

Hari Ziyad

Tue, 1/19 10:42AM 41:07

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, book, mother, black, life, hari, thinking, experience, flattening, communities, prisons, gender, anti, ways, blackness, support, children, terms, engage, punitive

SPEAKERS

Hari Ziyad, Omkari Williams



Omkari Williams 00:21

Hello, and welcome to Stepping Into Truth, the podcast where we take on the issues of race, gender and social justice. I'm your host Omkari Williams, and I'm very glad you're here with me today. Hosting this podcast is a joy for me. I'm privileged to speak with people who are out in the world making a difference with their day jobs, their programs, their art, and their activism. If you would like to support me in doing this work, you can do so for as little as \$3 a month by becoming a member of my Patreon community. You can go to patreon.com/omkariwilliams and sign up, and there's also a link on my website omkariwilliams.com.



Omkari Williams 01:03

Today, my guest Hari Ziyad is a cultural critic, a screenwriter, the editor-in-chief of RaceBaitr, and the author of Black Boy Out of Time. They are a 2021 Lambda Literary Fellow, and their writing has been featured in BuzzFeed, Out, the Guardian, Paste magazine, and the academic journal Critical Ethnic Studies, among other publications. Previously they were the managing editor of the Black Youth Project and a script consultant on the television series David Makes Man. Hari spends their all-too-rare free time trying to get their friends to give the latest generation of R & B starlets a chance and attempting to entertain their always very unbothered pit bull mix, Khione. For more information about the author, visit www.hariziyad.com.



Omkari Williams 01:55

Hi, Hari, how are you?



Hari Ziyad 01:57

Hi, I'm doing well. How are you?



Omkari Williams 01:59

I am doing really well. I've been looking forward to this conversation. I so enjoyed your book. And I actually want to start by quoting from the prologue to your book. And you wrote this, you said, "In a colonized world, the gods before whom Black children are told to humble themselves, require them to toil without ever being seen in the images of these gods, leaving them with only the false promise of being saved". And that really struck me so powerfully. Because I mean, while that is true for Black children, it continues to be true for Black people, I believe, even when we're adults. So let's talk about that powerful sentence to start our conversation talk about what you mean when you say those words, when you write those words.



Hari Ziyad 02:51

Yes. So as you know, as you read the book, I grew up as a Hari Krishna and my mother was Hindu. And so I had this like, very interesting spiritual journey, my extended family was all Christian. And my father was Muslim. And so I had so many different examples of, you know, what God looked like. And a lot of that was like, really beautiful how my parents did their cross cultural work. And they did a lot of like interfaith work in Cleveland. But there was this consistency, at least in my life that I saw across Christianity across Islam. And in Hinduism, the way that anti-Blackness functions in this in these belief systems was so unexplored. And so how that materialized in my life was through a lot of just dismissals of the racism we experienced in the Hindu community.



Hari Ziyad 03:47

And so that line was just trying to sum up what that is for, for Black children or cross cultural experiences and religious experiences. Because I think that is like the central thing that's missing. And this book was a lot of my searching for new, because I like I said, I appreciate it, so many parts of my mother's spiritual journey. And so I was trying to, like, reclaim those best parts of it. And in order to do that, I had to reckon with that part of it that I could never really feel safe in. And that was this idea that we had to, as Black

people, like, struggle in order to like prove our worth. Or experience violence, and just deal with it and turn the other cheek. Or my mother's spiritual teacher wrote her a letter saying that, you know, if people are racist to you, that's their problem. But if you let it get to you, that's your problem. And I was just like, confused by all of that. And so that was me trying to explore what that meant, and how my mother, especially, reckoned with that because she was very race conscious.



Omkari Williams 04:55

What you just said about the letter that your mother's spiritual teacher wrote to her, when I read that in the book, honestly, I was so angry. When I read that, I thought, are you kidding me? So all the burden is placed on the person who's being abused. And they're supposed to take the high road and turn the other cheek and the abuser just gets a pass. I mean, I think that we, we need to start to reckon with all the ways we do that, with all the places where we say the abuser gets a pass. And the onus is on the abused person to not take it personally, or just make the best of it, or whatever. Because that's absurd. But I think it's really an important piece of what you're talking about, because that theme of not owning our experiences, of being encouraged to not own our experiences runs through the entire book. And I think it's really an important part of what you're talking about. So I'm going to back up a little bit here, because there are a couple of terms that you use in the book that I think we should define for the listeners, because they're going to come up in this conversation. And those are carceral, as in incarceration think, people should think back to that link, and misafropedia, which is a term that you coined, and if you could define both of those for us to start.



Hari Ziyad 06:24

Yes, carcerality, as you mentioned, is just relating to the idea of prisons. And I use it in a lot of like critical race theories use it to describe how we think in a prison based society. Like outside of just the physical structures of prisons. So our ways of thinking about punishment as a response to violence, as a response to mistakes. That's all related to how our society is structured, with prisons being so central to how we address problems. So whenever I'm using carcerality, I'm just referring to this larger system of punitive thinking, and criminalization. And of course, we know that that specifically affects Black people to in a very large degree.



Hari Ziyad 07:17

And misafropedia as, writing the book, and this is a term I introduced much later in the

writing process, because I was like, I'm talking about the specific ways that anti-Blackness shows up in children's lives. And it was just so interesting to me that there wasn't a term for that. And maybe it shouldn't be that interesting, because I mean, we are redefining language all the time, like misogynoir, was introduced by some Black feminist thinkers very recently. And that did a lot of great work in highlighting the intersection of sexism and anti-Blackness. But I think there's a very specific way that anti-Blackness shows up in children's lives. And so I created this term to describe that and it comes from the word Mr. pedia, which is just a hatred or disdain for children. And this was how I was trying to explore, you know, things like we just mentioned, the ways that we engage religion can be harmful, even as adults. But I think it's a very specific way that it's introduced to children and taught to them and conditioned into them that I wanted to pinpoint and doing this work.



Omkari Williams 08:29

Yeah, I think one of the things that really hit me hard is you write about the flattening, as you describe it, of Black people, in particular, Black children. Talk about what you mean by flattening,



Hari Ziyad 08:44

In my experience, and I know, just based on how I interacted and read that this is true for a lot of folks. But I think one of the things that we come up against, as we're growing up in an anti-Black society is this concept of that there can only be one story. And I think that flattening all of our different nuances, even within ourselves, but also across our communities. We have so many different experiences and perspectives. But we're supposed to just adhere to like one set of standards and live our lives based on one idea of what's the right way to live, in particular when it comes to gender. And so a lot of the violence that I experienced growing up was because of that flattening when it came to gender. I was supposed to experience manhood in this very specific way that I didn't. And then because of carceral thinking I was punished for that. I think that does a lot of damage to children who are trying to come to terms with their own identity and their their uniqueness, and their selves, and trying to be whole. But I think we need to face that and challenge that in order to become whole people. For me, I had to go back to my childhood, and where those things are starting to come in order to figure out how not to do that flattening now in my current life. And not in the lives of the people that I interact with.



Omkari Williams 10:08

It's interesting that you say that because the flattening continues. I mean, I had an experience once where someone I worked with and I were talking about race, and this is a white woman, and I said something about being Black in America. And she actually said to me, oh, but Omkari, you're different. And it took everything I had in me not to just haul off and smack her. I swear, I was so enraged by that comment, I honestly couldn't even speak to her. And that way of sort of lumping everybody into a bucket, and not allowing people to be individuals, is certainly destructive as an adult. But I mean, I actually remember that happening as a child too. The way people would sort of lump me and all of my friends into this one bucket, that was a totally separate bucket than the non Black children, and tell us what we were, rather than allow us to be what we were.



Omkari Williams 11:13

And it's something that still happens now. And I'm really glad you're highlighting it because it creates a perpetuation of this system. And if we don't stop it early, I don't see how we break that pattern anytime soon. So I think it's really, really important. Something else that you do throughout the book, as part of this, when you come back to the impacts of structural anti-Blackness on children, you use many of your own experiences to talk about the damage that this does in childhood and beyond. And I would really love for you to talk about some of your personal struggles with that.



Hari Ziyad 11:55

Yeah, so like I mentioned, so much of my trauma was around gender stuff. And it's hard to pinpoint where that comes from. Because I think the way that gender is talked about in my mother's religion isn't necessarily how we experience it, or she taught it to us. But regardless, that was something that from a very young age, it was clear that I had to fit a very specific gendered role. And as a queer person who knew and understood my queerness very early, that was obviously really hard. But what made it harder is that for a long time, and in so many other ways, my mother did so much so that we could have a wider world that we could explore, like she homeschooled us. And she was just amazing in so many ways.



Hari Ziyad 12:47

And so what I was trying to explore was how that dissonance can happen. Because I think, if we were to have this conversation with anyone, like they'd be able to understand, like flattening things, putting people in boxes is a problem. What's harder to realize is how we

do that, even in our everyday lives. And how we do that unintentionally. And how sometimes in efforts to not do that, we can still perpetuate that if we're not being very, very conscious of that. And so I think, and this is just theories that I've come up with, although I have talked to my mother about this, that there was a line where she wasn't asking herself those same questions about whether we could be free and build the lives that we wanted for ourselves, because she was afraid of what that would do, because we were Black people in America.

H

Hari Ziyad 13:41

And my hope with this book is to acknowledge that fear as real, but figure out how to do that in ways that are less damaging. And so to answer your question, for me, the damage looked like I was almost disowned. When I eventually told my mother that I was queer. And my mother was like one of the closest relationships that I've had. And so I'm still dealing with the trauma of that. Before she passed, we did a lot of work to heal through that and a lot of that was through the writing of this book. But it is just so fascinating, because I knew that my mother deep down really loved me. And so it wasn't a question of love. And I think often these interpersonal relationships with other Black people, it's not about love. It's about what we acknowledge as possible. And I think before she passed, my mother was able to realize that there was a greater possibility for what life could look like. And I think that was really beautiful and healing for both of us.



Omkari Williams 14:45

Yeah, I wonder if also, in addition to what's possible, a lot of it is based in fear, because there's so much fear that's just part of being Black in America in particular, I wonder if some of what your mother was responding to was, I have this Black child, and he's queer. How am I going to keep this child safe in this world? Did you ever have conversations around anything like that?

H

Hari Ziyad 15:18

Yeah. I mean, I knew that that was what is, I've never had a question with my mother, that she loved me and that she wanted to protect me. So even though there was a time in college, where I was angry, and I think that was also justifiable. But particularly towards the end of her life, it was very clear that this came from her just trying to protect us and not knowing how to do that. And yet, I think the fear is tied to this lack of possibility, because we're not given the space to explore what life would be like if all of our children could explore their genders, you know?



Hari Ziyad 15:59

She didn't get to experience that growing up with her mother and her mother didn't get to experience that growing up with hers. And so the unknown is very scary, but particularly when you live in a society where so many things are out to harm you, it's almost always easier to go with what you know. And I think falling into those gender roles is just something she knew and something she did well, and something that she was able to see as saving her from a lot of the trauma that she would otherwise have experience. And so it was just hard for her to get over that hump, and realize that, even if that was true for her, it doesn't have to be true for someone else. And I can still be okay. I had to show my mother in so many ways that I was okay. And I think that's all she wanted to know.



Omkari Williams 16:49

Yeah, I'm sure it is. And I just want to give your mom props, because tell people, how many kids are in your family and your mom homeschooled you all?



Hari Ziyad 16:58

Yes, between my two parents, a blended family of 18 siblings, my mother had ten kids, homeschooled all of us, at least up to a point. So yes, she definitely put in a lot of work. And now that she's passed, especially, I have a lot of, a lot of the things that come up is like I don't, I hope no one reads this book and is like, Oh, this woman is like, did horrible things. And I think she did do some things that were painful. But underneath all of that was so much love and support. And like I said in the book, she's the one who showed me about new possibilities, even if it was just in a different way. And so I've been I've been able to take a lot of the lessons that I've learned from her, and how she explored her religion in particular, and use that and how I'm exploring my gender and how I'm exploring my spirituality. But I wouldn't have been able to do that without her.



Omkari Williams 17:56

I absolutely took from the book that there was so much love at the base of the relationship that you had with your mother and your siblings. And that was never a question for me. And honestly, I mean, it's our parents jobs to do something that will get us into therapy so that we can support our therapists down the road. So your mom was, you know, she did what she was supposed to do it's all good. But she sounds like she was an amazing woman. And even though she struggled, I mean, we all struggle, but it's it feels to me, and it felt to me reading this book, like this was both a story about your experience as a queer Black person in America, and also this deep, deep love in this family. So that's

what I took from it. And it was really, really a great read for me. I was I just was completely engaged in it the whole time.



Omkari Williams 18:58

So something else you talked about, because I've been really noodling about this and sort of taking this conversation in a somewhat different direction. But you talk about efficiency, in terms of capitalism, and I don't know that you specifically use that word, but it's how I remember it is that capitalism, equated with efficiency and then used as a tool of oppression. And one of the things you said that really struck me was, you said in contrast to that we have CP time, colored people's time. And you muse about CP time being a form of resistance. And I found that such an interesting idea, and I would love for you to talk about that.



Hari Ziyad 19:45

Yeah, I mean, capitalism obviously is all about productivity and getting the most not for the workers, but for the people that the workers work for. And I wanted to muse around CP time in particular, because that's something that I have a lot of struggles with, like, I was so angry with my father growing up because he was late for everything. But if you're thinking about this in terms of the larger capitalist structures, and in terms of, you know, the lack of possibilities that we mentioned earlier. There has to be ways that we're resisting within the system, even if we're not know, even if we're not naming that. And what if CP time, not thinking of time in the same way that's like only about productivity and efficiency was part of that? And not just like, as a theoretical exercise. But also, what does that mean for us who do get angry around that? And how does that force us to change the way that we engage with people who are thinking of time differently?



Hari Ziyad 20:54

Not just because we'll magically live in a liberated society if everyone's late. But what does it mean that we can create new ways of talking about what lateness is like what is even just having that conversation do for creating possibilities around how we engage with one another and hold space for each other? Because there are reasons that we're late, often, and those are very real reasons. In the case of my father, we didn't have a lot of things. And so he was fixing a car and it took forever for him to get there. Those are things I didn't necessarily think about, because I was only conditioned to think in terms of this is the time he's supposed to be here. And that's what's most productive. But if I could think bigger than that, and contextualize people outside of like, what they can do in this

system of efficiency as I do like that term, then what possibilities is that create for me to engage with people who are resisting in other ways?



Omkari Williams 21:54

Yeah, I like that. I think that it sort of shifts it from being so transactional, you know, into a more expansive view of what people actually do for us. So your father fixing that car for you, although not maybe directly for you in that moment, but as part of his way of taking care of you and your family, and just being there for you, and not making it be that, oh, he's not here on time. So obviously, he doesn't really give a damn about my time, or what's important to me. And just shifting that whole dynamic that we've been taught to think of that way. We're not taught to be generous when people are late. We're taught to be irritated and punitive and not question, what actually happened with any kind of openness in us. So I think that that's a really important thing to think about is just shifting our immediate responses to things and questioning whether that response is actually something that supports us, or doesn't support us in the larger scheme of things.



Hari Ziyad 23:08

Right. And sometimes, it is appropriate. I mean, sometimes people don't respect your time. But I think you're right, it's just about being able to ask those questions, and so that your first response isn't automatic and punitive. That I think is, would be helpful and moving forward. Because I mean, my dad still has a lot of things to work on, when it comes to timeliness. But that's not necessarily the first thing that I'm thinking of when that comes up. Right? I do have to sometimes hold him accountable.



Omkari Williams 23:40

And my dad was exactly the opposite. If you weren't ready, he was gone. So you were on your own then. So I was like, Oh, okay. So somewhere in the middle might be some happier place to reside. But we'll see. So another thing that you talk about in the book is the ways in which Black people make space in ourselves for anti-Blackness in order to survive. And what happens when we stop doing this? And I really want to hear what you have to say about that. Because I think it's such an important piece of how we get from where we are to where we want to be.



Hari Ziyad 24:22

What happens when we stop doing that? I don't know if I have, I have hopes for that,

because I'm not at the place where I'm not doing that anymore. But I know that as I've gotten further along this road, which really it's therapy, it is getting closer to my spirituality, and it's healing. And as that happens, obviously, like you're gonna feel better as an individual. But we're also as a community going to be able to engage with each other in different ways that don't feel as stressful and harmful. And so I do think that the only way to truly achieve liberation is through this healing process, uprooting the anti-Blackness that's conditioned into us. Because I don't think that that's an innate part of us. And I don't think we're full and whole beings with this completely foreign and harmful thing that's such a big part of our lives. And so, yeah, I think and I hope that that is what gonna lead us as a community to where we need to be on an individual level, it's just led to healing. It's led to better relationships with my family, with my mother, in particular, so much of this work was me wrestling with my own anti-Blackness in order to be able to make space of the things that felt anti-Black or harmful for her. And I wouldn't have been able to do that.



Omkari Williams 25:54

How did your anti-Blackness show up for you?



Hari Ziyad 25:58

A lot of it showed up through like the academic and education system. So when we did go to school, I was, you know very much about getting straight A's and had this like idea of what success looked like. And I also had this idea of what it meant if someone wasn't successful in this world, which is that they are lesser, they're lazy. And a lot of times this wasn't even like explicit, but it was just in the way that I engage certain people who I decided to be friends with, who I didn't like, for whatever reason. And it really was about the ways that they were playing this system, which at its core, is anti-Black, this system of education, just like the system of anything in this world, isn't for us.



Hari Ziyad 26:46

And so someone who's not playing that, I don't think that's a strike against them as a person. But growing up, that was something that I definitely used to weaponize against other people. I was comparing myself constantly with other people, as well. But most importantly, that was turned inward, like I was always judging myself and beating myself up for not achieving in the ways that I thought I should achieve. And I think later in life, it manifests in my anxiety. But that's really just a manifestation of me, telling myself, I would never, I'm never good enough. And I'm doing that specifically because I learned that as a

Black person, good enough looks a certain way, and I'm not achieving that.



Omkari Williams 27:34

And never could, I mean, that's the thing, it's the carrot that's held out is if you do X, Y or Z this way, then you'll be good enough. But the truth of the matter is, if you're not white, you're never going to meet that standard. So you're always running around chasing your own tail in a way. And I think that recognizing that and disconnecting from that is something that is critical for Black people, in beginning to eradicate the anti-Blackness that lives within us is just understanding that what's being held out there is not attainable, and is actually not desirable. Because why, you know? What is it about that that is so wonderful, inherently? It seems to me that that whole way of being sets everybody up for failure in some way. Even if the only failure isn't being able to honestly connect with other people, that that is undermining of us as individuals and us as a society in general as well.



Hari Ziyad 28:50

Yeah, I think one of the most effective functions of white supremacy is that it harms us in that way. And this does result in a lot of mental health issues. And what I hope to do in this book as well, but in general, with my work is tie this push for racial justice, to this idea of healing because they're so connected as you're getting at here. Like when you start to adopt those views, like you're doing this psychological damage to yourself, and you're also doing the psychological damage to your children and everybody else in your communities. And so reckoning with that will have to entail some psychological healing.



Omkari Williams 29:34

Yeah, completely and unfortunately, that is often not readily available for minority communities, marginalized communities. And I think part of the work is to make those resources more available so that that healing can happen on a broader level than it's currently happening. So one of the things you wrote about in the book is a trip that you took to Puerto Rico. And you talked about tourism, and the sort of downside of tourism. And this is something that's really interesting to me, because I have always had a sort of push pull relationship with philanthropy. And people kind of look at tourism as a form of philanthropy as well. And I would like you to talk about what you felt about tourism on that trip to Puerto Rico, what you learned on that trip so that people might start just having a different perspective on what that is?



Hari Ziyad 30:43

Yes. So I went to Puerto Rico, like right after Donald Trump was elected. And this was supposed to be like this escape for me. And I write about in the book in this larger section, where I'm talking about escape and like what that means. But how that manifests itself, in Puerto Rico in particular, is that, and I think this is intentional, in how tourism is talked about, my very presence here is beneficial. Like I don't have to think about harm that I might enact on a community by being there, because I'm feeding the economy or what have you.



Hari Ziyad 31:20

But that came up against so many different, very obvious problems. And I'm seeing how the economy there has been so devastated, and tourism has in that same time period becomes so much more central. And those things are connected. And it's also connected to how the deforestation is happening there. And it's really just turning people's lives and communities into commodities. And what does that do to the people who live there, and I think it's just a bigger, or another, example of what happens with gentrification. But we have to be a lot more intentional about how we show up in people's homes that have long contexts, and ways of doing things that have purpose. And if we're not intentional about that, we can end up doing a lot more harm than good. And so I was just reflecting on that with the trip to Puerto Rico in particular, because that was like, around the time that the economy was having a lot of issues. And there was a lot of shutdowns and stuff, as well. And I noticed myself like, almost intentionally pushing that out of my head instead of engaging it while I was there. And I just wanted to ask myself why that was and why it was so much easier for me to do that? And how that might show up in other ways that I'm engaging with communities that aren't mine.



Omkari Williams 32:48

Yeah, I think that that's actually one of the things that struck me, as I was reading that section of the book was to make me actually aware of looking at how an individual experience had ripples in other areas of my life, because I don't think we often take the time to do that. But when you wrote about that experience of being a tourist in Puerto Rico, and how that sort of reflected in other parts of your life, it made me think about that as well, and made me just resolve to be a bit more intentional. The next time I go somewhere, you know, if ever anyone gets to go anywhere, again.



Hari Ziyad 33:30

Right.



Omkari Williams 33:31

We'll see. But it really struck me and I think it's important, because we do tend to think, Oh, you know, we're putting money into the economy. So this is a win win. And that's not necessarily true. And I think we need to be responsible for how we impact other communities that are not our communities. So I really appreciated that you brought that up. So we're getting short on time. But before we go, I definitely want to ask you to talk about the importance of paying attention to and undoing the binaries that undergird so many of our systems, our prison system is one example. But there's so many more. And if you could speak about that.



Hari Ziyad 34:14

Yes, I think this goes back to what we were saying earlier about like the flattening that happens. The way that it's successful in this society in particular is that generally we're presented with binary options for how things should work. We think in terms of good and bad, it's very hard to wrap our minds around the idea of more than two genders, even though there's so many like actual scientific, there's lots of different chromosome mixtures. And I think that just makes it easier if you do have a carceral society where things are punished. It makes it easier to do that. So if there are only two options, it's very easy to just punish the people who don't fit into the option that you want them to fit into. And that shows up. Like you said, in so many ways.



Hari Ziyad 35:06

I spoke earlier about like my struggling through gender and how, you know, this concept of masculinity and femininity, there are a lot of overlaps for that for me, and my experience as the child before I was conscious of the pressures that were forcing me into those distinctions, felt a lot freer. And I think that when we can reject binaries in that way, we will experience that freedom again. And that has been my experience as I've tried to reject binaries, and so many other aspects of life. And that's why I think it's so crucial to tie this whole healing journey, and queerness to the concept of prison abolition, because ultimately, that's what prisons run on, as, you know, guilty, innocent, good, bad. You do something wrong, and it doesn't matter what's happening in your context. Like it's just matters if you broke this particular law. And we can't really think about nuances in a way that I think would be more helpful. One example of this is the woman now who was a victim of Munchausen by Proxy, I forget her name, but they've been so many Gypsy Rose,

Blanche something, something



Omkari Williams 36:25

Something like that. I forget exactly. Yeah.



Hari Ziyad 36:27

And it was just really interesting when I was watching that documentary, like how all the jurors were like, you know, there's so many extenuating circumstances about because she ended up killing her mother who was abusing her for all of these years. And I'm not saying that that's necessarily good or bad. But they weren't able to apply all of the context that they knew should have been applied. Just because the way things are set up. And what if we could change that? Like, what if we could approach people as individuals with a lot of different contexts to them, and reasons for doing things? And it wasn't just a one size fits all? How freeing would that be for me to experience? But also, how freeing could that be for a society where everyone was given that space?



Omkari Williams 37:13

Yeah, I completely agree. And I think your example is a really good one, I've had conversations with people who are in the legal system, and they are often enormously frustrated by the options, or the lack of options, that are presented to them to address something that has happened that we consider undesirable. You know, it makes a difference what the backstory is on something. And when there's no space for that we do, we just lump things into one bucket or the other. And we are taking all the nuance out of it. And we also are taking our compassion out of it. And I think that, fundamentally, that's probably the most damaging part of a binary system is that it just removes the ability for compassion to have space and air from it. Well, we're basically out of time. So I'm going to ask you to leave the listeners with three simple things that you would like them to do in defense of freedom and justice in forwarding the ideas that we've talked about, what are your suggestions?



Hari Ziyad 38:29

Yes. One is to just to sum up, everything that we talked about is to just be really intentional about how the binaries show up and how punitive thinking shows up in your life. Like I said, it's not just about prisons, or calling the police. It's your reaction to your child, when they do something you don't like. It's your reaction to your mother when you

know she's done something that's been hard hurtful to you. And thinking about those, I think on those more intimate personal, intimate personal scale is how we really reach abolition. And more tangible ways that can further the work that I'm doing is by buying Black Boy Out of Time, what we've been discussing you can get that anywhere that books are sold. And subscribing to RaceBaitr, which is a publication that I run, where we tackle issues surrounding abolition, anti-Blackness and carcerality. And you can also support that by becoming a Patreon. We're fully owner funded. And so every little bit of support counts, and we pay all of our writers competitive rates because of everyone's support.



Omkari Williams 39:43

Yeah, and I have to say definitely, buy Hari's book, it's really beautiful and important, and I'm very grateful Hari that you took the time to talk with me today. I so appreciate having had the opportunity to speak with you.



Hari Ziyad 40:01

Thank you, I was really glad to be here.



Omkari Williams 40:04

Thank you. One of the critical pieces of advocating for social justice is to educate ourselves, to bear witness to the experiences of others that may not be our own experience. Part of our work is to persist in our learning and our activism. So I really encourage you to read Hari's book, which is such a beautiful telling of his story, and a beautiful reflection of the stories of so many Black Americans. Thank you so much for listening. Remember that change starts with story, so keep sharing yours, and I'll be back with another episode of Stepping Into Truth very soon.