friend of mine, um, was curating this, like, experimental video showcase at a bar.

(0:19:05) speaker\_1: You know, I'm in my 20s so (laughs) there's just, like, stuff like that happening, you know.

(0:19:11) speaker\_1: So this person who was not Korean, not adopted, um, happened to have I think taught English in Korea and so had some connection with, uh, diaspora Koreans and knew something about Korea.

(0:19:28) speaker\_1: Anyway, f- for some reason she knew someone who knew someone and, um, included Tammi Chui's, um, documentary Searching for Gohyang in her series and...

(0:19:42) speaker\_1: or in this showcase. So I s- I watched this video and I was just...

(0:19:47) speaker\_1: You know, the video, I don't know if you've seen it, it's a, it's a sh- it's a short documentary based on Ta- at the time Tammi Tully and currently Tammi Chui, the filmmaker who, um, uh, p- produced this documentary about her own search and reunion s- story, or her reunion story.

(0:20:07) speaker\_1: Um, and, um, the- there was information in the video about, um, the s- history of Korean adoption.

(0:20:20) speaker\_1: And so that was my first, like, moment of like, "Oh, wh- what? I don't know anything about this history.

(0:20:32) speaker\_1: " And, um, the s- the film is so, um, moving and, um, exceptional in its... in, in documenting this, um, story of reunion.

(0:20:45) speaker\_1: Um, and so that really stuck with me. And then I must have...

(0:20:50) speaker\_1: You know, this is the early days of, of Yahoo or something, or Netscape, or whatever it was before Google. And so I, I, I just did a search-

(0:21:01) speaker\_2: Mm-hmm.

(0:21:01) speaker\_1: ... on... I must have searched on Korean and something something.

(0:21:05) speaker\_1: And so I had the impression from that video that I watched, and then I somehow found the first KAN Conference website and that also had more information about the extent of Korean adoption to the United States.

(0:21:20) speaker\_1: Um, and again, I was like, "How do I not know about this?" And, "How do I not know any adoptees if there's so many of them?

(0:21:28) speaker\_1: " And so I just started getting very curious about, um, what all of this meant. Um, and in my mind at the time was, and I...

(0:21:39) speaker\_1: you know, this inkling that, um...

(0:21:42) speaker\_1: And I was involved in, like, a lot of, like, social justice-related activism around, um, various things, but also, like, Asian American issues.

(0:21:52) speaker\_1: And so, that, that was f- another reason why I was like, "How do I not know (laughs) about this history?

(0:21:59) speaker\_1: " Um, so, um, so I imagined that there was, like, a kind of, um, activist, um, you know, social justice-oriented community around adoption.

(0:22:15) speaker\_1: And, um, so I just started getting really interested in it and ended up having a connection through the Korea Society in New York which was helping to sponsor the first gathering, and, um, got connected with, uh, Susan Cox who, um, y- you know, allowed me to, uh, volunteer for that first gathering.

(0:22:39) speaker\_1: And so I went there and, um, s- so basically, like, one thing just led to another. And I think it was at that gathering where I recognized-

(0:22:51) speaker\_2: Mm-hmm.

(0:22:51) speaker\_1: ... 'cause I didn't even know that I would necessarily make this the topic of my dissertation, but I was just curious and had this opportunity.

(0:22:59) speaker\_1: So I went and I volunteered.

(0:23:01) speaker\_2: Mm-hmm.

(0:23:01) speaker\_1: Um, I met Peter Savasta there (laughs). I met, like, all these people there. And, you know, there are 400 adoptees coming together-

(0:23:08) speaker\_2: Mm.

(0:23:08) speaker\_1: ... pretty much for the first time.

(0:23:09) speaker\_2: Mm-hmm.

(0:23:10) speaker\_1: Uh, and so I worked at the reception desk and I, I remember I, like... You know, I, I registered Mihye Cho who's now Kimura. And, you know, so there...

(0:23:19) speaker\_1: just, like, I kind of, like, witnessed all these bits of the nascent community. And, um, it was very, um, eye-opening.

(0:23:33) speaker\_1: Um, so many f- different things were happening. Like, there was an address from the First Lady of South Korea.

(0:23:42) speaker\_1: People were obviously, as you can imagine, ex- incredibly, um, moved to be part of this historic event. It felt very historic.

(0:23:55) speaker\_1: And, um, so I left there thinking, like-

(0:23:58) speaker\_2: Mm-hmm.

(0:23:58) speaker\_1: ... "I don't really know what to do with all of this, um, information." But I started to...

(0:24:03) speaker\_1: Uh, so actually what, what happened was I went to that gathering and I was like...

(0:24:09) speaker\_1: So I started doing more research, um, just trying to, you know, read up on the literature which, as I mentioned earlier, was not at all helpful (laughs) because it was mostly, like, social work studies and, uh, very, you know, uh......

(0:24:23) speaker\_1: yeah, adoptive parents, et cetera. And so, uh, so I, I, first I thought I would actually do research on birth parents, birth mothers in Korea.

(0:24:32) speaker\_1: And I went to Korea, uh, the summer of twen- 2001, uh, and I met Mihee there, Kimura there, and, um, I started trying to figure out how I could do research on Korean birth mothers, but I pretty much suddenly real- I was like, "I g- I don't think I can do this research.

(0:24:54) speaker\_1: " Because, um, just ethically and logistically, like, how to find birth mothers, how to ethically, like, design a research project with such a vulnerable population, and obviously now there's been more research done on, uh, birth parents' experiences, but certainly at that time, I j- I just wasn't well-equipped to even imagine that.

(0:25:23) speaker\_1: But I happened to, um...

(0:25:25) speaker\_1: So I was just kind of like poking around and trying to figure out an entryway into starting adoption, so I was meeting a lot of, um, adoptees who were living in Korea or visiting Korea, and then I volunteered for the OKF, the Overseas Koreas found- Koreans Foundation.

(0:25:44) speaker\_1:

(0:25:44) speaker\_3: Mm. Mm-hmm.

(0:25:45) speaker\_1: Um, and they had a motherland tour going on that summer, so I volunteered for that, and, um, that was where I kind of figured out a r- kind of a role I could play that made sense to me as a Korean American, um, and I also witnessed, like, some of the real tensions around what it meant for adoptees to go back to Korea, to be quote-unquote welcomed back by the Korean government-

(0:26:12) speaker\_3: Mm.

(0:26:12) speaker\_1: ...

(0:26:12) speaker\_1: and, um, uh, it was just, um, you know, a really, um, interesting moment in terms of adult adoptees going to South Korea, you know, in th- the early 2000s when South Korea itself was reaching out to overseas Koreans and wanting to help, wanting the diaspora to help South Korea, like, globalize.

(0:26:43) speaker\_1: Uh, so there was such interesting dynamics happening and I think that was the moment where I was like, "Okay, this is something I can look at," like, what is happening when you have adult Korean adoptees going back to South Korea, sometimes for the first time, encountering a very different country than the one that they had left, and being kind of interpolated into a specific narrative about what adoption is supposed to mean for the South Korean government when their own personal histories are not being even acknowledged as, um, part of the story of the country and the nation?

(0:27:21) speaker\_1: So, like, all of those dynamics were happening, like, right in front of me (laughs) at this OKF motherland tour, so I ended up writing about that, um, for my master's, uh, thesis, and, um, yeah.

(0:27:36) speaker\_1: So then, you know, but at the same time because I had been to the first gathering, um, I f- I wa- I suddenly realized I was also witnessing, like, this transnational, um, community or, you know, what's now called like the, you know, global network of Korean adoptees kind of forming at the very moment that I was tr- starting to do my research.

(0:27:56) speaker\_1: So, um, I was, you know, going to South Korea and, um, talking to people and, um, hanging out with adoptees who were living there, and then I was also in the US and talking to members of different, um, adult Korean adoptee organizations and, um, everyone was sort of starting to, uh, network with each other around the same time that I was meeting them, so it was a really interesting time for me to be like, "Oh, I'm actually, like, like, talking to people who have been in communication over email, uh, but haven't actually met in person.

(0:28:40) speaker\_1: " You know?

(0:28:41) speaker\_1: But as, like, as the years progressed and I was doing my research, people were meeting each other in person through different gatherings and different, um, you know, uh, other opportunities.

(0:28:53) speaker\_1: So it was just like a, it was just kind of all happening at the same time, and so that's pretty much how the dissertation and the book came into formation too, was, um, being present at this time when adoptees were also starting to develop their own consciousness of the global extent of, you know, Korean adoption, but also the agency and, uh, possibilities that they had as adoptees who were connected with each other through, you know, online...

(0:29:29) speaker\_1: You know, this is even before Facebook, right? (laughs) So it was like-

(0:29:32) speaker\_3: Yeah.

(0:29:32) speaker\_1: ...

(0:29:32) speaker\_1: just like through the internet and through being able to meet in person through these gatherings, so it was just like a, a super rich, um, moment to be, um, witnessing all the stuff come, come together.

(0:29:46) speaker\_1: And, um, so, like, one chapter in the book, because I was meeting adoptees not just from the US but also from Europe who had been so instrumental in laying the groundwork for this network of, you know, this international network to come into being, um, I really wanted to get that, those different stories together, um, and, uh, kind of, you know, provide some, at least some version of what that history c- is, I guess, you know, just by, um, collecting some of the interviews and oral histories from the, uh......

(0:30:29) speaker\_1: folks in Scandinavia who started some of those organizations in the '80s and, you know, U.S.

(0:30:35) speaker\_1: -based adoptees who had also been networking with each other starting in the '90s and kind of to try to tell that story, um, and put it all in one place, you know.

(0:30:46) speaker\_1:

(0:30:46) speaker\_0: Yeah, it sounds like it was a really dynamic time, um, and also perhaps that's where the first, you know, adoptees were s- uh, coming of age and, uh, like you said, meeting each other and, uh, starting up their own kind of activism, um, and consciousness on, political consciousness.

(0:31:09) speaker\_0: Um, I, I noticed in the book that you've gotten incredibly candid, um, comments from folks.

(0:31:19) speaker\_0: Wondering what, um, being kind of a, you know, an outsider yourself, although maybe at times you've been dubbed a, an honorary adoptee. (laughs)

(0:31:31) speaker\_1: (laughs)

(0:31:32) speaker\_0: Um, but how, what was it like being, uh, you know, inhabiting this kind of outsider status as you're, um, researching and observing this community who themselves often inhabit this kind of outsider identity?

(0:31:47) speaker\_0:

(0:31:47) speaker\_1: Yeah, I mean, and I, I just want to say, like, I, you know, I take the honorary adoptee thing super seriously 'cause I, I feel like, I honestly feel like, again, it w- you know, it came out 14 years ago.

(0:32:03) speaker\_1:

(0:32:03) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:32:03) speaker\_1: You know, I wrote it, you know, before then, so it's, like, you know, historical (laughs) now, I guess. Um, but-

(0:32:11) speaker\_0: Oh, yeah, for sure.

(0:32:12) speaker\_1: ...

(0:32:12) speaker\_1: you know, when I, when I was doing the research, I was very aware, like, of, like, you know, it was just very palpable how new it was and particularly for some folks who, like, the 1999 gathering was, like, the very first time they had met others who were adopted, certainly in those numbers, you know.

(0:32:36) speaker\_1: And, uh, so I wanted to capture some of that, the crackling newness of, of that feeling space, you know.

(0:32:44) speaker\_1: Um, but I also was super aware of, yeah, like, "I'm not adopted, but I have this privilege to tell some of the story.

(0:32:53) speaker\_1: " So there was a moment when, 'cause I was doing a lot of phone interviews with people, um, and, you know, I was, I had, like, a set of questions.

(0:33:05) speaker\_1: Um, but I really wanted to focus m- more, less so on their, how they wanted to talk about their adoption or their adop- being an adoptee and what, what that was like in terms of their autobiography and more on how they got into organizing or being, you know, um, 'cause I was, uh, I was trying to interview a lot of people who were, um, had been part of different organizations.

(0:33:31) speaker\_1: And, um, so, but still for whom, like, the kind of feeling the gathering, like, the sort of energy of the gathering was kind of really exciting.

(0:33:41) speaker\_1: And so because I think I realized, like, you know, there, there is a literature on, like, from the social work side, from the psychology side that tries to figure out a way to talk about the adoption experience, and that wasn't what I was gonna do 'cause I'm an anthropologist.

(0:33:57) speaker\_1: You know, we focus on groups not individuals.

(0:34:00) speaker\_1: And, um, and I also knew that, I mean, there are people who do psychological anthropology, but that's not what I do. (laughs)

(0:34:06) speaker\_0: (laughs)

(0:34:06) speaker\_1: And I also was like, "I'm not trained to kind of go there, you know, or to make sense of the vast, um, array of different experiences and the huge amount of diversity, even though there's a lot of commonality.

(0:34:21) speaker\_1: " Um, so I really want to focus on, like, what I could view as kind of like, the publicly facing side of, um, what adoptees were doing, which was like-

(0:34:31) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:34:31) speaker\_1: ... saying like, "Okay, there are so many of us. How can we create a community?

(0:34:38) speaker\_1: How can we, uh, find the, um, things that make us who we are as adoptees, you know?

(0:34:45) speaker\_1: " And, uh, you know, so even though, like, in a m- a lot of my interviews, you know, people were talking about kind of what personal experiences had led them to want to, um, create a group or organize or network with other adoptees, I really wanted to kind of keep my focus on the group aspect, um, and the more publicly-facing aspect.

(0:35:09) speaker\_1: It was kind of, it was, I mean, it's somewhat of an artificial boundary, but figuring out a way to foreground the ways that adoptees were, um, sort of writing their own stories as a collective was what I ended up trying to do and, um, or highlight or, you know, kind of, um, focus on.

(0:35:33) speaker\_1: And now I forgot your original question. Oh, as an, as an outsider, yeah.

(0:35:38) speaker\_1: So and, and definitely because I was like, "I'm not adopted," you know, and I, I, you know, I f- I felt like the responsibility of, um, conveying, um, adoptee experience was like beyond what I could do a- as a scholar, uh, especially as, as someone who was not adopted.

(0:36:00) speaker\_1: And earlier I mentioned when I was doing fieldwork in Korea and had volunteered for th- the OKF, Overseas Koreans Foundation, you know, one, one thing I realized was, "Okay, one of my roles can be as a kind of translator, both linguistically and culturally, uh, between adoptees and Koreans," particularly in that space where you have, like, native Koreans and working for the government (laughs) and doing these kinds of programs.

(0:36:27) speaker\_1: And then, you know, back home in the U.S. to kind of, you know, think about ways to......

(0:36:32) speaker\_1: I don't think I necessarily had it fully formulated when I was actually doing my research, but, you know, to say, like, uh, rather than think about, like, reproduce the narrative of adoption as a kind of, like, humanitarian, savior kind of thing, uh, focus on, you know, what adoptees are trying to, um, formulate as, um, the history they wanna tell about their own collective experience.

(0:37:00) speaker\_1: And, um, so that's kind of, you know, even like where the title came from, which was to say, like, th- this isn't about, like, you know, kind of boiling, boiling adoptee experience down to, like, one thing.

(0:37:16) speaker\_1: It's about trying to show the way, the spaces that adoptees created in order to bring this community into fruition, I guess. So, yeah.

(0:37:26) speaker\_1: (instrumental music plays)

(0:37:29) speaker\_0: Yeah, and I mean, it's clear that from reading, um, y- from your interviews and observations, that it, it, it at times got messy, and the community itself, you know, you're able to, um, write very, very, um, m- confidently, I guess, about, you know, a lot of the tensions within the community, within the different, uh, disparate voices of, um...

(0:38:19) speaker\_0: And, and, and it, it actually, you know, I recognized, because I think some of, you know, a lot of, there's still quite a lot of tension in the community of...

(0:38:30) speaker\_0: And I don't know if it just-

(0:38:32) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:38:32) speaker\_0: ... it stems from a sense of power and of, uh, adoptees not feeling like growing up having that power over their narrative, having-

(0:38:45) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:38:45) speaker\_0: ... being able, and then being, um, you know, our lives being kind of projected by different interests, um, for different gain. And so-

(0:38:55) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:38:56) speaker\_0: And I, and I know that I, I read that you had even said that you'd been approached m- maybe several times about, "Well, what was your angle in this?

(0:39:05) speaker\_0: " Or, "What, what's your politics about adoption?

(0:39:08) speaker\_0: " Before someone would actually, um, make themselves vulnerable, and, and I experienced that as well, even being an adoptee, starting a podcast, you know, early on.

(0:39:18) speaker\_0: I mean, now I think people kinda trust the work I do, but early on when people didn't know who I was, there was a lot of that, like, um, how d- you know.

(0:39:27) speaker\_0: And so you obviously were able to build the trust.

(0:39:31) speaker\_0: Um, can you talk about what you discovered in terms of the power dynamics within the community, and, um, you know, all the tensions?

(0:39:41) speaker\_1: Yeah. I mean, um, you know, I think when I...

(0:39:45) speaker\_1: I mean, so much happened so quickly in terms of the various tensions, and I mean some of it, some of it had, had already existed, I guess, but, um, uh, but they came to the surface much more, like, very, very quickly, I think, i- in retrospect, you know, um, when I think about it.

(0:40:09) speaker\_1: But, um, when I, um...

(0:40:11) speaker\_1: So, so when I first started to, um, do my field work, like at the gathering for instance, um, and I mentioned earlier, like, when I first heard about Korean adoption, I imagined that there's s- there's some social justice activism around, um, adoption.

(0:40:29) speaker\_1: But I didn't find it at first because, you know, at the first gathering, it was very much about, uh, well first of all, like, celebrating adoptees, and the diversity of experiences, and not wanting to define it necessarily.

(0:40:46) speaker\_1: Um, and a lot of adoptees also going in with this openness about like, "I don't," you know, "I," like, "Who, who am I?" Right?

(0:40:57) speaker\_1: Like, just trying to understand, like, their own experience within the context of so many other thousands of adoptions having happened, and, um, meeting other adoptees, and, uh...

(0:41:11) speaker\_1: But also, you know, the, the really dominant and prevalent discourse about adoption has always been, like, for the good, right?

(0:41:20) speaker\_1: And the first gathering definitely brought voice to some of the trauma, uh, but trauma wasn't the operative word at that time. It was loss.

(0:41:32) speaker\_1: And so loss was, um-

(0:41:35) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(0:41:35) speaker\_1: ...

(0:41:35) speaker\_1: y- uh, it, the title of my dissertation was actually called Remembering Loss, uh, because loss was such a key word that adoptees would bring up, um, because it was a bit more...

(0:41:48) speaker\_1: I mean, in the general discourse in, you know, um, American culture, trauma wasn't that common anyway, but loss, I think, also carried with it, like, it was a little bit value-neutral, you know?

(0:42:03) speaker\_1: Um, and it was a way of articulating some of the pain and the, um, confusion about what adoption was all about without, um, yeah, without sort of, um, making a value judgment.

(0:42:25) speaker\_1: Um, and so yeah, the, the political discourse that I, that I had anticipated wasn't really that commonly, um-...

(0:42:35) speaker\_1: you know, apparent, uh, until I went to Korea and I met Mihee and some other adoptees who had been living in Korea, who had, um, experienced a number of things like, like the blockades around, uh, birth family search for instance with adoption agencies.

(0:42:57) speaker\_1:

(0:42:57) speaker\_4: Right.

(0:42:58) speaker\_1: Or had experienced first-hand a lot of the patronizing attitudes of South Koreans towards adoptees, um, and who, um, were appalled that adoptions were still continuing.

(0:43:12) speaker\_1: Um, so that was a major line of difference be- just based on experience, right?

(0:43:19) speaker\_1: So adoptees living in Korea had a much more critical view of adoption as a, as a system, as an industry.

(0:43:28) speaker\_1: And, um, the vast majority of adoptees who hadn't gone back to Korea did- just didn't have that perspective.

(0:43:36) speaker\_1: Uh, so this is why when the gathering took place in Seoul for the first time, it was like, you know, kind of like powder keg (laughs).

(0:43:44) speaker\_4: Right, yeah.

(0:43:44) speaker\_1: Because you had adoptees come in who were like, "I just want to go to a gathering and the fact that it's in my birth country makes it even more special.

(0:43:53) speaker\_1: " And then you had adoptees who'd been living in Korea for a long time who were like, "Uh, this is now an opportunity to educate adoptees about the politics of adoption and how it's problematic and how there's a whole political economy around it that needs to be critiqued and analyzed.

(0:44:12) speaker\_1: " Um, but putting, you know, for some adoptees putting their own biography and personal feelings into that framework was just too much, you know.

(0:44:25) speaker\_1: Like, it just wasn't available to them.

(0:44:29) speaker\_1: Um, but I think when you add to that the personal experience of having the adoption agency tell you to your face that you can't have more information about your past, that's kind of I think where some of the, um, critical, um, you know, um, the critical perspective became more available for some adoptees when they started to see like, "Okay, the agencies are not, um, there to help me.

(0:45:04) speaker\_1: They're here, they're there to protect, uh, themselves and, um, and maybe, you know, other, other, um, agents that are actually preventing me from understanding more about myself.

(0:45:22) speaker\_1: " So that personal history piece got, um, connected to the political economy piece for adoptees who went back to Korea.

(0:45:29) speaker\_1: And so I think from there, you started to see like a loosening of some of these, um, what had been like very stark polarities and, uh, definitely when I was in Korea and I would meet some adoptees who were much more activist inclined.

(0:45:44) speaker\_1: Yeah, they would wanna know like, "Yeah, where do you stand?

(0:45:48) speaker\_1: " Uh, because they knew that in some spaces or in some relationships, their own political views could be used against them, and, um, so there were definitely issues of, um, trust and kind of like figuring out like who was an ally and who was an- who was not.

(0:46:08) speaker\_1: Um, and so I felt like my role in some instances, particularly in Korea, was to, like I said earlier, be like a cultural and linguistic translator between different groups of people.

(0:46:19) speaker\_1: But also to try to help like get information, you know, about what agencies were doing and, and what some of the attitudes and, um, uh, sort of ideologies that, um, some Koreans were reproducing in, in their work with adoptees.

(0:46:39) speaker\_1: Um, and, um, now I, I feel like, I mean it's been really remarkable to me to see how much, uh, what had been like a kind of marginal set of, um, you know, attempts by more politicized adoptees to br- to move the conversation, how much that has happened recently.

(0:47:08) speaker\_1: You know, and part of it has to do with-

(0:47:09) speaker\_4: Yes.

(0:47:09) speaker\_1: ... critical adoption studies.

(0:47:12) speaker\_1: A lot of it has to do with, um, I think just a change, a shift in like US race, racial politics, um, and, uh, a, just a generational change in terms of how people think about white supremacy and, uh, reproductive rights.

(0:47:35) speaker\_1: So there was such a divide before between thinking about like say reproductive politics and, uh, the, uh, rights that women have over their own choices in the United States versus how they viewed Korean women (laughs), you know, and their reproductive choices.

(0:47:54) speaker\_1: It was such like a cultural divide that was super orientalizing and, um, you know, just kind of not very enlightened.

(0:48:06) speaker\_1: And, um, it was, it took adoptees in Korea to actually start those conversations between adoptive parents and adoptees and birth mothers in Korea to kind of like help people see that like, the rights of Korean women to keep and raise their own children in Korea has everything to do with the reproductive politics that are espoused, you know, by liberal folks in the US.

(0:48:34) speaker\_1: You know what I'm saying? So, but, um-

(0:48:36) speaker\_4: Mm-hmm.

(0:48:37) speaker\_1: ... but th- so thinking about it now, it just seems like s- like strange that it-... people didn't see it in the early 2000s.

(0:48:45) speaker\_1: Um, but this was at a time when even, like, when I talked to, um, feminists or, or South Korean, uh, scholars in Korea who, you know, uh, called themselves feminists, and I would be like, "So how do you...

(0:49:03) speaker\_1: What do you think about adoption?" And they would be like, "Oh." They didn't have any thoughts about adoption.

(0:49:07) speaker\_1: I was like, "What do you think about unwed mothers? Reproductive rights?" It was, like, not on their radar. It wasn't on their agenda.

(0:49:15) speaker\_1: They cared about, you know, um, and they still care about, you know, anti-discrimination and, like, domestic violence and, you know.

(0:49:24) speaker\_1: But the reproductive rights of unwed mothers was not at all something that they even had thought about.

(0:49:31) speaker\_1: So, um, when I first went to Korea, like, two things were in the news.

(0:49:37) speaker\_1: One was, um, the, um, declining birth rate, which has only gotten more, you know, lower since then, and, um, and adoption.

(0:49:48) speaker\_1: And but no one was putting the two together, right? I was like, so-

(0:49:53) speaker\_0: Yeah.

(0:49:54) speaker\_1: ... lowe- lowest birth rate in the world and longest adoption program in the world, like, hello? (laughs) Like, how does this make any sense, you know?

(0:50:03) speaker\_1: And so I would bring this up with these feminist scholars, with, like, adoption adv- adoptee advocates, and it just didn't make sense.

(0:50:12) speaker\_1: You know, they didn't compute, which I thought was so strange.

(0:50:16) speaker\_1: But now, of course, um, there's more people putting two and two together and saying, "Yeah, this, this really, um, you know, is, uh, another sign of some of the contradictory, um, forces in Korea that just, you know, all, all of the fingers point to, like, gender inequality, you know, and patriarchy, and, um, the, uh, inability of women to make choices about their own reproductive futures.

(0:50:51) speaker\_1: " So, um, but it was really, like, you know, adoptees, activist adoptees in Korea who, uh, started to open up that conversation and started to, um, you know, force a, uh, a critical take on how all of these things fit together.

(0:51:12) speaker\_1: Um, of course, it's still not the case that adoptive- adopting or prospective parents in the U.S.

(0:51:19) speaker\_1: still don't think about and they're not asked to think about the reproductive rights of South Korean women, um, but at least more adoptees are thinking about it.

(0:51:30) speaker\_1: (instrumental music plays)

(0:51:32) speaker\_0: You know, your book is kind of, um, you know, in terms of the folks, the people that you met during those times you were doing research is, a lot of it is kind of like adoptee celebrity, um, you know, Melissa Lotay, um, uh, you know, Tim Holm, Susan Cox, uh, Peter Savasta, uh, MeeHee, um, you know, the folks with ASK.

(0:51:34) speaker\_0: You know, um, they all kind of, uh, played a role in those days, um, and one of the things that really struck me was you were talking about, I think, this is the 2004 gathering in Seoul where, you know, the folks that you spoke...

(0:52:27) speaker\_0: Some of the folks you spoke to, um, I think Susan Cox and so forth, or, uh, maybe even 1999-

(0:52:34) speaker\_1: Yes.

(0:52:34) speaker\_0: ... that they, they really wanted to show the Korean government in, to, in my mind, it seems almost performative.

(0:52:41) speaker\_0: Like, we come back, we're successful, we have money to spend, um, sort of, um, uh, recognize us for the consumers and, um, uh-

(0:52:56) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:52:56) speaker\_0: ... you know, empowered beings of our own lives and adults that we are and not as the orphans, the inf- you know, not marginalized.

(0:53:05) speaker\_0: And I wonder how e- and when I attended the 2016 gathering, um, I was also, uh, a little, um, uncomfortable by some of the verbiage, um, you know, Tim Holm at the time was saying, you know, the vast majority of us, I mean, sure there were a couple, some, um, unfortunate stories through adoption, but the vast majority of us are happy and here and, you know, able to have these expensive vacations.

(0:53:36) speaker\_0: And, um, in a way, it just didn't sit well with me because it seemed to...

(0:53:44) speaker\_0: There was, like, this transformation that was sort of expected where still kind of that grateful adoptee, but also, like, w- our lives, to sort of prove to the government that, in a way, you did make the right choice because our lives are better and we have-

(0:54:03) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(0:54:03) speaker\_0: ... money and educations. And so, um, I wondered h- how that struck you and if you feel like the dialogue has been changing?

(0:54:15) speaker\_1: Yeah, that's a good question. I think, um...

(0:54:18) speaker\_1: I can't remember if it's in the book, but I remember Tim Holm saying something like, you know, "I want maybe Koreans or people to recognize this as just, like, normal or ordinary," or something like that.

(0:54:31) speaker\_1: Um, like adult adoptees are just normal and ordinary, something to that effect.

(0:54:37) speaker\_1: Um, if not successful and, you know, (laughs) having lots of disposable income to travel all the way to Korea, et cetera. Um, yeah, I think that, um, that-...

(0:54:51) speaker\_1: um, presentation in Korea of successful adoptees or adoptees as being successful, um, was the kind of dominant, uh, image that was being projected, you know, by adoptees who were pretty successful, you know, if you, um, if you want to measure success by like, you know, income and class and all the rest.

(0:55:21) speaker\_1: Um-

(0:55:22) speaker\_5: Which is how Koreans define success.

(0:55:24) speaker\_1: Yes.

(0:55:25) speaker\_5: You know?

(0:55:25) speaker\_1: Yes, exactly.

(0:55:26) speaker\_1: So I think that, um, there are a bunch of things happening, like, uh, to make that important to the, as you call them, the celebrity adoptee organizers of IKA.

(0:55:41) speaker\_1: Um, some of it, I think, ha- had to do with sponsorships 'cause the gatherings really could only be possible because of a lot of sponsorship from various governmental organizations and corporations, and, um, even if it wasn't explicit, yeah, there is, uh, something about, like...

(0:56:03) speaker\_1: I mean, it was explicit actually when OKF had some of these, uh, Motherland Tour visits to, you know, various, uh, government offices or corporate, um, offices where, you know, you would have people literally saying, like, "You can go back to your countries and tell people how great Korea is-"

(0:56:25) speaker\_5: That we were to be the-

(0:56:26) speaker\_1: "... and how great Korean products are."

(0:56:27) speaker\_5: ... we were to be the bridge, right? After-

(0:56:29) speaker\_1: The bridge, yes, and even, like, the, you know, uh, future tour guides or, you know, um-

(0:56:38) speaker\_5: Consumers.

(0:56:39) speaker\_1: ... marketers-

(0:56:39) speaker\_5: Yeah, consumers. (laughs)

(0:56:40) speaker\_1: ... or, but, like, marketers to-

(0:56:42) speaker\_5: Oh, right.

(0:56:43) speaker\_1: ... like, these white, white consumers in the adoptive countries.

(0:56:46) speaker\_5: Right, right.

(0:56:47) speaker\_1: And, um, so that was definitely part of the whole picture at that time, and, um, but there was always a counter-narrative, you know, and a kind of like, um...

(0:56:59) speaker\_1: There were always adoptees kind of trying to pull the curtain back and make an argument about how that image was, um, not, you know, it, it was, um, inaccurate, for one thing, but also exclusionary of adoptees who didn't fit at least the, you know, success on, in terms of economic, um, and class, um, mobility story.

(0:57:28) speaker\_1: Um, and so that came up, like, right away for me when I was, uh, doing the OKF tour in 2001, where, uh, there were three adoptees who kind of became a bit infamous in Korea.

(0:57:43) speaker\_1: You know, they were from Europe.

(0:57:45) speaker\_1: They had basically, like, uh, you know, they kind of represented, like, the unsuccessful adoptees who had left home as teenagers, who had gone, gone back to Korea because they were, they couldn't stomach the racism of their adoptive countries in Europe.

(0:58:04) speaker\_1: And who had basically found ways to just eke, eke by in Seoul, um, and so they, they joined this OKF tour, and so you had, like, a bunch of, um, Ameri- you know, adoptees from the US who were doing the model minority adoptee thing, and then you had these European adoptees who were just kind of, like, embodying all of this otherness and, um, saying things about adoption that were super critical.

(0:58:36) speaker\_1: And, um, it was just this really, um, you know, they were so subversive in that setting, you know, and so I feel like i- in my experience, like, there's always been that subversive element, uh, because, um, you know, they were kind of like the repressed other of adoption.

(0:59:03) speaker\_1: It's like the adoptions that weren't, that didn't, um, lead to a happy outcome, you know, the, um, adoptions that were disrupted, you know, the adoptions that failed, and, um, the adoptees whose traumas won't be silenced, and, uh, the adoptions that force us to look back and say, like, "Why did this happen in the first place?

(0:59:31) speaker\_1: " You know? And why is it continuing to happen?

(0:59:35) speaker\_1: So even the adoptees who had, like, the most successful experiences, um, you know, had to acknowledge that they knew, you know?

(0:59:46) speaker\_1: I mean, we all know if y- y- you know, someone once said to me, like, um, "You know, adoption isn't, uh, you know, it always starts with something bad," right?

(0:59:59) speaker\_1: Um, and-

(1:00:01) speaker\_5: Right, a trauma always... Yeah.

(1:00:03) speaker\_1: Yeah. Like, y- you know, adoption doesn't, at least in the Western context, right, doesn't happen bec- from something good.

(1:00:09) speaker\_1: It's, there's always something bad that has to happen for adoption, uh, to take place, and, um, but then it's also like the addendum to that is, um, you know, adoption isn't always the happy ending to a sad story, right?

(1:00:26) speaker\_1:

(1:00:26) speaker\_5: Mm-hmm.

(1:00:26) speaker\_1: It's, it's just an ongoing story that, where lots of things happen, and so I always felt like the, these European adoptees were, like, making it impossible for people, whether you're adopted or whether you're Korean, like, any observer, to forget or to kind of go along with the redemptive story of adoption, and, um, so I think at the gathering, um......

(1:00:54) speaker\_1: you know, that's kind of what, uh, the 2007 gathering, that's kind of what was bubbling up along the margins of that conference.

(1:01:05) speaker\_1: And, um, and I think every subsequent gathering you started to see more integration of the more critical, um, perspectives into the programming itself.

(1:01:17) speaker\_1: Um, so, um, yeah. Now I can't remember your initial question again. (laughs)

(1:01:26) speaker\_0: Well, I just think that's a really interesting tension that you touched upon in your, in your book too, and which I, I've seen also in subsequent years, where this tension of especially, you know, these gatherings where that focus by organizers to wanna look forward, and where you have critic-, you know, um, adoptees that were looking critically at the institution of adoption and as a commodification, um, of, of selling of, of Korean bodies and of selling children, and wanting-

(1:02:01) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:02:01) speaker\_0: ... to look back, wa- wanting to put the focus on the past.

(1:02:07) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:02:07) speaker\_0: And have, uh, authorities answer to that and, um, make changes within the, um, you know, society in Korea, um, to ensure that they're, you know, that the, it wouldn't continue.

(1:02:21) speaker\_0: So, um, and I wonder if you think that, uh, and, and it's those, uh, um, polarized kind of sides that I felt like that I witnessed a l- and felt a lot of tension around.

(1:02:36) speaker\_0: Um, I wonder if you f- have a sense if that's still around or if the critical voices have, um, just with also, um, you know, changes in, in sort of the discourse, if, if the critical voices are, uh, becoming more prevalent.

(1:02:58) speaker\_0:

(1:02:59) speaker\_1: Yeah. You know, I've actually... So after my book, I wrote a few other essays related to Korean adoption.

(1:03:08) speaker\_1: Um, one was about, like, yeah, the commodification, um, of bodies that adoption, transnational adoption is, but then the, um, ways that returning adoptees are kind of enrolled into this kind of neoliberal, um, you know, um, narrative about adoption is always good, and then when the adoptee who returns, you know, uh, should represent, like, how successful adoption is by not being dependent on the South Korean government, but by, like, earning money and, you know, discovering their roots, but it's all, like, in this positive way.

(1:03:47) speaker\_1:

(1:03:47) speaker\_0: Mm.

(1:03:47) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh, but also pointing out that, like, yeah, there is this darker side that is hard to repress, because when adoptees go back, you are, you know, they are going back, right?

(1:04:00) speaker\_1: Even if everyone wants to believe that they're moving forward, right? There's a return-

(1:04:04) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:04:05) speaker\_1: The return entails some excavation of the past.

(1:04:08) speaker\_0: Right.

(1:04:09) speaker\_1: Um, and in that sense, the adoptee's own body is like a archive of this past, you know?

(1:04:17) speaker\_1: Um, but then I also was writing, I wrote a couple of essays that tried to grapple with what happens when, you know, if, if the narrative was in, uh, up till say, like, the mid-2000s, just like the redemptive story that adoption represented of saving, you know, an orphan and, you know, providing a better life, and the, um, critical, um, you know, counter-narrative of adoption as, um, exploitative and structured by all of these global inequalities.

(1:04:54) speaker\_1: Once that started to gain more, um, you know, more visibility and more acceptance among adoptees but also other publics, uh, then I started to notice there were some adoptees who were like, "Yeah, but I don't see myself in that.

(1:05:12) speaker\_1: " You know?

(1:05:13) speaker\_1: Where they, they saw the polarity, and they saw that the critical, uh, the critical voices were very persuasive in terms of the structural inequality that adoption reproduced, but, uh, for some individual adoptees, they're like, "Now people are seeing adoption as bad, but I had a good experience, and I'm actually happy in my life.

(1:05:40) speaker\_1: " And so there was this real kind of disjuncture between what was becoming, like, the more, um, dominant narrative, like the critical narrative, and a- adult adoptees who were saying, like, um, "I get it, but I don't feel it.

(1:06:01) speaker\_1: " And ex- experiencing, in a way, like, this other alienation, uh, from what was becoming more dominant in the adoptee community.

(1:06:15) speaker\_1: So I was interested in kind of what happens when there is, like, these, these polarities and, like, the, the, you know, the center of gravity shifts to the other side-

(1:06:31) speaker\_0: Mm.

(1:06:31) speaker\_1: ... the more, you know, the less dominant side becomes more dominant.

(1:06:36) speaker\_1: And, um, so in a sense it was more like saying like, "Well, we can't forget that, um, it's not just picking one side or the other.

(1:06:45) speaker\_1: " But that, like, there is something about, um, what I was hearing from these adoptees who were suddenly feeling alienated by the political economic critique because they didn't see themselves in that, uh, like, quote-unquote bad narrative.

(1:07:01) speaker\_1: Um-You know, I think what, what I wanted to articulate in some of these other essays was like, you know, maybe something gets lost in, when we sh- when, when the narrative shifts so dramatically like that.

(1:07:18) speaker\_1: And one thing that gets lost is that very deep, uh, kind of ontological experience of whatever you call it, loss or trauma or, you know, uh, that doesn't fall neatly on the, you know, paradigm of good or bad, you know.

(1:07:42) speaker\_1:

(1:07:43) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:07:43) speaker\_1: Positive or negative.

(1:07:45) speaker\_1: And, um, so I kind of wanted to leave a space open for that and I think we s- so I ended that essay with a piece by Anna Borsdam, Swedish Korean adoptee, and it's just like this incredible video piece that, um, I kind of describe and analyze along these lines, which is just to say, like, h- you know, "What i-" if there's something, um, that I guess I wanted to say is, like, you know, uh, very difficult if not impossible to access in terms of, um, a- adoptee existential or ontological experience.

(1:08:32) speaker\_1: And, um, so, I don't know. So that's kind of how I, how I see it.

(1:08:38) speaker\_1: It's, you know, it's kind of like maybe just 'cause, you know, you know, these tensions and polarities, I agree, like, they kind of continue to exist.

(1:08:48) speaker\_1: But I think there are also adoptees who are kind of, like, even outside of all of that, like, the, the turmoil of that debate.

(1:08:59) speaker\_1: Um, or maybe even, like, um, even adoptees who are kind of like taking sides, like there's, there's still this thing that I think, even being non-adopted, you know, that, that in my research, adoptees kept hearkening back to, which was this kind of ontological similarity, you know, of experience.

(1:09:21) speaker\_1: No matter where you fall upon the kind of political question.

(1:09:25) speaker\_0: Yes.

(1:09:26) speaker\_1: Um, so, um, but it kind of o- like, analytically became visible to me when I was hearing from adoptees who were like totally new to search or to adoption politics, suddenly being like, "Oh, wait.

(1:09:39) speaker\_1: People are saying, like, adoption is bad." Like, "Uh, I don't...

(1:09:43) speaker\_1: " Uh, like, and they just, they were suddenly like, "Wait, now I need to take a side, but I don't even know what it, like, I don't even know what to think about my own adoption history," you know.

(1:09:54) speaker\_1:

(1:09:54) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:09:54) speaker\_1: So yeah, so it's, you know, that, that was something that I kind of, um, thought was worth exploring, you know, kind of well, after all, you know, after all of the dust settles, is there something still at the core of adoptee experience?

(1:10:10) speaker\_1:

(1:10:10) speaker\_0: And I think that, I, I am hearing more of these kinds of, um, I mean, it, I know there's this tension between the personal versus the, um, more of a community, um, experience and s- and whether someone could separate that, for example.

(1:10:30) speaker\_0: Like, um-

(1:10:31) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:10:31) speaker\_0: ...

(1:10:31) speaker\_0: I, I do feel like I am hearing more of, you know, "Whereas I love my family, had a generally pretty good upbringing, good relationship with parents, and I can also still be critical of falsification of records and, you know-"

(1:10:49) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:10:49) speaker\_0: "... um, perhaps, um, illegal adoptions and that kind of piece." I'm hearing more of those voices, uh, right now as well.

(1:10:59) speaker\_0: So, uh, which I, you know, perhaps that there is a, becoming more of a space where people feel like they can occupy different-

(1:11:08) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:11:08) speaker\_0: They can separate their own personal experience-

(1:11:11) speaker\_1: Yeah.

(1:11:11) speaker\_0: ... to what they might believe in terms of adopt-

(1:11:15) speaker\_1: It's interesting, I, I watched this, uh, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation documentary about, um, Korean adoptees who were involved or are involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigation.

(1:11:29) speaker\_1:

(1:11:29) speaker\_0: Oh, right, yeah.

(1:11:30) speaker\_1: And, um-

(1:11:31) speaker\_0: I'm a case-

(1:11:31) speaker\_1: ... I don't know if you saw it.

(1:11:32) speaker\_0: I'm a case as well, so. (laughs)

(1:11:34) speaker\_1: Oh, okay.

(1:11:35) speaker\_1: But one of the stories was of, um, an adoptee who, um, is in conversation with her adoptive father and, um, I think its interes- kind of exactly what you're saying.

(1:11:50) speaker\_1: It's almost like the records cases, like the falsification of the records, um, at least in, in this documentary, like you saw the way that, um, what might have been in the past been a struggle between adoptive parents and adoptees to define what the narrative was about their adoption, right?

(1:12:12) speaker\_1:

(1:12:12) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:12:13) speaker\_1: Was suddenly about like, "How could this be?" Like, the adoptive father saying like, "How could I have been..."

(1:12:21) speaker\_0: Misled or...

(1:12:22) speaker\_1: Yeah. Misled, yeah. "How could I have been involved in something that's fraudulent?

(1:12:28) speaker\_1: " And, uh, it actually became the grounds for the adoptee and the adoptive parent to share in their outrage, um, over of the adoption.

(1:12:42) speaker\_1: Whereas I think in the past if it was just like, is adoption good or bad, then you have adoptees and adoptive parents kind of, you know, falling on different sides of that debate.

(1:12:53) speaker\_1: Which was definitely for, uh, these, the adoptees I was talking about who kind of were like, "I, I can't decide.

(1:13:02) speaker\_1: I don't wanna decide," because in part of allegiance to their adoptive parents and, you know, maybe falling into the gratitude, um......

(1:13:13) speaker\_1: narrative, but, uh, but yeah, I think that, you know, having this history unearthed around falsification of documents and a kind of systematic, um, uh, laundering of children is introducing a- a different dynamic into, um, how adoption is framed morally.

(1:13:40) speaker\_1: Because now it's like, clearly, (laughs) you know-

(1:13:44) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:13:44) speaker\_1: ... something really bad took place. And, um, the more evidence get- that gets, um, released, you know, I think it's gonna be, you know...

(1:13:56) speaker\_1: I mean, we- we might, you know, maybe they'll be another er- narrative of like, "Well, okay, this bad thing happened, but you know, it turned out good in the end," or something like that.

(1:14:06) speaker\_1: Um, but at least for now, I think, you know, it's kind of incontrovertibly true that this was not done in the best interests of children. You know?

(1:14:21) speaker\_0: Uh, you put up a, a, you had a symposium that I attended, which was ex-

(1:14:25) speaker\_1: Oh, yeah.

(1:14:25) speaker\_0: ... excellent at UC Irvine, and I wanted to say, you know, since this book, it looks like it was published in 2010, so, um, you know, 14 years since, uh...

(1:14:36) speaker\_0:

(1:14:36) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:14:38) speaker\_0: How has scholarship changed and what are you seeing out on the circuit?

(1:14:44) speaker\_1: (laughs) Um, well, um, I think that, um, as I said earlier, there's just like an incredible amount of, um, literary cultural studies, social science, um, scholarship on adoption.

(1:15:11) speaker\_1: Not just Korean adoption, but obviously a lot of it is, um, looking at Korean adoption, and, um, a lot of the scholarship is produced by adopted persons.

(1:15:23) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh... So it's amazing.

(1:15:26) speaker\_1: I mean, I think it's just so cool that, uh, I think Kim Park Nelson taught one of the first, if not the first, um, course on Korean adoption when she was a grad student at, uh, University of Minnesota in like 2007 or something.

(1:15:44) speaker\_1: And now it's just like, you know, it's just part of the curriculum in a lot of Asian American studies departments.

(1:15:55) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:15:56) speaker\_1: Um, and also like, when I first started to go to the Asian American Studies Conference, um, or even like Korean studies, both Korean studies and Asian-American studies, you know, when I- I was finishing my dissertation, neither recognized Korean adoption as a legitimate, um, topic for study, which is just totally strange to think about now.

(1:16:25) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh, you know, especially with Asian American studies because that was around the time that Chinese adoptions were really huge in number and, uh, so that, you know, thankfully has, (laughs) has changed.

(1:16:42) speaker\_1:

(1:16:42) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:16:43) speaker\_1: So it's, they're both, uh, in both area studies and ethnic studies, you know, adoption is seen as like, um, an important part of the conversation and where some of the most exciting research is taking place.

(1:16:56) speaker\_1: So, um, yeah, it's all been really fascinating and one thing that I'm really excited about is some of these, uh, historical scholarship that's, uh, being done on, um, Korean adoption in terms of archives in South Korea.

(1:17:15) speaker\_1: So really unpacking some of the, um, you know, the dynamics and the actors and the, um, institutions that were, uh, behind the l- large- largest waves of adoption from South Korea.

(1:17:34) speaker\_1: So Young-un Gu is a, uh, young scholar who, um, presented at that conference and she was a postdoc at UC Irvine and she's gonna start teaching at, uh, Lund University in, in Sweden, um, in the fall.

(1:17:49) speaker\_1: And so her dissertation and publications look at, uh, adoptions, how adoption kind of like transformed in the '60s and '70s to become kind of the, um, institutionalized child welfare, um, program that it was at that time.

(1:18:09) speaker\_1: And, uh, so that I think is really helping us to understand, um, the ways that South Korean social work, just as a field, was so tied in with adoption from the very beginning and how certain visions of what social work should be and what South Korean society should be were, uh, put in place, um, with adoption at its c- at its core.

(1:18:37) speaker\_1: Um, and a lot of those, uh, programs and policies were framed around the very, um, ideas and ideologies of family and childhood that were imported directly from the United States.

(1:18:56) speaker\_1: So you had kind of mid-century American ideologies of social work being implemented or being tr- be tr- you know, people were trying to implement them in South Korea.

(1:19:06) speaker\_1: But those were the very things that led to the huge explosion in placements and, or that kind of rationalized the- the huge numbers of, um, placements.

(1:19:18) speaker\_1: Uh, so I've always been interested in how......

(1:19:22) speaker\_1: that was happening in the 1960s in particular, and then as social work changed in the United States and different kinds of, um, policies were implemented in the US, South Korea stayed the same.

(1:19:39) speaker\_1: So, you know, there's a kind of, like not even lag, but a kind of like, you know, petrification of certain very gendered ideologies of social work that got implemented in South Korea and kind of like continued on.

(1:19:55) speaker\_1: So it's always really ironic when you have people in the US looking at South Korea and being like, "Oh, it's like the US was in the 1960s in terms of attitudes towards single women or single mothers.

(1:20:08) speaker\_1: " And you know-

(1:20:09) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:20:09) speaker\_1: ... and you're like, "Yeah, exactly." (laughs)

(1:20:11) speaker\_0: (laughs)

(1:20:12) speaker\_1: That's exactly what happened.

(1:20:13) speaker\_0: Yeah.

(1:20:14) speaker\_1: (laughs)

(1:20:15) speaker\_0: That's how I kind of explain it too. I mean, the...

(1:20:17) speaker\_0: And also you have, um, what I find really fascinating as well is this, like you said, the archival, um, digging into the archives in the- in Korea and, you know, the, the presentation by Corey Graves, um, you know, just the military-

(1:20:33) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:20:33) speaker\_0: ... affect and, um, mixed race, uh, progeny and, and the, the State's response to that and it's just so fascinating, Uri Dulin.

(1:20:44) speaker\_1: Yeah. Uri Dulin's... Yeah. So you were in Chicago?

(1:20:47) speaker\_0: Yes, I was in-

(1:20:48) speaker\_1: Yeah.

(1:20:48) speaker\_0: ...

(1:20:48) speaker\_6: as well.

(1:20:48) speaker\_1: Yeah, yeah and Uri's book is just amazing.

(1:20:52) speaker\_1: So his, like w- between him and Corey, like their scholarship is so important, um, to kind of fill in the story of, um, the early waves of mixed race children.

(1:21:05) speaker\_1: And, um, and then Deann Bourshet's, uh, film which is in production now will also be a huge contribution to that story, um...

(1:21:15) speaker\_0: Have you ever thought of looking at Korean Americans who are adopting from Korea?

(1:21:25) speaker\_1: You know, I haven't. Um, I don't even know how many there are, um, so-

(1:21:32) speaker\_0: 'Cause I-

(1:21:34) speaker\_1: I mean, I know, I know of-

(1:21:35) speaker\_0: ... know a few, I'm in touch with a few, but-

(1:21:37) speaker\_1: Yeah. Uh-huh.

(1:21:37) speaker\_0: And, and there's probably more that are kind of in the shadows, um, and I think they're not really even connected to each other. (laughs)

(1:21:46) speaker\_1: Hmm.

(1:21:46) speaker\_0: And I mean, for a long time, I think even, uh, domestic adoption in Korea, there was this practice of, uh, keeping it secret and, um, you know, even faking a pregnancy to, after adopting, um, to make it seem like you had a natural child, and, um, whereas Korean Americans who adopt from Korea, um, you know, uh, visually their families look like a, a natural, um, family.

(1:22:19) speaker\_0: But, um, they, uh, you know, those, those children are, are, you know, often, uh, I think it might be se- second gen who are adopting.

(1:22:29) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:22:30) speaker\_0: Um, and also, you know, younger generation of adoptive parents. The kids are, you know, under the age of, you know, 10.

(1:22:39) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:22:39) speaker\_0: They're young and, uh, you know, I... And, um, I think their experience...

(1:22:45) speaker\_0: You know, I'm very fascinated to see what the outcomes will be for their children and-

(1:22:51) speaker\_1: Yeah.

(1:22:52) speaker\_0: ... how they'll just...

(1:22:53) speaker\_0: I, I have, I met a few that have been to Khan and whereas they thought it was interesting, the feedback I got was they felt, um, y- you know, that it is more about the transracial adoption part.

(1:23:08) speaker\_0:

(1:23:08) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I just remember.

(1:23:10) speaker\_1: You're just reminding me, when I started doing my field work or did my research, I, I did some field work with adoption agencies in New York City and it was...

(1:23:23) speaker\_1: I mean, this was a long time ago now but it was so interesting because this is when South Korean government, you know, for, you know, at least until- at least since like the late, late 90s had been trying to reduce the number of adoptions.

(1:23:38) speaker\_1: And, uh, so they were prioritizing ethnic Koreans who wanted to adopt.

(1:23:45) speaker\_0: Right. Yeah.

(1:23:46) speaker\_1: So I was in this, you know, uh, adoption agency meeting with prospective parents and so much of the discourse and training was about cultural awareness and, you know, sensitivity towards like the different heritage of the child, um, and acknowledging the adoption history of the child, et cetera.

(1:24:11) speaker\_1: And there was a couple, a Korean couple in this group 'cause they wanted to adopt from Korea, but they were like, um, they were...

(1:24:23) speaker\_1: Like the, the, the husband had been, um, uh, you know, had been stationed in the US for work.

(1:24:33) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:24:34) speaker\_1: And they were not really English-speaking. So they were just sitting there 'cause th- it was the mandatory training they had to do as prospective parents.

(1:24:41) speaker\_1:

(1:24:41) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

(1:24:41) speaker\_1: But I was like, "This is not (laughs) registering with them at all."

(1:24:45) speaker\_0: Right.

(1:24:45) speaker\_1: They are here to adopt from Korea because they can do it from the US and no one will know, so when they go home, they can tell everyone that they got pregnant and they have a baby from Korea.

(1:24:55) speaker\_1: And I was just like, "This is so..." You know? Like-

(1:24:58) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm.

(1:24:58) speaker\_1: But because the Korean government was prioritizing ethnic Koreans, it kind of fit into the adoption agency's, you know, mandate.

(1:25:07) speaker\_0: Right.

(1:25:07) speaker\_1: Uh...

(1:25:08) speaker\_0: The w- the cookie cutter, one size fits all kind of...

(1:25:11) speaker\_1: Yeah. So it was kind of like, "Oh, okay. This is happening too.

(1:25:15) speaker\_1: " Um, I'm s- uh, I suspect it's less common now, uh, 'cause there are just many fewer Korean children being adopted generally, um, but it would be interesting to know more about kind of the broader demographic of-...

(1:25:32) speaker\_1: um, adoptees, for sure.

(1:25:34) speaker\_0: And not to, you know, tell too much of their story, but there, there is one Korean adoptive, uh, Korean American adoptive dad that, um, I've, I've met through the podcast.

(1:25:47) speaker\_0: Um, and he's gone back. Um, I think his, his daughter is maybe four or five. And he went back and searched for, uh, the birth mother and wanted to-

(1:26:04) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:26:04) speaker\_0: ... have an open adoption if it was something that his daughter wanted and-

(1:26:10) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:26:10) speaker\_0: ... so I thought that was interesting.

(1:26:12) speaker\_1: Yeah.

(1:26:12) speaker\_0: And he, being, speaking Korean and, you know, that was a much more maybe easier thing for him to do and also having, um, a younger child, having, you know, maybe better records that, you know...

(1:26:25) speaker\_0:

(1:26:25) speaker\_1: Mm-hmm.

(1:26:26) speaker\_0: So...

(1:26:27) speaker\_1: Yeah, and it seems like also like transracially adopted, um, children from Korea also, like, they're, so there are some, like, very progressive parents who, um, are, you know, have been trying to integrate trips to Korea and at least visits with foster mothers and, um-

(1:26:49) speaker\_0: Perhaps living in a more diverse area if they can -

(1:26:51) speaker\_1: Yeah, exactly. All that stuff.

(1:26:54) speaker\_0: Well, Elena, I, I, um, appreciate your time. Um, if folks wanna get in touch with you, are you open to that? And, and maybe-

(1:27:01) speaker\_1: Of course.

(1:27:01) speaker\_0: ... kind of just let us... Okay, so if you can just let us know how would be the best way, and also, you know, what's next for you.

(1:27:09) speaker\_1: So best way to reach me is through my uci.edu email. It's just my first dot last name, E-L-E-A-N-A.Kim@uci.edu.

(1:27:22) speaker\_1: Um, and what's next for me, um, it's a very good question. (laughs) I have, I have a few, um, you know, irons in a room temperature oven right now.

(1:27:38) speaker\_1: (laughs)

(1:27:39) speaker\_0: (laughs)

(1:27:40) speaker\_1: Um, but I'm doing a, I'm doing one project, not, not adoption related, um, but could be actually, uh, on olfaction and smell.

(1:27:53) speaker\_1: Um, and, uh, I mean, one connection to adoption could be just like the ways that smell and the senses-

(1:28:01) speaker\_0: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

(1:28:02) speaker\_1: ... are part of memory and, um, connection to place, um, or history. Uh, and, um, I have, I don't know.

(1:28:12) speaker\_1: I have a, I have a few other things that are kind of not-

(1:28:18) speaker\_0: That's really interesting.

(1:28:18) speaker\_1: ... well-baked enough. Yeah.

(1:28:20) speaker\_0: Yeah. Well, I don't wanna, um, yeah, we don't wanna, um, show your hand yet, so.

(1:28:25) speaker\_1: (laughs)

(1:28:26) speaker\_0: (laughs) But, um, so thank you so much. I appreciate it.

(1:28:30) speaker\_1: Yeah, thank you. It was really a pleasure, and I, um, yeah, I'm happy to, um, hear from any listeners, and I really appreciate the opportunity to chat.

(1:28:38) speaker\_1:

(1:28:39) speaker\_7: (instrumental music)

(1:28:50) speaker\_0: Thank you, Elena, for your research and curiosity and care. Thank you to all Patreon supporters who have helped keep this podcast going.

(1:29:00) speaker\_0: It's truly been a gift to be able to put on this podcast and be in solidarity with you all. Yoogeun Jeon is our volunteer Korean translator.

(1:29:09) speaker\_0: You can see her work at adaptedpodcast.com. And if you've listened all the way to the end credits, I've got a little surprise for you.

(1:29:18) speaker\_0: There will be one more episode in two weeks where I go back and talk to an adoptee who helped me get this podcast going. Stay tuned. I'm Kaomi Lee.

(1:29:30) speaker\_0: See you in two weeks.