

## BUILDING JUSTICE PODCAST



### **CRISJ 'Building Justice' Podcast**

#### **Season 2, Episode 15: "Sacramento City Councilmember Katie Valenzuela on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and her path to City Council."**

**Guests:** Danielle Slakoff, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice; Sacramento City Councilmember Katie Valenzuela; and Maria Vargas, Assistant Professor of Ethic Studies

**Please note:** This transcription was primarily created using transcription software. Some errors or imperfections may occur within the transcription. Please contact Professor Danielle Slakoff directly should you have questions.

#### **Music lyrics:**

Company under construction, the function, justice for the human family we demand it. Justice, true freedom, equality is a must. Thus, decolonization of the planet. So bust this. People be the power now we're Building Justice. Pulling out divinations, now we're Building Justice. Welcome the planet to the Podcast, "Building Justice," "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Building is to add on, or to do away with.

#### **Danielle Slakoff**

Welcome to Building Justice. A podcast by Sacramento State University's Center on Race Immigration, and Social Justice, also known as CRISJ. We explore critical issues affecting our communities with the hopes of creating a healthier and more just world. Your hosts for today are me, Danielle Slakoff, assistant Professor of Criminal justice at Sacramento State, Maria Vargas, Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at Sacramento State, and Sacramento City Councilmember Katie Valenzuela.

So, on March 8, 2022, CRISJ hosted an event called "Violence Against Indigenous Women Across the Americas." During this event, we had a keynote speech from Sacramento City Councilwoman Katie Valenzuela, and we had a panel of activists and advocates discussing violence against Indigenous women in a global context.

For this podcast, which we hope is part 1 in a series, Maria and I will be speaking with Sacramento City Councilmember Valenzuela.

City Council Member, Katie, Thanks so much for being here.

**Katie Valenzuela**

Thanks for having me.

**Danielle Slakoff**

We so look forward to learning more about the community work and activism that you are doing to support and uplift Indigenous women and other marginalized community members here in Sacramento. So, just to start out. Thank you for all that you do.

**Katie Valenzuela**

Thank you. That's very kind

**Maria Vargas**

Yes, and I definitely echo that. Thank you, Katie, for being with us today.

So, I'll go ahead and ask the first question. Many of our listeners may not have been able to attend the event on March 8th. Can you introduce yourself and your connection to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women?

**Katie Valenzuela:**

Sure, and thanks again for having me back to talk more about this important issue. So, I'm a newer City council member. I came on in 2020 at the end of the year. I'm born and raised in Kern County, though, and I am an Indigenous woman, and I know-- you know, I'd seen it in the news. I'd seen it on social media. You see, the missing persons bulletin, you see different announcements and articles. But what really brought this issue home for me was shortly after I was sworn in, I was sent to report by Morning Star Gali, of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives in California, and in that report, I learned that Sacramento has the second highest rate in the State, and it really pointed to a lot of the systemic issues around identifying and tracking, addressing the causes of what's going on in the Indigenous community.

So that was a real important moment for me. I went out to join an event that they had, a march on the river near what's now called Sutter's Landing, and, you know, really it became an important focal point for us in our work as we started partnering with those groups to try to address those issues.

### **Danielle Slakoff**

Thank you so much for sharing. I know that you sort of just mentioned how you got connected. And for listeners, Morning Star Gali was actually one of the amazing activists on the panel that we had. So that's really cool to see.

Could you share a little bit more about how this became part of your work as a City Council member, and maybe some of the activities that you've done around this topic?

### **Katie Valenzuela**

Yeah, we partnered very quickly with Morning Star and members of the Wilton Rancheria, which is one of the federally recognized tribes in our area, and other activists to put together--We started with a Webinar, where we brought in different, specifically youth serving Native organizations and other groups to speak to the issue. Um, in that Webinar we actually had some city staff participate from our Office of Violence Prevention and our Department of Community Response, and it became super apparent that not only were we not doing anything to support those groups work in this issue, but that a lot of them had no idea.

Um, you know, in relative numbers, it's a small number of people, say, thirteen, you know folks are like, okay, but in a smaller population of people, that's a significant impact, and any impact is significant. But when you see a trend I don't think that we were doing a good job of tracking that. And so, it's raised questions internally around what we could do to better track and make sure we're paying attention when trends like that arise in our community, but also what does it look like if we're looking at violence prevention, family and youth support community interventions? How are we being intentional about including Native serving institutions in that framework?

So, that has been our initial work, and we continue to keep that conversation alive through our Indigenous People's Day Recos, to different events throughout the year where we're bringing up the continued emphasis, so that our staff starts to normalize the idea of, "Yes, and." You know, yes, we're doing what we're doing, and we're also looking to be very intentional towards a population in our city that is super important, and has a really urgent issue that they're experiencing.

## **Maria Vargas**

Thank you. Thank you, Katie. Um, I'm going to go ahead and ask the next question. Can you define the issue for our audience members what sources are available for our audience to learn more about this issue?

## **Katie Valenzuela**

Yes, I will have to look up the report that Morning Star sent me. I was just trying to do that, and was unable to find it in time, so that folks can see-- I think the biggest. And this really speaks to the first big issue, which is the data. We don't really have great data on this, and some of it is due to law enforcement interactions. They're not classifying people appropriately. They're not registering folks as Tribal members or as Indigenous people. So, our data on the scale of this is incredibly limited, and as such, I think the scope and impact of this crisis is still not super well understood. You know we're really unfortunately leaning on the stories of families who are coming forward to say, "Yeah, my daughter left um for this trip to Nevada. I never saw her again," you know? There are these really horrible stories that I've heard of families who are really hurting and still looking for answers. So that's one level of --how we tracking? How are we understanding this issue?

I think, when it comes to the root issues behind the why, you know that points to some really complex challenges that are not totally unique to the Indigenous community, right? When we think about human trafficking, and we think about domestic violence and we think about other challenges, there are upstream interventions that are just not being well funded. You know, there are programs that exist to try to help identify and address, you know, young people might be getting into an unfortunate path or relationship, or to support people who are in a bad situation, that need to leave to get to safety.

So, there's some of the programming and community supports that are there that are missing, that need to be addressed. But I also think, and this became very real during the Gabby Petito case, and most recently in America, and we all know that that's when very quickly people realized that it was on every major news outlet every single day. And yes, it was horrible, and I'm not saying that she just wasn't entitled to that attention. But it was very obvious that's not happening for Native people when they go missing. Um, that there are people who are going missing who are not young, White, beautiful girls who are not getting the same level of attention, even though their circumstances are just as dire and just as urgent. So, it really brings a question of I mean, for lack of a better way to frame it, like bias in media reporting, it brought to question, you know, whether or not we are extending the same resources for different cases. If there is a systemic issue, why so many people have still not been found and are just presumed dead because it's been so long. So, I think what we've seen in terms of all the community pages and Facebook groups that are sharing information and trying to help find people is so incredible, but it shouldn't be necessary, right? You know, we should be able to expect those agencies to pursue our communities just as vigorously as they would anybody else's. But I think that case really shined a spotlight on the fact that, you know, while her attention was warranted, and they

were able to find a conclusion to her case. Um, there are so many others like her who are not getting that attention, and that warrants a discussion and some intentional policy making to try to change that reality.

### **Danielle Slakoff**

absolutely. And you know, I've actually done some research on the missing white woman syndrome in media, and have definitely seen in my own work that missing white women and girls do tend to get more of that media attention and to your point--after Gabby went missing there was a, I believe it was NBC, but there was a news report saying that in the last ten years in Wyoming there had been over 400 Indigenous girls in women who had gone missing in the same state where Gabby was found, and yet none of them warranted that level of attention. So, that is something that I am very passionate about from the media side and the media criminology side, so I really appreciate you bringing that up and mentioning that.

### **Katie Valenzuela**

I think it also drives some of these causes, right? It's like, this is—gosh—I struggling to remember the name of the show. I think it's that Yellowstone show Um! Is that the one I'm thinking of where there was that scene that was really kind of traumatizing in a lot of ways. But essentially, where one of the main characters sees a van parked on the side of the reservation road, and he says, "No, something's not right," and he says to his son, "you know, people think they can come to the reservation and that the laws don't apply here," right? There was two white men who were in the process of abducting and assaulting a young Native American woman, and it was, it was a really scarring scene. I don't recommend looking it up to watch it, because I immediately regretted that I had not turned it off faster because it was really impactful.

But I think it was impactful for a reason. Cause it was trying to educate the audience that, you know, why is it that, like there are so many structural issues around investment and resources and community support, but there is also this uncomfortable tinge of, "why is it that, you know, Indigenous people are being so, so significantly impacted, and kidnapped or murdered or assaulted or worse, in so many different, and seems like at such a higher rate in this population, and how much of that might be racially motivated, and how much of that might be a power dynamic. It's just, um, it's really unsettling to think about, and I know that a lot of folks are doing that work, and it's so important to to study that so that we can intervene appropriately. But, um, that is an undercurrent here, both in the media coverage and in the "why this might be happening in the first place," which is uncomfortable, but something we have to deal with as a society. If we're going to really confront this issue

### **Danielle Slakoff**

absolutely, and I have not seen that show. But that scene sounds really horrifying, and I'm sure that that got a lot of people's attention because my understanding is that that show is

not focused on that necessarily. So, wow, I had no idea. So, I'll definitely have to look into that a little bit more.

### **Maria Vargas**

Danielle, can I chime in? Katie you are saying a lot of you're seeing a lot of important points that, you know, get me excited because this is the conversation we need to have. And I wanted to mention two things briefly from your comments. And one is, you know, I'm blanking out on the name of law, but it was a law that a few years ago, when the VAWA-- the Violence Against Women Act got re-authorized—it included a protection in terms of, you know, because reservation law did not hold accountable or charge men who would come into—White men--who would come into the reservations and rape or hurt Native women. They could not be charged under that reservation law. And now that you know the way that you're talking about it, Katie. In that scene -- I have not watched the show, but it makes me kind of connect dots and think about, "Wow!" You know, even though that law is now appealed, or you know-- the VAWA was able to turn it around—perhaps that legacy of, you know, pretty much impunity of White men going into reservations and doing what they want, you know, is what has also led to this at this point, right? This kind of like genocidal consequence in which they think it's okay to go to the reservation and pick out or target Indigenous women.

And the other thing I wanted to say as well, and I actually just read about this case recently. I'm sure perhaps maybe both of you have heard of her. I had not, and I felt bad. Her name is Pepita Redhair, and she actually went missing before Gabby Petito from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She herself is an Indigenous woman, and she went missing, I believe March 27<sup>th</sup>. And the reason also that there was little to no media coverage is because the coverage was so overwhelmed by the pandemic--COVID. But why is it, as Katie just said, that even with the full flight of the pandemic, Gabby Petito got plenty of coverage, and Pepita Redhair still was very much silenced. So, you know...

### **Katie Valenzuela**

It's a heartbreaking...it's this legacy, right? I mean, like the fact that reservation law enforcement wasn't able to charge White men. I mean that is a legacy, right? That is as purely, I would imagine, wasn't just an oversight, right, that that happened. And you know, when you think about so much of what's happened in terms of the genocide of of Native people—it's not that long ago. I was just talking to somebody the other day from the Native Vote project, and he was saying, you know, it's so startling to him that people look at these cases at boarding schools in Canada, and all of these graves that were found, and said, "Oh, my gosh, that's so shocking!" And he's like, "That happened here, too. It happened not that long ago." It was our grandparents' generation, right, that was directly impacted by that. And so, these genocidal tendencies and this perception of a community as less than or different. And it's okay that we do what we want with them because they're different than us. It's it's a deep racist notion that's hard to break.

And it's important to be thoughtful about calling it out so that we can break it. I'm very, I very much believe that we have to be explicit when it comes to things like racial impacts like this, so that we can trigger that value set--most people don't like being called racist, right? But, it's like, if you're doing something that's reinforcing this outcome, we need to confront that by naming what it is, which is both a systems issue, an investment issue, a governance issue, a media bias issue, but also a much deeper legacy of what's happened to Tribal people for so long, and it's continuing to happen today.

### **Danielle Slakoff**

Absolutely, and there was a study that just came out in the last couple of years that showed that the missing and murdered Indigenous women issue in the US is very closely tied to resource extraction in many locations, and that it's not far, often from oil rigs that you see crime rates against Indigenous people go up, and how, you know, the legacy of that has been ongoing. And so, it's absolutely part of a deeper issue. So, thank you so much, Katie and Media for bringing that up and spelling that out explicitly. Because I agree, I think this is something that needs to be talked about, but also in very explicit terms.

So, on March 8th, we got a lot of audience questions about, "What can the average person, the person listening, what can they do to help?" Should it, should they be volunteering, should they be voting a certain way? You know, what suggestions, City Councilwoman, do you have for somebody who wants to know how they can help?

### **Katie Valenzuela**

I mean, the most important thing is to talk about it, right? And I mean, granted, I have a probably biased Facebook universe to most. But when the whole "Gabby Petito missing" was happening, my Facebook page was flooded with "Yes, and," right? Like a lot of this narrative, and a lot of calling out like, "Yes, this is important by why aren't we talking about these other people who have also been missing, as you mentioned, for longer at times, Maria, around the same time that are not getting attention, and I heard from a lot of people at that time who said, they never thought about that, right? You know, like they may have just watched that coverage and just thought, "Oh, no! How terrible," and never thought about "Hey, what about?" And that's happened so many times since then, you know. You hear these awful stories of like the mom on the East Coast who went on a jog in the morning and got murdered, kidnapped and murdered, and yes, that was super sad. But it was another opportunity to say, "Yes, this is super sad. And since this happened, this many people have been killed on Native territory, and we need to talk about that, too."

So, I think talking about it, is just super important, just to help give people a place to ask questions. But also, to just keep planting those seeds for folks, and that I think that this invisibility that's happening to the Native community is part of why this is persisted and grown to the level it is now, which is really a very urgent crisis. It's been an urgent crisis for a while, but it should have never gotten to this point. You know, we should have recognized this so much earlier, but Native people generally been erased from common

discussion, they are erased from demographic charts, so I think, continuing to ask those questions is very important, you know, if you go into a room, and they're talking about a report, and there is no Native data on there. Hey, what, what does this look like in the Indigenous community here locally? What does this look like in this crime data? Why does this chart not show me what is happening here? So that you continue to build that energy, and the public starts to ask those questions with us. Hey, what is happening? In Sacramento, the second highest rate in California, where something's wrong, and we need to figure that out for our community, and we to do that with the community that's impacted. So that's the first thing, I think, is just continuing to talk about it is so important, continuing to ask elected officials, law enforcement agency officials to continue to push on them for, "what are you doing?"

I think when funding plans come out, you know, violence prevention is a growing priority as we come out of this pandemic, and we're seeing these upticks in violence across the country. And what are we doing to invest in Native-serving organizations, right? Like, I can tell you, when our city staff finished that Webinar—I mean our, I mean this is violence prevention—this his is what they do. And they said, "we didn't even realize that we weren't funding Native serving organizations. We didn't know these folks were here, and now we do. And now we can start reaching out." But I think, making those connections and doing that advocacy--are you funding groups who serve this population so that they can do what they need to do to protect and and make sure that they're looking out for each other as well. But I think, those are to me that two biggest things is to continue to talk about it, and to continue to ask the question, so that it doesn't go away, and we can bring back the visibility of a population who is very much here, and is very much experiencing an urgent crisis that demands the type of attention we would afford to crises in other communities.

### **Danielle Slakoff**

I have a follow up to that, which is, is there a way for people to have their voice heard that maybe is, you know, we always say voting, right? But is there other ways that people can get involved, or to have their voice heard from the City Council, or maybe other people?

### **Katie Valenzuela**

Yeah, I think um meetings like you can send emails, and, like most elected officials, have some form for you to call or email or contact them with comments to ask these questions. Most public meetings have off-agenda items where members of the public can comment and say, Hey, this is a challenge. You know, when we get as we get closer to Indigenous people's day, just in a couple of weeks, I know we'll start speaking a lot more about this during Council, and really, when we present that resolution to highlight the need for this active partnership and conversation year round, so that we can work together on this crisis.

So yeah, there are more proactive ways you can work, and then there are great organizations like, you know, the group that Morning Star works, and these Facebook



groups, I mean, they do events in the community. They're doing things to support families who are impacted, you know, when events come up, they're working on State legislation. There's just been a lot of great movement on state bills in particular with James Ramos running a few bills to actually put money into Attorney General, you know investigations and data collection and work to address this crisis. So, I say tapping into those community groups that already exist in the neighborhoods that you're in, so that you can help support the work that is going on. It is robust, and could always use more voices and more support.

### **Maria Vargas**

This last question is going to kind of shift the conversation, but it is an important question because of how inspirational it is that you use your platform as a City Councilwoman to not only bring right social visibility and attention to this issue, but also by tangible change, in the way that, you know, you're kind of helping fund or helping bring funding and support to Indigenous organizations in Sacramento that have been doing this type of work.

So, the question is, at the event, you spoke about your career path to getting into City Council. Would you mind sharing more about how you got here?

### **Katie Valenzuela**

Yeah, I would love to um. It's, I mean, I was always a community organizer. I got started really young in Kern County working with my dad on projects that affect youth! And when I came to Davis to go to school, I found that that was something you could do for a living, and it was called community development, and I was like, oh, amazing! I can study this and just do this. So, I was very happily working on State policy on local projects, always busy doing one thing or another, either as a volunteer or as part of my work.

And really in 2018, it felt like things in Sacramento were starting to change. We were starting to see prices of housing go up. We were really starting to see the growing homelessness crisis that disproportionately impacts, you know, Brown, black, Indigenous people in our communities, and it really felt like it was we needed to do something if we were going to make sure that Sacramento would say a city for all of us.

So, I I remember this very vivid story of seeing an older man who was on the street in a cold winter night, and that being really the impetus for me to to call my friends who'd been pestering me for years about potentially running to say, "Okay, I think I want to do this." But my "why" has always been making sure that all Sacramentans feel like our city is a place for them, that we're really working, not just to continue to grow and and be prosperous, but to really make sure that everybody benefits from that. And so much of that to date has really been about bringing visibility to issues like missing and murdered Indigenous relatives, so that that can be something that we talk about and draw attention to as you mentioned. But, you know, it's also been so many other big and small times when we're able to ask questions and and bring forward a different perspective that really

wasn't known before. Right now, for instance, I'm the only tenant on my City Council, and so, like nobody really understood what the tenant laws were doing or not doing in the community, and we really bring that perspective forward. And I hear from tenants all over the city who call us for help because they know our office really focuses on those challenges, so it was a circuitous path to get here, but it also feels like I am where I am supposed to be at this time, and really enjoying the struggle of trying to push our city to be the best it can for all of us. So, yeah, organizing at a different level, I guess.

I still keep a toe in environmental work and environmental justice work at the Capital, because that's where I'm from in Kern County, so I'm always going to help those groups as best I can when I can. But you know Sacramento really is home for me now in a lot of ways, and I really am excited to have the opportunity to try to make it better.

### **Danielle Slakoff**

I am curious, and this is just follow up to what you just shared, is--you kind of mentioned your path, and how your friends had been kind of mentioning to you like, "Oh, you should run, you should run." How has it been different, maybe for better for worse, than what you were expecting? I mean, you want you ran, and then you got your seat. So, I'm just curious if you could reflect on, you know, what that journey has been like and what it's been like to be on City Council because I think CRISJ listeners are probably so excited to have a City Council member here today.

### **Katie Valenzuela**

No, I appreciate that. I mean, yeah, I ran. I worked hard. I did what I knew, I canvassed. I organized people, we did grassroots fundraising, I won. It was super surreal. And then three weeks later, we shut down for the pandemic, I won in March in the primary, so I spent the summer, and then, you know, George Floyd was killed, and then you had all this federal money coming down, and protests, and it was a really hard time to be on the sidelines because that's not why I ran. I ran to be in it.

So, by the time that I took office in December, it was a totally different environment than we expected it would be, both on police accountability issues, on budget, funding, we had an unprecedented amount of money coming down, and we could really push for solutions to some of these challenges we were facing, and there was a lot of activism and engagement. But I will say also a lot of tension and and struggle, and that's been tough to see the number of people we interact with, for example, the safe camping and parking site in my district, who are just falling through the cracks.

And right now, we have 12,000 families that are still waiting on rental assistance during the pandemic, and it just breaks your heart to see that suffering. You also know, this platform we've been given is surreal. I remember shortly after I got elected I tweeted about something. I don't even remember what it was about necessarily, and that tweet was in the Sac Bee article the next day, and I was like, "Oh, you like really pay attention to what I say now." So, I think I've been pleasantly surprised, while it does take five votes to

pass policy and ordinance and budget decisions, it doesn't take by votes to be vocal, and to be an advocate for your community, and to push on issues, and to raise awareness on challenges and things going on. And so that's been something we've really been leaning into um and thinking about, and also starting now that we've kind of figured out the ropes here, we're a little under two years into my four year term, thinking about going back to those organizing days and think-- what does a big campaign look like on affordability for housing, on justice, and funding from our city?

Like there's just...it's never boring, is sort of the one thing I tell everybody when they say, how's it going? It's never boring. Some days it's really really great. Some days it's really really hard, I won't lie, but in the end, when you have really strong values and you're really well connected to your community— there's always a path forward, and there's always more to do, and so, I've really enjoyed it. I've learned a lot, and I'm always willing to talk to people who are thinking about running themselves, because I think people should run, if they're interested in government when they have a connection to the community, when they have a strong why, I think you should, because we need more of us in this level of government, who can work together.

I will say that I did also get to go, because I'm kind of the only one-- not the only one-- I have a colleague on Council, Mai Vang, who is similar to me in a lot of respects, but I'm the only one in a lot of ways on our Council on policy, and I went to a conference in Denver from this national group called Local Progress, and I walked into this room with hundreds of City Council members and mayors and school board members who were just like me, and their pushing the issues, and it feels like every day I learn something that gives me more tools to try to make things better here in Sacramento, and to help more statewide and nationally with the movement to try to make our government work for everybody. So, it's it's exciting. It feels like the possibilities are endless, in the best and scariest of ways, I guess.

**Danielle Slakoff**

That's so cool. And maybe CRISJ needs to have you back in two years.

**Katie Valenzuela**

Yeah, and we can talk about what else I learned.

**Danielle Slakoff**

Yeah, because it is interesting at this midway point. But as you mentioned, the the last two years have not been, you know, the quote-unquote "normal" two years that maybe were expected before the pandemic began. So, I really appreciate you sharing your um experience, but also how unique it's been because of the pandemic.

**Katie Valenzuela**

Yeah, absolutely. It's definitely--Yeah, It's been one of the greatest experiences in my life, like I said in all levels of the way, but I don't regret it one bit, and I am looking forward to keep serving as long as my constituents want me to, because now I understand just what we can do, raising awareness about issues like this, for example, small things like the budget decisions—that's small money for our city to say, "Oh, Here's \$100,000," but we were able to do that, you know, just because we were here. So, I want to push--see how far we can take it in Sacramento. We can be a model for addressing this crisis, but also other challenges as well.

### **Maria Vargas**

I just wanted to highlight, you know, in terms of when you were discussing kind of the roller coaster, and, as Danielle said, the uniqueness of when you entered your Council member term and the pandemic. And you said, right, despite the hard days, I am where I'm supposed to be, and I think that's so beautiful, and again, inspirational, also for our students. Because I see, right, students kind of struggle and find themselves, be connected to their communities, you know, feel so pressured in terms of knowing their future and what they want to be. And for you and your journey, it was so organic, you know, and you naturally ended up at home, doing passionate work, right? And what holds you is your community, and your strong values, your father and the activism that you were exposed to in an early age. So, I hope that students listening as well-- you're an amazing role model for us, and you know to be at this platform, you know, and also active in these types of policy changes, which, as you've said several times, right, in this podcast, are rooted in 500 years of legacy of racism, patriarchy, and capitalism, and you are tackling them, you and your team. So, it's amazing. Thank you.

### **Danielle Slakoff**

Katie, is there anything that we haven't hit on today that you would like the chance to talk about? Or are you feeling good about where we've kind of left it?

### **Katie Valenzuela**

No, I guess I'll just add related to what you were saying, Maria, that I think sometimes people get intimidated with the size of these problems, and it is a big big, deep meaty issue, right, to try to tackle. But um, if you can change one person's mind, though, on this, or, if you can, just, you know, have one moment where you get the right person's ear and say, "hey, what about this issue? This data?" You know, that that matters, too, you know, I know sharing on Facebook seems futile, but you might have that one Facebook friend that didn't know that, and might be—ask you a question based on what they see.

So, I just always encourage people that change, you know, not everybody has to be a City Councilmember, or you know, some high level Congress person, or whatever, to make a difference on this issue, that, having these conversations and bringing visibility, is, it's going to have a positive impact on any issue that you care about. Because so much of this, I'm learning is community—changing community mindsets. And really opening people's

eyes and hearts to important solutions that need that support. So, just want to leave people with, whatever you choose to do, as long as it's something you care about, you'll have a great impact if you're staying close to your values and not being afraid to speak up.

### **Maria Vargas**

That is a beautiful place, and thought or advice, to be left with. Well, thank you so much for being here and for listening, we hope that our conversation today sparked, understanding, empathy, and motivation to join a struggle for a better future for all. This is Maria Vargas of the CRISJ podcast. Thank you for listening.

### **Outro Music Lyrics**

No more penalties and no more wars. Based on the actions. Now, time for "Building Justice," "Building Justice." Time for building justice, justice.