

Isacc Aquino
Professor Espiritu
ETHN 120D

Transcript

00:00:01.020 --> 00:00:15.719 Isacc Aquino: Alright, hello, my name is Isacc Aquino and. Today is May 13, 2020 and I'm interviewing Raj Chetty through zoom for the US UCSD race and oral history project. Could you please state your full name, date of birth, and place of birth?

00:00:16.800 --> 00:00:25.110 Raj Chetty: Yeah, it's Raj Chetty, September 25, 1979 is my birthday, and I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

00:00:27.270 --> 00:00:30.090 Isacc Aquino: All right, Raj. Could you tell me a little bit more about yourself?

00:00:31.260 --> 00:00:34.080 Raj Chetty: Sure. Um So professionally. I'm a professor at San Diego State University.

00:00:38.310 --> 00:00:44.610 Raj Chetty: Have been there for one year, and prior to here. I taught at St. John's University in both English Department

00:00:46.500 --> 00:00:49.650 Raj Chetty: I guess at San Diego State it's English and Comparative Literature department.

00:00:51.180 --> 00:01:05.820 Raj Chetty: And umm I'm actually returning to St. John's in the fall. I was here on a leave of absence and trying to figure out where was the best place for me. So that's professionally where I'll be in Queens come the Fall. I'm also ummm

00:01:07.590 --> 00:01:11.910 Raj Chetty: From California. I grew up in San Diego in Rancho Bernardo North County.

00:01:16.950 --> 00:01:17.940 Raj Chetty: I live here with my family, kids.

00:01:21.000 --> 00:01:22.200 Raj Chetty: Does that work for background?

00:01:22.500 --> 00:01:23.670 Isacc Aquino: Yes, yes. That works.

00:01:25.860 --> 00:01:28.410 Isacc Aquino: Umm. How has your upbringing influenced your career goals?

00:01:30.090 --> 00:01:35.670 Raj Chetty: Oh, yeah. So one thing I didn't say so my. The other part of my background. My parents are both immigrants from India.

00:01:37.080 --> 00:01:50.550 Raj Chetty: And and some level there's like two answers to that, I guess, in one sense, my parents who came in the sort of post civil rights immigration legislation of the 1965

00:01:51.570 --> 00:01:59.250 Raj Chetty: Came in the wake of that sort of the good kind of immigrants, right, the kind of immigrants that already spoke English already had.

00:01:59.910 --> 00:02:18.450 Raj Chetty: Degrees already or a certain kind of socio economic privileged set of people. And so I was born into those circumstances relative relevant but not crazy wealth relative affluence and upper middle class life and and

00:02:19.920 --> 00:02:26.700 Raj Chetty: And so immigrants of color, right. So kind of sort of acceptable immigrants that South Asians and South Asian immigrants tend to be

00:02:28.950 --> 00:02:38.880 Raj Chetty: But also not like fully white and so negotiating all of that in a predominantly white upper middle class neighborhood in North North County San Diego. umm.

00:02:40.530 --> 00:02:47.190 Raj Chetty: Made me understand that I come from a bunch of things that and received a bunch of things educationally that would help me succeed.

00:02:48.060 --> 00:03:04.530 Raj Chetty: But success defined in a very narrow sense around and kind of upward mobility that leaves a lot of people out. And a lot of people behind it allows those of us who are able to achieve it, a kind of bubble would have to interact with people as closely.

00:03:06.030 --> 00:03:17.160 Raj Chetty: We don't have all those sorts of privileges. And so in that sense in a, in a lot of ways. The, the, the work I do now. I work in black studies.

00:03:18.780 --> 00:03:23.610 Raj Chetty: In sort of global black studies and Caribbean studies, specifically on the Dominican Republic.

00:03:24.690 --> 00:03:28.050 Raj Chetty: And um I'm trying to think about how

00:03:29.370 --> 00:03:39.570 Raj Chetty: communities of color communities internationally Dominican communities Caribbean communities and the thoughts and the knowledge and the ways of understanding and the histories that come from these communities um

00:03:40.110 --> 00:03:45.990 Raj Chetty: Our understanding the world and actually templates for how we imagine worlds differently at a different kind of

00:03:47.280 --> 00:03:50.070 Raj Chetty: social relations than what we have now that privileges.

00:03:51.150 --> 00:04:00.630 Raj Chetty: Whiteness and the privileges class privilege and the privileges sort of proximity to whiteness and hetero normative it and all sorts of different things that become normative

00:04:01.590 --> 00:04:18.840 Raj Chetty: Which means excludes all these so so in that sense like I didn't, I didn't grow up with with this sort of deep sense or acute sense of marginality. In fact, quite the opposite. But over time through learning for, especially from other people have come to understand how much it matters to be

00:04:20.310 --> 00:04:25.920 Raj Chetty: Thinking with and through the lives and histories of people that come from these marginalized positions.

00:04:27.150 --> 00:04:27.510 Isacc Aquino: OK.

00:04:29.040 --> 00:04:33.180 Isacc Aquino: Now we'll go on to the following question. Um, how did you get involved with Allies to End Detention?

00:04:34.710 --> 00:04:44.640 Raj Chetty: So when I was at San Diego State in fall 2019 or as I was driving. I was already sort of interested in and trying to think about ways I could use

00:04:45.030 --> 00:04:57.570 Raj Chetty: My own position in my own abilities like Spanish speaking and a sort of academic position and sort of general sense of how to organize some things and mobilize some things and for um those who were in detention immigrants in particular. And part of this is because when I was living in New York. We and this is sort of a personal story at one of our daughters was going to school with another

00:05:12.090 --> 00:05:27.660 Raj Chetty: Young woman girl whose father was parents, both of whom are Salvadoran immigrants and we became friends with them through our daughter and

her friend and then one of them. The father was picked up by ice and put into a detention center in

00:05:28.740 --> 00:05:42.390 Raj Chetty: In New Jersey and we were in New York and and and so it brought home all the sort of very personal ways that this was effective. All of a sudden, we knew a wife without her husband, we knew two daughters without their father.

00:05:43.440 --> 00:05:44.880 Raj Chetty: And we knew that it was affecting them deeply umm

00:05:46.170 --> 00:05:50.190 Raj Chetty: And so while in New York, I was able to visit this

00:05:51.210 --> 00:06:01.620 Raj Chetty: the friend and his daughters weren't able to go visit him their mom was too scared to take them there. He didn't want them to see him in orange jumpsuit through a glass.

00:06:02.340 --> 00:06:13.290 Raj Chetty: But it was it was sort of really heart wrenching to sort of sit and listen to him. So when I came to San Diego. I knew this sort of, in some ways, not exactly. Ground Zero, but I kind of ground zero for these immigrant issues because we're right at the

00:06:15.780 --> 00:06:16.830 Raj Chetty: Tijuana um um US Mexico border.

00:06:18.300 --> 00:06:18.810 Raj Chetty: And that umm

00:06:19.980 --> 00:06:28.740 Raj Chetty: Both the amounts of activist and advocacy groups and groups on the ground and the sort of really violent forces of

00:06:29.250 --> 00:06:38.580 Raj Chetty: Customs and Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement and in the context of the border wall and in context of this current administration's sort of really is going to phobic racism.

00:06:39.090 --> 00:06:46.830 Raj Chetty: And anti Mexican and sort of broadly anti anti Latinx anti Central American. And this is sort of a site where there's a lot of

00:06:47.970 --> 00:06:49.650 Raj Chetty: Sort of forces vying for

00:06:51.630 --> 00:07:00.780 Raj Chetty: For the kind of world, whether it's a world that means more more incarceration, or will that means less where in a world of more inhumanity or less inhumanity.

00:07:01.710 --> 00:07:07.020 Raj Chetty: So I can't remember who I contact it, but I knew that Joanna Brooks, who was one of the cofounders, the organization.

00:07:07.350 --> 00:07:14.100 Raj Chetty: Was also a professor in the department. I'm in, but also as an administrator and over all sort of new faculty and faculty. We're going to tenure process.

00:07:14.850 --> 00:07:20.880 Raj Chetty: I knew she was involved in some work. And so I heard about it, and asked how to get involved. And so she connected me in different ways.

00:07:21.600 --> 00:07:33.150 Raj Chetty: To is really generous and helpful in the beginning, she said, Hey, get here and settle in before you start sort of running at these things and I said it was a really wise and generous thing to do. But I also was like wanting to get

00:07:33.780 --> 00:07:40.530 Raj Chetty: Sort of things as fast as I could. And just because I felt the urgency, having come from New York, and knowing sort of national situations.

00:07:42.360 --> 00:07:50.730 Raj Chetty: um, How much this is such an important task. Obviously, this is all before coronavirus and so I could not have anticipated, but like none of us could how much this would take a turn now.

00:07:51.870 --> 00:08:03.450 Raj Chetty: But that was how I got involved the church I attend, we were able to use it as a building. I was able to sort of asked if they could use it as sort of site where people can meet and they had outgrown sort of the homes, they were meeting in

00:08:04.680 --> 00:08:11.310 Raj Chetty: Allies and and then from there, we moved to a different building that's right near campus. Sorry, San Diego State campus.

00:08:11.730 --> 00:08:15.990 Raj Chetty: Sort of, again, are associated with our church. The church that I belong to and a few of the people that are in the group.

00:08:16.440 --> 00:08:27.900 Raj Chetty: And so that's been nice to be able to facilitate a meeting space since obviously cope with that meeting spaces change to kind of individuals in their homes and kind of picking up things and trying to do the best we can.

00:08:28.920 --> 00:08:37.110 Raj Chetty: But that's been sort of the trajectory of how I got it, and the ways that I was able to contribute something from my own connections. Okay.

00:08:38.130 --> 00:08:41.130 Isacc Aquino: umm. Tell me, How you feel by a growth within Allies to End Detention?

00:08:42.960 --> 00:08:46.800 Raj Chetty: Ahh it's, it's a good question. So I

00:08:47.910 --> 00:08:49.440 Raj Chetty: In a real sense. I'm still learning

00:08:50.730 --> 00:09:03.810 Raj Chetty: And and it's been that kind of process in a really positive way. I've learned from the people who co founded this who've been with allies to end detention for a year before, I think it was around a year before I started in the fall.

00:09:04.830 --> 00:09:12.660 Raj Chetty: And had databases and set up networks, working with students like yourself and other students at UCSD other students at San Diego State.

00:09:13.680 --> 00:09:20.010 Raj Chetty: And there's like really sort of powerful collaborative work across students and faculty and activists and people just interested in this kind of stuff.

00:09:21.090 --> 00:09:38.790 Raj Chetty: And so I've learned to sort of really appreciate how that kind of collaborative work has come together and I've understood it better and participating and growing in that sense of seeing how an organization like allies to End Detention and other ones. Similarly, umm

00:09:40.560 --> 00:09:48.840 Raj Chetty: Are about negotiations that are about relationships are about building capacity within ourselves as an organization and building each other up so that we can better serve

00:09:49.770 --> 00:09:58.080 Raj Chetty: Communities, we're trying to serve any other right but sort of kid for be in partnership with amplify the struggles of the communities when working with a particular

00:09:58.770 --> 00:10:11.190 Raj Chetty: Communities in detention people in detention insects little time a separate obvious trying to think about this larger scale is a part of a larger effort and the other, the other thing I'd say I've grown

00:10:12.270 --> 00:10:14.010 Raj Chetty: In is ahh

00:10:19.140 --> 00:10:30.030 Raj Chetty: Learning how to be patient. Hard for me. And I think for a lot of us because this stuff is so outrageous because I agree. Just because lives are at stake in a very literal sense and

00:10:30.510 --> 00:10:44.100 Raj Chetty: It's, it's hard to want to be patient. It's hard to want to hit the brakes to slow down. It's frustrating in so many ways. And so some growth and I don't think I've got it all. I don't think I've made it is trying to figure out how to how to be

00:10:45.300 --> 00:10:47.970 Raj Chetty: Consistent and at the same time.

00:10:49.110 --> 00:10:58.290 Raj Chetty: I mean, there's like an element of, like, I just wanna burn it all down, and I'm sure more and more than just me feel that way, but trying to figure out how to do that best

00:10:59.490 --> 00:10:59.760 Raj Chetty: Yeah.

00:11:01.470 --> 00:11:07.560 Isacc Aquino: Okay. Um, do you believe that the state home order has united the members, more or less?

00:11:09.300 --> 00:11:19.080 Raj Chetty: Um, I mean, I think it's affected the way we can be better with each other. And so there are people. So the easy answer is less

00:11:19.950 --> 00:11:25.560 Raj Chetty: But, but I want to say. In other words, it hasn't united us more. I guess what I mean to say is

00:11:26.100 --> 00:11:33.720 Raj Chetty: I don't think it has made it so we're disunited in the sense that we no longer able to function or functions in sort of collaborative ways

00:11:34.170 --> 00:11:42.240 Raj Chetty: It has limited that capacity, but it hasn't disabled it and and and some of this, for example, is there a number of students who can't

00:11:42.600 --> 00:11:52.650 Raj Chetty: Participate for a variety of reasons. There are a number of people who can't participate, for reasons in the way they could before. And, and so I wouldn't call that disunity.

00:11:53.430 --> 00:12:04.590 Raj Chetty: But, but it has the function of making us as sort of separately housed in a place to be on the same home to abide by the state home stuff with all of us appreciate to do

00:12:05.940 --> 00:12:10.710 Raj Chetty: Has made it so the sort of personal connection that builds community that builds the strength of the organization.

00:12:11.220 --> 00:12:22.740 Raj Chetty: Is not as fast as not as feasible and it's enabled. Certain things like we've been able to streamline a bunch of stuff. And that's good and one couple of people leaders are leaders in the group.

00:12:23.790 --> 00:12:32.430 Raj Chetty: Or leaders in the devices, I should say, have instituted a sort of we meet on Monday nights in person is to did a subset Monday night, check in.

00:12:34.230 --> 00:12:35.460 Raj Chetty: Really because it's just a

00:12:37.110 --> 00:12:49.200 Raj Chetty: It's sort of the work was we did when we met and then disappeared and and it has been a week and I'm not everyone even has been able to make it.

00:12:49.710 --> 00:13:03.030 Raj Chetty: But we're asking each other. Okay, who hasn't seen this person someone, someone want to check in with that person as he was doing or how those individuals are doing. And so there's a real sense that the community. We had built before is still actively vironment and

00:13:04.650 --> 00:13:07.020 Raj Chetty: caring for each other, taking care of each other.

00:13:09.960 --> 00:13:13.830 Isacc Aquino: What emotions come up for you when you read the letters from the detainees?

00:13:16.350 --> 00:13:17.880 Raj Chetty: Ah, that's heavy

00:13:19.020 --> 00:13:20.700 Raj Chetty: I mean it's a heaviness

00:13:22.020 --> 00:13:25.410 Raj Chetty: So then I guess that's one of the emotions. It's sort of like a weightiness

00:13:26.790 --> 00:13:27.960 Raj Chetty: There's a frustration.

00:13:29.220 --> 00:13:30.300 Raj Chetty: I was telling a friend.

00:13:32.250 --> 00:13:34.200 Raj Chetty: Not just about this work with other kinds of work.

00:13:35.340 --> 00:13:40.560 Raj Chetty: There's a frustration of feeling like you want to do so much more that so much more needs to be done.

00:13:41.760 --> 00:13:48.450 Raj Chetty: And people need to be out that people need to be in circumstances that make their life chances increase so they can live

00:13:50.070 --> 00:13:52.320 Raj Chetty: And and being sort of hamstrung by

00:13:53.460 --> 00:13:54.390 Raj Chetty: Does that make that

00:13:56.670 --> 00:14:02.700 Raj Chetty: At times, feel possible and at times feel just unlikely but people's voices in there are also umm

00:14:04.560 --> 00:14:15.450 Raj Chetty: People share artwork and people share poems and people share sort of really moving pieces so, so in the midst or alongside this heaviness.

00:14:16.200 --> 00:14:22.830 Raj Chetty: There is a sense of like this is this is really powerful stuff. It's, it's moving emotionally in a in an inspiring way.

00:14:23.490 --> 00:14:35.160 Raj Chetty: People write about their families. People write about the support they feel people about how much it means to be seen and all those things are sort of ways that those are all things that mitigate

00:14:35.940 --> 00:14:54.750 Raj Chetty: heaviness and I don't think they. I don't think it cancels out the heaviness, or the anger or the sadness or the desperation that we feel as being unable to sort of just immediately see these people be able to get out and but it does help to see and hear their perspectives.

00:14:57.390 --> 00:15:01.890 Raj Chetty: Because, because as difficult as everything is these are so people who are feeling

00:15:03.000 --> 00:15:07.440 Raj Chetty: Joy's in some way and that is inspiring. Yeah.

00:15:08.220 --> 00:15:14.010 Isacc Aquino: Um, do you feel like you get moved when detainees have like an optimistic view

00:15:15.120 --> 00:15:16.800 Isacc Aquino: Of afterwards?

00:15:17.520 --> 00:15:26.070 Raj Chetty: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I don't like. And this goes back to the sort of the initial questions of my background like have not had to face.

00:15:27.210 --> 00:15:33.420 Raj Chetty: Much of any of this kind of structural racism in the phobic

00:15:34.440 --> 00:15:42.660 Raj Chetty: incarceration of practice. Like I experienced micro aggressions but nothing at the level of racism that has had a material effect.

00:15:44.010 --> 00:15:55.170 Raj Chetty: On my life and or even the xenophobia, like we've been fine my family's been not my not my kids does too but I mean like me and my immigrant parents

00:15:56.400 --> 00:16:04.500 Raj Chetty: And and and so it is absolutely inspiring to see in the face of

00:16:06.720 --> 00:16:10.980 Raj Chetty: Objective material objectively material oppression.

00:16:12.810 --> 00:16:23.280 Raj Chetty: In the faith that people are holding on to, in many cases, a spiritual optimism is a very many of the letters have sort of a religious and spiritual

00:16:24.930 --> 00:16:36.210 Raj Chetty: Element to them and and that that people who are in the price are finding meaning in those kinds of connections, the community connections. They're establishing with each other, inside

00:16:37.080 --> 00:16:47.190 Raj Chetty: And those are like the way they're able to advocate for each other and that that those were sort of news reports are coming out those stories that are getting plays amazing one for that or

00:16:47.610 --> 00:16:54.660 Raj Chetty: Or step back, so to speak, or standing behind them, rather than front of the people are wanting to share to share that perspective from inside

00:16:55.080 --> 00:17:04.560 Raj Chetty: And they sort of the number of organizations that are doing that or is also itself inspiring but but yeah the the way that people convey through their letters.

00:17:05.640 --> 00:17:13.620 Raj Chetty: Any kind of optimism any kind of hope and any kind of joy, even if it's orient the future way.

00:17:14.880 --> 00:17:17.160 Raj Chetty: Is really moving it is really

00:17:18.690 --> 00:17:20.280 Raj Chetty: Yeah, that's, that's the right way to put it.

00:17:21.210 --> 00:17:35.910 Isacc Aquino: Okay, my next question is kind of is stating, basically what currently inspires you to fight for immigrant rights, but I feel like I could shape that more into, like, does that optimism is what is that optimism. What inspires you to for immigrant rights?

00:17:37.590 --> 00:17:42.840 Raj Chetty: Yeah, good question. I think I think absolutely. That's part of it. Hundred percent and I think

00:17:44.490 --> 00:17:56.250 Raj Chetty: umm I think I may qualify that. So yes, the answer is yes. And I think even without sort of optimism optimism. In other words, if and there are plenty of people who are inside who do not feel

00:17:58.860 --> 00:18:06.360 Raj Chetty: Up, so to speak, or as up maybe as others or or don't, or don't write it and whether or not they feel it or don't express it.

00:18:07.320 --> 00:18:22.980 Raj Chetty: Or maybe don't feel it as powerfully. I'm not sure quite going through faith crises, or going through optimism crises or feeling sort of really down. And I think in that sense, I think. Yes, the optimistic sort of inspired a some of the letters is absolutely part of

00:18:24.300 --> 00:18:36.510 Raj Chetty: What's inspiring me and those around me, and in my own family but but it's also a sense of kind of like a justice that even if the folks inside or not.

00:18:37.140 --> 00:18:48.180 Raj Chetty: Expressing that are unable to or of ice just shut down all the letters. I mean, I don't see that happening. I mean, we weren't getting word from inside from the people themselves who are in detention and we would still

00:18:49.260 --> 00:18:54.420 Raj Chetty: Have to do this work and and in some sites have to find and rely on other forms of inspiration.

00:18:55.110 --> 00:19:07.170 Raj Chetty: In the absence of that one. And I think in that sense, like the the organization itself and and part of allies to end detention is inspiring within itself, so to speak, like it's a self generating inspiration or motivational

00:19:10.260 --> 00:19:11.010 Raj Chetty: umm um Practice.

00:19:12.420 --> 00:19:17.910 Raj Chetty: work that you all are doing as students work that this project that you're doing and plenty of organizations are doing

00:19:19.260 --> 00:19:29.880 Raj Chetty: And then sort of national efforts. These are all also inspiring and they combine this with what you're saying is that the

00:19:31.860 --> 00:19:35.280 Raj Chetty: The inspirational words. Yeah.

00:19:35.610 --> 00:19:39.750 Isacc Aquino: okay. Um, How has the pandemic affected your attitude towards immigration issues?

00:19:41.220 --> 00:19:44.100 Raj Chetty: Ah I mean if anything, it's sharpen the sword of

00:19:45.300 --> 00:19:52.260 Raj Chetty: reach and how people are treated and maybe to put a finer point on it, how some people, other people

00:19:53.460 --> 00:20:00.660 Raj Chetty: It's hard. It's really hard not to just want to blow up at people who

00:20:03.570 --> 00:20:14.730 Raj Chetty: Are sort of towing the line about who the people are sort of the dominant and racist and Xenophobic lane out there about who these people are, that are in detention.

00:20:15.630 --> 00:20:25.920 Raj Chetty: Right, the narratives about them being criminals in the strong sense of the word, but really in any sense of the word, instead of the parents and slings and

00:20:26.970 --> 00:20:38.070 Raj Chetty: caretakers, and people who are working and people who are making a life that that the sort of narratives out there have not abated

00:20:39.420 --> 00:20:50.280 Raj Chetty: My wife recently was outside a couple weeks ago and and she came back in and she sort of side of the mistake and kindness why she's was talking about the mistake.

00:20:50.850 --> 00:20:58.680 Raj Chetty: Of having mentors some random dude outside that we were working on this stuff people in detention know the man. They were just outside of start a conversation and

00:20:59.010 --> 00:21:06.750 Raj Chetty: One, there was a thread that lead and when we said, and he's like, oh, but I don't want my tax dollars to people who are here illegally. Right. And these sort of

00:21:07.800 --> 00:21:19.590 Raj Chetty: The term illegal immigrant and sort of racist connotation and and and and she realized really quickly like aren't thinking human people still aren't thinking about humanity.

00:21:20.790 --> 00:21:32.820 Raj Chetty: And and and it's it's it's both depressing and sad. And so in the time of Iris one would want I want or expect this might cause people to shift a little bit to feel a little more care.

00:21:34.740 --> 00:21:52.350 Raj Chetty: If not, sort of, if not fully sort of rethink the positions before. And so it's sad when that's not happening. There are more people perhaps paying attention. And so that's positive. I'm also sort of frustrated by feel still like no longer enough people

00:21:54.900 --> 00:21:55.290 Raj Chetty: But

00:21:57.030 --> 00:22:18.480 Raj Chetty: Yeah, it's sort of how much the immigrant detention system is about death it height right it's it's if we understood this before and sort of foreclosing through incarceration and of course we're at large. So, traditional detainee is obviously if we're integration for incarceration or broadly.

00:22:19.740 --> 00:22:31.500 Raj Chetty: This makes it that much more clear that what take people on people's lives and the methods are intended to erase if not eliminate people's lives and

00:22:32.100 --> 00:22:49.020 Raj Chetty: That coronavirus response, the response to coronavirus I core civic by other for profit prison industrial profiteers by ice by CPB is is even more clear now.

00:22:50.250 --> 00:22:50.970 Raj Chetty: Than it was before.

00:22:51.780 --> 00:22:56.430 Isacc Aquino: Okay, um, Tell me how the death of Carlos Escobar Mejia has affected you?

00:22:59.310 --> 00:23:03.210 Raj Chetty: Ahh another heavy question. No, I, I appreciate it.

00:23:04.650 --> 00:23:18.240 Raj Chetty: And there have been so I was reading yesterday the story and The Guardian that did a much longer, sort of, because I had a little more time than somebody look into his life and his family live his siblings.

00:23:19.350 --> 00:23:21.600 Raj Chetty: And there was interview with his sister.

00:23:22.620 --> 00:23:34.320 Raj Chetty: And it was a really powerful and moving piece because it gives a bigger picture for this for this man, and it was able to. It was amazing report in so far as and give a full story to his life.

00:23:35.850 --> 00:23:43.650 Raj Chetty: And and so the day I it was via text from one of the other people and allies and detention of just not can

00:23:45.390 --> 00:23:49.290 Raj Chetty: Think of maybe was a message through slack. Our slack communication system.

00:23:50.100 --> 00:23:56.850 Raj Chetty: Whatever it was, it was a sort of a message to all of us said it that someone had there was reported that the reports that he had died.

00:23:57.480 --> 00:24:11.100 Raj Chetty: That hit hard, and that was a day where I believe we were getting letters also of the batch of letters from people in Otay Mesa and other spots and just come in. We were supposed to start reading them.

00:24:11.610 --> 00:24:18.300 Raj Chetty: And it was hard to sort of want to dive back into that and sort of is hard to get up and move move again because because

00:24:19.350 --> 00:24:23.490 Raj Chetty: Not because that represented. Oh, crap. It's nothing. We're doing is worth anything.

00:24:24.180 --> 00:24:32.850 Raj Chetty: Or nothing, we're doing is having an effect but inspiring the effects were having there are still deaths ran another person in the hospital now from Otay Mesa.

00:24:33.270 --> 00:24:46.830 Raj Chetty: And the conditions conditions are sort of vague and murky and ice isn't allowing his family to be in touch with them, they're refusing to allow me to call this mom from what I from some. What are some reports are saying and and so it's sort of this, this, this.

00:24:48.750 --> 00:25:00.420 Raj Chetty: That gut punch that that news was in spite of already knowing that could happen, and was pretty safe thing AND and OR it continues to be devastating. I don't think

00:25:01.170 --> 00:25:10.500 Raj Chetty: Of the. Personally, I prefer it in the sense that I've done processing and and feline now I'm moving on. It's like we're still doing this work and we're still doing things that we can do.

00:25:12.990 --> 00:25:20.310 Raj Chetty: To try and prevent another one or two giant people who have power to exercise in ways that would prevent

00:25:21.360 --> 00:25:26.880 Raj Chetty: And again, you will find the voice of the people, along with other organizations doing that network as well.

00:25:28.530 --> 00:25:31.740 Raj Chetty: Yeah, it's, I mean we have we had a discussion with my kids.

00:25:32.880 --> 00:25:45.300 Raj Chetty: They range from ages 5 to 13 and we were all present and we talked about. This is why we're doing the stuff we're doing to try and make this not happen and try and and then and then now we're trying to figure out how to hold

00:25:46.320 --> 00:25:48.630 Raj Chetty: People accountable. Hold it, hold government

00:25:49.980 --> 00:25:56.160 Raj Chetty: Institute's ice how to hold course civic how to figure out ways to hold them accountable for

00:25:57.330 --> 00:26:05.430 Raj Chetty: Brilliantly preventable and unnecessary death and how to hold the judge who denied is released on April 5 how to hold

00:26:06.150 --> 00:26:20.130 Raj Chetty: Different institution that could have done something I'm elected officials and how to hold them all responsible out of this merits, while also making sure that what we do is

00:26:21.780 --> 00:26:23.040 Raj Chetty: To pay attention to.

00:26:25.050 --> 00:26:31.980 Raj Chetty: Carlos Escobar Mejia life. I mean, that's right. Guardian story because it really was about his life in a really strong way.

00:26:33.690 --> 00:26:49.710 Isacc Aquino: Yeah, When it comes to huge companies, helping out people during the pandemic. Do you feel like you're more inclined to follow them purchase from them because of what they're doing towards immigrants, like they're helping them out or like offering services for them?

00:26:51.780 --> 00:26:58.200 Raj Chetty: Yeah, I mean I essentially thought about that and other examples of ones I should know the other examples of coporations.

00:26:58.770 --> 00:27:04.770 Isacc Aquino: For example like Disney donating \$1 million from their all their masks that they were made.

00:27:05.160 --> 00:27:10.020 Isacc Aquino: They had there were selling like mask, basically, and they donated up to a million dollars.

00:27:10.320 --> 00:27:22.290 Isacc Aquino: For this program called Medshare, which is it provides medical resources for people that don't have the money to pay for themselves and also like illegal immigrants and

00:27:23.580 --> 00:27:24.030 Isacc Aquino: So on.

00:27:24.840 --> 00:27:33.180 Raj Chetty: Yeah, no. Yeah, I guess I should be up front about that. I don't know enough like that story was me. I didn't know the difference yet done that. That sounds great.

00:27:33.840 --> 00:27:45.000 Raj Chetty: And I don't know enough about who was doing those things I'd say that I'm motivated in one way, I do know more about when I hear about it. And again, I'm not sort of deeply person this

00:27:45.990 --> 00:27:54.240 Raj Chetty: When corporations are behaving badly. In the way they treat their workers or how they exploit particularly undocumented labor.

00:27:55.770 --> 00:28:05.700 Raj Chetty: And usually, that's not sort of large, large, large corporations, but I'm sort of I'm more aware of, maybe, telling you where I am the sort of

00:28:07.980 --> 00:28:09.180 Raj Chetty: Contribution, so to speak.

00:28:10.260 --> 00:28:16.950 Raj Chetty: Immigrant and in particular document communities and people and

00:28:18.240 --> 00:28:20.430 Raj Chetty: And other sort of workers.

00:28:21.720 --> 00:28:25.830 Raj Chetty: But yeah, if I if I knew or as I know, as I learned about

00:28:27.780 --> 00:28:43.020 Raj Chetty: Groups of nations even sort of large corporations helping. I mean, I'm always skeptical in terms of like what sort of PR line here and what sort of visibility line, but also in times of super crisis like right now. It's almost we can't pick and choose in a strong sense

00:28:44.370 --> 00:28:54.510 Raj Chetty: Of which sort of the purity of the politics of the whoever's doing it. So, so, I mean, generally speaking, I'm more maybe circumspect

00:28:55.650 --> 00:29:07.890 Raj Chetty: But right now it's like a Disney is doing some stuff. It gets a whole bunch of people masks, whatever, whatever, whatever issues, I might have with Disney. I'm going to put them on hold for a little bit, because there's a sort of more urgent question in that sense, and

00:29:08.910 --> 00:29:09.180 Raj Chetty: Yeah.

00:29:11.100 --> 00:29:12.000 Raj Chetty: Does that answer to that one.

00:29:12.210 --> 00:29:18.780 Isacc Aquino: Yeah, that's, that's a great answer. Next question in your mind, how will the free them all campaign end?

00:29:21.090 --> 00:29:23.610 Raj Chetty: Ah, so

00:29:26.790 --> 00:29:36.450 Raj Chetty: I mean, the free them all campaign, like many of these activist campaigns but itself out of business. Speaker put itself out of necessity and obviously for them all is about

00:29:36.960 --> 00:29:54.090 Raj Chetty: Trying to them all and that sort of little sense. And so it only ends. Once that happens, and and i mean i want to believe. And this is some of the there's there's Stuart Hall is important cultural theorists passed away, not too long ago and black British cultural

00:29:55.530 --> 00:30:07.110 Raj Chetty: And I think he was citing I think I should know this better Antonio Gramsci. But I'm talking about the sort of pessimism of the intellect and the optimum of the world. And so pessimistically intellectually

00:30:08.940 --> 00:30:15.480 Raj Chetty: Part of me worries about how sustainable the campaign's movements are

00:30:16.020 --> 00:30:29.880 Raj Chetty: I think it's been beautiful and amazing right now. And I think it's been amazing in the San Diego local level has been sort of amazing national ways there's sort of really important and networks, but I also get nervous about how people can keep those things.

00:30:32.490 --> 00:30:49.710 Raj Chetty: Moving and growing an active and keep people's attention on them and it were in a sort of technological moment, maybe where people's attention shifts quickly we're in a crisis moment where there are other things super crucial. This is obviously, these aren't the only crises that exist.

00:30:51.000 --> 00:31:02.010 Raj Chetty: And so people's attention can be diverted so so in some sense that there's pessimism isn't the right word, but I'll worry about free them all ending so to speak before they're all free before the needs to end.

00:31:03.180 --> 00:31:10.200 Raj Chetty: Or not having the legs to sort of continue at the same time, the sort of optimism of the will side of that that for that.

00:31:12.000 --> 00:31:30.120 Raj Chetty: And it's like, I really, I really want to believe in it. I really want to believe in its ability to sustain overall long as long as is necessary, and that long is is as until people are out and that post dates coronavirus, in a sense, right, so many of the most all of the organizations predate

00:31:31.410 --> 00:31:37.500 Raj Chetty: coronavirus epidemic. And then there are some people who have joined forces people more than organizations that have joined in.

00:31:37.740 --> 00:31:49.680 Raj Chetty: With these efforts, either through donations are writing letters or calling are doing the different things at sort of in this increased are heightened crisis because the current buyers who will probably fade a little bit as these things fade.

00:31:50.730 --> 00:32:01.830 Raj Chetty: In importance or I guess I should say it fade in terms of like being super crisis and but but just like the word these ordination before they'll outlive. And so in that sense. Like it's it's

00:32:02.790 --> 00:32:07.950 Raj Chetty: I mean, I don't know. I don't know when, when did you ask, like, when do I think this or how this one?

00:32:08.130 --> 00:32:09.030 Isacc Aquino: How, how

00:32:09.180 --> 00:32:12.630 Raj Chetty: How yeah it's it's a hard question to answer.

00:32:14.370 --> 00:32:29.190 Raj Chetty: That we've seen that these efforts around for them all have gotten people out and so there there are real successes that we have to hold on to and grab and embrace and for at least sort of breaths feel them.

00:32:30.150 --> 00:32:38.070 Raj Chetty: And then get right back into it for this sort of the people that aren't yet out and the people who continued continued sort of amplification of advocacy and

00:32:40.560 --> 00:32:42.210 Raj Chetty: So I think

00:32:43.650 --> 00:32:48.600 Raj Chetty: Yeah you know i don't i don't have a good answer. I don't have a good answer. And some of this is because

00:32:49.710 --> 00:33:03.630 Raj Chetty: The How is dependent on how ice responds, how the federal how these federal government responds and how people inside are moving and sort of shifting in their own sort of strategies, tactics.

00:33:04.800 --> 00:33:08.100 Raj Chetty: And so in that sense, I think it's, it's to be seen.

00:33:09.360 --> 00:33:19.230 Raj Chetty: I don't think it will be ending this sorry, it will move an end in the same way. Now, I could have had to shift, even in the last month, even within the coronavirus crisis.

00:33:20.100 --> 00:33:39.840 Raj Chetty: Because as as Carlos's death indicates people are dying and I sad to recognize that other people will likely die unnecessarily through this and that's which is the how of how sort of the tactics of intervention can move forward.

00:33:42.510 --> 00:33:45.150 Isacc Aquino: Yeah, well, this is the last question.

00:33:46.530 --> 00:33:49.680 Isacc Aquino: For this interview. What is one thing you want the readers to take away?

00:33:56.970 --> 00:33:57.630 Raj Chetty: Ahh So,

00:34:02.130 --> 00:34:13.410 Raj Chetty: Ahh Ah So this comes from like my own sort of professional work in the Dominican Republic specifically and and in Spanish language communities pa'lante pa'lante pa'lante right so

00:34:14.700 --> 00:34:23.760 Raj Chetty: Para Adelante is a phrase that is sort of a rallying cry of social movements in many parts of the Spanish speaking world.

00:34:25.200 --> 00:34:33.270 Raj Chetty: And and and many people write emails to me like go with it right pa'lante and that

00:34:34.650 --> 00:34:53.520 Raj Chetty: sensibility of moving forward, continue to press on and doing it together that I think is the one thing that I would want people to stick with is that this is slow laborious and it's urgent and frustrating and so ahh

00:34:55.740 --> 00:34:56.730 Raj Chetty: At times.

00:34:58.200 --> 00:35:14.640 Raj Chetty: Seemingly futile a that it's not the sort of communities and collaborative networks we build our in of themselves meaningful and they are in of themselves, meaningful, because they represent the way work should be done and and

00:35:16.140 --> 00:35:18.660 Raj Chetty: Yeah i think that i think that's pa'lante

00:35:19.110 --> 00:35:19.470 Isacc Aquino: Yeah.

00:35:21.960 --> 00:35:24.870 Isacc Aquino: Raj, Thank you for your time. It honestly has been a pleasure to conduct this interview.

00:35:27.360 --> 00:35:30.510 Isacc Aquino: Thank you for all the work you've done with Allies to End Detention.

00:35:32.160 --> 00:35:33.630 Isacc Aquino: Let me stop the recording.