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Mama Nattie: Excited. Not sad, excited, apprehensive. What am I expected to do? What am I going to do? How should I act, or how should I ... All those things that you would think of, or that I think of, for facing something that I've never faced before. But the one thing that, really, I think that helped me was that your dad was there.

Jason Lee: We're Jason and ...

Yvonne Lee: Yvonne Lee. Wife.

Jason Lee: Husband, father.

Yvonne Lee: Mother.

Jason Lee: Actors.

Yvonne Lee: Producers and seekers.

Jason Lee: Educators, explorers of identity.

Yvonne Lee: You're listening to Lagralane Spirits. A delicious podcast where we invite you into our living room for a family spirit symposium, a real-talk meeting of the minds over reverent cocktails.

Jason Lee: Join us as we dive back in time to examine the legacy of our ancestors that have shaped the stories of our shared cultural history. You can find all of our cocktail recipes and show notes on [lagralanespirits.com](http://lagralanespirits.com). And, as always, please enjoy.

Yvonne Lee: Responsibly.

Yvonne Lee: We are not trees to be rooted in the ground, held steadfast by the earth not to be moved. We are the seeds from the oak tree floating violently in the wind.

Jason Lee: They were chased from their homes by the threat of the grave and sought freedom through blending. Their mixed race heritage, a mark of every seed and bloodline, would help them pass somewhere else, somewhere new.

Jason Lee: This is the violence of migration.

Yvonne Lee: This is the violence of migration.

Yvonne Lee: Hello and welcome to tonight's episode of Lagralane Spirits podcast.

Jason Lee: Hey guys. Welcome.

Yvonne Lee: This season, Jason and I are exploring all things identity. We'll revisit moments in American history through the lens of our own family's roots and the legacy of the generations that have come before us. Tonight, we'll be exploring the threads that connect violence and migration. To help us explore this topic, we'll

be chatting with a special guest, Natividad Lagramada Huff. We'll be indulging and what we have coined a spirit symposium with you all tonight. These days, we think of a symposium as a meeting of experts around a specific topic. But the actual origin of the word comes from the Greek word sympinein, meaning to drink together. What are you making, babe?

Jason Lee: Tonight our little OB joyful is the humble Sazerac, it's a Louisiana creation. A New Orleans staple and, in my opinion, one of the simplest and most elegant cocktails. Spirit, sugar, bitters, water, that's it. The ingredients of this drink are incredibly simple: 1 1/2 oz of Cognac or Rye whiskey, 1/4th oz Absinthe, one sugar cube, and three dashes Peychaud's Bitters. Here is your Sazerac, Yvonne. Why don't we get a little more comfortable?

Yvonne Lee: To family, legacy, and migration.

Jason Lee: Cheers.

Yvonne Lee: Cheers.

Jason Lee: What's the verdict, Yvonne?

Yvonne Lee: Wow, that's great. I love the Cognac, it's delicious and so refreshing.

Jason Lee: I love the bitters, I love the complexity that the Peychaud's adds. This little chestnut colored beauty was invented in 1838 by Antoine Amédée Peychaud.

Yvonne Lee: Peychaud Bitters.

Jason Lee: Yes, right. He was a Creole apothecary who moved to New Orleans from the West Indies. He was an immigrant. This drink got me to thinking about migration, his personal migration, and massive migrations like the Trail of Tears. Coincidentally, the same year this drink was created, the forced removal of 15,000 to 17,000 Cherokee Indians from Georgia that resulted in thousands of deaths. Almost half didn't make the journey. The Trail of Tears was forced, was Peychaud's. That wasn't the only forced migration at the time. Kidnapped Black Americans were led by slave catchers in Maryland and Virginia on these forced migrations called coffles, either by land or by sea, which ended at Southern slave trading posts as Natchez, Mississippi and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Jason Lee: I don't know, it makes me think about how we all got here. It makes me think about your mom and her story.

Yvonne Lee: Yeah, my mom is an immigrant. She came to the US after meeting my dad. This is for all of you out there, just to let you know a little secret. Not a secret, part of my history. My mom came to the US after meeting my dad during the Vietnam War while he was stationed in the Philippines. It's interesting because I am a combination of peoples who came here because they've migrated, and also because of people who came here because they ... through the force of violence, through being enslaved peoples. My dad was trying to find a better path, and so it's interesting that the Vietnam War was actually this way that

he ... It was war that took him back out of this country, and it was a way for him to get out of Macon, Georgia.

Yvonne Lee: I can't quite remember, I ask my mom about this, was he drafted or did he enlist? But I do know that there's something that he was running from. As we think about how we all got here, my mom is from the Philippines. She met my dad when she was in college. They were cleaning apartments or the houses, or maybe there was a party. There's always that story, how did your parents meet? I've actually heard this story at least 10 different ways, but what I'm sticking with is that my mom and her cousin were trying to make money for school by cleaning apartments. Somehow they came across the place where all of these GI's were staying, and that's where my mom and my dad met.

Yvonne Lee: In the end, it took me a long time to understand the makeup of my family when I think about my mom and my dad together. But a lot of my mom's cousins married black servicemen, that's what happens when we go to these other countries and we're located there in times of war. I'm interested in seeing what's happening over these past few wars that we've had, all the different kinds of beautiful people that will come from those encounters.

Jason Lee: Iraqi, African.

Yvonne Lee: Yeah, exactly. But for my mom and for a lot of people in third world countries, and this is how I think of it, I don't know if it's totally true, but marriage was one of the ways out of the country at that time. I'm not sure if my mom was trying to escape, but somehow she knew that there could be another kind of life for her here in the States. It's funny enough that all of my mom's cousin somehow ended up in Arizona like my mom did. That's what I grew up with, is with my mom's cousins, who are actually my second cousins but I call them my auntie's. My dad at the time was stationed at Luke Air Force Base after the war. I have memories of when we moved to Arizona and then it was time to go grocery shopping, and we'd go to the Luke Air Force Base commissary and there's all of this food.

Yvonne Lee: It was such a fun thing because we'd all pile into the car, and there'd just be aisles, and aisles, and aisles of food. I don't know why that is such a great memory for me as a kid, maybe it's because I knew we were going to get ice cream or something like that. But it made me think about how we all got here and for my dad to come from enslaved people and then to go into the Vietnam War, and how he was treated being a black man in Vietnam, coming back to the States. It wasn't until much later on that he told me that they gave him the wrong pair of shoes, and so he never quite walked straight because they never gave him the right size shoes. I will say that one thing that I do take from my mom and I have a lot of respect for her, is in the Philippines, you always pay respect to the eldest, and that's one thing that I've learned from my mom.

Yvonne Lee: One of the women whose shoulders I stand upon, my mother, is that she always ... Because she's the oldest you always handles the respect that is due to her with such care and be in service to her family. And me, being the oldest of three, I've shared this with my husband, Jason, but I'm also sharing with you, the

listeners. That is something that I always hold as something that is sacred, that for me as the oldest to always be respectful of my position as the oldest. For my mom and my dad with everything that they've gained in creating this new life, including with us, the kids. I have a younger brother and a younger sister. My mom's life, her new life had its ups and downs.

Yvonne Lee: A lot was lost in migration, at least for me, and especially her language. I didn't learn her language, my dad actually didn't let her speak it in the house. I wished I'd learned it, I wished by now that I would know ... The national language in the Philippines is Tagalog, and my mom speaks a dialect of [inaudible 00:11:07]. So one day, I'll learn it. Jason, what do you think gets lost in migration?

Jason Lee: A lot. You mentioned language, it makes me think about self identity. How we speak, what we say is so a part of who we are. When that gets lost, a part of ourselves, our heritage, is gone forever. My wife Yvonne knows this, and I'll tell the listeners, I was adopted. I was about eight months old when I was adopted. At first all I knew, growing up, all I really knew was my adopted identity. I literally adopted an identity from my adopted family that raised me, and raised me with love, and support, and concern, and care, but I was adopted. Every family history has a story, mine certainly does too, both my adopted story and my biological story. My adopted story, I'm Jason Delane Lee. That's my name.

Yvonne Lee: Our son is Maximo Delane Lee.

Jason Lee: Our son is Maximo Delane Lee. There's an interesting just family story behind both Delane and Lee. My adopted father, his name was Richard Delane Lee. So I inherited his middle name, which we have then now passed down to our son, Maximo. But Delane wasn't the original name. My adopted father was of Norwegian descent, and his mother named him after Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Originally his name was going to be Richard Delano Lee, but the O when she wrote it looked like an E. So that just stuck and it became Delane, which is now mine and his adopted grandson's middle name. And, who knows, maybe Maximo's son will be a Delane as well. Lee also, this family line of my adopted father, they were the Endilees. And as a lot of immigrant families do when they've come to the States, they shortened their names, or they changed their names, and Endilee became Lee. So, thusly, I became Jason Delane Lee here in 2021.

Jason Lee: I'd say it goes so far to say the tragedy of America, as great of a nation as we are, the tragic elements of America is this loss of culture, and the labeling of everything outside of the dominant culture as other.

Yvonne Lee: Yeah, I think about all the people who came here either by choice or not by their choice because their names were changed. Because it reminds me of our last name, Lee, and it's interesting the way that people might identify me when they see that my name is Yvonne Lee. How much story that they might get out of it because they'll see, oh, she's a black woman, but she looks like she has some ... Don't use this word, people, don't ever use the word exotic. They might say Yvonne Lee, and she looks like she's black and Chinese, or black and something. I think to myself, if they only knew the steps of history behind my name, Yvonne

Lee, is how that gets lost in translation. How this is the first thing a person might say is, "Oh, are you part Chinese?" And I would say, "No." Actually, in Asian culture, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, there are so many, many, many different, very specific cultures that we don't all get to experience.

Yvonne Lee: I do get a little upset sometimes when the first thing that people say is Chinese, because that's the biggest touchpoint that people have with Asian culture, in my experience. In a way, that is a loss of culture for you and me, because our complete identity can't be found in our last name. Does that make us other?

Jason Lee: What is other? If we take the chance to really learn about our neighbors or [inaudible 00:15:43], it makes me think about on my biological side, that unknown is my adopted side, my adopted identity that I embraced until I started researching more about my biological history. Because I've met both of my birth parents and I've found their names. This conversation is interesting because it's ... for me, personally, because it took me locating their names for me to get on ancestry.com and plug in their names, thusly finding out more about my biological heritage. Which led me to my birth father who was born in Oklahoma, but then on the ancestry, I started realizing there were a lot of individuals further down the family trees who were all from Louisiana. Some from Southern Arkansas, but a lot from Louisiana. I was like, "Wait a second, what's this?"

Jason Lee: And so I had to go explore that a little more and dive into what was happening in Louisiana and in the deep south in the 1800s. We know our history, there was a lot of racial strife in the 1800s in Louisiana, but there were also free blacks. There was a strong culture pre Civil War of a free black community, not everybody was enslaved. That was an interesting exploration, and you see these successful black communities getting to a point, there's a recurring theme in American history where successful black communities get to a point where the dominant culture gets a little bit jealous and they go on the attack. You see this all the way through American history, literally to January 6th 2021, it's just an interesting exploration in the 1800s.

Jason Lee: Like I said, there was the post Civil War era, the Reconstruction Era from, call it, 1863 to 1877. Then in 1870, there was a ratification of the 15th amendment. Every state in the south had African American males being elected during Reconstruction to State congresses and the US Congress, individuals who a decade earlier were enslaved.

Yvonne Lee: I remember when you were diving into all that history. These are things that I did not learn in elementary school, I did not learn them in high school. It wasn't until later, so it was so fascinating to hear about, through your point of view, where we had to ... you were originally told that we had to go in and dive and find out about all these successful ex enslaved people.

Jason Lee: I was a history major in college, and I wasn't taught a lot of this truth in college, and I specifically studied African American history in college. And so to find a personal connect to that was fascinating. There was a-

Yvonne Lee: Grounding.

Jason Lee: Very. Blacks who could fully enjoy citizenship. It's like we're living through a Reconstruction Era movement again today, to go from the presidency of Barack Obama, to the presidency of Donald Trump, now to the presidency of Joe Biden. It's really reminiscent, I would assume, if anyone was still alive from the 1870s, to what's happening right now. 2,000 African American men held office from local, all the way up to the Senate. The majority of these individuals were specifically in South Carolina and in Louisiana. With this newfound power, these communities gained power, but then they were faced with and this leads to violent acts, which forced migrations out of the south.

Jason Lee: A particular one that I found was on a far, far off family tree branch, a gentleman by the name of Gabriel Mugler, who would have been great grandfather ... No, the grandfather of my great-great grandmother's sister. Her husband was the grandson of Gabriel Magloire, who was lynched on September 5th 1892 in Marksville, Louisiana. That act, that lynching act, led to the movement, the migration, the forced migration of his wife and immediate family on a wagon trail ... wagon train from Louisiana to Luther, Oklahoma, therein 1893 for survival purposes.

Yvonne Lee: That does something to you, when you realize you're adopted, you're a black man. Then you go back to, wow, this is the exact way of how I'm connected to history.

Jason Lee: Yeah. As a product of an interracial relationship, I was put up for adoption. Which is another act of a migratory purpose out of a family structure and into an unknown. I think often about what it took for these family members to pack up all their known belongings. Oklahoma wasn't a state back then, Oklahoma wasn't a state until 1907. Phoebe Magloire, Gabriel Magloire's wife, was the matriarch of this crew, of this clan of this family clan, that moved from 1893. She passed away in 1906, her gravestone is still there, on the property where they moved to. The homestead property where they moved to outside of Luther next to an abandoned church. She passed away in 1906, Statehood for Oklahoma was 1907. Many of these family members then moved to Tulsa, and we all know that this is the 100th year of what happened in Tulsa in 1921. What do you know about Tulsa?

Yvonne Lee: What do I know about Tulsa?

Jason Lee: Yeah.

Yvonne Lee: The thing that actually makes me upset is that I did not know about Tulsa, Oklahoma, anywhere in my education, from elementary school, to high school, to college. It wasn't until I graduated, left college, and then documentaries and all kinds of things were coming my way where I actually understood what happened in Tulsa. This self sustaining affluent black community being destroyed by the dominant culture, I'll say white people, because they needed to be put in their place. That they could not have the things that they had. Thusly, wiping out an entire community of folks who might have been the next president, who might have been the leaders of our country in so many different and beautiful ways.

Jason Lee: And that this happened not just in Tulsa, but in so many known and unknown areas. Cities, villages, townships across our landscape, both in the north and in the south. We talk about the post George Floyd reckoning, this reckoning is a post Civil War reckoning. This reckoning is an American reckoning that we have been doing decade, after decade, after decade, for a very long time. I think attaching our identity, these violent acts, these migrations, these migratory movements, how they shape our identity, how we go from ... I think about Phoebe Magloire, she was a nationless and a stateless woman. Oklahoma wasn't a state, she died before Statehood. She was living in this territory from 1893 to 1906 before she passed away, not really in the United States of America. That adds a different type of impact and lens about who do I think I am in this landscape? How am I being received by, to use their language, the other, as I raise my family? As your husband, as I help raise our children? I think it just leads to a very interesting conversation, which we're having right now.

Yvonne Lee: Yes. It's time to introduce our guest.

Jason Lee: Today's guest is pretty special. Yvonne, why don't you introduce her?

Yvonne Lee: Hello, Mama.

Mama Nattie: Hey.

Jason Lee: Mama Nattie.

Yvonne Lee: Hey, everyone. Okay everyone, my mom is here. I love my mom, it's so exciting. We're not in the same room, we can't do it because it's quarantine, but we are speaking to each other. My mom, not only is she a mom, she used to work at the post office. Her number one job is being a mama and a grandma. She's been professionally or ... I guess, yes, being a yoga teacher and teaching herself, and teaching our kids even. My mom is very grounded and likes to be Mama to other people in my life. Which is really awesome, and I learned how to do that from her.

Jason Lee: I remember when I first met who I refer to as Mama Nattie and I was wondering how to ... What do I say? Because Yvonne and I were dating and I didn't know if I should refer to you, Mama Nattie, as Mrs. Hoff. You said to me, I just remember you said, back in the late 90s you said, "Just call me Mama Nattie." That has been the case for me ever since.

Mama Nattie: And that's what everybody calls me now.

Yvonne Lee: I have to remind them, do not call her by her first name.

Jason Lee: But Mama Nattie is also Lola to our children.

Yvonne Lee: Yeah, they would never call her by her first name. They don't even know what-

Jason Lee: The culturalism of Lola.

Yvonne Lee: Yes. Well, just for the folks of you out there, in the Philippines you never call an elder by their first name. I remember when I did that to my uncle Jose for the first time I met him, and he wouldn't even look my way even though I kept saying "Jose, Jose." Anyway, it's more of a Filipino culture, you don't call somebody by their first name. Okay, so we're here. We've just had a great conversation about immigration. So Mama, can you tell us a little bit about your migration from the Philippines? What it meant to you, what was happening at the time? How you felt about it?

Mama Nattie: Well, I have the opportunity to migrate here to the US because I met your dad and we got married. He was in the Air Force, so to migrate here, you had to go through all the paperwork. In the Philippines, you hire somebody to make it easier to go through all the paperwork that's needed to get your immigration papers. That's how I know it was done in the Philippines, and that's how I got here. I was a wife of an Air Force personnel. I flew Space A, stopped in Alaska, and then arrived in Arizona, and had to get used to the 100 plus weather where I've never been in 100 plus weather [inaudible 00:27:38]. That was quite an adjustment, yes. But as far as getting here, getting all those paperwork, mine was more of the normal way of getting the paperwork processed, just because your dad was in the military.

Jason Lee: I don't think I knew that you and Yvonne's dad were married in the Philippines.

Mama Nattie: Yeah, we were married in the Philippines. Yeah, we were married in the Philippines first, then we went through with the paperwork and hired a company to ... Like you have here where you have company here that helps people with their passports, well, they have that in the Philippines too.

Yvonne Lee: Just as a point of clarification, because I mentioned earlier that I feel like there's five different versions of how you and dad met. Can you tell again, was it that you were in school and you were working with your cousin, and you were cleaning up an apartment and they were there?

Mama Nattie: My cousin, Romain, you've met her.

Yvonne Lee: Oh, yeah.

Mama Nattie: Cousin Romain was already married to her husband was in Angeles City. I went to Angeles City to go to school and I was staying with them, and part of the arrangement was that I would do the housekeeping for them. They were living in an apartment.

Yvonne Lee: Got it. And so then dad came over?

Mama Nattie: Yeah, that's where I met your dad, when they would have this get together on weekends. That's how I met your dad.

Yvonne Lee: The truth shall set you free.



Jason Lee: I never had the opportunity to meet James Huff, and I will always remember asking you for Yvonne's hand. I guess my question there, to go back to your arrival in Arizona. You said you went through Alaska?

Mama Nattie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason Lee: I lived in Manila in 1980, and we flew through Anchorage on the way there, Anchorage, to Hawaii, to the Philippines.

Mama Nattie: Yeah, that's where I stopped in Anchorage, which to me was the first time I've ever been out of the country. And then to arrive in Alaska, where at that time it was really cold ... Well, I guess it's always cold, but then it was always day time.

Jason Lee: That's right.

Mama Nattie: The time we were there, the sun never went down.

Jason Lee: To go from the Philippines, to the cold of Alaska, to the desert of Arizona. That's interesting.

Mama Nattie: Yeah. Then Arizona, I was getting used to it because you go outside in May, it's already hot. So picked the time when I would get out of the house, just because it was so hot.

Jason Lee: He was stationed at [crosstalk 00:30:55]?

Mama Nattie: Luke Air Force.

Jason Lee: At Luke. Yeah. How long was he stationed there?

Mama Nattie: That's where he got out. I think I already had Alvin when he did get out of the service. Then worked for post office, first as a mailman and then as a mechanic. When he retired, he was a mechanic.

Jason Lee: I'm interested in this from my own backstory as well. I'm a German and black descent, and I'm curious of the times in the 70s, early 80s. Did you and he have a lot of conversations about the transnational multi-country, multi-racial family that you so beautifully created?

Mama Nattie: I don't think we ever had a conversation about it. Where we were, it was just a normal thing. Because we are in this community with mostly military personnel, and you have people that are there like me having married to a black guy, and then the next house might be another one just like me but also mix marriage. Then the people that we did also, what you call it, party with or have a get togethers. There was never a mention of being white or black, or I don't know, maybe I just didn't notice it. Because, for me, it was just we were all there and didn't matter what the color was. It doesn't matter how you talk, we understood each other, and that's just how I looked at it.

Jason Lee: I think the military aspect of that comes in strong too. It's a unifying element, right?

Mama Nattie: Yeah, I think so, because everybody that we associated with have been somewhere around the world, or coming from different parts of the country.

Yvonne Lee: Do you remember how you felt when you started coming to the States? Were you excited, or sad?

Mama Nattie: Excited. Not sad, excited, apprehensive. What am I expected to do? What am I going to do? How should I act or how should I ... All those things that you would think of or that I think of for facing something that I've never faced before. But the one thing that, really, I think that helped me was that your dad was there. Whatever it was, it wasn't anything that I would face by myself.

Jason Lee: Can't wait for COVID to end so we can do it again. But one of my favorite gatherings is either Thanksgiving or Christmas there in Phoenix with you, and Alvin, and Bibi, and your whole family. I know you're the oldest of your ... the oldest sibling in your family. Yvonne has a lot of auntie's there in Phoenix also, were you the first one to come over?

Mama Nattie: Yes. I think I was the first one to come here. Then after that, I think Romain was still in the Philippines, and then Cora. Then Adela and ... Oh, wait a minute. No, not them but cousins in San Diego, they were next. But I think I was the first one here. They were still in the Philippines when I came. That was hard also being here, was that when I was here, it was just me. Like I said, the one thing that made it all easier for me it was that your daddy was there.

Jason Lee: Thank you so much for sharing that Mama Nattie, and sharing so much of your story with us. But I'm wondering now, Mama Nattie, are you ready for your cocktail confession?

Mama Nattie: Yeah.

Yvonne Lee: Okay, Mama. You might have spoken to it a little bit, but we'll go more deeper into it. What makes people uproot their lives?

Mama Nattie: What makes people uproot their lives? Opportunity, love. I think opportunity goes with looking for a better life, and that also ties up with first you want to ... something that you want to join somebody that you love. The worst part is you're trying to get away from something or somebody. Then you go through all that and uproot yourself or uproot your family just to get a better life, a better chance at life, better chance of happiness, better chance for your family.

Jason Lee: I love that. Talking about the Vietnam War, out of a violent environment, a war, that you and he fell in love and started a family, and migrated here to the States to raise that family. That's beautiful.

Yvonne Lee: Did the Vietnam War have anything to do with wanting to get out of there, out of the Philippines?

Mama Nattie: No, I don't think so. That didn't have anything to do with the Vietnam War. Although during the Vietnam War, there was a lot more military personnel in the

Philippines. But as far as the violence that was the war in Vietnam, no, it didn't have anything to do with that.

Jason Lee: I know he was from Georgia, so the move to Arizona was specifically for the Air Force Base?

Mama Nattie: Right. From the Philippines, he was stationed to Luke Air Force.

Yvonne Lee: Did your other cousins in terms of uprooting their lives ... They're her cousins, your cousins, but I call them my auntie's because that's the respectable thing to say. But did they leave for those same reasons, you think? Did any of them leave because they were trying to get away from something?

Mama Nattie: I guess we all left because we married military people. Your aunt Angie married your uncle Douglas, and then Cora did do with Bill. You remember Bill, right?

Yvonne Lee: Yeah. Of course.

Mama Nattie: So did my cousin Mercy, she also married Air Force person. Actually, that's what happened.

Jason Lee: For the listeners out there, we all took a trip to the Philippines after Yvonne and I got married in 2006. A quick side story, I think this connects. It was in 2007 when we took a trip to Guiuan in Homonhon. The fiesta was going on, I just remember a big party and there was a DJ. It was a very big family event, it seemed like, on Homonhon there, everybody was a family member. I just remember the DJ pointing out family and giving shout outs, and then he looked directly at me and he said, "We don't know where you're from or what you are, but tonight, you're Filipino." I was like I'm welcome to the family now. That love familial, Mama Nattie, I felt this from you the first time I met you when Yvonne introduced me to you. The welcoming into the family, you made a lasting impact of me, so thanks for that.

Yvonne Lee: I'm curious, when you uproot yourself and then you're in a different culture, how do you feel like you rerouted here in the States in passing along Filipino culture to me, and Bibi, and Alvin, and then to our kids? I guess I have my perspective on what I take from it, but what was your intention when you are no longer in your original culture?

Mama Nattie: My intention was to just be where I was and absorb everything. Watch, and absorb, and learn. I guess it's more like your survival instinct, is that I'm in a new place, I have to adapt. I have to watch, I have to absorb whatever it is that I need for me to survive, to prosper. To not so feel like I've been uprooted, it's more like I'm here, this is my life. I'm going to do everything I can to make it and live and be happy where I was. I missed all the other stuff that was in the Philippines, though, having to get together with the Filipino ... with my family in the Philippines. But at that point, staying in the ... What I say is that keeping my mind in the Philippines rather than where I was wasn't going to help me.

Yvonne Lee: Early on in those years when we were all born, how did you feel like you passed on Filipino culture to us, or was it just kind of organic?

Mama Nattie: I don't really think I actually did take into ... or actually planned on that, it just came through. Whatever I did, whatever was done, whatever I passed on to you, it was just all, I guess, organic. Or just out of making sure that when I raised you, I raised you guys the way I was raised. In the Philippines, everybody takes care of everybody. It's a whole community that take care of each other, at least where I was, where I was growing up. That kind of mentality, that kind of caring, is what I still do. And so, when you guys came along, I didn't have that. But I still have that feeling that you guys come along that I have to take care of you, there's no other choice. There is no ifs, ands, or buts, it was just it. No matter what, you will be taken care of.

Jason Lee: One thing I've benefited from greatly is the Filipino food, the chicken Adobo. You've greatly passed on your chicken Adobo, Mama Nattie, to your daughter here, and it's a weekly staple for us here. I want to just respectfully lean in a little bit more on this, though, so I can see how culture can be passed through. Yvonne doesn't speak Tagalog, and I'm wondering was there a ... When you first got here or into the 80s, was there a conscious or not choice about passing on the language?

Mama Nattie: I don't think there was ever a conscious or unconscious way of not passing on the language. I wasn't surrounded by other people that spoke my language, everybody just spoke English. I was probably the only one that was Filipina where we were, and then when I did see people, the Filipino people, was when we went to the commissary.

Yvonne Lee: The commissary.

Mama Nattie: The military store, the military grocery store. When I hear somebody speaking Tagalog or other Filipino dialect, then I would speak it, But otherwise, there was no other people that speak the Filipino language, or speak Tagalog. Then also, your daddy didn't speak the dialect even though he was in the Philippines for a couple of years. I guess, no pressure, just speak it or no, because everybody just spoke English.

Jason Lee: Well, then you took that one step further and mastered the game of Scrabble in English.

Mama Nattie: Yeah.

Jason Lee: Pretty impressive.

Yvonne Lee: But I also thought that daddy didn't want you to speak the language.

Mama Nattie: Well, that was too. He didn't understand it, so he didn't want me to speak it. Instead of say this to me and teach him how to it, and that didn't happen.

Jason Lee: Yvonne, how old were you when your Lola came? Mama Nattie, when did your mom come over?

Yvonne Lee: I was in college.

Mama Nattie: She was in college. She came in 91'.

Yvonne Lee: Yeah, I'd just graduated high school and then went to college that fall.

Jason Lee: I mentioned her because she is no longer with us, and I know she got to a certain point when she wanted to go back because she might have known that the end was coming and she wanted to be back in the Philippines.

Mama Nattie: Yeah.

Jason Lee: How do you feel about that? You've been here for as long as my wife has been alive, I'm smart enough not to throw out numbers here right now.

Yvonne Lee: Well, she's been here longer than she was in the Philippines.

Mama Nattie: That's very true.

Jason Lee: But you have a strong connection, for familial obvious reasons, back to the Philippines. Where is home for you, is it both?

Mama Nattie: This is home, yeah. Your house is my home. This is my home. Philippines is my home.

Yvonne Lee: All three?

Mama Nattie: All three. Wherever you guys are, I'll be home.

Jason Lee: Well, we can't wait to visit with you in person when it is safe to do so.

Mama Nattie: That would really be nice.

Yvonne Lee: Yeah, [foreign 00:46:04].

Mama Nattie: [foreign 00:46:04].

Jason Lee: What did we just say?

Yvonne Lee: Thank you for visiting with us. We said I love you, she said I love you too.

Jason Lee: Mama Nattie, thank you so much.

Mama Nattie: You're welcome. This has been fun.

Yvonne Lee: We migrate with a desire for a better life, for opportunity, for love, for life. To bring what we have to the place we are now, to become seeds floating in the wind.

Jason Lee:

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