

# Episode 9 - Public media and the limits of “diversity”

The View from Somewhere podcast [pub date Feb. 25, 2020]

## **Public Media and the Limits of “Diversity” (episode 9) CREDITS:**

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Guests: Brenda Salinas, Cecilia Garcia

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Special thanks: WUNC for recording help, Brenda Salinas for protecting her magic, Kynita Stringer-Stanback for crispy editorial advice

## **Public Media and the Limits of “Diversity” (episode 9) LINKS:**

[“Protect Your Magic: A Survival Guide for Journalists of Color,”](#) by Brenda Salinas, Poynter.org

[“Austin’s KUT wrestles with ‘serious issues’ in newsroom culture.”](#) by April Simpson, Current.org (September 2018)

[NPR’s staff diversity numbers, 2019](#)

[“How a CPB task force advanced a prescient vision for diversity in public radio.”](#) by Laura Garbes, Current.org (November 2017)

[Bill Siemering’s “National Public Radio Purposes.” 1970](#) on Current.org

[Made Possible By...: The Death of Public Broadcasting in the United States](#), by James Ledbetter (1997)

[NPR’s NextGenRadio](#) training program

## **MUSIC (in order of appearance):**

- **Steppin’ Intro** by Podington Bear
- **Elephants on Parade** by Podington Bear
- *Variation One, Percussion + Bass* by Dogbotic, *Original Music for The View from Somewhere*
- **Tango Mécanique** (The View from Somewhere Theme Song) by Kirk Pearson and Julian Korzeniowsky
- **Nocturne Op 27 No 2** by Podington Bear
- *Accordion Vamp* by Dogbotic, *Original Music for The View from Somewhere*
- **Canvas** by Podington Bear

- **Dole It Out** by Podington Bear
- **Gentle Heart** by Podington Bear
- *Chill Vibe + Snap* by Dogbotic, *Original Music for The View from Somewhere*
- **Blammo** by Podington Bear
- **Pink Blossoms** by Podington Bear
- **In** by Podington Bear
- **Song for a Pea** by Podington Bear
- **Time Waste** by Podington Bear
- **Cm** by Podington Bear
- *Chill Accordion + Vibes* by Dogbotic, *Original Music for The View from Somewhere*
- **Go to Sleep** by Podington Bear
- **Rude Boy** by Podington Bear
- *Electro Synths* by Dogbotic, *Original Music for The View from Somewhere*
- *Tango Mécanique, Electro Variation* by Dogbotic, *Original Music for The View from Somewhere*

## TRANSCRIPT:

### **Ramona Martinez:**

This is the View from Somewhere—a podcast about journalism with a purpose. I'm producer Ramona Martinez, and we wanted to extend a huge and sincere thanks to everyone who gave to our recent fundraiser. Thanks to y'all, we're back in production through the rest of the season.

If you're just listening for the first time—welcome. This podcast is serialized, so we recommend going back and listening from the start if you like what you hear today. Thanks, and enjoy the show.

### **[MUSIC: Steppin Intro by Podington Bear]**

**Brenda Salinas:** So whenever I'm interviewing latinas, even like before I say anything, I'm like, 'Um, can you please take off your bracelets, thank you.' Cause we jingle, we talk like this [laughs]...

**Lewis Raven Wallace:** This is Brenda Salinas, a radio reporter and producer who's worked in public radio and now works at Google News. She traces her interest in storytelling to the women in her family...

**Brenda:** My mom, and my godmother, and my aunts -- I remember just wanting to be at the table while they were telling stories, because they were just so funny, and soulful and powerful. And my mom in a way is a reporter too, like she's the type of person who like, in the bathroom stall will like, comment on the lady's shoes next to her and like, strike up a conversation. I have been at an airport with her, have gone to do something

for five minutes, and I come back and she has like, all the stories of everybody in the...[laughs] in the terminal because she's like, eavesdropping and asking them questions. And I'm like, these are skills I didn't learn at NPR, these are skills that are a part of my culture.

<<MUSIC OUT>>

**Lewis:** She got into listening to NPR in high school because her white teachers kept talking about it...and she wanted to know what was up...

**Brenda:** And I really loved that it made me smarter, that it made me understand the world in a nuanced way, and I just kept listening to it as much as I could. And then I heard Maria Hinojosa on the radio for LatinoUSA. I must've been around 15...

**Maria Hinojosa CLIP:** From NPR...I'm Maria Hinojosa...

**Brenda:** ...and that's the first time I realized that somebody like me could tell stories on the radio, it was a really powerful moment.

**Lewis:** Her first radio gig was interning at Houston's public radio station...and pretty quickly after that she got an elite Kroc Fellowship at NPR in DC, worked at LatinoUSA with the one and only, Maria Hinojosa. Brenda was on the star track. Then she got a call from a station in Texas that was launching a statewide show. In 2014, she became a founding producer and the only Latina on staff.

<<MUSIC: Elephants on Parade by Podington Bear>>

**Lewis:** And the tokenism started right away...

**Brenda:** Lulu Garcia Navarro calls it the Tortilla beat. Like I was sort of the go to person for stories about Mexican culture, but when it came to stories about immigration, because I'm an immigrant myself, it wasn't trusted that I could do those stories. I was seen as like, too close to the story, but it's like, oh, but i'm not close to the story about the breakfast tacos, you know? Like [laughs], that's a part of my life too, as much as my immigration is...

**Lewis:** It was not particularly subtle...

**Brenda:** You know, this presidential candidate is calling Mexicans rapists, and criminals. And I said something in a meeting that was like, "Oh, you know, maybe this is the moment when the latino base really mobilizes." And I was told, 'Okay, that's an interesting idea. We're gonna hand it off to somebody else.'

**Lewis:** Her pitches for stories, like those of many journo's of color, also weren't taken seriously—probably even more so because she was young...

**Brenda:** I've been at many editorial meetings with a bunch of white editors who will pitch things like, "I was in my neighborhood the other day, and..." or like, "I overheard this at my kid's school." Or, "I met this lady at the grocery store." And it's like, Okay, you all live in the same three neighborhoods, what type of stories do you think you're gonna get. The worst, worst part of it is when you have a story and they ask you...

<<**MUSIC: Variation One, Percussion + Bass by Dogbotic, Original Music for The View from Somewhere**>>

**Brenda:** 'Oh what's the news hook?' Or like, 'Oh, I'm not sure that's a story.' You know, they want to take your experience and run it through this computer program, I don't know, this filter, and they get to decide [robot noises] 'Does this compute, does this not compute.' And because we have lived experiences, sometimes you just have to trust the other person, like. You know my work, if I'm telling you this is a story, this is a story. And what's the newshook? The newshook is that it's happening.

**Lewis:** So, in theory they wanted her there to add to the newsroom diversity, and because she was so experienced and talented—but the fact that she was a Latina also meant her ideas weren't given the same weight. Which means—she was being tokenized. Not respected for the life experience that she brought to the room, on *her* terms. And, what could she do in that situation?

**Brenda:** At KUT like, I just thought, I talked to a lot of people who had a similar experience. I thought if I just kept doing more work, the situation there would improve. And it was actually the opposite....I was giving more and more and more of myself to an organization, a system, that didn't really value me. It wanted my stories, but it didn't want me to have any power.

## THEME MUSIC

**Lewis:** This is the View from Somewhere, a podcast about journalism with a purpose. I'm your host, Lewis Raven Wallace.

Today, we're talking about public media, and why it *still* doesn't reflect the actual whole public in the U.S. It turns out, public radio has been trying to address its diversity problem since the 1970s, and we'll meet another Latina who was around in the early part of that struggle.

We'll also talk about how journalists of color are surviving in newsrooms that claim to want diverse voices, but don't treat them equitably—plus: how racism keeps us from having the archives we need.

Stay with us.

**[THEME MUSIC OUT]**

**Lewis:** Brenda Salinas was struggling to navigate this job at KUT in Austin. It wasn't just the problem of being alternately scrutinized and ignored in pitch meetings. Pretty soon, her targeting as a young Latina became more extreme.

**<<MUSIC: Nocturne Op 27 No 2 by Podington Bear>>**

**Brenda:** I had a manager who...I felt like they just had really bad anxiety or something, they were just like...I know they had a lot of pressure, and they were always really tense, and they tended to lash out at people. And I noticed, I mean it was really clear, that the people they were lashing out at were people of color, and women, right? But because I came from national, I was this wunderkind, we got along at first, I was sort of immune from it. And then I started speaking up about diversity, I started...you know, when someone got berated, or had their deadlines moved up for no reason, just you know, all the bullshit editors can pull when they want to break you, when I started speaking up about that, I became a target of the abuse too.

**Lewis:** For example, Brenda would get an assignment at 12pm, saying it was for 4pm. But then at 1:30 saying, hey I'm actually leaving early, so you have to have this to me by 2. And when that deadline wasn't met, she would get blamed for it.

**Brenda:** And this person that was like berating people and being really abusive, and um...erratic and sort of gaslighting, when we brought this up to their attention, they would say, 'Oh well this is like the way that I was brought up in newsrooms. This is a rite of passage.'

**Lewis:** And a really insidious part of it, Brenda says, is all the white people who looked the other way while this happened.

**<<MUSIC OUT>>**

**Brenda:** You know, these newsrooms tend to be open concept newsrooms. So everybody knows what's going on at all times. And I remember being berated in the middle of the newsroom, I looked over to this white man who put on his headphones and looked away...and that was like really the part that crushed...crushed me. I was like, Oh, people know, and they don't care. Because white men...first of all, I feel like a lot of the times white men who do act as allies expect some sort of medal ... and I'm like, No, dude, you don't get a medal, this should be a requirement for living in a multicultural world, you should support people who don't look like you. But the men who choose not

to do it, they say, 'Oh, well I have a wife, I have a family. I have kids at private school. I can't afford to take a stand.' When really like, I can't afford to take a stand either, I was just conscripted into this war that you can like, be on the sidelines of.

**Lewis:** Just a few months onto the job, she was told to report instances of abuse to HR, to document it. She did, but HR believed it was a personal issue... *her* personal issue. They suggested mediation training for *her*...

<<**MUSIC: *Accordion Vamp by Dogbotic, Original Music for The View from Somewhere***>>

**Brenda:** There got to be a point where I could not walk into the office without taking a xanax, because I would have a panic attack. Because it was always this anxiety of like...am I gonna be the person that gets yelled at today, for no reason.

**Lewis:** So after less than a year at KUT she decided to quit.

**Brenda:** This person is not going to break me, I need to remove myself from this situation, and it was a really hard decision, and it was a really hard decision, my parents were not happy with me, neither of them had ever quit jobs before. Um...I was under 26 so I was still under their insurance, thank God. That helped me convince them a little bit. And I had to tell my mom, for the next couple months when I call you, no matter how stressed out you are, no matter how worried you are for me I need you to tell me, Sweetie, you're doing amazing, we're so proud of you.

<<**MUSIC: *Canvas by Podington Bear***>>

**Lewis:** And once she left, she started to really look at the big picture—not just the abuse, but what was allowing the abuse to go on. Who was complicit in that...

**Brenda:** I think we need to be defined by, what is the worst behavior that we're willing to tolerate. Because that's the behavior that everybody talks about, and the behavior that really...sets morale. So it's really a bottom line type of thing. So sometimes people are like, "Oh, but everyone's so wonderful," but okay, you let harassers go unpunished?

**Lewis:** Public media has a problem retaining journalists of color, particularly young talents like Brenda. And a lot of it has to do with this internal culture of deference to authority, and of course the double standard with which that's applied. If you're new, or young, or an intern, or the only "X" in the room, you're kind of expected to go along with editorial leadership and not push back too much.

<<**MUSIC OUT**>>

**Lewis:** Assertiveness is valued in white cis men but...not necessarily everyone else. That culture thinks of diversity like an automaton that you plug in and then voila, these diverse voices will be deferential and part of the culture...

<<**MUSIC: Dole It Out by Podington Bear**>>

**Lewis:** But, according to Brenda...that's not how true diversity works...

**Brenda:** And if I as a manager, if I hire ten people who look differently than I do, with very different experiences -- they are going to call me out on my bullshit, and they should! Like...that's why I hired them. As journalists, we don't have the luxury of being comfortable. If you're a journalist, and you're comfortable, you are not a very good journalist. You should be uncomfortable every single day of your life.

**Lewis:** Journalists *should* be able to sit with discomfort, and often *do* when it comes to tough sources and stories. But what about when it comes to confronting power dynamics within the newsroom, or oppressive attitudes within ourselves?

[music transition]

**Ramona:** Hey Lewis?

**Lewis:** Hey, Ramona.

**Ramona:** I just wanted to say something after hearing Brenda's story. So.

**Lewis:** Yeah yeah!

**Ramona:** Yeah. I obviously heard it a couple of times now, but it wasn't until the third time that I was listening to her talk, and especially the part when she said that she had to take a Xanax before coming to work every day, I realized that I actually went through a super similar experience to this, the only latina on an all-white production staff, an older white manager who was super, like, emotionally abusive, with the way that they treated the producers, especially me, and like, yeah, I was definitely self-medicating just to survive the workday. I guess I realized that I'd always thought about what happened to me as just like, oh, you know, this person really should have gone to therapy, and like, just an individual beef kind of thing? But it's actually, yeah, it's part of a larger systemic thing.

**Lewis:** Wow, I'm so sorry that happened to you and also, like, glad that hearing Brenda's story could sort of resonate and help you think about that experience differently?

**Ramona:** Yeah...exactly.

<<MUSIC: **Gentle Heart** by Podington Bear>>

**Ramona:** I mean, definitely every time I apply for a job I think, how much of my, like, Latinness is being considered in whether or not I'm gonna be hired, right. And in this case I definitely was hired to increase the diversity of the production team, and then, this happened to me. Yeah.

**Lewis:** Yeah, totally, and it's this tricky thing...it feels familiar to me too, as a white trans person in public media—I was brought in as a part of this diversity program, which is a good thing I think? and at least some people were happy to feel like they *had* a trans person in their mix, but pretty defensive and uncomfortable when I would actually speak up for myself, for my values and my community. Which totally defeats the purpose of diversifying your newsroom...

**Ramona:** And the diversity efforts in public media aren't going very well at all—NPR's most recent diversity numbers were really bad—less than 8 percent of the newsroom staff is Hispanic or Latinx, and a little under 10 percent is Black. And even with those numbers, the *experience* of being at (or listening to) NPR is super white-dominated...

<<MUSIC: *Chill Vibe + Snap* by Dogbotic, Original Music for *The View from Somewhere*>>

**Lewis:** After all these years...and as I learned when I was researching for my book, of course, people *have* been pushing back on this and trying to change this...almost as long as public media has existed, it was founded in 1968. The problems back then led us to the problems we have now; Brenda Salinas's story and yours, have dozens, maybe even hundreds, of antecedents. I came across someone who was literally on a task force about public media diversity in the 1970s. And I'm gonna turn it over now to Ramona to introduce her.

**Ramona:** Cecilia Garcia says when she came of age in Detroit Michigan in the late 50s, early 60s, she was kind of a rabble rouser, like a lot of people we've featured on this show...

**Cecilia Garcia:** My college career was you know pretty iffy I. I went for a couple of years to a small Catholic college, got very bored....My only fun was actually participating in the strikes that we... we would have all the time.

<<MUSIC: **Blammo** by Podington Bear>>

**Ramona:** She had an uncle who worked in T.V. And being politically minded, she knew television was a form of power. One that *her* Latino community didn't have enough access to.

**Cecilia:** My main motivation was my family my I have I'm the second youngest of six I have now I guess 19 or 20 nieces and nephews. I didn't. I wanted them to be able to see something on television that mirrored their experience or at least mirrored who they were. There was I didn't want their only frame of reference on television to be the Frito

Bandido or Sergeant Garcia on Zorro. You know that's my brothers and sisters and I. That's what we grew up with. I wanted better for them and I knew we could do it.

**Ramona:** So in the early 1970s, just a couple years after public media first became a thing, she and this group of young Latinx folks were like, let's do this, let's make our own show. None of them had television experience or really knew what that entailed. They reached out to civil rights attorneys about how they could get it on the air ...

**Cecilia** And they helped and advised us and said, you know your best bet is to go to public broadcasting because you know that's what the P stands for. You know public.

<<MUSIC: Pink Blossoms by Podington Bear>>

**Ramona:** Now, a moment about the P in public media. It was brand new at the time...the whole public system of TV and radio was created by the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 under Lyndon B. Johnson. That established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, or CPB, which supported both PBS—public TV, and later, NPR, which was founded in 1970.

The vision *in part* was that these public assets would create access for those who *couldn't* get their voices into corporate media.

It's how we got Sesame Street and Mister Rogers and the PBS Newshour. But groups like Cecilia Garcia's had to *push* to get their programs on public TV

**Cecilia:** It was a little harder than we thought. We thought they would just love the opportunity to make their, their airwaves more relevant. They kind of gave us the runaround and you know made us keep coming back for more meetings and more meetings and finally they just I think we wore them down and they finally said OK here's the deal. You come in on let's say Wednesday night is your production night. You come in we'll have a crew there for you and have at it. So in the meantime you know we're all looking at each other like well OK, now what, now what do we do?

**Ramona:** So she picked up all the skills she could, as quickly as she could...

**Cecilia:** I made it my business to learn everything I could about the way television is made.

<<MUSIC: In by Podington Bear>>

**Cecilia:** I made myself a nuisance, I was in every room. I was determined that they would not say that we didn't try or that we couldn't cut it or you know to give them any excuse at all like that. And so we lasted seven years.

**Ramona:** SEVEN YEARS! Seven years!

**Cecilia:** We produced Para mi Pueblo from 1973 until 1979. And we called it a bilingual newsmagazine.

**Ramona:** She was proud of the fact that they covered issues for the large Latinx community in Detroit, based on *their* feedback—which wasn't happening in any other TV news—

**Cecilia:** My goal was to let. The broader community understand the complexity of the Latino community. It was complex, it was not a simple community to cover. We covered, we wanted to cover issues that our community reported back to us and said look you know these things are important to us.

<<MUSIC OUT>>

**Ramona:** They had their local show...but national programming was still overwhelmingly white. And groups like hers didn't have enough sway over PBS, the national network—to get their shows funded or aired with national support...

**Cecilia:** The money that would go into productions never went to any minority producers frankly but especially not Latino producers.

<<MUSIC: song for a pea by podington bear>>

**Ramona:** So they formed a group called the Latino Consortium...instead of waiting for national distribution, they would do what's called "bicycling" their shows. She would take this 2-inch video tape, and mail it to a producer in, say, Boston, to air on their station. And then that producer would mail that same tape to Los Angeles to play there. And so on. So you didn't have the costs of copying and distributing the tape, it was just passed along.

I asked Cecilia over the phone if she had any tapes of Para Mi Pueblo that we could use in this episode. You might be able to hear my reaction through her receiver when she answers my question.

**Cecilia:** We reused tape.

**[barely audible]** ...WHAT?

**Cecilia:** We reused videotape until the oxide fell off.

**Ramona:** Seven years of programming about the latinx community in 1970s Detroit is lost to history. That means that producers like me don't have access to archive tape, and even BEYOND that, people trying to research the history of Detroit, or midwestern latinx populations, have lost this huge resource.

And all because Cecilia and her producers didn't have the resources to save video tapes.

**Ramona:** The fact that they had so little support definitely speaks to the structural problem they were up against—there weren't enough people of color in *leadership* in public media. Making those decisions about funding and programming.

<<MUSIC OUT>>

A lot of people recognized this as a problem, even early on...

<<MUSIC: Time Waste by Podington Bear>>

**Cecilia:** In nineteen seventy six or seventy seven I was contacted by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to be part of a task force on that would look at and study the state of minorities in public broadcasting...

**Ramona:** So she and a few dozen people from across the system, radio and TV, were asked to study every aspect of it—distribution, programming, staff, who was in charge. And they issued a report that was really damning.

Here's the opening statement: "The task force must conclude that the public broadcast system is asleep at the transmitter." The report called PBS and NPR's diversity numbers "appalling."

**Cecilia:** The main finding was that minorities have been left out and have continued to be left out of all major points of decision making, and unless you know drastic steps would be taken, this would, this trend would continue. And I'm frankly I'm not so sure how far we've come from 1977 when we issued that report.

**Ramona:** The task force made dozens of recommendations about how to change programming, leadership, and audience assessment to lead a more diverse and representative public media. But many of these were never implemented.

<<MUSIC OUT>>

So what happened? Why *haven't* things really changed?

**Lewis:** So, I looked as deep into this as I could go when I was researching for my book. And concluded that basically, the reasons public media never really embraced its idealistic founding vision were MONEY and POLITICS. And of course feeding into those is always just straightup racism...so that familiar trifecta...

<<MUSIC: Cm by Podington Bear>>

**Ramona:** Ugh. Right, well, talk us through the money thing first I guess...

**Lewis:** That one's a little easier to stomach—basically, even though public media is *partly* funded by the government, it's never been fully funded that way. So it's always depended on donations and underwriting, sponsorship (Morning edition is brought to you by...)

**Ramona:** Pajamagrams

**Lewis:** Right, pajamagrams, it's depended on pajamagrams to survive. The underwriting creates an incentive to serve wealthier, whiter populations, to make more money. Which in turn created a kind of slippery slope toward a corporate approach—and you hear that even in Cecilia's story, how producers of color couldn't get their programs distributed nationally because the perception was that they weren't marketable for a quote-unquote general audience. So the whole thing has never been truly "public."

**Ramona:** And then what about the politics part of it?

**Lewis:** Yeah...every federal budget season there are these super politicized attacks on public TV and radio. Conservative organizations like this watchdog group founded in the 70s called Accuracy in Media would go after anything on topics they didn't like—sex education, incarcerated youth, immigration, gay rights—and say it was biased and shouldn't receive public funding. Then they'd insist that public media perform balance by giving a platform to radically conservative people—

**Ramona:** And that strategy worked?

**Lewis:** Absolutely. It preyed on racism and sexism and homophobia and transphobia that was already present in the culture, right. The right wing would present POC and women and trans people's issues as threats to public media's neutrality. So by the late 1980s public media was regularly giving a platform to people like Pat Buchanan, a notorious homophobe and liar who once said AIDS was God taking revenge on gay people. And newsroom leaders *within* public media were warning their staff to not be "controversial."

**Ramona:** Which really meant don't piss off the conservative people who are watching our every move and could potentially threaten our funding.

<<MUSIC: Chill Accordion Vibes>>

**Lewis:** Right. And then of course there all the racism, tokenism, stories like Brenda's and so many others—that have led Black, indigenous, POC, queer and trans folks to quit or get fired...

**Ramona:** Depressing.

**Lewis:** I know, but don't worry, because Brenda Salinas is about to share some inspiring stuff! ...so I wanna get back to her...

<<**MUSIC: Go to Sleep by Podington Bear**>>

**Lewis:** By the time she left KUT, Brenda was exhausted. But... she had learned a lot.

**Brenda:** And after I quit, I started putting a lot of habits in place to protect myself, to protect my creativity, to nurture myself...and to really become that prolific writer and radio producer that I'd always been. It took me about six weeks, it felt like it took forever, but I got there, and I'm still there. And I tend to protect myself better now...

**Lewis:** She started mentoring other people of color in radio through an NPR program called NextGen. But after the #MeToo movement really hit in public radio in 2017, and the extent of abuse that had been occurring was revealed, Brenda had serious reservations about even advising young women of color to go into public media...

**Brenda:** How can I in good faith train people to enter these toxic environments and not tell them the truth about what is happening? And so I talked to Doug Mitchell, who is the head of NPR next generation, and he said, Well maybe we need to develop a different type of training for them.

**Lewis:** At the time, she was interested in war correspondents... reading a lot of conflict reporting guides, and she had this idea...

**Brenda:** You know what we need? We need a conflict reporting guide for people of color and marginalized people in majority white newsrooms. Because when you're in these spaces, it can feel like you're in a battle zone. You're battling to preserve your own creativity.

**Lewis:** A conflict reporting guide...that definitely says a lot. So, she created this guide and training for journalists of color called Protect your Magic—the language was actually inspired by a friend of *mine*, Nick Daily, who works with people of color in higher ed and talks a lot about protecting and preserving your magic...

**Brenda:** I always start with a meditation, and I tell people, like, think of all the things that make you special, all those little touches that let me know that a story is your story, even before I hear your voice, or before I see your byline. Your sense of humor, the ppl in your community, all the things that make you you. That is your magic. And you want to get to a place where you can take your magic to work with you. But the reality is that's not always going to be the place that you're at. So you need to be very proactive about protecting your magic. So...who gets to see your magic? Who gets to tap into your magic, and who do you keep your magic away from? Because being creative is being

vulnerable. There is no way to be creative without exposing these like raw nerves inside yourself. And if you're in an unsafe environment, people are just going to keep poking at those nerves until you break down. So...you need to have discipline in terms of, what are the habits that I need to take on? What are the ways that I need to nourish myself to make sure that my magic stays intact, and that it's for me, and I get to share it with the people and audiences that I want to share it with, on my terms.

<<MUSIC: **Rude Boy** by Podington Bear >>

**Lewis:** People often ask me, is there any hope for public media...is it getting better, or going to? I honestly don't know...so I asked Brenda what she thinks...

**Brenda:** I don't think in 15 years public media is going to look like the way public media looks like now. I think technology is going to be changing things really, really fast. So if you're a creator, and you're a person of color, I would say - focus on your craft, focus on your storytelling. The platforms might change, but the stories aren't gonna change. We've been telling stories to each other for thousands of years, it's how our brains evolved. So as long as you focus on the craft, I do think you can be ready for the future. I don't think we necessarily have to burn public media down, because I think it's doing a pretty good job of burning itself down.

**Lewis:** I mean, the thing is, I don't really *want* public media to burn itself down. I want the people who need it most to *take it over*. Like—imagine if we had public media newsrooms that *were* run by people like Brenda Salinas and Ramona Martinez and our editor Carla Murphy? What would the ethics and values be, who would get those jobs, what stories would be told and archived that aren't now? Public media should and *could* belong to the community, which means striving to serve the parts of the community that have the least space on corporate platforms...and I believe that feminist, anti-racist newsrooms are possible...

But that can't happen as long as this newsroom culture of deference and selective silencing continues—the thing that pushed Brenda, and me, and Ramona all *out* of public media. It's happened to so many people, y'all...I know because they contact me *all the time* with stories. Black and indigenous people, POC, trans and queer people, and women...this ongoing problem of people being pushed out isn't going to go away until we address the fact that just *taking* our stories and creativity and tokenizing us can't work. We need shifts in actual power. And that means the people in charge now will need to give something up.

<<MUSIC: >>

Only then can we have a public media that actually serves the public, serves justice and democracy in a real way. But...call me naive, I still think it's worth putting the pressure on these institutions to change. Working from the inside (and protecting your magic) or the outside like we are. The airwaves *are* public and they should belong to all of us.

We do have some formidable obstacles in this effort—all the folks in newsrooms who are complicit, plus the gatekeeping surrounding “objectivity” and “balance” that we’ve been talking about all season. And there are the conservative media activists, changing the terms of the debate, so that public media forever has to “balance” marginalized voices with racist or homophobic ones.

And this conservative activism is a *really* important piece of how we got here that I think we need to really dig into... why the far right had the power to reframe “objectivity,” and pull even liberal media toward the right in the last few decades.

**Ramona:** Which is what we’re going to do on the next episode. About the view from the Right Wing, and the colonization of doubt

**Promo TAPE—Kevin Young:** It’s not just that people are hoaxing more, it’s also that people are accusing other people, things that are true, to be hoaxes...

**Lewis:** I am sooo excited about having Kevin Young on this next episode...

**Ramona:** Wawawawa...

**Lewis:** Yeah...hey, The View from Somewhere is distributed by Critical Frequency, supported by our Kickstarter backers, we love you!, and produced by rockstar gemini Ramona Martinez...

**Ramona:** And this episode was edited by Carla Murphy, with special thanks to Brenda Salinas for protecting her magic and sharing it with us all, and Kynita Stringer-Stanback for the utterly crispy editing advice. Billy Dee does our art, and our theme music is by Dogbotic with additional music by Podington Bear. Roxana Bendezu with Migrant Roots Media is our social media producer. See you next time!

**Lewis:** Um, Ramona, can you like, make theme music sounds to help me get in the mood?

**Ramona:** Yeah, totally. Waa, wawawawaawa, woooooo....