

Ethnic studies Transcript.

Me: Um, hello, my name is Kwentin and I am interviewing Dan Call and I am a junior and we are at Franklin Pierce high school on Friday, January 7th, 1:34 PM. Okay. So my first question is how long have you lived in the area of Tacoma or post?

Mr.Call: Um, altogether, I've lived here now for 15 years. Uh, three years in 2004. And. Uh, we moved away in 2007 and I moved back in 2010. So this is my 15th year.

Me: What is, well, how, how do you like the area so far?

Mr.Call: I really like it. Um, both for the climate. I love the trees, the clouds, the relative lack of snow compared to where I came from, but I also love the diversity of this area. You mentioned relative lack of snow.

Me: We just got like four inches of it.

Dan Call: Yeah. But that's nothing compared to what I grew up with in Utah where like we'd have three, four months of snow a year.

Me: Yeah. Yeah. What is something from your culture slash Homeland? Is this, does it still record? Oh, okay. Okay. What is something from your culture slash Homeland that us people here in Tacoma that people here practiced?

Dan Call: Uh, yeah, the, with my Chilean roots, um, I. I really wished that we had a lot more of the sense of hospitality or like the sense of duty to strangers. There's even like one of the most popular songs in Chile talks about, um, like how this is how we treat strangers. It's like a line in the song. Um, and the way that they do like is just you, you treat strangers as the most respected guests and so. Like the example I always think of is that in Chile, when you serve a glass of water to someone, you put it on a plate and you bring it out to them. And if you have to touch it, they always say, please, excuse the hand, like the, if you touch the cup because they just want you to feel, uh, very honored and welcomed there. Once I was walking down the street on a summer day, and I asked somebody who was watering his bushes, like, could I just take a sip of water from your hose? And he shook his head and sat down and said, wait, And he went inside and came back with a glass of water for me on a plate. And I was like, okay, I guess if you want to do that, and it kind of bothered me a little bit, that he was going to so much trouble for me, but at the same time, like what if we had that kind of attitude towards anyone that we saw here that we treat them in that same way?

Me: What do you think it would be like if people here in Tacoma or this area had that same hospitality?

Mr.Call: Uh, I think number one that we would have probably like a lot more. Institutionally. I think that on the streets, in these parks, we would see a lot more parks. I'd love to see that. Um, I would love to see a lot less graffiti going up in some places where that is. I'd also love to see us, um, maybe do a better job of taking care of the poor or the homeless in this area. Uh, we do have a lot of good institutions. Don't get me wrong, but I think that we would be more serious about, uh, getting things done.

Me: Since you told me that. Well, how about, we'll answer this question for both. When you visited Chile and your, uh, where you reside now, have you ever experienced discrimination and or oppression in school work or community, you know, in Chile or here as well?

Mr.Call: Uh, I mean, since I grew up in the United States, the first experience that I remember was when I was. Five years old. And there was another kid on the block who I was playing with, but my mom called me, uh, to, to go back. This is like on a Saturday evening. I remember she called me from way down the block and I said, okay, I gotta go. And he said, don't go yet. And he kept like saying, don't go. And as I got to go, my mom was calling me and he finally used the N word on me when I was five years old. And it was the first time I remember. Where does a five-year-old kid learned that word? Right. And I, I have given it some thought and I think that it was probably just something you heard his parents using to talk to other people in a way that was demeaning. And, and, uh, anyways, it stuck with me. And that was the first time the other like formative experience when I was in school. I remember, um, talking with my fifth grade teacher once and he wanted to know about, uh, my background. We just moved into this. And this teacher was asking me questions about my background. And I was telling him that my mom was from Chile, which is how I always heard her say it as well as my father. They said chili. And I didn't know that a lot of English speakers had chili instead of chili. To me, it was like a bowl of beans and ground beef that you get from now. So he stopped me when I said my mom is from Chile. He stopped me, held up his hand and said, it's pronounced. And I was, I thought, okay. But I went on and the next time again, when I said chili, he wants again stopped me. I'll never forget that. Like he wasn't, I think trying to be insensitive, he maybe hadn't my best thought in mind thinking he needs to learn to speak like an English speaker. Yeah. He just thought you were saying it wrong. Yeah. Right. It's just a clash of different ideas about how to say something, but it really stuck with me. And as a teacher, I might say. I have constantly looked at my teaching and said, have I ever interacted with students in a way that make them feel insecure or less than about their own home language, their families?

Me: Yeah. You meet people the way you teach. You make people speak out about it too. Cool. So what I'm hoping for, from being in your class, I can tell that you've viewed embrace your culture, which is amazing, and it makes people feel warm and comfortable, but what, what role does it play for you, your culture or other people's?

Dan Call: Yeah, thanks. Um, I mean it teaches me of course my own history, my own past. And I think that a people without a past is a people with amnesia. Like if you don't know your past, then there's these other identities that the corporations or companies or other people have ready-made for us to consume because you need an identity of some sort.

And that's why. We see a lot of people with consumer identities. Uh, I think that it's, I mean, it's not bad for instance, to, to say I'm going to dress like this group of kids over here. I really like that. But I think that, that we have an identity that our ancestors have given to us and it doesn't have to be the only. Yeah, uh, that we are, that we do. So if you want to, uh, you know, where Naruto clothes or something like that, I mean, that, that's fine, but we should keep in mind too, like where we came from. Uh, and my culture for me at least serves that purpose, that it teaches me how to be in the world, how to be in relation to other people, how to be in relation to the earth. Uh, and, and so like, I guess one example of that, uh, The the, the Chilean culture. One thing that I was used to seeing a lot was older people who were retired, would just walk around the neighborhood, looking at stuff and picking up garbage and, um, oftentimes chatting with people and keeping an eye out for strangers in the neighborhood. You know, there was a sense of community that they kept in place. And I really liked that a lot. They were even like, you know how, like sometimes here I think. They use miss or Mister before their first name. We, we usually will say, ah, Mr. Call for me. But if it's a respected adult, you use their first name. And you'd say like, miss Jamie. Yeah. They'll do that in Chile as well, but they use Dawn and Donya. Okay. And it's a title that you only give to the most respected. That's good.

Me: Yeah. Um, what was, what was your childhood like? How did your childhood differ? Where you experienced or your kids, how did it differ from children today?

Mr. Dan: Oh, I spend a lot more time outside unsupervised. I got into a lot of danger and nearly killed myself a couple of times. Like just playing outside. Yeah. Just on, on accidents. Um, I fell out of a tree once and, and could have broken some bones, but didn't, uh, We grew up near a military base. And, uh, so there was a lot of, of, um, of things. Let's just say that one day, my friend and I found, uh, a rifle shell that was about that size. It was a shotgun shell. We needed to blow this thing up. You know, I was like seven years old. So we got a hammer and started like smashing this thing, thinking it'd be cool if it made like a popping explosion. Oh, we've got some recycling now. So. Um, so we hammered this thing probably like six or seven times on a rock thinking we need to make this thing blow up like a fireworks. And it wasn't until later on, we didn't get it to go off, but somebody told us that thing could have killed you. You know, the beads, they there's like a hundred of them a minute to destroy every band. I didn't know that. And so I think by thinking, I guess my childhood was filled with a lot more danger. And compared with my own kids, I lament that I might have taken away some of that from them, but we also have raised kids in an internet age where we can see on a map for instance, like where the sex predators live in this area within a one mile radius. Uh, and also this area. One thing that I, I do dislike about this area is that there's just not sidewalks. Yeah, that's, that's don't want to intrude, but I told you, I came from shadow there's sidewalks and buses everywhere here. There's like none from miles. I'm like, damn, but there'll be a school. Like, for instance, here, when you leave the school, like when you take a right, there's no sidewalks until you get to the intersection by the QC. And it just amazes me. I was like, oh, I like to send my kids walking down the street. If they want to go somewhere, I have to think. Are they going to be in a spot where like a karma hit them? Or I don't know. But it also is very unsafe nowadays to just, I mean, it was probably an unsafe thing, but I guess you grew up where you knew right from wrong, but a lot of kids are sheltered now to, to the point where they don't really know right.

From wrong in some aspects of a predator or just, I guess, keeping themselves safe. So I've tried to give my kids opportunities. Oh, they're onto like dropping them off places sometimes in parks or leaving them in certain spots and saying, Hey, uh, dropping them off at the supermarket and seeing here's 15 bucks go in and I needed to find this, this and this.

So they have that experience of interacting on their own in public, but it's still not the same. This isn't just a new era or a new age for people. So when you can't, you can't really blame yourself or feel bad about it. It just got to raise your kids. How you raised him. Yeah, that's true. I asked you this the first time too.

And I want to see, hear your answer this time as well. How do you feel about participating in the national Anthem or the pledge of allegiance? Very mixed feelings. Um, I did it and questioning when I was growing up because I was a Cub scout and an Eagle scout in boy Scouts of America. Um, and, uh, but now that.

We are, uh, it's been enforced by the state that we're supposed to be doing the pledge of allegiance on a daily basis in schools. And I used to, I remember when we would do the pledge, I used to ask people to stand for it. I wouldn't, I never pushed her insisted that anyone did, but I used to ask them to stand for it.

And I'm glad that I don't have to do that anymore. I don't. I sometimes, well, no, I usually stand for it, but I don't place my hand over my heart because I feel I'm number one. Uh, I mean the, the flag itself to me is a symbol and a symbol stands in place of something else. Right. For an idea. So for me, it's, it's the people, it's the ideas and the values that we have in this country.

And to me to pledge allegiance to the flag, like why not pledge allegiance to another symbol? Like I pledge allegiance to the alphabet, or I pledge allegiance to, uh, the Bible, you know, these are symbols for other things. And so I, I'm not super enthusiastic about it. And especially knowing how this country has treated people of color, uh, and how it's treating the planet, the environment itself.

Um, I will stand and look at the flag while that's happening, but for me, the standing isn't out of respect as much as standing like as a power. To look at it and to think, and reflect myself on what I want out of this country and what it's doing for me and for others. And so that's just 30 seconds a day that I'll take to do that, but I see it as productive for me, but just maybe not in the way that the lawmakers who pushed me to do it, we're hoping.

Do you think, uh, how you were raised or how other people were raised? You say you stand for the pledge, but you don't put your hand over your heart over your chest. Do you feel that just how you're raised? Like you just need to respect the flag or not need to, but I don't want to say obligated either, but that's obligated to stand for it, but you also don't want to, um, yeah, they do show us how you were raised and where you were raised.

You're obligated to stand for the flag and look at it and respect it as a symbol. I definitely think that the, yeah, the practice and years of doing it. Created in me, the at least some sense that I should join in. Right. And I guess that's my thing. Like, because at first I wasn't critical about it. I just did it.

And the, the different responses that are to do it the way that they had intended to not do it or to do it, but to subvert the, the practices and that, for me, like, I feel like I want it to be part of something. I think that as a country, we do need some. Some common practices. Yeah. Right. Um, so like with English, for instance, I wish that everyone who wants to learn English could have the chance to do it, but I'm not going to insist that people speak English if they don't want to.

And in their homes or in schools or in public, they shouldn't have to speak English, but to have some kind of a common language, I would love for everyone to have the chance to learn it. If that's what they want. And the same with the pledge, I feel like it gives me. Regardless of, of, uh, how we feel about the flag.

It gives us the chance to participate in something together, but I'm really cool. Like if somebody wants to take a knee during the pledge, I love that if somebody, yeah. If somebody wants to raise a fist during the pledge or during the national Anthem, absolutely let them do that because they're participating in it in some way, even though others will say, well, that's not how you should do it, but I see it as participating.

And subversion of something to say, this is what it means to me, or this is how I choose to join. Yeah. I just want to add into, and people would do that. You know, there's a lot of controversy with the Colin Kaepernick. Never understood. It. Never understood the, the conflict with it. I mean, yes, it was the big thing back then, because everything wasn't on the open, but he was okay.

He was kneeling, but he was standing for what he believed. Which is why I was like, Tony, anybody else could do it, but it was because he was a national icon. Who's one of the best quarterbacks in the league. They went there, you know, the NFL is all about Americans and all that American flag and all that stuff.

So I just never understood it. It just baffles me because it, me, if I was a quarterback and I stood for something I would kneel or I would put my fist up or I would, you know, you know, et cetera, et cetera,

all types of stuff. It just, it makes no sense to me why people should argue with a man who believes in things that.

He feels him. Right. It's very baffling to me to, yeah. I, I don't know. I mean, let's just move on. Next question. Um, you lived in, okay. You told me that you, your is in Chile. Oh yeah. Uh, what is your relationship with your ancestral language or language from your Homeland? Um, I mean, it's, it's layered, I should say because, um, Spanish being one aspect of that, my mother grew up speaking Spanish and I heard it because my parents spoke it to each other while they were raising us.

And so when I started studying it in school, and then I had the chance to live in Chile, it got a lot stronger. Um, but then, um, so after, uh, that's what I realized and came to learn. Uh, I Mata is the indigenous language that my mother's ancestors spoke and that the Spanish conquerors, the colonists came in and tried to stamp it out the same way as like what happened here in north America.

Right. And so that's something that is kind of troublesome for me because as a teacher of Spanish and as a great lover of the Spanish language and as somebody who took. And exploring everything that, that both like Spanish in general, but Chilean Spanish also came to offer me. I have to come to the reconcile with the fact that Spanish itself was a colonizer's language and, uh, that it was used in a way that was meant to wipe out people in culture.

And so I've been trying to study a little bit of Imada. It's really hard since it's. Yeah. Spanish is a lot more similar to English and you can see some common routes with Latin. I Mata has no. And like a language that has no Latin it, I mean, it, it does only because it's absorbed some Spanish. And so like some words, for instance, uh, the word for bank in Spanish is Bonko and in Imada they use the word Wanko because there's, there was no bank in their culture before the arrival of the Spanish.

And so there's a lot of things that the colonizers themselves brought that I might've had to absorb. To be, to be able to participate at all. And, uh, and as I've been trying to learn to speak somewhat, I am easily able to identify, okay, this word probably had some Spanish influence to it. Whereas what were some of the words that, that don't, that were like pure Imada?

And like I say, it's been really hard. It's tiring because I don't have people that I can practice with a lot. Um, but it's, it's a pursuit of mine. When you move the movie you watched, what was it? Um, Walk out and walk out. Yes. Have you ever been restricted of your own language in school as those two boys work?

When we watched that scene where he was like, what I say about Spanish? Have you ever been restricted in that way in a school environment or work environment or just a community all together? Um, I've never been formally restricted by like, uh, an adult figure or an authority figure. That's pretty good.

Like, I can say that that's never happened. I have been challenged by other adults, like at church. Um, my family and I, when, when we seen from the hymns and there's a hymnal, that's in English, in our church, but we are able to download a copy of it in Spanish to our phones. And we'll sometimes choose to sing in Spanish just because we love the sound of it a little bit more.

And that's what we speak at home. So that's how we want to worship. When we are seeing in Spanish, we've had a couple of people who have challenges afterwards and said, I think that you should sing in English. And we don't agree with that. I mean, it's serious or language. It's great to embrace it. I just never, I just don't understand people like that.

If we've just been learning a lot and it's opened my mind a lot to a lot of things, and it's just, people really are like, weird about just cultures in general. It just upsets me because my sister had my mom, you know, you know, had a black boyfriend and she got pregnant and my sister's black. So it was my brother, my brother's light-skin.

So I've always been in that, but not necessarily, you know what I'm saying? Not necessarily in their culture, but I've always been attached to it because that's what they believed in. So it always weirds me out. When you told me that people challenge you for embracing yourself or get mad at a grown man for kneeling for, he believes.

Upsets me because that's like irritating, you know, like if me as a white man, if I was to speak out about something, what I've seen people would listen. It's not that I feel safe, but it's just like, oh, it's a white man. He has an opinion. Let's listen. But when let's say my older brother, for example, a light-skinned man with curls, he was to speak out about something.

Yeah. Just from what I've seen in America, nobody will listen or nobody will give attention to it. It's like, he doesn't have an opinion. So it's just, it's just your attention. Just that thing. You're coming to get familiar with that idea that we've talked about, about privilege right in class. And you've got some evidence that like, just you saying something carries a lot more weight or a lot more believability credibility than if it comes from somebody who just because of some extra melanin in their skin, right.

Or the, the shape of their hair, it doesn't matter as much to other people. And so I'm glad that you're, you're seeing that we need that. Cashier a story. My sister told me when I was younger. Absolutely. She was an honor student, like on the principal's list and all of that. And this teacher, he was a man envied her for some reason, envied her talent.

I guess she was really smart. And she had like, like colleges looking at her for her brain, but she was also a star athlete too. So it was, he failed her on. Because she was African-American and he told everyone, told my mother told us when I was a young, when I was a young kid, I didn't understand it. Then I was like, what?

Like, cause I live with her. So I was like, she's not black to me. She, my sister. And he got fired and obviously all of that, but it ruined her high school career a lot because she was an honor student and all of a sudden she's just getting bad grades. So it was. It wasn't one of those times where like, oh, my daughter never gets bad grades.

We really looked into it and he was a racist man. And it was just, it shocked, it shocked. My sister shocked my family because we knew who we knew how she was. And we didn't know this man at all and he doesn't even know us. So it was just, it's just, it's cool to know. Not cool. It's interesting to know that people have that experiences.

Like actually I witnessed it. I didn't have it happen to me. It's just, it's an experience. You'll never forget. Cause you're like, wow. It seems like it made a big impression on you. Well, it just makes a big impression on anybody. Like if it wasn't happening to you or what happened to anybody in this class that has a darker skin tone, I would be like, Billy.

Now I'm older and I understand I'll speak upon it and be behind someone. But the younger you are when you're younger, you all know they're talking about. Right. Cause it was just something you live with. Oh, yeah. I asked you this a while ago, too. Does your view on America, how you view America and it's just, it's flagging it symbols.

Does it affect your teaching or style of teaching in any way? And does it inspire you to teach? Yeah, definitely. I think that, uh, my view on America in a nutshell is that we are not yet the country that we can be. Um, we, uh, The idea of make America great. Again for me is a little bit condescending. No, it's very condescending actually, because who is it great for in the past?

And it's, it's basically a coded way of saying make America great for white people because it's worked best in the past for people who were hoarding power. I think of like looking at America, at least number

one as something that we've got to acknowledge our problematic past. Yeah. I don't know. If this country will survive the things that we're going through right now, I would love to think that we can and I want it to work for it.

Uh, although I don't know how, I don't know the path forward, but in terms of my teaching style, I view my job as a teacher. Um, at least part of that is helping students to develop their voice, helping students to feel a sense of empowerment with an ability to change or shape or diverse. The attention of the teacher.

And that's what I love to take a student's comments. And if they seem relevant, shove my plans aside and say, let's talk about this instead, because students should have the ability to affect the outcome of their environment. And so, um, I see that as both good teaching, but also good practice for participating in a democracy.

And I try to create moments. At my best, I succeed. And at my worst moments, I often feel that I am controlling the classroom too much. And, uh, and I'm speaking too much. I would like to say, I've never heard a teacher want a class to be a democracy. It's always been teacher versus students, not everyone with each other.

That's that's just amazing. I've never heard somebody say that a teacher say that. That's why I was just like, wow. I'm not the only one. That's not my idea, but you express it. Well, you, you express student are grading very well. That's why, or just express yourself very well. That's why I wanted to interview in the first place.

I appreciate that last question. How do you feel about teaching altogether, altogether? I love it. I love being in this profession. I love being around youth and the energy that comes from being around. Sometimes hesitate to say that, cause it makes me sound like an empire or creditor or something, but I really do love being around youth.

Um, I love the fact that I get to, to talk about and share and, um, initiate people into things that interest me too. So it's a little bit greedy in that sense. But when I, when I teaching ethnic studies, I've been studying some of this stuff since I was eight years. Uh, when I'm teaching Spanish the same, like it's my own culture.

I'll pick cultural things that I grew up with to share with students. And so I love that ability to share and to be an authentic me in public. Um, I should also say like on the whole, as teaching, uh, I, I worry greatly

about, um, just how this pandemic has affected the teaching profession. Yeah. This has been the hardest time of my career.

And I'm planning on toughing this out as best as I can, but Quintin, there have been moments this semester that I've wanted to cry, that I've wanted to break down and just cry because I have not seen what I'm hoping for in terms of. Productivity, well, productivity kind of, but just engagement. Like I'll ask a question sometimes, or I'm hoping to be able to do a certain kind of activity that I know generates interest from the students and involvement and, and when I'm met with apathy or with just blank stares, you know, and, uh, I don't want to blame the students for it because we're all products of our times and our environment.

And so I'm just mad that things have gone on as long as they have. Yeah. I'd love for it to end soon, safely and properly. And at the same time, I'm really tired. I've been going to sleep a lot earlier than they usually do. And that's good, but it's because I'm so tired when I get home. And, um, yeah, it's been really, really tough for me, but I'm planning on toughing it out.

I'm hoping. And I have faith that things will get, yeah, COVID has been a pretty hard thing on anybody and any, anyone who's witnessed it is strong and I'm glad that you're, you know, still, you know, helping us out and being a teacher because any, on anybody that's strong, just my experiences, kids experiences your experiences as well.

Just COVID has been COVID rural, remote. There's no need to show. You're saying that you're tired. It's just, I'm glad you can express that to me. Cause you know, it's, it's relatable for everybody. Thank you for validating my feelings. I appreciate that. Yeah. Well, thank you for having this wonderful interview.

Again, it's been a pleasure.