2023 Issue 2 | Free

SPARK

The magazine of Humanities Washington.

One Second of Hate: A Story of Forgiveness

ALSO INSIDE:

- *The missionary spies of World War II*
- *When audio technology changed everything*

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

Spark is a publication of nonprofit Humanities Washington, our state's affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Online and at community venues across Washington, we hold hundreds of free events each year where scholars, authors, artists, and activists discuss everything from Washington State history to current social issues.

Published twice per year, *Spark* is a free magazine based on those conversations. It's available at cultural organizations throughout the state, or you can have *Spark* delivered for free to your door by signing up at humanities.org.

Spark is dedicated to publishing a variety of perspectives. Opinions expressed may not reflect the viewpoints of Humanities Washington's staff, board, funders, or partners.

EDITOR:
David Haldeman

LAYOUT & DESIGN:
Tarsha Rockowitz

COPYEDITOR:
Rachel Jacobson

More stories online at humanities.org/blog
Find a free event at humanities.org

FOLLOW US ONLINE:

Cover image by Tarsha Rockowitz

INSIDE

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY
by Matthew Avery Sutton 6–9

ONE SECOND OF HATE: A STORY OF FORGIVENESS
by Agueda Pacheco Flores 10–13

WHAT WE STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR
by E.J. Iannelli 14–19

I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT
by Ross Reynolds 20–23

STANDING UP
by Michelle Liu 24–26

NEWS
from Humanities Washington 29

HUMANITIES WASHINGTON
Staff & Programs 30–31

From our Director of Programs

When I think of the humanities, I think of moments both quiet and thunderous.

The quiet moments come to mind easily: contemplative walks, a cozy bookstore, and weighty conversations over coffee.

But the humanities can get loud.

I recall the first time I read about Socrates, a philosopher strolling the streets of Athens, challenging those who claimed they were experts on one topic or another. He peppered them with questions—endless questions—allowing his interlocutors to tie themselves into philosophical knots, demonstrating that they did not actually *know* what they thought they knew. He frustrated them. The petty could not tolerate this insult and found an excuse to depart the conversation, apparently late for this appointment or that; the most aggrieved took him to court, leading to his execution.

The virtuous, however, changed their minds, able to see their errors and correct them. Sometimes they found a new belief to replace the old one. But, often, they found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to say, "I simply don't know."

For me, this first contact with philosophy did not result in a peaceful, casual interest in the subject. It was a lightning strike. I was electrified by Socrates's obsession with knowledge and his unbridled curiosity. Philosophical questions pressed on my mind, shouting their demands for inquiry, for exploration.

It can only be compared to the feeling of looking upon an endless, churning ocean, a colossal mountain, or a starry sky unpolluted by city light—it is a rapturous, humbling sense of awe and something-akin-to-but-not-quite fear. One feels the power and sheer scale of nature, a contrast to one's own diminutive place in the universe. Philosophers have named this the *sublime*.

In the same way, an idea can ignite something within you that feels like a shattering or a remaking of your mind. The world suddenly unfolds in inspiration or epiphany. This is the great gift of the humanities—wisdom. It is an illumination of what was obscured in shadow or never noticed at all.

And, at times, the greatest benefactor of wisdom is doubt. By engaging with the humanities, one encounters the best teacher of all: smart people who

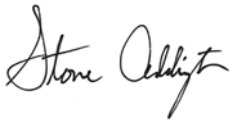
disagree with you and have good reasons for doing so. It is a challenge that is less like *wonder* and more like *being hit with a hammer*. But doubt can be a blessing when it offers the opportunity to step out of one's conviction and second-guess one's assumptions. Socrates offered this gift to those he conversed with. Some accepted the gift; some turned it away.

Doubt offers us the same choice that Socrates gave his interlocutors. Do you turn away these uncertainties, pretending as though they are baseless and not worth considering? Or do you think with courage? Can you face them head-on, focusing the full spotlight of your mind, looking for virtues and flaws?

The humanities give us these challenging moments, but also the wisdom to deal with them—thinking critically, navigating ambiguity, and practicing intellectual humility. Wisdom is a precious resource, but, incredibly, one that can be freely shared with all. We at Humanities Washington seek to share this sublime gift of the humanities with everyone in our state.

Only the humanities can provoke these transformational moments of inspiration and doubt,

quiet and thunder. I ask you to wonder, what ideas are lying in wait for you? Will they be silent and serene? Or roaring and resonant? Most critically, will you be listening?



— Stone Addington, PhD, Director of Programs

▲ John Birch performed many extraordinary acts of service and heroism, which grew out of the skills and knowledge he had developed as a missionary. Here, General Claire Chennault recognizes Birch's work with a Legion of Merit. Photo courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

In World War II, the US government realized that missionaries make great spies. John Birch was one of the best.

By **Matthew Avery Sutton**

In early 1940, fundamentalist Bible student John Birch sailed from Seattle to China. He had chosen a difficult time to start a missionary career. Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931, and in 1937 a full-scale war broke out in Asia. The missionary enterprise, difficult even in the best of circumstances, grew substantially harder for those like Birch laboring in one of the world's hot spots. When Birch arrived, conditions had deteriorated to the point that most other missionaries were leaving. Not Birch.

Birch set up his first mission in the fall of 1940, in Hangzhou, one of China's largest and most impressive cities. He preached, worked with local communities, and supported existing Christian ministries. Sometimes he even slept. But the project was short lived. When the Japanese launched a new offensive in the area in fall 1941, the missionary had no choice but to abandon the work.

In 1942, Birch traveled the countryside on a missionary circuit when he came across and helped rescued famed airman James Doolittle and his crew after they bombed Tokyo and abandoned their plane over China. Doolittle recognized Birch's potential and recruited him for Army intelligence. Birch later went to work for the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the CIA.

Birch was not the only missionary American intelligence leaders quietly recruited during World War II. The US government closely guarded the secret that they turned missionaries and religious activists into spies and assassins. American intelligence leaders intentionally hid the fact that dozens of missionaries, missionary executives, priests, religious activists, and at least one rabbi played a substantial role in wartime intelligence gathering, espionage, and covert operations. These operatives exchanged their calling to serve God for a more temporal and temporary duty. But they did not want to bring any attention to their wartime actions. If native peoples knew that some missionaries had worked as government spies, how could they ever trust the ones that insisted they were only doing the Lord's work? They couldn't. As a result, their wartime stories have remained almost entirely hidden.

Until now.

In my Humanities Washington talk, "Double Crossed: The Missionary Spies of World War II," based on my book of the same title, I tell the story of a secret army of holy spies who fought around the globe for the sake of their god and their country. None of them had ever imagined that this was the work they would do. But Japan's surprise attack on the United States on December 7, 1941 changed everything. Americans from all walks of life heeded the call to serve. For many this meant enlisting in the armed forces or going to work in munitions factories. For a handful of people whose religious activities had inadvertently provided them with a unique and valuable skill set, a different opportunity arose. American intelligence leaders realized that they could send missionaries and priests back to their foreign posts as secret agents.

Birch was one of their best. One of his most dangerous and exhausting jobs, which he undertook in the summer of 1943, was sneaking across hundreds of miles of territory and past the Japanese lines in order to rendezvous with Chinese guerrillas. For this mission, he dressed as a Chinese peasant to blend better into his surroundings. Only his previous experience as a missionary made this possible. According to one report, he walked between twenty and thirty miles a day, climbing six- to eight-thousand-foot mountains in tremendous heat. During the trip he learned that the Japanese were securing much needed resources from nearby iron mines. Birch provided the intelligence necessary to destroy the mines. According to a report from the field, the missionary had the "satisfaction of watching" the first B-25 bombers hit their targets before he scrambled away.

Mines were not all Birch found. While operating behind enemy lines, the missionary discovered a large Japanese munitions dump and garrison that the Americans did not previously know existed. The Japanese had stationed between ten and twenty thousand men there. From a nearby hillside Birch studied the village through a pair of binoculars. He identified the officers' quarters and the hidden locations of the munitions. He returned to his base with this information. American aviators proved unable to find the secret camp, so Birch joined the crew of a B-25 bomber and rode in the nose of the lead plan. From the sky he was able to pinpoint the target. American bombs rained down on the village, lighting up the munitions dump. In a major understatement, Birch reported that this was "about the only direct contribution I ever made to the war effort." Nor did he seem to ever feel any guilt over his actions. Taking human life did not run counter to this missionary's understanding of the Christian faith.

▲ Missionaries like Birch (second from left) were used to living among locals, and many had mastered Chinese languages and culture. US leaders embedded Birch with the Chinese army, where he coordinated military operations with the US Army Air Force. Photo courtesy of Arlington Baptist College Heritage Collection.

Birch also served sometimes as a human homing beacon for American pilots in search of targets in Japanese-controlled territory. He routinely went into the field to scout enemy positions and communicate precise information on their locations, providing what one of his fellow soldiers described as "faster and more accurate intelligence than any other American outfit was getting in China." Once Birch came within visual range of a target, he relayed descriptions of the target via portable radio to pilots already in the air. If bombers missed their mark, Birch got back onto the radio to coach them further, instructing them to aim higher, or lower, a little to the left, or a little to right. The American pilots dubbed him the "eyes of the 14th air force."

As Birch's responsibilities as an intelligence officer grew, he did not forget the original work that he believed God had called him to. Birch always tried to follow the Apostle Paul's directive to "work out" his "salvation" with "fear and trembling." While dodging Japanese bullets, establishing new radio networks, and helping bombers hit their targets, he continued to preach the gospel. He believed, he confessed, that a Christian should "work as earnestly to win the lost today as though Christ were sure to return tonight." This was truer than ever living in a war zone. In just about every village that Birch visited, he preached and distributed New Testaments to local residents. His commanding officers approved of his actions. They decided that letting Birch continue with his evangelism while on duty made him a better and more valuable soldier. "John," one officer recalled, was best suited to integrating both roles at once, to serve as "a soldier missionary."

Yet most missionary operatives were not proud of their actions or the choices and compromises the war forced upon them. Men of

▲ John Birch (right) arrived in Shanghai ready to convert the Chinese to a fundamentalist form of the Christian faith. Just a few years into his work, he became an intelligence officer, but he never stopped evangelizing. Photo courtesy of Arlington Baptist College Heritage Collection.

> *Taking human life did not run counter to this missionary's understanding of the Christian faith.*

great faith became men of great doubt. "We deserve to go to hell when we die," one operative later lamented. "It is still an open question," he continued, "whether an operator in OSS or in CIA can ever again become a wholly honorable man." Espionage is not like most occupations. It is not even like serving in the military. An operative's success is often proportional to his ability to bend the rules, to fix the game, to load the dice. Operatives and agents manipulate, betray, bluff, bribe, cheat, con, dupe, forge, fake, and hoodwink. Covert actions are always about ends; they are never about means. Evangelism is not like most other jobs either. Preachers and missionaries usually believe that God has called them specifically to their work. They embark on their careers with a sense of divine mission. They seek to build up the kingdom of God, not dismantle kingdoms of man. They seek the protection of the cross; they do not expect to double cross others. But they knew the job had to be done.

On August 25, 1945, just weeks after Japan surrendered, Chinese communists killed Birch while he was on an OSS mission. The US government covered up his death. Almost a decade later, his story inspired the rise of the strident anti-communist John Birch Society. Only now are we beginning to recover the story of those like Birch who exchanged their Bibles for spy craft.

Matthew Avery Sutton is a professor and chair of the Department of History at Washington State University. He has authored several books, the most recent of which is *Double Crossed: The Missionaries Who Spied for the United States During the Second World War.* He has written for the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. In 2016, he was appointed a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow.

ONE SECOND OF HATE: A STORY OF FORGIVENESS

Rais Bhuiyan was shot during a hate crime—then tried to save his attacker from death row.

By **Agueda Pacheco Flores**

Twenty-three years ago a white supremacist shot Rais Bhuyian at point blank range in the face. It was ten days after 9/11 and he was working at a convenience store when Mark Stroman went on a vengeful shooting spree targeting what he perceived as Middle Eastern people. Miraculously, Bhuyian survived. Surprisingly, Bhuyian forgave him.

Bhuyian is one of hundreds of people who became victims of hate crimes in America immediately following the terrorist attacks that brought down the World Trade Center. According to a 2002 report by Human Rights Watch, more than 2,000 backlash incidents related to 9/11 were reported by Arab people, Muslims, and people perceived to be Arab and Muslim. The report also found that the Federal Bureau of Investigations saw a seven-fold increase of anti-Arab crimes across the country.

After the shotgun shell blast showered Bhuyian's face with pellets, he played dead until the shooter left. Covered in blood, Bhuyain ran out to the barber shop next door. He still remembers his unrecognizable face in the mirror looking back at him while he pleaded for help. In the ambulance, on his way to the hospital, he cried out for his mother and begged God to save him, promising he would only do good if he lived to see another day. Waqar Hasan and Vasudev Patel, two other victims of Stroman, were not so lucky.

Stroman was eventually put on death row. And who was his biggest champion before he faced lethal injection? Bhuiyan. After attending Mecca in 2009, he fought to appeal Stroman's death sentence in federal court. He lost the appeal and Stroman was executed on July 20, 2011. In the end Stroman called Bhuiyan his brother and told him he loved him. Among his last words were, "One second of hate will cause a lifetime of pain."

Despite losing vision in one eye, facing extraordinary physical and mental trauma, and dealing with thousands of dollars of debt, today Bhuiyan emits positivity and optimism. He dedicates his life to World Without Hate, the nonprofit he founded, and is part of Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau, giving a talk called "One Second of Hate: A Story of Forgiveness." He travels both the state and the country sharing his story of tragedy, forgiveness, and redemption. He especially enjoys speaking in small towns, the kind you find in rural America.

"People are so open and welcoming," he says. "There is fear, of course, but when they come and join this event after a few minutes they feel comfortable. It's not about talking down to them or giving them a lecture. The way I do things, I do things with them, not to them, so that people feel they're part of this conversation."

Humanities Washington spoke to Rais about his journey to forgive his would-be killer. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

You'd been in the US for two years when Mark Stroman shot you. Was this your first experience with hate in the U.S.?

Before 9/11, I don't remember facing any kind of racism or hateful experience. I loved the country very much. I came here to study, so I was in a learning mood. I left my career in the Bangladesh Air Force to come to the U.S. to study computer science. Everything was new to me. Culture, people, environment.

Before you immigrated did you imagine that maybe you'd be a victim of hate?

Never in a million years. America was my dream country. Growing up in Bangladesh, watching Hollywood movies and TV shows, I was captivated by what I saw. The natural beauty, the seemingly endless opportunity, the generosity of American people. The United States is known for offering the best higher education in the world. And it's a country where anyone can prosper. And still I have the same view about America. This is a beacon of hope. This is still the greatest country on the face of the earth.

Walk me through your day leading up to that moment that changed your life forever.

Business was slow. The gas station itself was located in a neighborhood where I saw the plight of poverty, racism, discrimination, drug abuse, and gun violence. It was something that I did not watch in the movies or TV shows I remember watching as a child. Around noon a man walked in wearing a bandana, sunglasses, and a baseball cap, and he was holding something shiny and black on his waist. Having been robbed before in the same gas station, I thought it would be another robbery. As soon as he walked in, I offered him the money. But he had no desire to look at the money. He was looking at me straight. I felt cold air flow through my spine. I was freaking out at the time. "Why is he not looking at the money? Why is he not taking it? Why is he not taking the money and just leaving?"

Then what happened?

He bumbled a question: "Where are you from?" In a fraction of a second I realized: *He's here for me.* And then in a fearful voice, I said, "Excuse me?" As soon as I said that he pulled the trigger from point blank range. There was no argument, there was no confrontation, there was nothing. I felt a million bees stinging my face and then I heard the explosion. I looked

> *By killing this person, by taking his life, we will not get back our loved ones. The pain and suffering we went through will not be erased from our life, but by keeping this person alive behind bars, he might be able to get a chance, finally, to repair himself.*

down, saw blood pouring like an open faucet from the right side of my head. My military training instinct kicked in: I need to reduce myself so that I'm no longer a big target for him to shoot more. So I fell to the floor. And I remember the gun touching, pointing straight at my face. Since I was not moving, lying on my own full of blood, he finally left after a few seconds. I stood up and grabbed the phone, but I was shaking so badly I could not even dial 911.

When did you realize you survived?

When I woke up, I didn't know where I was. I could not talk because my jaw was completely stuck. I thought I'd actually died. So very slowly, I said, "Where am I?" And after a few seconds I heard, "Good morning Mr. Bhuiyan, you're in the hospital." It was one of the most beautiful moments of my life. My eyes were full of tears, not from the pain, but from the joy of still being alive. Knowing that I'll be able to go back to my mom, my family, my loved ones, my friends. I'll be able to enjoy life again. That pleasure is so powerful, so heavenly. It's impossible to express with human words. But the joy did not last long. The hospital was private and expensive and I had no health insurance at the time. They discharged me the next morning and told me to arrange follow-up medical treatments on my own.

What was your recovery like?

I went to several surgeries, one after the other. The last surgery I had was 2004. But my medical treatment continued up to 2007. After the fourth surgery, the doctor told me that there is no way they can save my vision. So I lost my vision in one eye. I still carry more than three dozen pellets. I lost a tooth. I lost my fiancé. My medical bills were piling up. It went up to more than $60,000. It took several years to finally end my medical treatments, but the toll was very high mentally, physically, psychologically, not knowing where the money would come from to cover the medical expenses. It was another trauma I was going through every single day.

What about your family? Where were they and how did they find out?

When I was in the hospital, somebody called my family and told my dad. There was no follow-up, so my family thought I was no longer there. That caused another trauma, another disaster back home, and as a result, my father suffered a stroke. Thankfully, he survived. On the forth or fifth day I called. It was a very emotional and painful phone call. I didn't want any of my family members to come be a part of this pain and misery. Rather, I wanted to face it, to get it over with, and then when things felt in a better way maybe I'd have them come.

What about Mark? What did you think or feel toward him?

I never hated him. I was never angry at him. I was angry about the whole situation, where this happened because I came here to do something bigger and better. And then now this thing. But when you learn more about this incident, why he did it, it helped me not to hate him. In the course of time, it helped me to see him as a human being, someone like me and also as a victim, but that took time. He didn't realize what he was doing, doing evil to respond to evil.

How do you forgive someone who wanted to kill you?

Our life is the most precious commodity. So when I got my life back I wanted to move forward. I wanted to rebuild my life. If I stay angry, if I stay sad, depressed, if I stay revengeful, it would be hard for me to move forward and stay sane every single day. When I went to Mecca in 2009 I was praying every single day and reflecting on the shooting incident. I realized that I had forgiven my attacker many years ago, but I feel like that was not enough. Even after I forgave him, he was going to be executed. I made a promise to God that I would help. Maybe he should be the first person that needs my help. And I needed to do something to save his life. By killing him we would lose a human life without getting to the root cause.

▲ Bhuiyan after he was shot in the face on September 21, 2001. He still carries more than 36 pellets in his face from the blast. Photo courtesy Rais Bhuiyan.

You tried to save this man from death row. What did the families of the other victims think?

After I went to Mecca, I reached out to both families. This terrible incident brought us together, but now both the widows see me as their brother. I reached out to them and I explained my intention. It's not about letting him go free; it was all about saving a life. By killing this person, by taking his life, we will not get back our loved ones. The pain and suffering we went through will not be erased from our life, but by keeping this person alive behind bars, he might be able to get a chance, finally, to repair himself. By being repaired, he might be able to contribute to the free world, reaching out to people like him and saying, "Look, this is what I did and I'm paying for my mistakes, so learn from my mistakes." If he could touch one life, if he could help one person to change, to reform, that's a positive outcome. But by killing him, we will not get anything. I did not push [the other victims' families] and I was extremely respectful to their emotions, to their thoughts and ideas. It took time. After one week, both families came. I had their blessings. And one of the families came forward and joined my campaign.

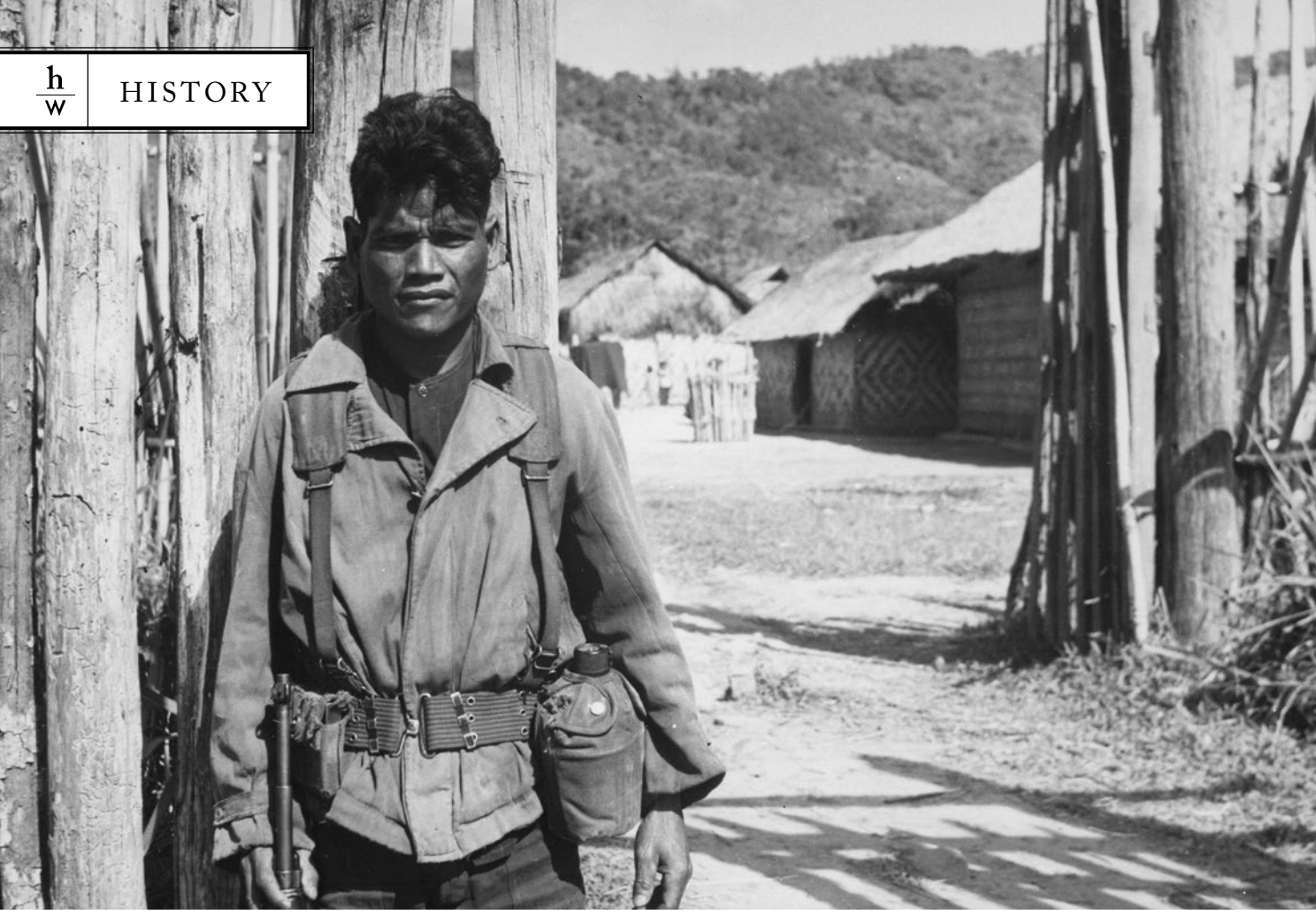
You've made it your mission to combat hate, but especially with what the political situation has looked like since 2016, do you think hate has gotten worse or better since 9/11?

Hate in America has gotten worse in some places, in some places it has improved. From my journey and from meeting people through speaking engagements, people are afraid. People are going through challenges in their own lives, struggling financially, physically, mentally, psychologically. On top of that, there is a lot of fear in our society. There's a lot of misunderstanding and misinformation. Some of that is spread purposefully by some of our public officials, some of our elected leaders, to advance their career. They don't think about how by spreading this fear, these lies, and this misinformation, they're destroying the lives of all those people. Nobody wants to stay in fear. It doesn't matter who the person is. People want to lead a peaceful life, but sometimes they don't have the capacity. They don't have the means to get beyond their neighborhood, their community. People want to learn and grow. We need more two-way dialogue. We need to listen to each other respectfully. Even if we disagree, we have to come to this point that even though I disagree, I agree to disagree, and I will listen to you respectfully. Because it might lead to an unlikely source of wisdom.

Do you think it's possible to live in a world without hate?

Absolutely.

Agueda Pacheco Flores is a freelance writer in Seattle who focuses on social justice issues, music, arts, and the Latine diaspora. She's previously written for *The Seattle Times, Crosscut, Journey Magazine, Real Change News*, and *The South Seattle Emerald.*



▲ South Vietnamese Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldier standing again a fence during the war in 1966. Photo from the American Photo Archive.

WHAT WE STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR

In America, why does our history of the war overlook the perspective of the South Vietnamese?

By **E.J. Iannelli**

▲ South Vietnamese POW's salute South Vietnamese flag after their release at Been Hoa. The United States halted withdrawal of troops from South Vietnam until North Vietnam and Viet Cong carry out their promises to free more American POWs. Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

Julie Pham was just two months old when she arrived in the United States with her family in 1979. They were among the 800,000 refugees known as "boat people" who fled Vietnam by sea in the 20-year period following the fall of Saigon in 1975. Pham's father, a former officer in the South Vietnamese military, had spent three years in a re-education camp after the war, and they were desperate to escape the country that Vietnam had become after reunification under the Communist regime.

When Pham was studying history in her late teens, she began to question the received wisdom about the Vietnam War that she encountered in America. Movies and TV shows often portrayed the South Vietnamese military and government as submissive, corrupt, or inept. Historical accounts framed the war as an example of American overreach and profligacy. Among ordinary Americans, the consensus seemed to be that their country and its military should never have been involved in the conflict in the first place.

A fateful conversation with her father about his own wartime experience would open her eyes to just how much of the South Vietnamese perspective had been sidelined in the prevailing American historical narrative. She began interviewing émigré veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Military Forces to hear their stories and give voice to the experiences that often get overlooked, such as the oppression that the South Vietnamese faced immediately following the war. In 2019, these interviews were published as *Their War: The Perspectives of the South Vietnamese Military in the Words of Veteran-Emigres*.

For Humanities Washington, Pham gives a talk titled "Hidden Histories: The South Vietnamese Side of the Vietnam War."

▲ South Vietnamese government troops from the 2nd Battalion of the 36th Infantry sleep in a U.S. Navy troop carrier on their way back to the Provincial capital of Ca Mau in Aug. 1962, during the Vietnam War. The soldiers were on a four-day and night operation against the Viet Cong Communists in the swamplands of the southern tip of the country. Photo courtesy of AP Photo/Horst Faas.

It draws on her book and the topic that she's been researching and reflecting on for the past 20 years. Crucially, it doesn't purport to be the definitive version of the South Vietnamese experience. Pham's primary intent is to provide the audience with an opportunity to have the same revelation about the Vietnam War that she once did and better appreciate its complexities.

Humanities Washington spoke with Pham about her talk and the research behind it. The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What's the basic premise of your talk?

With the Vietnam War, most of the time it's portrayed as being between the U.S. and Vietnam. The "Vietnamese" in that sense are de facto the North Vietnamese, or the Communists, whereas the South Vietnamese are shunted to the side. So I examine that overlooked perspective.

The research for it is based on my undergraduate research. I did interviews with 40 different South Vietnamese veterans who are Vietnamese-American and served as officers during the Vietnam War.

And what were some things you uncovered during that research?

There was definitely a multiplicity of perspectives. And that's something I make really clear when I'm giving the talk — that this is not a monolithic experience and what I'm sharing is based on these 40 interviews I conducted. That way, people don't think, "Oh, after hearing this, now I know the South Vietnamese perspective."

I also break these stories out in different ways. There are things that impact people's memories. How long did they serve in the military? How long did they spend in re-education camp? When did they come to the United States? The answers to those questions will influence how they think about the war and how they remember the war. And so I talk a lot about memory, too.

The thing that I really want people to leave with is that we remember things differently and we have different perspectives.

> *When you say we shouldn't have been there, a South Vietnamese veteran might think, 'Well, why not? We believed in our cause.'*

▲ South Vietnamese troops carry their weapons as they walks along highway 7 past barbed wire, between Krek and the Vietnamese firebase Alpha, located inside Cambodia about 3½ miles East of Krek on Oct. 30, 1971. Photo Courtesy of AP Photo/Nick Ut.

And to appreciate that the media portrayal and common understanding of the war is still very much centered on the American experience. It doesn't look at the fact that the South Vietnamese considered the Americans their allies and their peers.

This isn't an apples-to-apples comparison, of course, but to frame it in a way that might hit home, is it somewhat analogous to only telling the American War of Independence from the French point of view?

That's an interesting point. I never thought about comparing it to another war. I just think an easy way to describe it is when we talk about the war solely in terms of winners and losers, there are a lot of perspectives that get lost.

What are some of those lost perspectives?

If you watch Hollywood movies about the Vietnam War, like *Apocalypse Now* or *Good Morning, Vietnam*, or if you read any American history books, the writing about the Vietnam War states that the South Vietnamese were the puppets of the Americans. It was the Americans who were really in charge.

And some people who I interviewed felt that was true. But a lot didn't. A lot felt like, "No, we were their peers. They were our counterparts. They were our allies." And there's a strong sense of betrayal there. If the South Vietnamese really were equals, why should they be portrayed as less than?

Did any of the interviewees' stories present you with a viewpoint you'd never even considered?

Yes. For the most part, people weren't trying to defend themselves. For example, there are all of these negative stereotypes about the South Vietnamese — that they were corrupt, that they were apathetic. And a lot of the interviewees admitted, "Yeah, that existed. There were times when I myself was ambivalent." That stuck out to me — the sheer complexity of it. There was good and there was bad.

So it's not that my interviewees were saying, "No, everything was good, and people didn't understand we were good." It was more just like, "We want to be heard." That was the overall message. They just wanted to be able to tell their

story. Especially now that they were in the United States, a lot of veterans felt misunderstood. And they felt that this was particularly important for their children, too, because they felt like they couldn't talk to them about it.

And were there striking differences between the stories of those who emigrated from South Vietnam and those who remained?

Oh, yeah. The big difference is that those who are still in Vietnam, they're under a Communist government, so there's heavy censorship. One of the examples I hold up here is Ken Burns. For his seven-part documentary on the Vietnam War, he interviewed South Vietnamese veterans, but he only interviewed those who were living in Vietnam. And I bring this up because, with talk about historiography, it's usually about who writes the history. If you're only interviewing those who are living under Communist censorship in Vietnam about the South Vietnamese perspective, what perspective are you going to get? That's going to be quite different from the South Vietnamese military perspective that you find in the U.S.

And, again, I stress that it's not that one is right or wrong. There are differences, and I actually think that the differences are what makes it fascinating.

Was there a personal connection to this research that spurred you to pursue it?

I was 19 years old when I started this research. I was at [the University of California at] Berkeley, and all these classes gave this perspective of the Vietnam War, and I was confused. So I talked to my Dad and said, "We were the losers. That's what's in all these books." And he said, "No, actually, we fought for something." That's when I started talking to his friends and doing the research. And I realized, wow, this perspective is sorely overlooked.

What's personal about it for me is, how can such a large community be so misunderstood? And when Americans say we shouldn't have been there, then you don't understand why we were fighting. What's also interesting is, for some of the American vets who attend [this talk], when they hear this, they feel the same way. When they came back from their service, people misunderstood them and vilified them.

So, yes, it was very personal research. But at the same time, I really wanted to make sure that I wasn't being biased. For a number of years I lived in Vietnam, too, and my dissertation ended up being about a South Vietnamese Communist because I was interested in both sides.

And your father spent a number of years in a re-education camp. What role do those camps play in the South Vietnamese experience?

After the war, any officer was sent to a re-education camp — and that, of course, is a euphemism. It wasn't some polite place where people sat at desks and read about Marxism and Leninism. It was a prison camp, a hard labor camp, because the South Vietnamese were considered traitors to the Communist regime.

For Americans, there seems to be a lot of national psychology bound up in the Vietnam war. The savior complex. American exceptionalism. Is that what you found as well?

Yes, and I think American guilt is part of that too. There's such a sense of guilt for being there, and what that guilt does is it takes away from the agency of the people who were there. Because when you say we shouldn't have been there, a South Vietnamese veteran might think, "Well, why not? We believed in our cause." And that's actually a huge revelation when I talk to audiences. Most of those who come to these talks are older, and quite a few are American vets themselves, and what I have to share is quite a revelation for them. Some Americans really did see their South Vietnamese counterparts as peers, and they didn't even know that this is how they felt.

And even though my initial research was published 20 years ago, there's still a huge gap in what people understand. There are over 2 million Vietnamese here [in the U.S.], and most of them are from South Vietnam and feel incredibly misunderstood.

Regarding American exceptionalism, the other thing I talk about is the story of why people come here [to the U.S.]. It usually focuses on these 'pull' factors like the American Dream. But what most people don't think about is the 'push' factor: What incites people to leave? That's where you get into the distinction between refugees and immigrants. I often quote from this Somali-British poet, Warsan Shire, who said, "You have to understand, no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land." And whenever I quote from that, people start to get it. To be able to introduce that notion to people has been really gratifying in my experience as a speaker.

Maybe this is indicative of my own milieu, but I think this notion of, "We shouldn't have been there," is the view of the Vietnam War that a lot of Americans have now internalized.

Yes, and I think that puts a lot of the conflict on American shoulders. It's still very much centered on the American experience. South Vietnamese veterans would say, "Well, we were there, and we were still fighting Communism." And that goes back to the sense of betrayal in the interviews: "The Americans pulled out. They left us. We had to stay and keep fighting."

In talking to veterans in the interviews, many of them said, "We served for decades. Once you were in the military you didn't know when you were leaving." Whereas, in the American case, you did your tour of duty and that's it. But for the South Vietnamese, once they joined the military, that was it for the rest of their lives.

With so many perspectives and so many factors influencing them, what's the grand takeaway from all this? Is it simply that the Vietnam War is far more nuanced than we might have been led to believe?

Yes, and that we are all capable of still learning. But are we open to that opportunity?

On a related note, when people talk about Vietnam, they often talk about the lessons learned. However, to me, as a historian, I know that we can learn from history, but we can't prevent bad things from happening. We can't prevent war. There will be things that come up that we feel we have to fight for. Right now, nearly 50 years on, Vietnam might be doing really well economically, but they still don't have political freedom.

And that's what I want people to leave with. This sense that it's much more complicated than we initially think.

E.J. Iannelli is the arts and music director at Spokane Public Radio, and a freelance writer, editor, and translator. He's a regular contributor to regional newspapers and magazines as well as *The Times Literary Supplement*.

▲ Herbert Hoover with a radio in 1922. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

I LIKE *the* SOUND *of* THAT

Five moments when audio technology changed everything.

By **Ross Reynolds**

We live in a visual world. We watch constantly: online, at the movies, and on television. But the rise of moving pictures was predated by advances in audio technology that made sound the pre-eminent mass medium in the decades before television arrived in the 1950's.

Audio is a powerful and evocative communications technology. Telephone, radio, podcasts, and audio books create unique experiences. Media theorist Marshall McCluhan classified most visual media as 'hot,' meaning that it contained lots of information. But audio on the other hand is a 'cool' medium—it provides much less information, and thus demands more participation from the consumer. As opposed to film and television, it makes our mind create the accompanying pictures. Here are five key moments in the evolution of audio transmission technology.

▲ Alexander Graham Bell at the opening of the New York and Chicago telephone line, October 1892. Photo by E. J. Holmes courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery.

1. The Telephone.

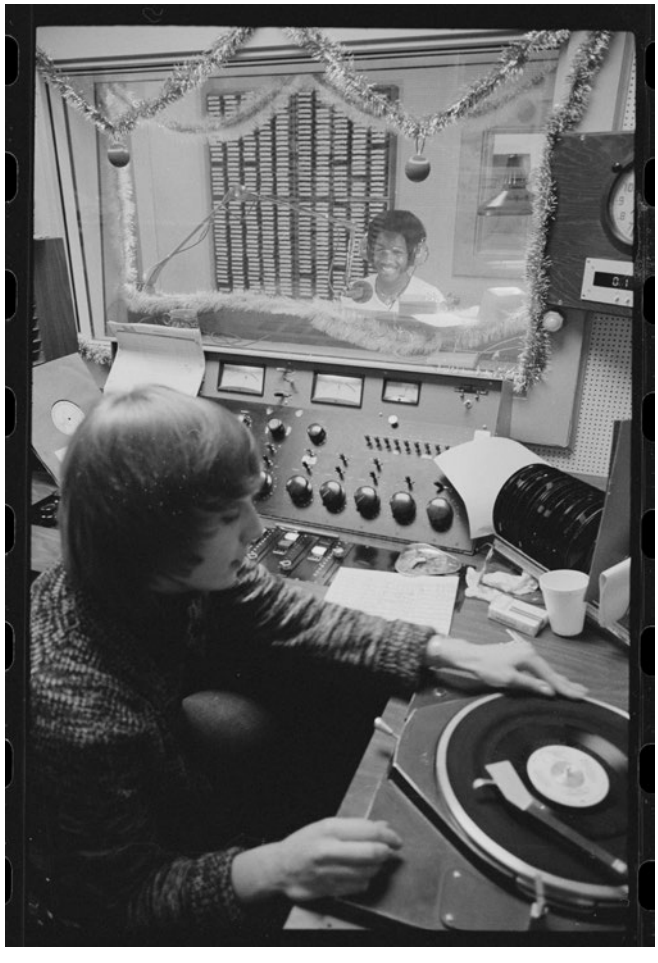
The groundwork for the telephone can be traced back to the 1830s, but it was in 1876 that Alexander Graham Bell filed a patent for a device that could transmit speech electrically. On March 10 of that year, Bell successfully made the first telephone call to his assistant, Thomas Watson, saying the famous words, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you." Although he invented the telephone, Bell considered it an unwanted interruption. The inventor of the telephone refused to have one in his study. Despite its being nearly 150 years old, the telephone remains a profoundly important communications method, allowing you to hear the subtleties of a person's voice—its changes in pitch or volume or its shakiness or steadiness. My wife talks to her brothers every week, and she can tell their mood within seconds of starting the conversation. How many momentous moments in your life took place on the telephone? Calling for a first date, talking to a doctor, hearing from an employer. So much can be conveyed by a phone call.

▲ A US farmer listening to a crystal radio around 1922. AM radio broadcasting had a revolutionary effect on rural life, and radio listening became a hugely popular pastime. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia.

2. AM Radio.

As marvelous as the phone was it was still only person to person, and phones had to be connected by a wire, which took a massive logistical effort to set up across long distances. That changed when the first broadcast radio station went on the air in 1920. It was a medium that collapsed space and time. In fact it was so new, there was no word for what radio did, so a word from agriculture was appropriated: broadcasting. The term originally meant "to spread seeds," but over time, broadcasting was redefined to mean radio waves scattering over the air containing radio messages and speeches, and then news, music, radio theater, and live sporting events. It's difficult today to imagine the impact radio had on the world. Radio was the first medium

to connect masses of people across huge geographic areas at once. To many people at the time, hearing those voices was magical. A newspaper article in the early days quoted a woman what thought radio was just like a séance—it brought voices from beyond the land of the living. Today most media is saturated in advertising, but in the early days of radio some opposed this. Then Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover said, "It is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service to be drowned out in advertising chatter."



▲ WFC-AM & WKYS-FM radio operation 12/19/1977. Photo by Thomas J. O'Halloran, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

3. FM Radio.

The first FM station signed on in 1941, but to hear FM, you had to buy an FM radio. The broadcast signal was higher audio quality than AM, but FM didn't begin to catch on until the 50s and 60s. Unlike popular AM frequencies, FM radio frequencies were easy to acquire. Many educational institutions (University of Washington, Washington State University, Seattle's Nathan Hale High School) snapped them up. In the 1960's FM music stations catered to the youth culture with music AM stations wouldn't touch. This also coincided with a reawakening of the power of radio to not just entertain, but also educate and inspire. President Johnson and Congress created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to fund public radio and television, with the goal of creating a more informed public. That led to the rise of public radio stations. Although most funding comes from listeners, the federal government though CPB still provides an important stipend to public radio and TV stations.

▲ Progressive Networks is considered by many to have started the streaming media industry with their launch of RealAudio 1.0 in April of 1995. Photo by Brett Jordan/Unsplash.

4. Streaming.

In 1994 Rob Glaser left his job at Microsoft to start Seattle-based company Progressive Networks. The goal was to provide a distribution channel for politically progressive content. They produced audio programming you couldn't get on radio and distributed it over the internet. But what caught on was not the political content, it was the distribution of audio via internet through a technology known as streaming. It was scratchy and

> *A newspaper article in the early days quoted a woman what thought radio was just like a séance—it brought voices from beyond the land of the living.*

glitchy over 300 baud modems, but suddenly that computer could talk! As computers and internet connections got faster, audio quality improved rapidly. One of the earliest events streamed over the internet was a baseball game between the New York Yankees and Seattle Mariners on September 5, 1995. Streaming has now transcended broadcasting, and today most radio stations also stream their signal. A remarkable app called Radio Garden allows you tune into virtually any radio station in the world.

▲ Violeta Martin interviews Dr. Karina Vega-Villa on science-informed activism for Humanities Washington's podcast *A More Perfect Union*. Photo by Humanities Washington.

5. Podcasts.

All the audio transmission technology I've described so far transmits live in real time. But one facet of streaming technology that's become a huge source of audio content is the ability to download audio and listen to it at your convenience. According to Edison Research, 83% of Americans 12 and up are familiar with podcasts, but only 31%—primarily people ages 12 to 34—have listened to a podcast in the past week. Podcast listening is a distinctly different experience from radio listening. Rebecca Mead wrote in the *New Yorker* that great podcasts presented an audio narrative [that] can be immersive in a way that a radio playing in the background rarely is. Podcasts are designed to take up time, rather than to be checked, scanned, and rushed through.

The future of audio technology is apt to be less about how you listen and more by how what you listen to is created. The NPR podcast *Planet Money* recently did an episode written and edited entirely by artificial intelligence on the topic of—wait for it—how technology replaced almost all the female telephone operators. The producers used AI to write questions for interviewees, chose the clips of sound from the interviews, write the script, and even create an AI voice based on a former show host. The show's producers found the computer generated podcast pretty good, but lacking in the spontaneity and humor of an episode produced by people. While these developments are horrifying to some content creators (they are a major factor in recent labor unrest among writers and actors), others are chomping at the bit to create AI versions of themselves. When Kara Swisher interviewed Martha Stewart, the queen of domesticity let slip she was working a project for an AI Martha that could answer all your home, kitchen, and garden questions. Martha could just relax. Stay tuned!

Ross Reynolds is a journalist who recently served as KUOW's executive producer for community engagement, before which he was a program host for 16 years. His awards include the 2011 Public Radio News Directors First Place in the call-in category for *Living in a White City*. In 2015, he was named to the University of Washington Communication Alumni Hall of Fame.

▲ Margaret Cho taking the stage at a comedy festival. Photo by Charlie Nguyen.

STANDING UP

Asian American identity, comedy, and belonging.

By **Michelle Liu**

What does laughter tell us?

I've been asking myself this question ever since Humanities Washington gave the green light to my idea for a Speakers Bureau talk on comedy, Asian Americans, and inclusion. I was suddenly beset with nerves. What business do I have in talking about laughter? Sure, I have a fascination with Asian American comedians, and as an English professor, my trade is to examine ever-shifting narratives of who we are and how we connect. But doesn't everyone laugh? Does the world really need someone to talk *about* laughter? Wouldn't everyone rather hear from a comedian than an English professor?

As to the last question, you got me. But while I am not a comedian, I am curious about laughter. The itch to do a talk about humor came from a student comment long ago in my Asian American Literature class. While we were discussing the varied feelings people had about the raunchy jokes and impersonations of the stand-up comedian Margaret Cho, an

exasperated student piped in with her takeaway from another class: comedy isn't for thinking about. You either laugh or you don't. Move on.

I can't remember what I replied, but I do know part of me continued to conduct class while another part did exactly what annoyed my student—I thought about comedy. Laughter bursts out of the body with the exuberance of a compressed spring, no thought required. But what compresses this spring?

As anyone who aims to amuse knows, a joke is more than the content. It's all about you, the teller. About your sense of… timing. Your sense of what the audience anticipates a person who looks like you will sound like. Knowing how people move in the cultural landscape.

> *"In the American imagination, "Asian American" and "comedy" are an unnatural pairing. Comedy is all about extroversion, and so much of the Asian American experience has been about being boxed in—packaged as model minorities or threats to the American way."*

This attentiveness is why I'm so interested in Asian-American stand-up comedians. In the American imagination, "Asian American" and "comedy" are an unnatural pairing. Comedy is all about extroversion, and so much of the Asian American experience has been about being boxed in–packaged as model minorities or threats to the American way. These tropes appear to be contradictory, but really, they describe simultaneous lived planes of existence. The model minority and Asian peril: two sides, same coin.

This simultaneity makes Asians, according to the writer Jay Caspian Kang, "the loneliest Americans," with "no more reference points for how we should act, how we should think about ourselves" beyond model minority or threat. We are the nonplayer characters of the democratic experiment, performing whatever roles needed to make the actual players feel more like agents of their own destinies (hello, *Students for Fair Admission v. Harvard*).

But the unexpected can happen when a person tunes in to where the script dictating how we "should" act and think drops off. And so many Asian American comedians (more than a few who have left behind steady careers as scientists, programmers, and medical professionals) have been making this unexpectedness funny. And it starts with changing what people think an Asian person sounds like.

"I would describe my comedy as noises, sounds–weird, but also really relatable." So says the comedian Atsuko Okatsuka in a blurb for her HBO Max special. Playing with what Asian American sounds like–accented American English and not, drawing on everything ranging from childhood experiences to very adult, un-*Joy Luck Club* material–is all part of making relatable the "untelegenic" range of emotions that the poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong calls in her book of the same name the "minor feelings" that arise from being cast as nonplayer characters. From a distance, Asian Americans are orderly, disciplined, and comely even, adding richness to the stories of others. But upon closer examination, that attractive appearance is jarringly pixelated, quaked by the emotional tremors that come from this unsettling realization: you are seen reliably performing the same motions ad nauseam, but if you speak, you are not meant to be heard.

So just telling stories about these minor feelings alone isn't what makes them relatable. Without the life Margaret Cho gives to her material in her delivery, the transcript of her one-person show, *I'm the One that I Want*, reads like a deeply unfunny tale of coming-of-age with addiction and ambition. Reading the transcript of her show is like witnessing the struggle of an insect caught in historical webs, woven of the spidering intersections of family and nation that wrap us into who we "should" be. This struggle indeed looks lonely and alarming.

But through her performance, she turns her story into a series of jokes that calls in the audience to listen with her. Cho, like so

many Asian American comedians who follow in her trailblazing footsteps, makes it possible to talk about things otherwise only shared with friends, family, or therapists. Humor surfaces the restless thoughts and emotions running just below the surface of day-to-day life so that a room of strangers, in laughing along, become strangers no more.

I marvel at the Asian American comics who create outlets for untelegenic feelings that may be, well, untelegenic. As comedian Ali Wong's partner relates in her book, *Dear Girls*, when people buy commemorative posters to remember the night they laughed so hard they peed, he glows, knowing the mother of his children has succeeded. Succeeded in creating unexpected moments in which an Asian woman (pregnant and nonpregnant) jokes with ebullient crassness about sexual desire, materialism, and gender roles. Successful in doing what many who seek to create community through humor want: for you, the laugher, to know that the sore core muscles that come from belly laughing means that your body is gloriously yours, necessarily entwined with the other people around you. To realize that to have "no more reference points for how we should act, how we should think about ourselves" is not loneliness, but creative flux. A place where entangling historical webs that have affixed who we should be are broken, leaving new space to weave our various histories together into tapestries rather than traps.

Everyone knows that not all laughter leads to a good place. Poking fun at the backwardness of Those Other People. Snickering at those not Normal Like Us. These jokes work because everybody already knows what they should do–laugh *at* rather than laugh *with*. These jokes release the coil of laughter only to repack it tight. They emerge from the cynical subtext that there is nothing to do about the suspicions and dissatisfactions built into everyday life.

It's so easy to get people to laugh in a way that subtracts rather than adds, which is why I'm full of admiration for people who do the daring work of experimenting with getting people to laugh with rather than laugh at. What laughter tells me is that to be heard is not just to speak, but to use humor to create different ways of listening to voices we otherwise don't know how to hear.

I've noticed that a lot of people coming to my Humanities Washington talk expect that it will be about laughing, so they anticipate not taking things too seriously. Certainly, laughter can be an escape. And it can help us be so much more. The most challenging part of putting together a Humanities Washington talk about humor is that so much of the humor that gives release to minor feelings is untelegenic, its unprettiness connected to the grim conditions of their making. But that challenge has been the most fun part of giving this talk. How to make inclusion happen is a laughing matter. It's looking to stand up comedians as guides for standing up–standing up for new ways we can hear and feel who we are together.

▲ Ali Wong performing stand up in 2013. Photo by Greg Harries.

Michelle Liu is a professor of English and the associate director of writing programs at the University of Washington. She is also a member of Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau.

Support Humanities Washington through a Planned Gift

Leave a legacy for Washington State that promotes a deeper understanding of the self, of others, and the human experience in order to promote the common good. Planned giving could allow you to make a more substantial charitable gift than is possible during your lifetime, and can offer significant tax advantages for you and/or your heirs.

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

For more information please contact,
Shelley Saunders, at 206-682-1770 x103
or via email at shelley@humanities.org

Information on gift planning provided by Humanities Washington is not intended as financial, legal, or tax advice. Please consult an attorney or other professional advisor before taking action.

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

Quarter MOON

bedtime **stories** 25th FUNDRAISER

We look forward to seeing you at Bedtime Stories 2023,
Humanities Washington's annual fundraiser
where Pacific Northwest writers unveil original short stories!

SEATTLE • SEPTEMBER 29
Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI)

SPOKANE • OCTOBER 20
Chateau Rive

Let's celebrate our shared humanity together.

For more information visit humanities.org

NEWS

from Humanities Washington

Announcing the 2023-2024 Heritage Arts Apprenticeship pairs

From West African dance to Mariachi music, Nooksack language preservation, canoe making, and more, The Center for Washington Cultural Traditions is excited to announce the new apprenticeship pairs for the 2023-2024 Heritage Arts Apprenticeship Program.

Folk and traditional arts practices are often learned informally in one-on-one settings, and many practitioners lack the resources and network to pass on their skills. Because of this, many traditions are at risk of being lost. The Heritage Arts Apprenticeship program helps carry on cultural traditions important to Washington's communities by having a skilled master artist mentor an apprentice over at least 100 hours of one-on-one time over a year. To view the full list of apprenticeship pairs, visit humanities.org.

▲ Franchesska Berry, master of West African and African dance, with her apprentice Nola Taylor.

The Center for Washington Cultural Traditions is a partnership between Humanities Washington and ArtsWA.

Introducing Prime Time Preschool

Announcing a new Prime Time program: Prime Time Preschool.

Like our Prime Time Family Reading program held at libraries, schools, museums, or other eligible youth-serving organizations throughout the state, each six-week Prime Time Preschool models reading and discussion techniques that families can easily engage with, transforming homes into learning environments and giving children strong foundations for becoming lifelong learners.

Prime Time Preschool serves children from three- to five-years old and their families. The sessions are held in-person, and promote school readiness through development of reading, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Using beautifully illustrated, award-winning books with culturally diverse stories and themes, Prime Time Preschool incorporates a communal meal, story sharing, discussion, and play to create a rich, humanities-based learning environment. Prime Time Preschool serves between 10 and 15 families.

New Speakers Bureau roster begins January 1

Every two years, Humanities Washington appoints a new group of scholars, writers, artists, activists, and others to travel the state giving fascinating public talks as part of our Speakers Bureau. Starting January 1, a new slate of talks will begin across the state, including subjects as diverse as early Northwest rock and roll, the roots of homelessness, LGBT identity in the early days of the internet—even turning lost loved ones into artificial intelligence.

Check out the complete list of talks on our website at humanities.org.

Board of Trustees

Shandy Abrahamson
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Deepti Agrawal
Deepti Designs Inc

Todd Arkley
Arkley Accounting Group

Julieta Altamirano-Crosby
WAGRO Foundation

René Baca
Wenatchee Valley College

Ryan Booth
WSU Pullman

Annmarie Caño
Gonzaga University

Xavier Cavazos
Central Washington University

Andrew Chanse
Spokane Public Library

Peter Danelo
Heller Ehrman (retired)

Eric Davis
Bellevue College

Jennifer Ernst
Yakima Valley College

Mike Faulk
Office of Governor Jay Inslee

Senator Karen Fraser
22nd District Thurston County (retired)

Geoff Froh
Densho

Betsy Godlewski
Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture (retired)

DeAnne Hamilton
KBTC Public TV

Joshua Heim
Western Arts Alliance

Brianna Hoffman
Washington Library Association

Eric Lawson
University of Washington

Mark Miyake
Western Washington University

Clarence Moriwaki
Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community

Bradley Richardson
Clark County Historical Museum

Joe Ross
Gates Archive

Colleen Rozillis (chair)
Moss Adams

Staff

George Abeyta
Senior Program Manager

Stone Addington
Director of Programs

Tom Beasley
Technology and Special Projects Manager

Sarah Faulkner
Program Manager

David Haldeman
Director of Communications and Content

Rachel Jacobson
Development and Communications Coordinator

Jera Lego
Project Manager

Violeta Martin
Program Manager

Thomas Grant Richardson
Director, Center for Washington Cultural Traditions

Eric Sanders, CPA
Chief Financial Officer

Shelley Saunders
Chief Resource Development Officer

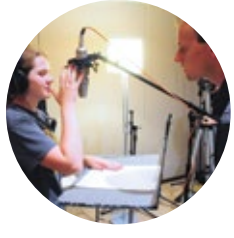
Julie Ziegler
Chief Executive Officer

OUR MISSION

Humanities Washington opens minds and bridges divides by creating spaces to explore different perspectives.

OUR PROGRAMS

FAMILY READING uses storytelling and discussion to explore cultural and ethical themes in children's literature and emphasizes the importance of families reading together.

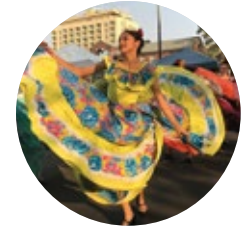


GRANTS assist local organizations in creating opportunities for their community to come together to discuss important issues using the humanities.

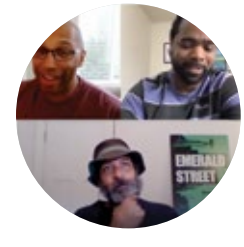
SPEAKERS BUREAU draws from a pool of leading cultural experts and scholars to provide free conversational lectures in communities throughout the state.

THINK & DRINK brings hosted conversations on provocative topics and new ideas to pubs and tasting rooms.

WASHINGTON STATE POET LAUREATE builds awareness and appreciation of poetry – including the state's legacy of poetry – through public readings, workshops, lectures, and presentations throughout the state. Presented in partnership with ArtsWA.



CENTER FOR WASHINGTON CULTURAL TRADITIONS amplifies our state's rich, diverse living cultural treasures through research and special programming. Presented in partnership with ArtsWA.



MEDIA PROJECTS brings online content such as live and recorded panel discussions and conversations, radio shows, and other accessible deep dives into important current topics to viewers on our YouTube channel.

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

130 Nickerson St., Suite 304
Seattle, WA 98109

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 2389

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Changes? Please make the corrections on your address label, check the appropriate box below, and return to Humanities Washington.

- ☐ *Name misspelled*
- ☐ *Contact person changed*
- ☐ *Address wrong*
- ☐ *Duplicate mailing*
- ☐ *Remove from mailing list*

Or send changes via email to info@humanities.org