CRT2 Episode Script
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Group 4: Arjun, Ashley, Brooke, and Jermaine

Echoes of History in the Future of Immigration: Revisiting the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965

Hosts: Arjun S. Dasari and Brooke Greenwood
Guest Speakers: Dr. Donna Hylton, Professor Gemma Solimene, Professor Rose Cuison-Villazor, Professor Mae Ngai

DONNA HYLTON [00:00:12] You know, my life as a child, I wouldn't say it was idyllic, but it was definitely one that I miss. One that holds a lot of memories and just heartfelt emotions for me. You know, as a little girl on Jamaica, on the island, I used to my friends were butterflies and hummingbirds and, you know, the flowers and just nature. I just, you know, I started realizing, like, nature has always been a pull for me in the water, like just being being surrounded by the Caribbean Sea. And just the beauty of that, you know, and I think as a little girl, just the beauty of those things, following the butterflies, watching them, how they land on a little flower, you know, the honeysuckle and things like that, and just watching what they do for me, that was just so beautiful.

ARJUN DASARI [00:01:13] What is the story of immigration to America? What has it looked like since the 1965 Immigration Nationality Act alongside the beauty of this story? For this young girl living in Jamaica, there was turmoil.

DONNA HYLTON [00:01:35] There was another part of my life, too, where, you know, my mother, my mother was a very as an adult, as I look back, my mother is a very hurt woman, broken. And we have to look at the times. I was born in the 60s, early 60s. And so she lived through a lot and so often times she would be very abusive. Right. So I had two worlds going on at the same time as a child, but still it was home and it was beautiful for me, you know?

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:02:12] This is the voice of Dr. Donna Hylton, activist, author of a memoir titled A Little Piece of Light and CEO of a women's nonprofit organization of the same name. We're discussing Donna's story today in commemoration of 60 years since the three landmark Civil Rights Acts were passed, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and importantly, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.

ARJUN DASARI [00:02:40] Before we get started, here are what the prospects of immigration look like in 2024.

DONALD TRUMP (AUDIO) [00:02:47] I will invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 18. No. Of 1798. Think of that. 1798. That's when we had real politicians that said We're not going to play games. We have to go back to 1798 to target and dismantle every migrant criminal network operating on American soil. We're going to knock the hell out of them.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:03:14] President elect Donald Trump has weaponized racist tropes against immigrants and promised to institute immigration policies that are punitive, inhumane, and, frankly, horrifying. So how did we get here? Why are these comments politically effective even now?

ARJUN DASARI [00:03:30] And ultimately, can applying critical race theory help us find our way towards an alternative immigrant inclusive future? [BROOKE: I'm Brooke Greenwood] And I'm Arjun Dasari alongside our colleagues, Ashley and Jermaine. We are students in professor Kendall Thomas and professor Flores Forbes Critical race theory seminar at Columbia Law School. While representing a critical juncture in U.S. history, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 faces unprecedented challenges.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:04:08] Decades of judicial and political incursions have eroded its ambitions of equality and justice for all.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON [00:04:11] This bill says central that from this day, for those wishing to emigrate to America shall be admitted on the basis of their skills and their close relationships to those already here. This is a simple test and it is a fair test. Those who can contribute most to this country, to its growth, to its strength, to its spirit, will be the first that are admitted to this land.

ARJUN DASARI [00:04:41] By dismantling the race based national origins quota system, this act significantly changed the demographic landscape of the United States to include more immigrants of color, including my grandparents who immigrated from southern India in 1970. Let's return to Donna's Story, Brooke.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:05:02] Yeah. Okay. So at seven years old, she was trafficked to the United States after being sold by her mother to the Hyltons. A couple who promised to take her to Disneyland but became her abusers.

DONNA HYLTON [00:05:16] Then one. I don't know. I would like. And I was a little girl. A man that was part of this family, the Hylton family in Jamaica. Started telling me about this beautiful place, this beautiful, magical place. And I was a child. So, you know, my ears are open. And I was telling me about Disney. Disneyland, Right. And. I was like, wow. I became so fascinated and intrigued and telling me you know, all this stuff about this place and this magical place and this little mouse, me and Mickey and Minnie, right. And Donald Duck and stuff like that. And. And I just became intrigued. I didn't know why he was telling me, but it sounded beautiful. But as time went on, I kept hearing these stories and I started seeing some pictures of this place. And then and they kept saying, Do you want to visit? Do you want to see? Do you want to visit? And I was like, yes, like, yes. And so. A big day came that I was to be brought to America to go see this magical place. All right. Disney and they brought me up here. I was seven and a half years old. And I never went back. Never went back.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:06:35] When most Americans think about immigrants, they think of people who choose to come to the United States. They imagine everyone must want to live here. However, many people don't have a choice. Donna certainly didn't.

DONNA HYLTON [00:06:46] And I find out, you know, some point late way later in adults having gone through everything that I went through, that basically I was trafficked. My mother had agreed to send me, for them to bring me up here, but there was some money exchanges and stuff like that. And that's what makes it [right] trafficking. And next thing I know, by the time I was nine and I was nine and a half, by that time I was, you know, I started becoming accustomed to calling them mom and dad. You know, I never had a dad around in my life. I had a mom, you know, a mother. So it was difficult for me to understand how calling somebody knows mom or mummy, I will say to make a. That's what happened. And then the abuse started around that time as well. So I wouldn't do it. A horrific abuse by the hands of my now father. And so that's really what shaped my experiences as a young person into young adulthood. And, you know, at 12 years old, I went to school to try to tell tell the school counselor. I asked for help. That didn't happen. And so just a series of things. They labeled me a liar. Everything, you know, just went south.

ARJUN DASARI [00:08:20] Donna was sold a part of the American dream when she was trafficked that many immigrants still hold on to. America in the eyes of immigrants becomes an idealized promise, a place of fantasy and prosperity. That fantasy was a cover for a reality of abuse for Donna.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:08:41] Yeah, it's such a tough story and it's a story that we don't often hear. It makes me wonder, Arjun, what about all the other stories?

ARJUN DASARI [00:08:49] Yeah, we really only hear one side of this story, and it's the people who are able to create a new life for themselves and their families. But there's the people who, as Donna's story, tells us, that this was not their reality.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:09:10] So let's hear what Donna remembers about becoming a U.S. citizen.

DONNA HYLTON [00:09:13] And I remember when I was ten, and I remember standing in the courtroom and I had to raise my right hand and I had to take the Pledge of Allegiance. But before that, I had to learn the Pledge of Allegiance. You have to memorize this. You have to learn it. You have to understand. I couldn't really understand it. I really didn't understand it as a child. But I learned it and I memorized it. And so I said it. And that's when I was being sworn in. And my status, I was as I look back and looking at some paperwork or limited paperwork, I saw that I had an alien registration number like everyone else, and I had a green card [uh] and stuff. But I think it was 1975 or something like that, 76 that I actually was sworn in and became a United States citizen.

ARJUN DASARI [00:10:02] For the first time. The act made it possible for black and brown people from all over the world to immigrate to the U.S..

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:10:11] When Donna became a U.S. citizen in the mid to late 1970s, the Immigration and Nationality Act had been in place for over a decade.

ARJUN DASARI [00:10:18] To understand the significance of that change, we have to go back to what immigration was like before the Immigration Nationality Act of 1965 was passed.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:10:28] Throughout our immigration history, we've seen cycles of and, you know, swings from openness to restrictiveness. And within those cycles, there have also been a lot of contradictions. So just as an example, on the one hand, today we have over a million people who are admitted for lawful permanent residents each year. We have 45 million individuals who come as temporary visitors. On the other hand, we have a history of laws that have excluded groups of people by ethnicity and race. We have a history of exclusion and deportation for political beliefs. We have a history of making immigrants scapegoats for our economic, political and other social problems in the United States.

ARJUN DASARI [00:11:06] That's Professor Solimene, a clinical law professor at Fordham Law School and long term immigration attorney.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:11:14] And if you go back in time and look at the history of our immigration laws in the first century after independence, so from 1776 to about 1875, there are actually no immigration controls. There were wide open spaces. There was a need for settlers and labor. So immigration. But immigration was open to any free white man, and they could immigrate and even become a citizen after only two years of residency if they renounced other allegiances.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:11:45] There's an important caveat in what Professor Solomon is saying. Immigration and citizenship was only available for free White European Men.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:11:52] Alongside that, though, there was a massive importation of slaves. Right? So we have millions of Americans brought to the United States as slaves over the

course of two centuries. On the one hand, no immigration controls, but to, a very limited population based on race.

ARJUN DASARI [00:12:10] Professor Solimene is bringing up this dichotomy between immigration and slavery, and it's through slavery, racial capitalism and the genocide of Native Americans that America became a country of European settlers and enslaved black people, where race and racism became a part of the codes of existence.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:12:33] And then, you know, sort of in the late 1800s to the early 1900s, there's an large influx of immigrants in sort of what's known as the first great waves, great wave. Just by way of example, in terms of numbers, to put, you know, some concrete numbers to it, the total number of new immigrants in the 43 years between 1776 and 1819, for example, is said to have been 250,000 people. But the total number of new immigrants in 1908 alone was over a million people. And so the early 1900s saw a massive influx of individuals from southern and Eastern Europe. So people from Italy, Poland, Greece, Jews from Eastern Europe before that. Immigration had overwhelmingly been withdrawn from individuals from northern and Western Europe. As the numbers grew and as the complexion or the people changed, it was met with a demand for restrictions. And so we saw things like literacy tests, qualitative restrictions, people with physical defects, what the law called psychopathic inferiority.

PROFESSOR CUISON-VILLAZOR [00:13:58] 1875 Page act was the first act that that tried to prohibit women who were supposedly engaging in in prostitution. And although the statute itself did not mention did not target Chinese women, it was understood based on legislative history that the intent of Congress at the time was to stop Chinese women from coming to the United States, in large part because of the stereotype that they and other Asian women were engaged in immoral purposes.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:14:36] That's the voice of Professor Cuison-Villazor.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:14:38] I am a an immigrant. I am a woman of color. I was born in the Philippines, and when I was about 11 years old, my family immigrated to the United States by immigrating to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which is a U.S. territory.

ARJUN DASARI [00:15:00] Professor Cuison-Villazor is professor of law and Chancellor's Social Justice scholar at Rutgers Law School. Her family's experience as immigrants of color in the United States has shaped her study of immigration law. Here she discusses the legal exclusion of Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s.

PROFESSOR CUISON-VILLAZOR [00:15:21] Both the 1875 Act and the 1882 Act represents the use of congressional power to stop particular groups of people on the basis of race from coming to the United States, from stopping stopping them at the border. And then the Supreme Court upheld the power of Congress to exclude immigrants or to pass legislation like the Chinese Exclusion Act in the in the Chae Chan Ping versus United States case that was passed in 1889. And I'm not sure if you read that case, but that case sometimes when it when I teach it, I still get chills because there the court talks about how the uses the words that Congress was right to pass this law because of aggression coming from these immigrants. They would not a similar bill to the United States. We were there. We're at war with the United States. That they needed that law needed to be passed for purposes of national security.

ARJUN DASARI [00:16:25] Only a few years later, we get to 1924, which is the Immigration Act of 1924, known as the Johnson Reed Act, which established national origins quotas to limit the

number of immigrants from each country to 2% of the total number of people of that nationality in the United States as of the 1890 census.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:16:50] And here's Professor Mae Ngai talking about the impact of that quota system. Professor Ngai is a professor of history at Columbia and the Long Family professor of Asian American studies.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:17:01] Right. Most people don't know that before World War One, you didn't need a passport or a visa or a quota. You know, it was basically open. And some 25 million people came, you know, from the turn of the century to World War One, and only 2% were excluded when they arrived at Ellis Island. So say for Chinese exclusion, immigration from Europe, you know, most of the world was really unrestricted. And the hard quota put on immigration, the ceiling put on immigration in 1924 was drastic. It was 150,000 a year. And if you you know, people may recall that during the decade before World War one, immigration was 1 million a year. So that was an 85% cut in immigration.

ARJUN DASARI [00:18:01] So now we get to the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Our focus of this podcast, the 1965 Act, repealed and replaced the National Origins Quota System with a preference system based on skills. Family reunification and refugee status under the 1965 Act. Each country received the same quota of 20,000 immigrants. So overall, the Act removed ethnicity and national origin as a formal factor in immigration policy and paved the way for non-European immigration. And as Professor Ngai explained, the policies before had been blatantly racist and discriminatory. So the idea that this act undid this legacy of racism is something to consider because we will see how maybe this was not the reality of how this act continued in the legacy of the act.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:19:08] Yeah, that's such a good point and a good summary of the act. So that's why it's considered one of the landmark statutes of the civil rights era. But is that title deserved? So here's Professor Cuison-Villazor describing.

PROFESSOR CUISON-VILLAZOR [00:19:23] It was passed in 1965 alongside the 64 Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as a way to create this momentum of eliminating race discrimination. Right. Explicit race discrimination that we were seeing in all walks of life all across the United States. These three federal laws were designed to instantiate what we had hoped would be a a race, a race neutral, or even more so the hope was that it would completely try to undo it would attempt to undo all that that the legacy of race discrimination in in the United States.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:20:15] So it was ambitious. But like the civil rights legacy more generally, the adherence to formal equality in immigration was limited. Here's how Professor Ngai describes the crucial limitations of the 1965 act.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:20:29] The 1965 act raised the ceiling just a little bit, but it was proportionately the same. So it was actually still a very restrictive law in terms of numbers. The other thing I want to say, though, what was illiberal about the 1965 act was that in two respects, first, it extended quotas to the entire globe. So it encompassed the Western Hemisphere, which had previously not had any formal quotas. And secondly, it had this idea that every country should have the same quota. And that, that to me is really interesting because it seems fair. And they said it would they they advocated for it because it would be fair. And it to me was a -- an index of civil rights thinking in the 1960s. And so this is where I think students of critical race theory would be interested in how what is the intersection between civil rights reform in the 60s and the Immigration Act? I mean, they're often spoken about together, right? The acts of 64, 65, but how they are similar and and where in lay some problems is that this was very much based on an idea of formal equality. Right. A lot of scholars have critiqued the Civil Rights Act and the civil rights ethos as being

concerned with formal equality and not substantive equality. Right? Certainly not equity. Okay. And so but, you know, but there was something positive about that at the time. Right? Every person is of equal worth. Right and should be treated equally under the law. Now, but you cannot just apply that to immigration because countries are not individual persons. Right. There's a slippage there. Where you say we're going to treat every country the same. So. Just as not every individual is actually the same, right? I mean, they are they have maybe different circumstances, different conditions which need to be taken into account in terms of policy. But even more starkly regarding immigration, is India really the same as France or New Zealand? The same as China? Right. So you impose a quota of 20,000 a year on all countries saying that's fair, but it's not fair. And that number has barely gone up since 1965. It went up to 26,500. And that's where it is today.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:23:26] What Professor Ngai's saying about fairness is so interesting. The Immigration and Nationality Act dismantled the old overt racism, but replaced it with a notion of formal equality that was also completely flawed. How did this impact immigrants of color?

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:23:41] The idea that every country should be treated equal, reproduced, racial distinctions, and more implicit as subtle ways. Right? So there is -- so if every country has the same quota or same maximum number. Right. Technically, 26,500. You have long waiting lists, but the lists are longest from the countries, the biggest sending countries-- Mexico, India, China, the Philippines. Those are the countries that have waiting lists that for visas that are, you know, 10, 15, 20 years long. And that is, to me, the single largest reason for undocumented migration, because if you're on a list for 20 years, you might think there's an easier, maybe dangerous, but a quicker way to get into the country. So undocumented migration has very much to do with the imbalances in our visa system.

ARJUN DASARI [00:24:37] The unyielding quota of 26,500 is appalling, frankly. And we can see how this quota and these waiting times of 15 or 20 years for a visa from countries such as Mexico, India, China and the Philippines. It's just something that is bound to lead to undocumented migration, which was one of the unintended consequences of the 1965 Act.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:25:12] And so the unintended consequence of the 1965 act was that by, you know, the turn of the 21st century, 80 to 90% of immigrants coming to this country came from Asia and Latin America. And then you had increasingly people from Africa. But that's a more recent phenomenon. So, you know, 10 to 15% of our immigrants come from Europe, which was actually their intention was to get more immigrants from Europe. So I think that in many ways the 65 act on its surface, it was a very kind of fair. It's actually very elegant, right in its simplicity. All countries will be, we'll treat all countries the same. But in its actual even in its actual fundamental structure as well as its particulars, it was meant to favor Europeans. And the fact that it ended up generating large numbers of people from Asia and Latin America has, I think. In a in a in a general way, perpetuated racism against those communities because people said, wait, it wasn't you weren't supposed to be here. Even though even if they come legally. It wasn't meant for you, right? We didn't intend it to be for you. Somehow you used it. Right to come, but it wasn't meant to benefit you. And so that, so in 1965, it was not a law that was truly, truly desiring of a multi-cultural society. That law it only reckoned with discrimination against Italians and Jews and Hungarians or what have you. It did not reckon with the history of racism in immigration policy towards Asia. Or its policy towards Latin America and Mexico, which was, you know, you come as illegal labor and you, you know, we work you and then we throw you out. Right. So the 65 act while purporting to be fair and [um] respectful of all nations failed to reckon with the deep racisms involved in previous policies in immigration and otherwise.

ARJUN DASARI [00:27:57] And so with this foundation on the history of the act, let's return to Donna's story. She became a citizen, at ten years old, without having control over her circumstances. Living in America with parental figures she did not know. And by the time she was 14, after years of abuse from her father, Donna ran away. And as a young woman of color who was trafficked as a child, Donna's immigration in the United States was bound up in trauma and abuse, and it left her vulnerable and isolated, trying to survive in a hostile world with no safety and no support system. So by the time she was 18, Donna was in prison serving a life sentence for murder. And after being detained despite her naturalization as a child, Donna's immigrant status was raised and she was threatened with deportation. Here's Donna explaining what happened.

DONNA HYLTON [00:29:05] You know, but what happened was like when I was detained on Rikers Island, the Department of ICE. Right. What we know as ICE today. Right. Came and started questioning me about my citizenship. And remember, I was a child, so I had to like really to hold a memory of that, you know, especially through all the trauma and stuff. And so I knew that I had been sworn in. I knew that it was paperwork, my little hands were signing, I remember those things. But, you know, they were questioning my citizenship. And so, you know, I was like, I know I'm a citizen. I know I was a citizen. And so they're asking all these questions. And I really didn't know some of the answers, but I knew I was a citizen. I knew I had been naturalized and all these other things. And then it was like, well, you know, you could be deported. And I was like, it hit me. Gutted me like "deported". I mean, I was smart and I knew what that meant. And I'm like, "Huh, are you threatening to deport me because I was convicted of a crime?" And I said "But once you're a citizen, aren't you always a citizen?" I am now an American. And I've been here long enough, Been in America long, and by that time, been in America longer than I was on my own island where I come from. So make it makes sense, right?

ARJUN DASARI [00:30:35] Yeah. This reminds me of Stuart Hall's essay. Race The Floating Signifier. Because Donna, as a woman of color, even though she was a citizen, it was clearly still a fragile system because they were weaponizing the fact that she had been naturalized and they were using that against her in the process of her incarceration. So eventually they found Donna's papers. But this experience was traumatic, and it's one that she said was common among incarcerated women of color.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:31:15] It's horrifying to think that this is such a common experience, but this experience of intense xenophobia is one Professor Solimene, can confirm through her years of representing people in the immigration system.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:31:26] The years, immigration law has expanded the criminal related deportation and inadmissibility grounds and have increased the harsh effects with people for people with certain convictions, making some, you know, leading some people to essentially be mandatorily deportable because they're ineligible for any forms of relief in the immigration law. Well, we know there are criminal system is one that is infused with racism, discriminatory actions and effects. So if black and brown people are disproportionately affected and involved in our criminal system, it's going to affect black and brown people's immigration status. Right? Those who are not United States citizens. The war on drugs is, you know, in that era of the war on drugs is sort of a prime example of that. You know, there were vestiges of racism permeated in the laws around controlled substance. And when you have increased harsh immigration consequences of drug related convictions, then black and brown immigrants are going to bear the brunt of that.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:32:30] Yeah. So just like you were saying earlier, Arjun, Donna's experience of the precarity of American citizenship as a woman of color just tells us a lot about the fundamentally different type of citizenship this country offers black and brown people. In her academic writing, Professor Cuison-Villazor looks at the imposition of citizenship on Native

Americans, on Native Hawaiians, as well as how people born in the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands are U.S. citizens, but they're not able to fully enjoy the rights of U.S. citizenship. So back to Professor Quison-Villazor.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:33:08] Many people who historically who were born in this country and obtained formal citizenship, but they were treated as second class citizens. And so in rejecting citizenship, I highlight how there are some groups today who are not US citizens who are saying I'm rejecting citizenship or I'm going to abandon U.S. citizenship because it's not doing anything good for me, or I should not have to be forced to become one, right? And so the point for me is that as much as I love being a U.S. citizen, it is a it is critical to recognize that there are people who don't want it, as it should be a choice for them. And and that's because citizenship comes with also this legacy of subordination. It's been a tool for inclusion, right? It's a tool for membership. That's the -- there's this option to become a US citizen. But my piece, Rejecting Citizenship talks about how it's been a tool for empire and a tool of oppression of subjugating people because of race.

ARJUN DASARI [00:34:22] That's an interesting point that Professor Cuizon Velocore brings up with this idea that there's a tool for inclusion and a tool for membership, but a legacy of subordination and how holding those two things in our mind at the same time kind of shows and reveals the complexity of citizenship as a legal tool through which decisions are made about who belongs and who doesn't. And so it's through this lens of critical race theory of taking a step back and looking at the landscape of politics and the landscape of rhetoric and the landscape of creating these laws that we can tell that these decisions have been historically made on the basis of power.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:35:12] And that, of course, brings us where we are now. And there's really no sugarcoating it. The future for immigrants, their families, for citizens of color looks pretty bleak under a second Trump presidency with a Republican Congress and a conservative majority on the Supreme Court. We talked to Professor Cuison-Villazor about what she remembers about the first Trump presidency.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:35:36] We can look back to what happened in 2017, days after President Trump entered the White House where he issued the Muslim ban. And I remember marching with thousands of other people in New York. And there are other marches all across the United States protesting the Muslim ban and remembering now the family separation policy. Children are separated from their parents, right. Under the Trump administration.

ARCHIVAL AUDIO [00:36:08] The first public since migrant kids might be taken from their parents came in the first months of the Trump administration. March 2017, Then head of Homeland Security, John Kelly, floated it on television.

ARCHIVAL AUDIO [00:36:21] Are you the Department of Homeland Security considering a new a new initiative that would separate children from their parents if they tried to enter the United States illegally?

ARCHIVAL AUDIO [00:36:33] I am considering exactly that.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:36:36] And I have no doubt that some of these policies will return in a Trump administration. At the same time, I have been disappointed with the policies currently right now in under the Biden administration.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:36:59] It's pretty traumatic to even be reminded of these policies. But as Professor Solimene describes, we're facing a real time of fear for immigration. You know.

PROFESSOR SOLIMENE [00:37:09] It's rooted in white supremacist ideology. This shamefully and regrettably, been successful throughout the history of our country. Right. That is not talked about enough. It's not acknowledged. It's really hasn't been dealt with. You know, it's ripe for increased restrictions and quite frankly, lawlessness that will require challenge. You know, we still are a nation of laws. You can't simply sweep people up and put them on planes to deport them. We have a severely challenged immigration system, as it is with extreme backlogs that will only be exacerbated. I quite honestly think it's going to be chaos. And we saw it, quite frankly, you know, the first, first his first administration. And, you know, you know, sort of people just living in fear and [and] again, exacerbating the conditions under which they they live, people afraid to go to the jobs that they have, people afraid to send their U.S. citizen children to school.

ARJUN DASARI [00:38:19] This is a reality to contend with. And what will it mean for the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965? The act that serves as the golden ticket for formal equality? Is that also to be eradicated? Well, here's Professor Cuison-Villazor.

PROFESSOR NGAI [00:38:43] My concern is that the contributions, the work of the 1965 Act will eventually be -- be stopped, be diminished because of efforts to to limit the number of people of color coming to the United States.

ARJUN DASARI [00:39:11] So amidst this moment of ideological warfare and precarity and uncertainty, we must find it within ourselves to resist, or at least continually strive towards imagining a future of immigration that's grounded in racial justice.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:39:40] Yeah, that's the critical question, isn't it? And I certainly hope we can. So Professor Quison-Villazor, it's about envisaging an inclusive and it's.

ARJUN DASARI [00:39:50] Really the work of immigrants that are related to all of these institutions. And this is a country of immigrants. We have to really consider that It needs to be something, a mental shift of viewing immigrants as people who belong. It's really about this politics of belonging. And for Professor Ngai, to that point, it's about a system of open borders.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:40:20] So when we talked to these experts, they said proper funding, removing backlogs in the system, enabling better temporary work phases and facilitating circular migration are all short to medium term reforms that would make the immigration system more just. But both also point to the need to address the global inequalities that drive migration.

ARJUN DASARI [00:40:42] In this podcast, we traversed the history of immigration in America. The Immigration Nationality Act of 1965 and its legacies, the various forms of rhetoric and ideologies that are present in these policies and the ramifications. And we have talked about Donna and we should return to Donna. So eight years ago in 2016, Donna, Dr. Hylton addressed the woman's rally in Washington, D.C., as the only formerly incarcerated person to do so.

DONNA HYLTON (ARCHIVAL AUDIO) [00:41:26] As we continue to march, walk, let's walk and write this because we are beautiful. We are amazing. And we are not silent anymore.

DONNA HYLTON (ARCHIVAL AUDIO) [00:41:40] Today. Today. We all of us. My voice, your voice, our voice is one voice. One voice. And together that voice is powerful. My name is Donna Hylton and this...

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:42:04] Yeah. Donna represents our story of immigration in every conceivable way. As a child immigrant, a naturalized citizen, a young person whose trauma led to

incarceration and who was threatened with deportation. And now, as a powerful advocate for women and girls of color. So what is she thinking about? The future?

DONNA HYLTON [00:42:27] That's what I'm praying for. The people's conscience will start kicking in and they start saying, you know what? This isn't right. I've got to do something. It's going to take every individual to stand up, to step up and to speak out. And call things as wrong and say, No, I'm not going to allow this. How am I not going to allow this? I'm going to vote you out. I am not with you. You are not speaking for me. You are not my voice. Because what you're standing on is wrong and that's what it's going to take. It's going to take us as a race of people. As a race of people. No new vision, no divisiveness, none of that separation. No. It's going to take us as a whole of people. And I believe our collective consciousness is going to kick in at some point. Unfortunately, we're going to have to go through the chaos to start going through the chaos for it to start kicking in, because if we look back in history, it always took times of severe chaos, extreme unrest for things to start. So people can start waking up and to start saying no. And unfortunately, we're going to have to go through this turbulence. But out of this turbulence can come a brighter future.

ARJUN DASARI [00:43:46] Thank you, Donna. We would like to thank our incredible team. Ashley, Jermaine, Brooke and I are so grateful for our esteemed interviewees for this opportunity to discuss immigration in today's world.

BROOKE GREENWOOD [00:44:04] Yes, I. And after a semester of critical race theory, I think we can all agree it helps us to both understand our history and the possibilities for a brighter future and no less so in the area of immigration.

ARJUN DASARI [00:44:18] Yes, exactly, Brooke. This semester has really unlocked this way for us to think of the possibilities for this brighter future. So all power to the people. Let's get back to work.