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Narrator: Hiroki Kimiko Keaveney
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HK:

But I think like I emailed Amy Sueyoshi, she was leading this oral history project called The Dragon Fruit Project. It was an intergenerational, um, like one queer elders and Queer youth who are all Asian and Pacific Islander, Queer and trans. Sorry. Um, and she like kind of swooped me up. Like she, I sent this email and be like, hey Amy, like, thanks so much for welcoming cause like she was, she knew the director of API Equality-LA, so API Equality-LA - see this is how they take care of people there, she was like, oh, let me introduce you to Amy Sueyoshi. She's someone you should know. And so I met Amy at API Equality in Northern California because of API Equality-LA. So like API Equality-LA actually like, yeah, they're so good about taking care of people and like welcoming people, you know? And so, um, so when I met Amy, I like told her, I was like, yeah, like I'm too white, I'm so sorry, like, this project sounds awesome, but I shouldn't be the one to be a part of it, like, thanks so much, you seem really cool but yeah, I can't. And she like responded with this like really long email and it was so nice and she said all these nice things and she was like come into my office - like she works at San Francisco State - and basically that conversation led to me applying to grad school and like led to me - like she even shared something in the email. She said that a lot of JAs like fourth generation don't feel connected to or even third generation like Sansei don't feel connected to Asia America because we have such a different history with the internment and being like generationally in the United States compared to a lot of Asian Americans who are the first generation or second generation and like, you know, immigrant kid aches like language, filial piety, guilt, all the shit. Like that's just something we don't really have as much as other Asian Americans. Like a lot of us didn't speak our language growing up. A lot of us didn't eat the foods growing up. Like, we don't, we don't have that story of going to elementary school, bringing our food and having the kids make fun of us, you know, or stuff like that. Or like you, yeah. Anyway, I don't even to go out into every

horrible thing, you know, every type of microaggression or racist thing that Asian Americans go through. But basically like Amy's email really, she really saw me and like she really accepted me as a mixed person, which was really, I was like, whoa, really? Like, cause she's - I thought she was monoracial but I found out she was Okinawa and mainland Japanese. And I think that's a mixed experience in and of itself. And so, um, anyways, so to answer your question in the bay, I didn't organize with Japanese Americans and I didn't organize with Asian Americans. Um, I was volunteering some time with the straight, they're not all straight, but like, I find that like straight Asian American groups are more welcoming of mixed people than queer and trans groups. And I think at, I keep saying queer and trans, but I'll tell you, the trans community is so welcoming. We would take everyone, take white people would take everyone, but um, anyway, but it's like for like Queer Asian American, like it's just identity politics or it's just so intense when you're half white. It's just like, should I even show up? Like, and but with like I found with like more hetero, like Asian American, there was less of crabs in a barrel. It was more like, oh, you're half white, okay, my husband's white. Or like, you know what I'm saying? It wasn't like as serious like, and so I did volunteer some times with um, the Asian Law Caucus, which is like Asians Advancing Justice - Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Um, the one in San Francisco and um, yeah. Um, God that was so cool. Like, cause I got to meet some of the Japanese American elders, um, like famous ones and like it was like, that was a very - that was a very important experience for me too because like I understood the ways in which fame really disconnects people. Um, like way we idealize like say the Kochiyamas or say the Korematsus but then actually meeting the Korematsu's and the Kochiyamas you see that they're just people and that they're normal and that that we can be great too. And it's just that their families were in the spotlight with their excellence. And that was a gift to get to, to know the Kochiyamas and the Korematsus, um, stories better from their children, um, through Asian Law Caucus. And then now I'm here and um, I have to say, cause I, you know, I know I shit talk the Queer API community a lot on the west coast - or well in the bay, but I also want to name that being here with queer and trans Asian Americans, it's been really healing actually. Like they're so welcoming. Like I showed a picture of that group I 2 I to a friend on the west coast and I was like, oh my God, look at this photo. And it's like you have like South Asian, southeast, east, like transracially adopted people, mixed people who are double POC and like half white. Like you have like you have old people, you have young people, people bring their babies to events here. Like it's just like so cool. Like it's intergenerational,

it's mixed ethnicity, it's mixed class. It's like I've never been in a space like that for queer and trans Asian Americans. And so it, it's been so powerful to be around such a welcoming community. So I don't want to say all community spaces are the same as you can hear just from the differences. Um, cause like Tadaima was so welcoming. But if you notice, I said we worked separately in our different little ethnic enclaves. We work together - here it's like they - I know people separate - but it seems more like, you know, and I'm like, oh, interesting. And I showed my friend that he grew up in the bay area and he saw the photo and he's, he's Korean and Japanese and he saw it and he was like, whoa, this looks like a Sense8 photo. And there's this TV show called Sense8 and it's all about like interconnectedness of humanity. And I was like, I know it looks like Sense8 because, um, yeah, it's like everyone's so different like, but they all are like a family. So, um, so yeah, that's - and in DC I was there for only like 6 months and there were like no Asian Americans. Like it was so like, it was so shitty being Asian American there. But like my friends who were there were API like a few of them, so I didn't feel isolated, but it definitely felt weird being Asian American in DC for sure. Um, and I'm sure there are groups there, but I just didn't really know of them.

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