



Quarterly Update
Fall 2023



Welcome

This is our first-ever quarterly update, and I'm excited to share highlights of what we've been up to over the past several months.

There are plenty of good reasons for us to share regular updates, but I think the top one is to make sure you know **what's happening and what you're supporting** when you make a donation to Threshold.

We have a different funding model than most podcasts—we rely entirely on listener support and foundation grants. Making a show like Threshold is time and labor intensive, and there are stretches when our feed is quiet. We know that it might be hard to feel connected and invested when you aren't hearing new episodes. But these quiet times are when the magic is happening. Your support **helps us make the show** (and do all kinds of other cool stuff—like create educator resources!), so in the times between seasons, it feels especially important that you know what we're working on and how things are going.

Going forward, we'll be sending these updates in January, April, July, and October. If you have any feedback or suggestions on what you want to know more about, don't hesitate to reach out. You can email me at deneen@thresholdpodcast.org.

As I write this, it's definitely fall here in northeastern Wisconsin. The air off Lake Michigan is changing and this afternoon we'll go for a quick (and chilly!) dip instead of a long and leisurely swim. The tamaracks are starting to blaze, and the sun's light is gentler. It's treasured time in the woods and near the water right now, especially knowing Wisconsin winter is nearly here. Wherever you are, I hope you can claim a moment or many to pause and experience the changes that come with earth's rotation around the sun, however they show up around you or within you.

With gratitude,



Deneen Wiske
Executive Director

Highlights

from the past few months

We're producing the next seasons of *Threshold* (yes, seasons—we've got two currently underway). Amy and Jay have been researching, traveling, interviewing, and writing, with more ahead for the next few months.



We introduced Base Camp, our monthly giving program. Monthly donations are important to our financial stability, and we're building a more substantial program and engaging experience for our monthly supporters.

We released two *Bison Dispatches* on our podcast feed. Our "bison season" (Season 1), as many refer to it, was released in 2017, but recent developments may change how the Yellowstone bison are managed. The first dispatch explained the proposed management options and provided information on how listeners can submit feedback on the plans. In our second dispatch, we answered listener questions about bison management and what the draft plan might mean for the future of the herd.



Highlights

from the past few months



We created an [Educator Hub](#) on our website, and rolled out the first of our education resources. This has been something we've wanted to do for a long time, and we're excited to continue building it out through all of our past seasons —and we'll add more resources as funding allows.

As part of our ongoing work to be an anti-racist and equitable organization, our team does a monthly read/watch/listen and discussion on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These conversations guide and shape our work in all areas of the organization.



Here's a sampling of what we discussed over the last few months, with links to each if you'd like to check them out.

- [Short bio of Ida B. Wells](#)
- [Bringing Truth to the American Narrative](#)
- [Artists in Residence at National Parks](#)
- [The Plan to Dismantle DEI](#)
- [Ten Thousand Things - Voice with Alice Wong](#)
- [Behind the Movement to Create More Black Video Game Characters](#)



By the numbers

23

of locations visited for reporting so far this year (11 different countries)

63

of interviews conducted so far this year

51K

of podcast episode downloads (June–September 2023)

672

Estimated # of newsletters our Managing Editor, Erika Janik, has read since July

Many

of times we said “bison” over the past month since Yellowstone National Park released its updated bison management plan

1.35M

Total podcast episode downloads to date (through September 30, 2023)

Threshold in the news

In August, Peabody Awards featured Threshold Season 3, "The Refuge" in their Peabody Finds newsletter, "Fighting for the Earth: What to Watch to Understand the Environmental Crisis."



In May, podcast guru and insider Lauren Passell featured Threshold's "This Most Excellent Canopy" in "Podcast the Newsletter" and wrote this delightful Apple Podcast review:



34567890 stars!!

"The 'This Most Excellent Canopy' episode made me feel like I was on drugs in the best way. The writing and reading of it is absolutely perfect."

-mypassell, Apple Podcast review

Threshold in the news

Also in May, Vulture and New York Magazine's podcast newsletter 1.5 Speed highlighted Threshold in its roundup of environmental/climate change podcasts:

NEW YORK
VULTURE

“They do a superb job of showing all sides of complex climate stories (plus excellent production quality and sound design).”



In April, we partnered with Glacier National Park's Headwaters podcast on Instagram and Twitter.

In June, we did a social media promo swap with artist Megan Broughton whose copperplate etchings are inspired by the Arctic.



Meet Threshold Producer Jay Avery



We welcomed our newest producer Jay (she/her) to our team in March. From her home in North Carolina, she jumped right into reporting and getting up to speed on all things Threshold. We put together a Q&A with Jay for our Threshold supporters to learn more about her.

Q: You chose to study constitutional law at UNC but eventually decided practicing law wasn't for you. Tell us about that experience and how it informs your current work?

Jay: I loved law school (I'm a nerd, if you can't tell!), and I was fortunate to have been able to learn from some of the most brilliant legal minds in this country. I never intended to practice traditionally, and going into it with that knowledge really allowed me to hone in on what I was actually interested in, as opposed to fighting for a job in Big Law.

I've always been fascinated by the Constitution. It calls itself a document of freedom, while simultaneously denying freedom to many. It expounds "inalienable rights" for all, while also declaring people of African descent to be three-fifths of a person. We have an amendment that bars slavery, while another opened the door for new forms of slavery (chain gangs, prisons, etc.). So, I wanted to study the Constitution, and the ways that laws are interpreted under it, to gain a better understanding of how we got here. Being that so much of my current work is rooted in history, the study of constitutional law was critical to understanding the shaping of US law and race as a social construct.

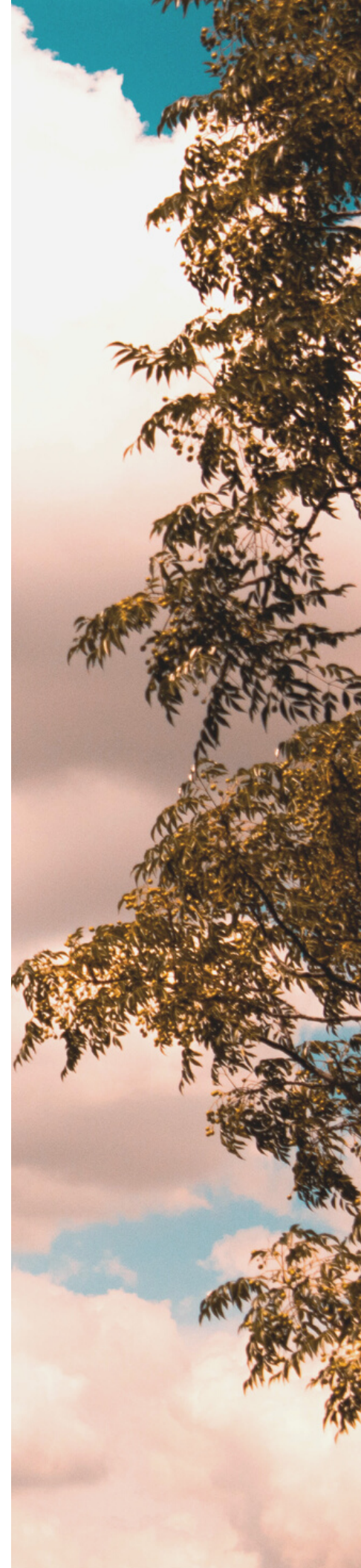
Q: You have clear motivations for your work—to tell the stories of African Americans. Can you talk about that and why that is your calling?

Jay: As a storyteller, I consider myself a vessel to help amplify the voices of African Americans, both past and present. I don't tell people's stories; rather, I try to provide the opportunity and platform for them to tell their own stories. This applies to African Americans of the past, as well. While I can't interview them, of course, I lean heavily upon the oral tradition and historical records to discover and highlight their experiences.

I feel called to this work because I am living in a time where I can read, learn, and do anything I want. For generations, these freedoms were denied to African Americans. I don't see myself as being just an individual, out here telling stories of my own accord. No, I'm the latest link in a glorious chain that started long before my birth, and will continue on long after I'm gone. The fact that African Americans are here today is nothing short of miraculous, and I try to honor that miracle by documenting and preserving our journey through my work.

Q: Who is one of your favorite storytellers—or who is one that greatly influences your own storytelling?

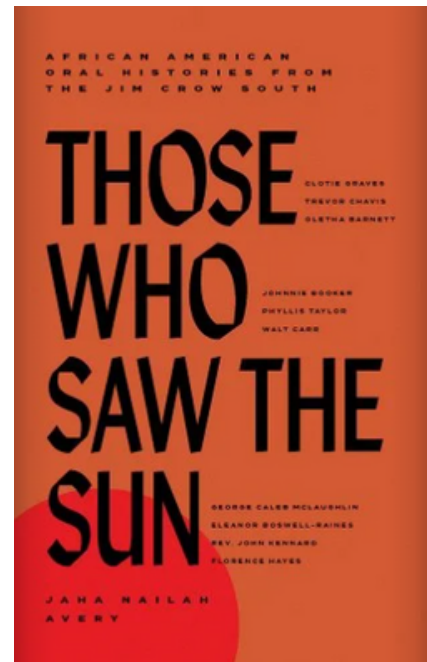
Jay: I learned the foundations of storytelling from my grandparents. My granddaddy was a preacher, and stood before hundreds of people every Sunday, employing the combination of oratorical skill, storytelling finesse, and Biblical research to keep people engaged and inspired. My grandmother was a teacher, and she was very creative. She was always coming up with some sort of activity for us, and in fact, I learned the art of character development from her!



Aside from that, the oral tradition is so powerful in African American culture (and many other cultures around the world), so I paid attention when my grandparents and their siblings and friends were talking. They would just be sitting around, sometimes over a meal, and sharing stories about their experiences. Now that I'm an adult, I realize how truly sacred those moments were, and how incredibly fortunate I am to have been a witness to them. Today, they are part of me, and I carry them in my own storytelling. That's kind of what the oral tradition is all about!

Q: You've just released your first book! How is that going?

Jay: It's going amazing! The manuscript lived solely on my computer for months as I was working on it, so it's a little surreal to have the book now living out in the real world. But I'm so proud of it, and I feel that it's a major contribution to the existing body of work pertaining to African American history. I want more African American history told by African Americans, not by other communities, and I think that's part of what makes it so powerful.



Q: What are your favorite podcasts (and why)?

Jay: Threshold, of course! I also love NPR's Code Switch, the Food Heaven podcast (shout out to my girls Wendy and Jess!), and The Dream podcast. But truthfully, the podcasts I listen to most regularly are pop culture-based. They're fun and lighthearted, and I get to hear about my favorite TV characters!



Welcome new board members

In July, we welcomed two new members to the board of Auricle Productions, the 501c3 nonprofit that produces Threshold.

Eddie Gonzalez (he/him) works at the intersection of creative expression and spiritual care, as well as digital media and community engagement. With a BA in journalism and an MFA in creative writing, he became a hospice chaplain in 2009, and over the last fourteen years has worked within healthcare and national nonprofits to create meaningful spaces for storytelling, compassionate listening, and reflective dialogue. He currently works at [On Being](#).



Eddie has a deep interest in the relationship between inner and outer life and how the stories we tell can have profound impacts on ourselves, each other, and the natural world. He finds inspiration and solace in the arts, the outdoors, and time spent with loved ones.



Brittany Damico (she/her) has worked in the financial services industry since 2007, and she is dedicated to the sustainable and responsible investing space. She has supported individuals, financial firms, and nonprofits whose goals have aligned with growing a capital market system that better serves people and the planet. She holds a BS in Chemistry and Environmental Science from the University of Hawai'i and a MSc in Ecological Economics from the University of Edinburgh.

Most recently Brittany has co-founded a business designed to help scale and elevate the voices of mission-focused asset managers in the financial industry. In addition to her work in financial services, Brittany serves her local community as a certified yoga instructor.



Looking ahead

For the remainder of 2023, Amy and Jay will be deep in reporting and production mode, creating the next seasons of Threshold. We'll also be keeping tabs on the Yellowstone bison and the recent announcement of the Biden administration's cancelation of remaining leases for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (see Peabody Award-winning [Season 3](#) of Threshold for a deep dive on this decades-long controversy). Follow us on [social media](#) and be sure you are [subscribed](#) to our newsletter to get updates on these two issues (and others as they arise) from past Threshold seasons.

Also ahead, our year-end fundraising campaign will launch in November and run through December 31. And we'll welcome a Marketing and Communications Director before the end of the year to help ensure Threshold reaches as many ears as possible.

We'll see you again in January with updates on all this, and more!

Thank you

We can't say it enough. We've had a busy 2023 so far, and none of it would be possible without the enthusiastic and generous support of our listeners.

Thank you for listening, sharing, supporting, and for being a part of the Threshold community.



thresholdpodcast.org

Auricle Productions is the 501 (c)(3) nonprofit journalism organization that produces Threshold. Auricle Productions was founded by Amy Martin and is incorporated in Missoula, Montana.

Our tax ID is 84-2931585.

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