

Zuberi Williams Interview

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

This is Sylviane Greensword. I'm here with the Honorable Zuberi Williams. Today is October the fourth, the year is 2021, and we are in The Harrison for the Race and Reconciliation Initiative's Oral History Project. Judge Williams, thank you for joining us here.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

It is such a pleasure to be here. I'm excited about your project and excited about today.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Well, we're going to dive into the Williams experience with TCU.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Okay.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And we're going to go fairly chronologically,

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Okay.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Starting with your origin. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself? Where are you from? Where did you grow up? What kind of spiritual or intellectual influences did you grow up under?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Okay, yeah. So, anytime I was asked a question about what are your origins, I always told my parents. I've been so blessed to have really good parents. My mom is from South America. She's from a country called Guyana. Most Americans know her from Georgetown, Guyana. But my mom was from a small village outside of Georgetown called Victoria village. She immigrated over through the use of education. She speaks many languages, and she ended up going to the University of Illinois, that was her way to get to the United States--education. But my dad, that's a different story. My dad grew up on the west and south side Chicago.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh, wow.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

During one of the most turbulent racial times, segregated time ago, Chicago is known as a "city of neighborhoods," and so he grew up in that context. He was one of five children. His father passed early, so he didn't have the same relationship with his father that I have with him. And he was the youngest, and my dad, all the rest of his sisters and brothers got linked to gangs and drugs, but they made sure that he did not part of the way they did that. It's just that they kept him inside watching TV. So he knows a lot about TV and film, which, which hopefully, we're talking about later, has contributed to my pop level pop culture. My dad got a scholarship to run track at Southern Illinois University, the Salukis. And he was a hurdler. And that was his way out. So while my mom was education, my dad was athletics, and it taught me a lot about who I am. They ended up moving to DC during the Civil Rights era, in order to go to Howard University as the Black Mecca. And they thought we want to have our children grow up in a way where they can understand their place in America, and the history in America as well. I have two sisters. My oldest sister's name is Zakia Aisha. I'm the middle child, because that's sometimes why I'm loud and boisterous. My name is Zuberi Bakari, and then I have a younger sister, her name is Zainabu Zawadi.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Okay, so I'm seeing a theme here with names. Tell us about that.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah. So my parents were really into the Civil Rights Era, empowering Black folks. My dad studied graduate degree in Swahili at Howard University, and so he wanted to build a team. An army. Not in a negative, violent way but like a group of people, right. So when he had my oldest sister Zakia Aisha, it was Z-A. When he had me it was Zuberi Bakari, it was Z-B. He and my mom said they were prepared to have 26 children, so they'd make change in this country. Then my third sister came and they're like Zainabu Zawadi, Z-Z. That's it, we're done! But it was the kind of act, that bringing up and having a name that is different, being different, being dark skin, in that way, and having your parents be, you know, always looking for fairness that helped launch everything. Another question that was asked is, "how did you grow up spiritually?" I spiritually grew up as a Black Baptist. That was what we did. Six hours Sunday, Zion Baptist Church in Welcome, Maryland. It was just a church and a graveyard and a bunch of crops, and we'd go there, and we'd be there for Sunday school. We would be there for the actual sermon, and then we'd do fellowship after. Vacation Bible School. I never knew why they call it a Vacation Bible School. It was not a vacation. It was *not* a vacation.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Just a school.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I remember lots of pinchings, and paying attention. But we grew up our Black Baptists, and so it was hearing preachers, be able to win over people who are in low moments of their life, and so folks would come to the church for so many different reasons. Whether or not they were being abandoned by other

folks or somehow had jobs and that felt marginalized, and then the preachers would somehow on a six-hour service on Sunday, lift them. They were getting lifted. And just watching how people did that, really had an impact on me. And so, that's how I grew up culturally in that way. Southern Maryland, Charles County, La Plata, the way the makeup of the actual county is, physically, is that it used to be a bunch of plantations. And so, a lot of my friends, lived on old plantations, my white friends, and so you could always see three different... and it's funny, I was talking to my friend that was here at TCU, and when he used to come back with me, I'd always be driving around, and I will say things and he's always making fun of how I say it. I said, "you see over there, slave quarters, right, master's house, field," and that was just the makeup of the way that the county was, and I didn't think anything different. So, my friends would grow up on these plantations, and they'd build a soccer field. And I tell my parents, I remember one in particular, the one plantation called The Nappy, that has so many different connotations to it, but I think it was the family's name. I remember coming to my dad and I said, "hey, I'm going to go to my friend's house, we're going to play soccer. I love soccer," and he said "oh because oh he has a soccer field?" so I said, "yeah, he lives on The Nappy." My dad was like, "what? You're not going to that plantation; you're not doing that." But I didn't understand why at the time, because it was such a mix of race, and kind of just heritage, and then forgetfulness about how it would affect folks like me and my dad. But that's kind of, you know, how I grew up. My sisters are great. I was the first person in my family not to be a teacher. So, a lot of times people see a lot of teacher in me even when I'm on the bench, but some people like, some people dislike. My older sister is a teacher, she stayed in the Baltimore area, and my younger sister is a big to-do at the State Department. She's actually stationed in Maryland. She chartered some a lot of the thoughts about diversity that America can take, in places like Mumbai, India, she also was stationed in Japan, South Africa, in Brazil. So, we're all over the place trying to do stuff on small levels, country-wide level, national levels, international. And so you asked me my origins, those are my origins.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right. So, you're multilocal?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, multilocal I like that. I like that.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD

Yeah. I mean, once you told me that you were into soccer, you got me already. Alright,

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I know!

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I know, that doesn't get any more international than that.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Have you been to our women's soccer game? I went and Coach Bell was down there, and I saw all these beautiful folks running and doing stuff. There was not that type of instance, when I was here at TCU. It wasn't that type of Black coach, teaching Black and brown athletes and with white folks, and being champions. And so, I just bring that up, because that's just so amazing. It was not like that in my time here at TCU, not that I remember.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD

So, we're going to have to go back to that. But there's a few things that you mentioned that kind of puzzled me. So, you're telling me that you had a kind of a multiethnic group of friends.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I did. At TCU?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

No, in your childhood. Growing up, can you tell us about that?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, so...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

How often you interacted with them?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yes, so I interacted quite a bit. And I'll tell you why. First of all, at that point in time, there was a large white population, who grew up and was raised in Charles County. And in fact, the reason my dad actually got a job in Charles County at a high school that I ended up going to, because they were looking for Black men to come into high schools and teach, and my dad ended up being a computer science teacher, math teacher, and in demand cross-country and track coach. That's why when I said cross-country, I was like, well, it's good for him. And so, they were actually actively looking for strong Black men to come in. And my dad ended up getting swept up with that, because they knew that the next generation of folks coming through high school, were going to be Black men and Black women, anyway, trying to identify them. And the whiteness of their teachers, they were worried about that as well. But going back to your question was – is that because I grew up around a lot of white folks, it was very rural. And those are the folks that would be around. But more importantly, these are the folks that were placed in the classes that I would be placed in, the honors classes. We had a class called junior grade books, and you would go in junior grade books in elementary school. Do you mind me sharing with you a story about kind of how when I came up in elementary school?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Please.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

My teachers at my elementary school, Dr. James Craig, Charles County, when I was in the first or second grade, wanted to put me in remedial classes.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

You had a first-grade teacher with a PhD? You said “Dr.”

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Oh no, that's the name of our old school.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

No, I wish we had! I'm sorry, the name of the school was Dr. James Craig.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Okay, that makes sense.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Dr. James Craig Elementary School. You know, I don't think I was a troubled kid, but I was a loud kid. I mean, either from the instance that I walked in here today, Marcellis walked me all around, I can tend to be loud and “in your face,” because it's the kind of thing I know people are like, “oh, this guy's coming out...” But it's the way it's the way that I am. Okay, they identified that as probably maybe a problem child.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Even though that both my parents were teachers, pillars of the community, and so they started to put me in remediation.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

But did your academic performance match the level that they wanted to put you in?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So, I would quickly finish whatever they gave me, and then I'd go in the corner and talk to somebody or whatever. So, my ability to get right and wrong answers was mostly right.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Okay.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

But then, you know, the teacher is trying to move on with the lesson, and I can be a little bit disruptive.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

And that's behavioral

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes. it's behavioral it's not academic.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

But what you do when you're in, what tends to happen to Black kids in that situation is, "I can't control you. I can't have you sit down and do these things."

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So, you must go to remediation for this other class or this B class.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Because I don't have the time to stop teaching. It's one of the things that my parents complained about with other kids, and my parents would interrupt with other children, and here on this occasion, they had to interrupt for me. And I remember my dad and my mom coming in and they're teachers in the community and yelling – well, yelling – or being very angry over the teachers and saying, "why are you doing this, maybe you need to put them into advanced class as opposed to doing something else."

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Correct.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

By the time I reach the fourth grade, I was into junior grade books. And ever since then, I've been in nothing but honors and AP classes. It's one of those situations where my parents didn't let me fall through the cracks. And the only thing that was different was that I looked different from everybody else, and they didn't know how to quote unquote control me, or at least operate a class with somebody like me, because I wasn't like the other kids.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes, absolutely.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Had I fallen down and down, my parents weren't invested or didn't have the time to invest in them, I'm not even saying a bad thing, right? It would have totally changed the arc of my academic career. But to answer your question is, these are the classes that where I was the only Black person because my parents fought it out. And then when I saw other folks whom I was no smarter than, that were like me, and maybe didn't have parents that were attuned to the education system, they stayed in the A level upper classes, they never ended up writing, reading these great stories, right, and trying to learn how to talk, and not to talk, how to let people know that you understand, because sometimes you have to dumb it down, so they understand that you understand, even when you're flying by, and they missed out on it. And so, I had a very diverse group of friends, mostly white friends. My Black – I played soccer – my Black friends, the people I was with, with all these cultures in the community. It was always the church that bound back. It was those opportunities for my parents to say, “hey, look, you're no better than anybody else. This kings' English that you speak ain't so great because look what kings have done throughout time, or Europeans have done throughout time. You have to know that at the very bottom of everything is us. And when it comes down to it, when they look at you, and they get somebody else, they're going to downplay you, and you have to be more than excellent. And your job is to pull people up. And if you become a man, my son, if you don't pull people up behind you, why are you here?”

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

That is deep! And even in terms of curriculum design, and just the approach to teaching, I was a teacher for 15 years before transitioning to higher ed...

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I think you've probably been a teacher your whole life.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

That is probably true because I'm from a family of educators. But we now know that the way the curriculum is designed, and even the approach to discipline, it's actually designed with a culturally white mindset.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yes.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So, it's not necessarily efficient or relevant or fluent in, in diversity in the student population on how to approach to the population. You mentioned being "loud," I'm just kind of... "being Black"! This is our cultural language, you know, this is this is how we approach communication. So it can be misread as rude or being disobedient but we also know that, you know, the whole approach to discipline in the classroom something has to be, something has to be done.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

And it's interesting you put it that way. Can I tell you a little bit about having the damage that is given to me now?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes, yes please.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So when I'm on the bench, and a person cannot hear, a party and cannot hear. When I first got on the bench, I would speak up, and I'll say, "look, this is what's going on, here are your choices," right? It's a different moment. And one of my colleagues pulled me aside and said, "people say you're yelling at them." I'm saying, the person cannot hear. I'm raising my voice, and so it's not damage in a bad way. But it's one of the things I have to look over my shoulder about. So every time now that I'm on the bench, whether it's good or bad, if somebody says, Judge, I can't hear, I feel obligated, this is the damage, I feel obligated to tell the entire court room, "I'm not angry, I'm going to raise my voice. I'm not upset at you at all. I'm raising my voice, you can hear me because I know you have important things to say, and I have important things I want to say, okay?" No other judge that I know of has to do that check.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Has to check themselves in that way.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Because they don't have the experience of being called "you're yelling at me, you're angry at me," and I think that emanates from what you said about, you characterize it as "I'm just being Black, just the way that some Black folks just talk to each other in that way." But now, as a part of even though I'm a judge, and I'm one of the youngest judges, and I fly all over the country and doing all these things, and, and really pushing the agenda, the agenda, meaning fairness to everybody. I still have to check myself. At 42, at the top of my profession. So I just wanted to share that part of I call it damage, but you know, it's something that I think is important for folks to understand.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes, yes. The gift that keeps on giving.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So, you chose TCU from what I read rather randomly, and out of a desire to fly away.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Well yes. There's the real story, and there's the story that I tell everybody, which one do you want me to share with you?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Well, I want the real story.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So you know, right around 17, your parents are on you. If your parents value education in a particular way. They're on you. They are, "what are you going to do to get in? I'm going to help you." So my mom would have these things who would call "Scholarships Sundays," and I had to look for a scholarship or I had to apply. Every Sunday, she got her book, my mom was guiding she get our book, she has a little I'll say Jamaican accent, she does not like it when I say that. It's a Guyanese accent, it's a Guyanese accent,

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And Jamaicans would probably not like it either.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Exactly. But they'll like it more than Trinidadian. So I appreciate that, and she would go over all the stuff that we had to do. So one Sunday, I was watching now what we call the Washington Football Team, right? I was watching it and she came down she was like "I'm tired of trying to push you. Don't you see your sister did these things? You need to do these things as well. You need to identify for me a college that you want to apply to." So you know how it is. "Bet mom, all right." So I went in, and we

had this Christian college catalog. And I flipped through it. And there was this goofy looking cartoon, horned frog. It was purple. I was like what, you know what, mom I want to go this college. She's just like "apply, whatever, put in for scholarships, apply and do it." But I got into other colleges. Never once stepped foot on TCU, didn't want to go to TCU. Here is the real thing that I don't share with people because you never know how they're gonna take it. Right? Whether it's spiritual or magic or some other like mental illnesses or something. I had a dream. Not Dr. King's dream. It was a dream of a high school student. And I don't remember all the parts of the dream, but I do remember that I was here at TCU. I remember being here and having fun and being with folks and just having a good time. I woke up from the dream, and I ran upstairs to my mom, who was cooking breakfast. And she said, "oh, my baby is so great" because my mom is very spiritual. So she's like "you had a dream?" So that's the ancestors reaching back and telling me – that's my mom, right? I run to my sisters, and they're like, "oh, okay. That's... that's great. We love you, I guess. Do you..." Right? I'll never forget, I ran to my father who's one of my heroes. I ran to my dad I said "Dad, dad, dad, guess what? Dad, I had a dream and I'm gonna go to TCU and it's gonna be great. And we never visited the college. But this is where I'm gonna go." And my dad kind of rolled back in his chair looked at me and said, "was there money in this dream?" But through, you know, circumstance luck, magic, spirituality, a belief in God, the money ended up being there. I was one of the last students during my time when I graduated in 2000, they had the TCU diversity grant before they actually stopped it, and then we started some diversity grants. I was the last student. I know I'm the last student because not only was I in the last class that it happened, I'm a W. Right? I'm a Williams. So, when they were going down and giving it out, I always know. In every educational setting, I did the last of whatever. I think since that time, they've started back up. But it was one of those times, where they said, "we're no longer giving this diversity grants." I had other scholarship money; I won scholarships when I was here, they helped me stay here. But I remember stepping off the plane coming here, and my dad was like, "good luck, you're a man." My mom was crying on the phone, and I went there, it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. So whether it was spirituality, my Christian belief, magic, or whatever else. It was how it was supposed to be. That's the true story. The other story of just saying like, "oh, you know, I went there and I lucked out," but I... I don't believe in luck.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Well, I'm glad we get the exclusive. So, though you never visited the place, you didn't know anything at all about TCU? Its racial makeup or nothing at all?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Well, I'll be quite honest with you. If I did, I might not have come. It was probably a blessing that I didn't know. Sometimes ignorance, you know, it's like, and I hate to use sports analogies, because not everybody likes sports, but if you're in the bottom of the ninth in the World Series, and you need to run, you put in the rookie who doesn't know anything about the pitcher, because that rookie doesn't care, that rookie's going to swing at the ball, and try to hit it, regardless of where the pitcher is. Sometimes, I felt like that would come in. There are folks that say, "don't worry, we got you." It had a small Black

fraternity feel to it. My dad was in a fraternity, I expected me to be in a fraternity. We can talk about that later. It's very specific events that occurred. But I thought that, you know, maybe the less I knew... And I think a lot of times, sometimes when you don't have extra expectations, that you're open to new stuff like I met some of my best friends who are white, who are like Latinx, who are LGBTQ, I met them here and had I not not have preconceived notions, and really kind of been not thoughtful than I would have never met them. I never had that experience in high school. It was white, Black, straight, if you're gay, put you to the side, and that is something that I got to learn, to not do here at TCU, and carried it forward. And I know as a Black man, who identifies as heterosexual, right, straight Black man, that a lot of times, they don't expect for me to be as thoughtful and open. And that's something that I hope to rectify, everybody together, whomever you are, to make sure we move forward as people, as Americans, as members of the international community.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And what about your high school peers? Did they know anything about TCU? Nobody tried to warn you?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

They only thing they knew about TCU was that we played football out here. But when I came in, football wasn't the big thing. It was basketball. We had all that because of Tubs, Tubs was our coach. He was a type of coach who did not teach defense. And so, all of the scores, we would win all the time, and all the scores would be 145 to 123, all the time. And in fact, you know, it's funny, I was trying to get tickets from my rural county over here at the basketball arena for this Texas-UT game, and I kept asking people "where's Run DMC? Where's Run DMC?" That's how we used to call it because we would run people in Daniel Meyer Coliseum, and we would call Run DMC because we were just going to run you with lots of points, and just at the end of the day beat you. And they were like, "we have no idea what you're talking about," and I said "the basketball arena," and they were like "Schollmeier or something?" I said, "I have no idea what that is." There's a disconnect between our two worlds, "Where's Run DMC?", you know the one with the rappers' name, so it was 90's, late 90's. So, they didn't warn me at all. I don't, I don't know if they were thoughtful about it. They were worried about who they were, where they were, and how their parents were going to afford it. So, we were all just happy to actually be going to a college, wherever that was.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So now go ahead and walk us through your first day beginning from the end, you step here step foot on college, on a college campus, and first day of class. What happens?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So, you know, at TCU before we have class, we have one of like the frog camps, where we have other types of leadership things, we're going to get you together. I think Dr. Kay Higgins used to be in charge of it. Back in the day, it was run by orientation of student advisors (OSAs). OSAs, and there were like,

one or two Black OSAs, so I kind of naturally gravitated to those folks. But they will say, "this is going to be a great experience, and we want to make it and if there's anything that goes wrong, come find me, come find us, and we will be able to help walk you through it." So, we had kind of like this whole bond, get to know each other class folks, before we had the first day. I don't know if that was because of frog camp, or leadership or whatever. But, what happened was, is that I knew folks, when I was going into my first class, I fashioned myself to be a computer science person, because I was very nerdy, I could program in three different languages. My dad was computer science teacher. I appreciated science, and I thought that that's what I was going to do. Sometimes the things you think you're good at, you're not as good as you think you are, and sometimes your mission is someplace else. So, I was quickly learned or disabused of the matter that I would actually do computer science. Like going to class, where they taught algorithmic discrete math, differential equations, and you know, all the Pascal courses, like basic, but they were trying to get you up to other languages, and I fell flat on my face. And when I looked around for folks who look like me, those same OSAs, or those same folks, that I would think "oh, you know, can you help me out," I would go to them, maybe like, "oh, I'm in nursing," which is great, but not helpful for a discrete math class, or other folks who were there, and they were like, "well, I'm in athletics," or "I'm doing kinesiology," or "I'm doing..." and those are fine areas to be in, but I was isolated, and the folks that I knew who were good at math were white folks, and there were folks that would come to me and like, get this, do this and do that. I think I probably got turned off the most about being in computer science for two reasons. First, I got an F, when you're living your whole life, and never even knowing what an F is...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes, yes.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

And you get one, it kind of takes you back. And there was nobody there could explain to me why I wasn't there. The second thing is, is I had a girlfriend, who was, when I was in my second year, she was a year underneath, and she was in engineering. So, she had a lot of the same classes that I took. And one time she came crying, and I was like "what are you crying about?" you know, we're not, you're not as experienced as you are and how to talk to folks, you're learning in the process. But "what you crying about? like what's going on?" And she related to me that in her class, she believed that the professors here were calling her dumb, and we're not only saying you got it wrong, but doing so in a way that was nerve racking, that seemed to undercut her ability to do anything, and the only thing she thought that she was the reason for that, because she was one of two women at the time in the engineering program. And she was so smart. She was smarter than me. I left computer science, she stayed with engineering, she ended up going to Mexico, to Alma Gordo, whatever the secret place is, and find out the new engineering, she is actually admitting that she almost quit that, and she was crying on that day, because of how appalled she felt that the men were treating her in this male-dominated area. I can never know that. I don't know what it's like to walk in the parking lot at night or that every person that's male that passes by you and thinks they can somehow control you. I'll never understand that, but I did understand

the isolation. I did understand what it meant to feel like that only they're telling you that you got it wrong, that you are so wrong, that you are bad, or different. And that's when I made the decision to leave. I didn't tell my parents that, and go to the business school, which I thought would be a place that maybe would be more inviting. Long since, me and her both have been really good friends. We're really good friends now. We were just supporting each other in that way. But I look back at TCU and I think about the times that I could describe as gender bias, LGBTQ, but most importantly for this project, Black folk. There was never – on certain occasions, we're talking about it – but it was never ever, “you got it wrong.” It was always “what are you doing here? You don't belong. You are more than wrong; you are taking up a seat for somebody else.” And that can have real mental impact for young folks. Because people always think when it comes to undergrad that they're fully formed, and they're not.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I'm thankful for Montgomery County. I'm sorry for the Maryland judiciary, and I fly around and talk about differentials in sentencing and how that's affected by men, women, especially Black folk, I learn something new all the time. But we have this thought that we did in college that somehow you're fully formed. And that's not true. So I think part of the history of TCU in its niceties, trying to invite folks like us to come, that's the biggest thing they can, one of the biggest things that can do is, is when we make mistakes when we do something wrong, to call it wrong, like you call it for everybody. Because you can still call it wrong even when you feel like there's something else behind it. It leads into the implicit bias or the explicit bias or other things that we have at this campus. Now I'm encouraged because I got to walk around. And Marcellis who, while I'm here walking around, I'll be like, y'all are here? What? You know, I was kind of a little bit, you know, encouraged. But I still sense some of that today.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

What about your fellow African Americans classmates? How did they experience? Did they experience the same isolation?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, so I will. So I'll answer this one. When I went to TCU, between the years of, and they're gonna try that. Somebody's gonna to try to catch me on math. But this is my memoir. This is how I remember it, okay? Of the Black students, both male and female, that were not athletes, that were here on campus, 38.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Wow. We don't even need to say out of how many, just the fact that it's two digits.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

38. We'll talk about that all the time between us. And if you take that same portion of folks who weren't in Black fraternities, sororities, there was like 6 of us. So I think to answer your question, the answer is this: I know, based on some folks who are now on the trustee board or my friends, and all the why in the way of some other things, that their way of dealing with stuff was that they went to the group of people

whom they identified with. So if they were athletes, they were able to have the, you know athletes be in the athletic world, which is different. I'm not saying for some all they had it easy now, doing two days and 10 new tasks, it's not easy. We're just saying that. But they will be able to go there and have coaches, they have tutors, and things of that nature. If you were in a fraternity or sorority, you could fall back on the sisters or the brothers and say, okay, and they will take you out for a drink, or kind of push you or do whatever, right? But those of us who didn't have had to create our own, it was very nice. So when they were isolated, I think they had some places they could go. We could always commune in like the Black Caucus, right? But we always had these other things that we had our feet in, it's not dissimilar to the way a lot of African Americans will talk about Black folks or talk about having one foot in the white world and having another foot in our world. They were always constantly battling those things. And so whenever there was an opportunity to be isolated in the way that I described, it's my opinion on my view that I saw that a lot of them were able to keep their foot in the other thing, because that was why they were here, where they had confidence. For those of us who weren't in fraternities, what happens? I was on the ultimate Frisbee team, you know. What's that? I was just fast. I was just fast and I could catch a Frisbee, but I couldn't throw a Frisbee. I'll just go and catch it. I think that had a lot to do with it. And so, when we had conversations, like about the we talked about later TCU rapists and it brought us together. The Black Caucus was trying to do things, we we're trying to, I saw that you had Flo Rida here before, right? And it's interesting. I got an opportunity to sit down with Honeycutt, who's new, the first Black student body president that we've ever had. So, I got an opportunity to sit down with him for coffee as I was talking about this. When we had it, we had Goo Goo Dolls and we had the push for Goo Goo Dolls, right? And so, the only time when we got together was to try to create these things, right? I think we tried to get out Dave Chappelle here. We tried to do those sometimes. That was our way of being not petty with the little things, but like saying we're here, right? To feel less isolated, like to try to seize on the fact that white folks like the entertainment that Black folks bring, whether it's co-opted or whether or not, it's fun, right?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I mean, that the Flo Rida audience, I was not there, but what was the ethnic makeup?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Well, I'll be sincere with you, one of the criticisms that I brought up. So, I do a lot of social media to the chagrin of both people. And one of the comments, and I won't say the whole conversation I had was, why was every Instagram that I was watching, or that I was retweeting or re-gracing, only contain white folks, right? Flo Rida is appealable to the masses, and there's the majority of white folks here. But Flo Rida is also a type of music that I know a lot of Black folks like, created and liked, right? And so, I'll try to figure out why there, why I'm doing these images of people having fun. I guarantee if you took the images from the Goo Goo Dolls back in 1997, and took the images from the Flo Rida concert, they will be substantially similar. Cut offs, boots, hats, partying, throwing it around. So, I don't know whether disconnected that is. I don't know how you have somebody who, you know, because there's no Black

and white music, but we all know that certain amount of certain folks who have promoted music in the past and creating music had music stolen from them.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Having co-oped, and are still kind of the folks with the entertainers right. I'm not sure why that was, and that's a question that I asked folks in the administration and haven't had a good answer. But those are kind of questions that I asked. Why don't we get invited? They always want to have me here; I'm joking about that. But why sometimes I'll ask tough questions? Like but I do that for a living. Why did you rob? Why did you do this? There's no good answer, and I want to make you say something.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

We're in the business of uncomfortable truths

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

That is true.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

In a recent interview, Chancellor Boschini stated there is room at the table for everyone. How does this claim resonate with you?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, so you know, I like Victor Boschini, I am a fan of him. He's done a lot for the campus. And he's done a lot. So, I lived through I was telling myself, I lived through three Chancellor's, right? We had Tucker, when I first came in, Ferrari, and then now Victor Boschini. So, I've seen different faces about the ways people talk to students and Boschini is by and far, the friendliest, the one that will come to you, in fact he's teaching a class in Beasley right now, right? And he would do those things. Here's what I will say about that comment, because I don't know the entire context. The most frustration that I've seen in my professional career, in my personal life, is when I've had opinions about things that people don't like. For instance, there are only two Black male judges in Montgomery County, me and my colleagues, we have some Black female. We have a long way to go and from this state that counts itself as progressive, which is why I do a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to some of these things, because I feel like if I don't do it no one will. And I always say, "don't put me on a committee that you don't want to hear about." So, when I hear folks who say, "we want everybody to have a seat at the table". we have to think about health effects. Getting a seat at the table doesn't mean to get fat. Having everybody, those of us who grew up with big families, big epic families, where if you let the bread go by, it's not coming back around, but there's people sitting at the table. It shows I think, a different view of it is, don't put me on committee, don't give me a voice at the table, if I'm not going to be the same portion of the food. If

you don't have enough food for everybody, why are you bringing everybody to the table? Or if you're inclined to never feed a certain type of person? The only thing bringing me yeah. If you have to take it please take it, it's important. I'm serious. You sure? Alright, I'm not upset, I'm not sad, I'm not angry. The only thing that it does is when you bring everybody to the table, and you don't have enough food for everybody or you have to feed everybody is that fosters more animosity. I always tell people in the law for me, the law is two things, and I'm just personification of those two things. Jealous. Right? and skeptical. Jealous, because you're always thinking about why are you treated me different than another person? That's the jealousy that I personify to the folks. Why are you treating this defendant? Different from that defendant? Right, if it's a criminal case. Skeptical because we're one of the few places where people have to actually show evidence. Well, I think she said this, I think he said that, I think they did this, or they did this for this reason, oh I say, "okay, great. Show me." Going back to your example of folks having enough seats at the table, I'm skeptical that you're able to feed everybody. And if you are, show me. I am jealous at that table when I see other folks getting more of the food that goes around because I'm going to ask the question, "why are you treating those folks different than me?" Now the answer that you may have or other folks, and I'm not I'm not saying this is true by any one person, is that we're really lucky we had you at the table, and my response to that is, "you forget that me and people like me built this table." So, when I hear comments that are aimed in the right direction, who are trying to bring people together, which I think is exactly what he's trying to do, when you get to my level of stuff, show me.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Nicely put. Nicely put. Do you believe that? The campus atmosphere, and I'm talking during the late 90s and early 2000, do you believe that the campus atmosphere, the organized events, or even the geography of the building, the way the buildings are located? So, we have the athletic complex on one side and you know, the academic side here, and then the residence halls there? Do you think that all of this together favored the occurrence of interracial social encounters?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

That favored it? That caused it?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

That hindered it.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, so the answer is yes. Let me give you a short answer first. So, when I came through it was exactly how it was. So, on that side of university, we had Neely, we had all of the academic side. To get on this side, it was pretty much all the residence halls. We didn't have education here and a couple over there. And then there was the athletic, there was Moncrief, the athletics, and then Worth Hills was offered. You never went to Worth Hills once you were Greek. Well, I don't want to say Greek I mean, white predominant Greek, right? And that was what they had. They had what we thought was the best

breakfasts, they can stay over there, they had wealth over there. The nerds where I lived was Tom Brown, Tom Brown, Pete Wright, and the dorm. And then it became a living place, an apartment building, and so we all just nerds over there, right? And Clark was there too. And so, I think it really hindered it. You could go to a part of the campus, and never have to interact with anybody who is different. That you could have, if you were in a Greek fraternity or sorority, and you're inviting your friends from Kansas, or UT, or, God forbid, Oklahoma, down here, you could never set foot on the main campus, you could just have them out on Worth Hills. We used to always call Worth Hills, and we said the Worth Hills, you're saying something negative. We oh so when I came back people like oh, yeah, we're gonna go to Worth Hills. I'm like, why are you going to Worth Hills? That's not for us. Listen, to the name. We don't, we're not worth anything. Why would we go to Worth Hills?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

The other side of the tracks

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So, I think during the late 90s, early 2000s that it was in Congress, right? And I used to be on Bing. So, I was a parliamentarian and the student government. My roommate was the president. And we helped start the buses, they used to go from one part of campus to the other. And so, we would oftentimes talk about trying to link the campuses. So, Bit Alexander was the president, who was my roommate for all four years. So, I'm at the game saw him the other night, too. He's a great guy, great, awesome. His wife was a president of the student body as well, Chelsea, at that time, lots of Chelsea. And we were always talking about how to leave the campus better. So, we started the bus system, primarily so that folks could have access pretty quickly, to different parts of the campus, the administration at the time, through that we were just trying to do this really cool project of so people didn't have to walk too far. But he and I had an understanding, I think, I think that we were trying to unite the campus in a way that we had been united are first of all, white boy from West Texas, East Coast, or from East Coast Black kid, right. Yeah, so we had a we had a bit of a rough first couple of weeks, but we're best friends now. So, I do think it would have the actual physical makeup on the canvas and have a role affected. And additionally, it got the folks the opportunity to talk about their West Berry. People like oh, just go down, Berry, I was trying to find places to go beyond just go down. It wasn't like that when I was here. All the way people stayed in Worth Hill, they were over here there on the side. And anytime they talked about Berry Street or West Berry or whatever, they're like don't go over there. The only time I would meet them is that we were at that time, it was like a Whataburger next to a Wendy's. And then so it's two o'clock in the morning, you come back from the party. That's where you're by, we'll meet right and you should have me know how you did where you going next, right. That's the only time that people went down there. So, it was also an opportunity, before we grew into Berry and grew back out that way to kind of say, this is our campus and everything else is formed. Turns out that most brown folks that live in that part of Berry, and Black folks as well, because they want to Paschal, right? And so, it was my friend Carlo Capital, who's a great guy, but he does a lot. He grew up in this area. And he went to Paschal. And he was like, why don't you guys come back over here. Nobody wanted to go past Sandage nobody wanted

to go back over to Berry. We just didn't do it. And even Black folks are like, well, if you're going to go over there you have to be tough. You didn't. There was a misnomer that we had based on our I think intelligence or thought was our intelligence, being a rich school, being a rich white school, and it being so far from Worth Hills, and it's the other side. So, I've been thinking how like, I'm encouraged how TCU has moved out. But I am also questioning because I come from the East Coast. What happened to the people that's always in the back. I don't like to be a party pooper. But also, the reason I think about those people because those people are me.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And these are the kinds of things that the Race and Reconciliation Committee consider.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I know I talk a lot I'm sorry. Is it okay if I get some water.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

All right, so thinking back, what do you think could have been done to make your stay better?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

at TCU?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yes.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

You know? Hmm. I think that what would make my... so, I had a wonderful time at TCU. I don't want you to think that I didn't have a wonderful time.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Absolutely.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

It was one of the best decisions I've ever made. I felt that when I left TCU, when I was gone from TCU. I think that ultimately what would have made it better is... if so, my friends were always open to new experiences. I remember one of my good friends Mark had served, served in the military. He was ROTC here Air Force ROTC here. When he came to get down to one of the folks who helped found Kwanzaa so I celebrate Kwanzaa, just something that my parents made us do. And so, we just get to it on and on. Maulana Karenga, come down to the Black bookstore, which I think is way down there. And my friend would come to me and be like, "I don't know what this is. I'm a Polish white boy. And I'm going to go because for some reason, it's important to you." I wish we had more experiences like that, where people were out of their comfort zones, in areas that they weren't familiar. We're so big in the tradition in

Texas, and I'm not a Texan, and I get that. I got here as quickly as I could, but I'm not a Texan and I get it. But I love the school, with all my heart, all my heart. If we had more experiences where we had other folks celebrate in a real way other traditions because they were curious, not because they were trying to prove a point or otherwise. But just to be curious, my friend came, he was like, what is this? It looks like Hanukkah, what is this? Right? And I was like "well, why don't you come and find out?" We didn't have those experiences, I think it would have made my stay better if we had those experiences, because we would have went connecting to people who were different than we were. You talk so much about tradition in Texas, because we're talking about the traditional football, the tradition of Texas's thoughts when it comes to being free, thoughts when it comes to what they believe to be the Second Amendment. We have all these traditions in Texas. And I think the issue is that we will exclude some others. So, I tell the story sometimes, I met my wife in law school. And I am a great orator or so I think, half the time. I win arguments I don't lose trials, and in law school, we ended up in the same clinic, with intellectual property clinic. And one of the things you had to do at the end of the clinic was given an oral representation, either a closing, or an opening, whatever. And our teachers had fashioned this problem for us it had to do with Navajo Nation, and the use of Navajo products for trademark versus the traditional products, versus what other people who were like part Native American can do, if they can exploit them or plan on exploiting them. So, we went in, and I went first and we're on two separate teams, and I killed it. I killed it. Tradition is this, tradition is that. They have a tradition. All the things that I know were felt up and bottled up in me from what I've learned here. When I imagine what tradition looks like, it's flying on the Texas flag or the fear of the frog, or the Riff Ram, because it brings folks together that it can actually do more when we have that tradition. And I spoke about that. And I can remember in that instant having died in my heart because I had four years at TCU. And I believe that and I killed it. And everybody was worried about her. "Oh, they're dating. If she's going up there, what's it going to look like?" And she's from Detroit, so she doesn't have any fear. So, she gets up there, and the first thing that she said that has changed my thought about what happened at TCU here, and when people talked about tradition. She looked at the jury and said, "tradition is so important. You know what the best thing there is about tradition? You can always start a new one." I deflate, the room deflates. All of my bluster, and machismo, and all these things that I believe to be true, and it was this pinprick, and it just absolutely deflates. So, we talked about TCU and the things that would have made my experience better? I love tradition, the football game and I mean I flew down here for it. I love all that stuff. I love the things that we do that make us the C in TCU. I love that stuff. But we can never be afraid of the best thing about tradition, it's that we can start a new one. And so, if TCU had started, new traditions, new traditions, when I was there...

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

OK. So, let's talk about those uncomfortable topics, and I'm going to get straight to the point. Did you experience any racist incident here on campus?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Never! [laughs]

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So, what are we doing here, then? [laughs]

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I know, right? [laughs] So I'm not going to focus on the microaggressions. I think at this point I've made it kind of clear about my views about that. I will tell you one major one that I actually still talk about is about fair law enforcement. I can't remember what year it was but I remember I was here between 96 and 2000. And there were some incidents of sexual assault – rape, sexual assault at or around the campus, on those fringes. Remember I told you about Berry, West Berry, back on Sandage, all around in those areas. There were some sexual assaults and if I remember correctly rapes on folks that were either associated with TCU and the community. And when it came out, people lost their minds. Rightfully so, they were fearful I'm not going to trying to belittle that, it's important to be fearful in a way. But they lost their minds. It was “the TCU rapist” or something like that or “the rapist near TCU.” And they had these traditional things that Black folks are complain about: the really vague identifying factors, 5'8” to 6'2”. What? That's everybody! Weighing 175 to 250 like, look out for this person with this weird sketch. All of the things that sometimes we see in movies, television movies. And during that time, a lot of coeds where, if I remember correctly, women went, were afraid. And they had to walk with people, had to take, um, the golf, uh, the golf carts, Froggy 5 0, all that stuff, uh, to move around. And that was how, and then the specter of that this individual was black, I think, added to it. This person was from outside of our community, or maybe he was a part of our community. Or whatever it was. So one of the things that happened is that the police were trying to figure out who this person was. Not just because of white folks that were affected. We gotta remember that a lot of times, actually, it's on a rich campus. Privilege goes in hand with money, which goes in hand with race. They're all intertwined. Yeah, there's some different, you know, somebody can be white and not privileged, feel like they're not privileged, or not at all poor, or not understand their privilege, or whatever. And I get that. This was at TCU, a fairly rich university, uh, had a huge endowment, and was the lifeblood of Fort Worth at that time. Well, Downtown Fort Worth. And so, I remember being a student, and being asked, uh, came up to us by the administration, or the police, or whomever, that all the black men on campus would have to get some type of swab, or blood test, or whatever.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

You said, all the black men?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

All the black men. Yeah. So it is not uncommon for folks to think of policing the law enforcement, violent folks in a way of exclusion. Let's exclude all these people, and then we'll find the one. That has been, uh, a method that law enforcement uses, and that makes sense to a lot of people, because their thought at that time that was communicated to me was, if you didn't do it, what you gotta worry about?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

It is a very simple, uh, thought that's clear for most people. What do you worry about? What it fails to capture is the history of how a lot of us were raised.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Well not only do we have to be better than folks, but we have to also keep our head on a swivel. That was the expression. That you can be in the wrong place at the wrong time to a similarly situated friend, and it's going to end up worse for you. That if they find drugs on everybody, that you're the only one that's going to spend the night in jail. All those things that we know to be true because of statistics at that time, and even till today. Are riding around in our minds. And so we're having a disconnect in the conversation. It's the first time that my white friends and I, truly disagreed on something. They were like, don't you want this campus to be safe? Not all of them. Some of them agree with me. But, don't you want the campus to be safe? Don't you care about this? This is a sexual assault. These are folks you say that you care about. You know, I'm student government. You do these things.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Wow

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Why don't you just go ahead and agree to get tested?

Also, I can be a little bit paranoid. It's a good to call a black man paranoid. I don't think it's that at all. I just know the law, interest in the law at that time. Which is why I'm a judge today, because I'm trying to be thoughtful about things. I think DNA is one of the most invasive, your blood and your DNA, it doesn't get any more personal. That is the most personal thing. And you would never ask anybody to do something so personal on something like this, I think. So we have tax magistrates and judges to decide when you do DNA tests. Which is why we get a warrant for DNA in most parts of the country. I think I know the constitution. So in that moment, there was a little disconnect. I felt, um, uneasy. I felt tilted. I didn't know how to respond. And remember, still forming my own views. I'm forming my brain. I respect people and I want people to be safe. You know, first thing I always say when I go to events, honor safety first. But is what you're doing really making people safer? That's the next question.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Honor safety first. But is taking swabs or blood testing everybody? And I revolted. It was the first time that I kind of said no. In the administration, I don't remember being very forceful about it. It was one of those times where I felt like, hey guys, what if we do this? But we're 18- and 19-year-olds. We're, we're subject to folks in power and authority saying this is going to be our way, especially folks that keep us safe. And that brought us here. I think about it 'till today. It scarred me. It scarred me in a way.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

So, they, they did, they did.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

They didn't do it. They did not. They did not.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Why not?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I think because of revolt from students. Um, and especially, and I'll give it up to our black sisters who did it right now. They put Biden in our White House and then they, they saved me back in 1997. Uh, they really stood up and said, um, you know, you're not doing this. We're not protesting this. We're going to be loud about this. It's not going to be something that we're going to do. They always "Oh just voluntary". But we don't want the specter of being a volunteer. There's a pressure about why. You're not doing it. We all have to start a letter thing, right? And I think a lot of the community who were there, and some of the athletes, to a certain extent, rejected it. And nobody did the volunteer thing. It was one of those ideas that was floated. It was pressure, but it never came to fruition. But that doesn't mean, just because we ended up with the right result, that it wasn't damaging to some of us. Not damaging the way it was. I was crying in my people or looking at people the wrong way, or me getting extra offended. I was always going to be me. And I didn't, you know, think about everybody who believed in that. But what it did though, it really added to the isolation. That added to me being like, "well... maybe we're not on the same page like I thought we were". There are flash points in our lives where we see the people who stick with us and the ones who don't. And you know, it's based on color, sex, or, who you choose to love. It can be vary damaging when you already think you're at the bottom of the barrel.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I believe this speaks volume also in terms of how the idea of race has been constructed in this community. Because we are talking about testimonials. So people have seen, uh, quote unquote African American men or probably should say black. Because it could be from Africa, from the Caribbean, we don't know.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I prefer, I prefer saying black, it goes people the wrong way, but I prefer black.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Probably because of my mom.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

But, I agree. Not just because of my also complicated ethnic heritage. But, in terms of color, we know that any group that is not of direct European descent could have the color of what they call the black man. So if you're going to decide to test black men, well, there could be some South American men who are just as dark or, you know, Asian men who are just as dark. So, you know, there's like a complete disconnect with race being a construct and, you know, other aspects of phenotype.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

And then the other question is, why would you admittedly describe that it was a student? You had picked us to come here. You carefully collated us 'cause there are only so many black folks who are not athletes. I can't even imagine if it was a person of football. I'm not saying there is, but I can't even imagine. Right? Because it's a very, like, everybody together type of thing. But you know you said the first thing is you said it could be black but, why is it a student?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yeah

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

We're out here in Fort Worth which is we're a mid size, at that time, you know, population area. It could be anybody. It could be anybody.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

It could be anybody.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

They didn't ask the professors to do it. It could've been them. It could've been a person down the street. It could've been anybody. So that is the danger of these types of things. Not only does it hurt the psyche of the people. Cavaliers to whom you're just like "hold on did you do this? It makes sense". You're also not catching the bad guy. You're not honoring safety.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right. Which you claim to defend.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

And you'd think you are. But are you? And that's a lot of my dad. So, I think about it and I talk about it all the time. I felt tilted. I felt the most out of place that I've ever felt. And it took me a while to get out of that funk. It was a lot of anger built up. You don't understand when I'm saying. It's like at that time when at my High School when I was president of the class and they we're like "Oh. Let's do that Southern movie. It was like: "you'll never take my land" (sings). It has the first black woman who won Academy Award for Supporting Actress was it was The Maid. Gone with the wind. Yeah, because at that time, they were like, "Oh, let's have a homecoming with the theme of Gone with the wind. Because we get to dress up and wear these dresses". I said, well, you know, we could do something else. Maybe we'll go in 20s. Maybe something else. Maybe we'll do some, like, 80s stuff. You know, like, why don't we do something else? We could all dress up like 80s stuff. And they're like "Well, we can wear dresses and we can do all this other stuff" and you're looking at them and you're saying, "You don't get I'm saying".

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yeah. Not at all.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

It's like that's not fun time for me. I know you want to wear that dress. I know it. You probably look great in that dress. But does that mean that my sister has to wear a dress? Does that mean that I have to wear that actually? Why don't you just dress how you want to dress? Now I know Shonda Rhimes is doing some different stuff. I appreciate that here in 2021. I'm talking about 96, 97. Right? Or when I was in high school, which was 92. And it was that same feeling though, in this moment that you're not hear me and I don't know how to tell you without screaming.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Yeah. And then you will sound like "the angry black man".

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Exactly. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Tell me we're you involved in any black or minority organization?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, so I was in the Black Student Caucus and, you know I pledged Omega Psi Phi on campus. I dropped the line for a number of reasons, but I was always on a collective with those folks. My closest friend who are still friends today, we still form part of the same circles. I don't know if you've already

interviewed Jorana? Yea, you could do that. I just saw her, she just like totally tapped me at the game, we haven't seen each other in so long. She was a big supporter of me when I was here.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

She was like a soul sister always looked out for me in a bug way. So, I was part of those communities right? There were some other black fraternities in that small population, this was before they were on the Greek, so you had to go pledge at like UTA and so you could not pledge here you had to pledge over there. And there were a lot of other Latinx sororities had to do the same thing, pledge some of themselves.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Oh. Okay.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

We didn't have, like, I walked in the Greek, like, oh, this is the, like, what is this? Why is this on North Hills? What's the Greek? Why is it here? It's Panhellenic, right? So, um. Yeah, yeah. But so those are the organizations I was a part of. I was mostly a part of the SBA. Um, I did a lot of stuff that I think helped advance people of color and doing other stuff of that nature really challenging people at that level. I was able to do that because of my best friend and roommate was the President. So everytime I was like were not going to bring that up, he was like "We are bringing this up".

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I see. Now, did you, uh, interact with the minority council?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I believe it was the Black Student Caucus when I was here, I'm not sure. Oh yeah, when Darren was doing it. Um, I mean we always sat down and had conversations. I'm not sure how formal it was. But I always could talk to Darren and other folks. Dorana and Daryl. Yeah, I don't remember being as formal. Quenelle was here, yeah. So, yeah.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

We interviewed him, by the way. I don't know if you can hear me.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Cornell?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Mm hmm.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I like him. I like him a lot, but it was a very, if I remember correctly, it was a very Malcolm-Martin relationship, if I'm being real with you.

[Laughter]

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I mean, that's, I mean, I'll leave it at that. I was, you know, I was young. Maybe I got it wrong, but that's how I felt.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

That's nice. We're going to put that clip right after his introduction. (jokingly)

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Oh. Let me do it right now. It's a very Malcolm and Martin relationship, I think. But maybe I'm remembering it wrong. That's what I think.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

No, that's the narrative. That's the narrative throughout. So, yeah. Um, but the reason why I was asking is, um, I mean, I know that you had, like, the student part of your involvement, um, but the minority council would be, you know, involved actual, like, actual staff. So, um, I was wondering, like, how would you address any concern that you had as a minority student?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, so, you could go talk to Darren or Cornell. You would have one-on-one conversations with them. There were upper classment who I think did a good job. So, the premise of the question in my experience, there is a law of. It was in my view that if you wanted anything to truly get done that those in the minority council positions could actually do anything. You could go to them for enlightenment. You could go to them for something that really horrible happened, because in that case they would step in and do something. But if you are talking about a way to either make TCU understand its past or otherwise move the needle, I'm not sure, and I may be in the minority group, but I would never go to a black student caucus like other folk that might actually need the needle moved and try to partner with them in that way. One of the things that I think is sadly true is that the centers of power within the university during that time: Chancellor's office, right? alumni slash trustees. And, even though there were other groups that could say new things, if you didn't come through one of those power centers, it doesn't matter exactly how you move the needle otherwise think about, um, race reconciliation and the initiative without pushing through on both ways. Which is why it's so important beyond diversity to have people of the center of those power centers. So, when you hear something that makes sense or an idea that has a new tradition that you can then use to change the campus. There is this idea that if all black and brown folks come together, and that all minorities come together, that we can move into

ourselves and that has not been my experience here at TCU. You have to have allyship, you have to bring people more, you have to use this big sense of power to do it and it can be long and slow.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So that's why when I had the chance to talk to student president at the end of the day I tried to press up on them that they are able to use their power to create change. We're going to lose voters, so I always warn people that if you're using your power with that center, that you may wanna think about trying to cover within the basis of the other certain powers that there are. So, the trustee board, which is why they're so important for me to be active on that. I have allies on that have resold to me and I think more than theory that actually think about practice because that's where we are able to help people. Right? So I think at the time that I was there I don't think I understood the specifications of that. It wasn't until law school, through the judgeship, you know, clerking, doing terrorism cases turns that I understood that there are some rules to the power. So some speeches I give you, I always tell people: If you think you have a good idea and you're going to be governor. You want to be governor. And I'm somebody who doesn't want you, whether it's because you're black or who you are, how you identify, you know how you stop that person from being governor? you let them be mayor. You'll kill their career as mayor. Because they are going to go around and say: "I'm Mayor of Fort Worth". Nah. Nah. The mayor of Fort Worth is great. He's a friend of TCU's. I don't want to use that one. I'm the mayor of Baltimore. I'm the mayor of wherever. For people of color, they think, oh, you've got power. But the power there is at the governor's office. Or the president's. Or the judge or the next stop above, well, the federal. What's the best way to get a young, aspiring judge to not make it to the supreme court or to the court appeal to the court? Let them be the administrator of judge of the category. You think you're doing more good for more people? C'mon. Don't "Oki Dokey" me. So when we talk about TCU, we talk about the way it was at that time. What my thought is that there is a false narrative. I am afraid to say that, because those people did so much work, and worked amongst all in protected means. But that doesn't make what I say less true. And I am thankful to them. They stuck out for me in big ways.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Can you give an example of one of these ways?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, I mean I think that um. I think that there were times where I was pushing hard and acting 19 at TCU. When Daren had to intervene. I think there were times, I didn't know, how to talk less. I waved my term. Daren had to pull me aside and eat with me for breakfast one morning and tell me that my ship stopped. There was a time in my senior year, and I don't want to implicate everybody, because most folks know me, where all the student government threw a party on my apartment on campus because my roommate was depressed, I was the partner living there. And a lot of the folks who are prominent now

were all different types of examples. And we wanted to cut lose because we thought we were titled to cut lose because we had been so good, we deserved it. Why not? We deserved it. We are drinking. There is underage drinking. We opened the doors and we were yelling out. So, we've gone past the time people who normally like, oh, they're just kids But that's two o'clock in the morning, right? The campus police was asked to go in and see. I was a Wanna-Be-lawyer. I was challenging the campus police for a number of things asserting a right that I thought that I had and I only took one class here. Business Law. I was saying certain things that I was saying and being a complete dick. I'm not signing this, I'm not doing that, I'm not doing a lot of stuff. And I was a prominent member. Probably at that time, the most prominent black member of the association. I was in the student association like they were flying me to Oklahoma, giving speeches back in DC. I was that guy. When TCU was going to go point to somebody and be like, Look, this black guy from the East Coast can do it, you can do it too". I was that guy. If you look back at all the covers throughout those years, It's me. Every admission bulletin cover, TCU magazine cover, I was the black poster boy and my friends laughed at that. Even today. And I think that somebody interceded on my behalf. And it was my fault, it was a grace that I shouldn't have done because I in the group was the loudest and the most arrogant. I was convinced that because I got caught doing something wrong, I had some sense of entitlement that I probably learned from here. The white allies too there was Don Mills that didn't get anything but it could've had really bad consequences when going into law school, being shot from the East Coast.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Exactly right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

I think that they did some hard work for me, and I will forever be grateful. I can't put my finger on it but somehow, I know that they helped. So, when I am asked about times when they were able to do something and by heart, I believe that is why.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And, recently, the past few years, as you're probably aware, TCU has been in the media quite a lot, criticized the media for, um, instances of racism, including lawsuits.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Are we talking about the Aramid Blacks? I know it was a lot. Go ahead. I know all those folks, you know, Darren's a friend of mine. Yeah. Who was that white guy? He was a friend of mine. All these folks that I know were friends of mine. I'm sure those are who you mean.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

No I wasn't gonna name anyone.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Oh. I'm sorry, go ahead with your question.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

No, I wasn't going to name anyone.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Oh, I mean, I mean, it's an, it's an indictment, right?

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

It's public knowledge.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Or the, uh, the lawsuit, not the indictment, the lawsuit.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I was just wondering about your views, um, I know that you have, besides what we just mentioned, you also have a very positive experience with TCU.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Absolutely.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

But do you think that the criticism that was in the media, do you believe that this smudged TCU's reputation and maybe spread, um, some false information or some false imagery about TCU, or rather that the media coverage brought to light something that was already there, or a reality, or what's really occurring behind the scenes.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So, if I can, let me answer that question in two ways. I wasn't there. The people that I know, I have some implicit bias for, the people who were named allegedly did stuff. I know them. And it's difficult for me to imagine the conversations I've had with them and how the white folks that I know could ever be implicated to do those things. I do believe people have off days which some things are true in certain ways. I'm not excusing the behavior, but it's hard to image from the raw moments that I've had with those people that they could betray me. I've seen enough cases and trials and stuff where I have had that feeling and it beats out of me. Or at least the person has felt strongly that this is how it affected them. I mean think about the stories I just told you. We didn't believe it. You "just asked them one time to, you know, to take a DNA. It wasn't a big deal. To me it was like, "Oh my god, what kind of person would do that?" That's real stuff. That's being a human.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Right.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So, I got the opportunity, to do a fellow coutship in one of the fastest courthouses in the nation. There were two prominent..

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

in the present way you would say something like Death to America, or no longer Saddam Hussein or anything, and every time that he would yell it would happen is. So we have a press that when I was sitting in front of the press, I'm now sitting in front of us, the press would be able to assign a smaller federal, and here I am as young law clerk with me, and on certain occasions, he would say that he would turn around, after breaking, I got off the bench, and state these things, and they would hostile back. And then it wouldn't watch. So it was one time that I was there, and I recount this, and I tell this al the time with folks, while I was sitting there with one of my colleagues who ended up being a really big to do, he was my co-clerk, and we're sitting there, and Sawi, it's a break room. Defendant Musawi, he turns around and says something like, Allah will provide or something that was pro Allah right? And he said it fast. Now, we start leaving the courtroom and because I'm a watchdog at them, so they get to leave first. We got to leave first. My co-clerk went back to our chambers. I was like, I'm hungry, right, and I'm always hungry. I rushed into the elevator, and on the elevator is a group of reporters who were in the same court room as I was, and all CNN, Fox, MSNBC, all the cable networks. And they don't pay attention to me because I'm just this law clerk sitting in the corner, minding my own business, we've been instructed not to talk about these things. And I hear one report, and like I say, for which agency, because they're all in it together, "what did you hear what he said? did you hear what he said?" It was hard to hear, because he said it fast because they're talking to each other, because they're going down the elevator outside to be in front of the cameras, because they have to report right away because we have a 24 hour news cycle, even back then, since 2005, or 4, I can't remember, and one of them says "I think he said Death to America." Now I've told you that he said something positive or reaffirming? About Allah. Right? I wanted to say something but we have been told that it's not our responsibility to say, stay out of it, and be part of this system, we represent the judge who you're clerking for, and I said "no," and then another person. Yeah, that's what I'm going to write down. Is that what you're going to write down? Yes, you're going to write down that too? Yes. Alright, so we're going to write this now. In a pile out of the elevator, I watched them go across the street, and I sat in the middle of, food place, we actually had a TV, and listen to them say that during that time, he had said something like that something like Death to America or something like that. And I had to bite my tongue. And if there's anything that's more serious and terrorism, and more serious, in my opinion about having justice and fairness of court, to have these reporters at this top news, cable news agencies, talk to each other and decide on an elevator ride down something that the individual did not say, and reporter's ethics makes me think that when I hear in these situations, that the reporting said that they said x y&z it gives me some pause. Not saying that they made it up, not saying that it's wrong, but remember, I told you about these two things a law is: jealous and skeptical.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Take it with a grain of salt, a grain or two.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Again, it was a hard lesson to learn, and it was disturbing to me, because I've been a person that's always relying on the press, and I think they're good, and I think there's things that they can do positive. When you see that it make you think. Going back to your question about TCU, when I have that experience in a very profound way. And I think about whether or not they got it right, or they showed a lot of something or made something up the answer, ultimately, I don't know only the reporters know. The people who were involved in that as well. Here's why: Investigations matter. Giving people showing evidence, as opposed to just being able to say gossipy things patterns, and that in my court and things that I look for, I look for actual evidence, not to turn a blind eye, not to say that it couldn't happen, to believe and investigate. And I'm not sure that occurred based on what happened. But I'm not a part of the process. I'm not the lawyer. I'm not the judge. I've only read what I'm reading. And so I'm not sure that's the best answer for Race and Reconciliation, and it shouldn't say that there's no role for reporters in the US because we do have a dark history. Some that are physical, and some of the ones that I've talked to you and have been mental, you know, affected folks that I know. But it deserves to be investigated. Ask questions, but these assumptions, I would encourage people to try to withhold.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I'm going to ask you another question.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Okay.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

If we were to choose one person, I will allow you two. Okay. So of the people who have impacted, or have the strongest influence on your life, fantasy, who are those people?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

So many impacted, but the question's the strongest, so if I leave somebody out, it's not that you didn't have an impact. Dr. Kay Higgins. She was in charge of frog, I'm sorry, orientation. For a long time she retired last year. I still keep in contact with them. Now, she was the first progressive person in Texas that made it okay for me to share on the football team, and be a part of traditional things, but also understand the culture and she wasn't quite about it. She was in charge of orientation to Dubai for a long time. I know, toward her retirement, she was moved to a different place and that sort of thing. But we had some candid comments and some conversations that I think would rival some of the ways Congress had dinner conversations. She likes to think of herself as this mother. She's white, Texas is super Christian. She thinks of herself as a brand, but she wasn't I have a mother. She wasn't a mother. She was an example of how you can use love, and the progressive thought, in an institution that is wholly conservative and prosper and win people over, and I think that that talent that she gave to me. I know that she took some

lumps from the administration, because of her beliefs. She was absolutely, she continues even in retirement at TCU. In fact, she was the one that called me up and said, I'm going to be in Fort Worth, for this UT game, and you're going to do all the stuff of university and all this stuff with alumni relations, and meet with all these people and do this, need to go meet the first Black student body president. I said I don't have time for that. She said, "you want me to write?" You know, come on. So I think that's because she's, she knows that it matters, the conversation you have with those folks. I'm in a position to do that just because of the success that I have. Hopefully, hopefully with the team you have, find that way. That's the first person. The second person is the person on staff. Dan Wicker Wells. Dan's family are Disciples of Christ, and they were big in the creation of white divinity, and the Well sermons here at TCU every year, it's his family. He used to have to dress up and go, so you can say this is the great great grandson of certain son of Wells, the Wells, and he's a year behind me, and he always reminds me the first time that we met. I was coming home he were trying to do rush week. He was in the hallway and had to rush and drinking underage, 18 year old, and it was loud. Just awkward with my boy sitting down, and I'm on the way to my old dorm. An old compound like an apartment an old dorm, and one of the things he tells me that I said during that time was, "hey, nice to meet you. Don't tell anybody that I will let you know." What a mean old thing to say to somebody who's just come to campus and is trying to fit in through rush, and not getting invitations to be a part of what a mean old thing to say. He forgave me. He tells the story all the time now to make fun of me, and became one of my best friends. I've seen his children grow up, when I come here, when he comes to DC, he's one of him, and my other friend Nathan Neely, who's down in Houston, are the people that I've tied to the most. When I first met Nathan he had this long hair walking around talking about "how you Jesus, you're not even Black?" How is all of that possible. You know, and I would threw and I twisted the hound and he forgave me and said, "call me your friend, I'm different, you're definitely something different. So I'll merge the two of those. Nathan Neely and Wells. It's that forgiveness when people have insulted you, not a turn the other cheek. I think that's too, I don't really like that phrase turn the other cheek. I do believe in forgiveness. Growing up in the church mattered to me not in a mountain versus Mark way. But we always used to have these church covenants that we have to say every third Sunday, when we did our, we did our communion for Black Baptist, third Sunday, preacher got out, then we'll do juice wine, things a little waffers, as we did, the whole thing was great. One of the things we had to read before we did that with the church covenant. The one part of the church covenant, this is what folks within the church would talk about, how we're going to conduct our business as the ethnic congregation. In a phrase that I think is important to hear, and that I always do for my back of my mind, I don't think has turned the other cheek, I think it's something more. And this is what it is. And it's part of what you guys are doing is the phrase that's in it and I think it's so beautiful: be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

Beautiful. Now, when you chose law, yes, I have read that you were

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

We're going to talk about my friends? Make me cry about my friends? It's fine. 21st century.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I'm not sure where this is going to go. Okay. But, I know that you were inspired. If not, you know, in all of this empowered by the Civil Rights Movement.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Absolutely.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And you want it to be in a position to help the disenfranchised. What is your proudest accomplishment? As a judge?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

There are several, I will give you two. You said the most, I'm going to give you two. Politics number one, don't ask the question that was asked. Too much DC in my mind. There's two. I like when folks come in, and they're not eloquent, and they speak in the vernacular, which I will do from time to time because of who I am. It just is. You always have like a bigger other side. It's like, well, that's not this. That's not this, that's not this. They think that they're going to beat them down in the wall. I like to make sure that it is either, I make suitable against the person, but it's going to be dignity, respect, and if it's going to be in my courtroom. So what happened one time was in court, and I didn't like the way something was going, I work for the law, not a court of equity, so you got to follow the law. But one of the tenants that we have under the Constitution is due process. When the person was talking, the person kept saying, I didn't get notice, or I didn't do this, and then this company came after me, and it's not fair. It's not fair. It's not fair. He didn't articulate under the law, where there was a violation of due process. That's a very technical thing. He did not have an attorney. So he didn't say it, and so I ended up ruling in his favor and saying, "okay, well, he didn't know that's not fair." I get off the bench a little bit later, one of my colleagues come to me because I'm smart, sometimes they come to us away from the public eye, and they say, "well, why did you do this? In this case? There's no do you just did it because it wasn't fair. And just because it wasn't fair. What's the due process? What did he do wrong?" And stop my colleague and say, "due process is fairness. It's just a way that awesome lawyers and judges talk about what's being fair. If you look at the root of the word, educate, due process, and the Constitution and processing of these cases that we read is all about what's fair. Sometimes people come in and say, this is not fair, if you are searching for them to say that you violated my process, you're gonna miss the hurt. And so one of my biggest accomplishments that I feel that I have, is to look for other folks that they don't get along with, or they don't know anymore, and make sure I see what they're really saying whether it's a due process violation. I don't think that that's overreach, I think that that is being smart, and using my cultural or my history of what I've done, been done, to make sure that we are hearing people fairly, not every person who's going to come into us and articulate. There are times that I've been flush into my life, and I haven't been able to express myself. Sometimes when I haven't been able to afford an attorney or the odds seem like they're against me, evening, the odds, when you breathe that

oxygen of odds into the community, and you can't change given your want and you have to be fair, and impartial that isn't prime. It's like the people who say they're colorblind and know what you say, you're wasting. You always say, I know your color blind, because you'll only see white and Black, where you only see white, you don't see any other colors. That's the problem, you shouldn't be color blind, and you'll look at all the colors and try to figure out, okay, what's going on here? It's a tough job. But here's the thing, you don't have to do it, we believe we'll find somebody in the end. The second thing that I like doing is challenging my colleagues. So I told you about this whole Sentencing Project that I'm doing, we're trying to do it nationwide, disparities, when you just walk into a courtroom, and you get more of a sentence, or in every part of the criminal justice system, some implicit bias or unconscious bias to return when it doesn't matter to me, as a result saying we're quibbling about these terms academically and pragmatically, the statistics are just bad. Either way. I'm challenging them to think further, and putting people in front of them that challenged them to think. I hold trends now for Maryland, for all my colleagues, and I had some tough conversations. I make some statements with them that I don't think that they ever thought that the country was 42 year old judge would do. But I also have on the ball, so the Constitution. My only boss is the Constitution, or in our case, the relevant information and right choices. So I like challenging them because if I don't do that, who is? Who am I gonna say? Well, you know, I looked at your stats, and you did this for this person, I walked into another judge, right? It's courtroom, it was a criminal case. It was about a DUI stop. The judge who just happens to be a white judge, I totally respect the judge, the Office of the Public Defender is telling him why his client was nervous and didn't want to get out the car, on his routine DUI stop. But the public defender is afraid to say things like race, or what's going on outside, so she's just intimating to him "well, you know, there's a good reason why a DUI and my colleague says like, well, what's the reason? Why didn't you talk? There's a good reason why I said, "well you know, jobs." It's like, what are you talking about? They're having a conversation about this Black defendant, and the public defendant, she's afraid to say it because she might not know the judge. The judge is not listening or understanding, and here is this defendant who didn't have a car because he was afraid if he didn't comply that you'd get shot at. You get George Floyd. I'm not saying that that is what would happened, you know, pretty good police in Modero county. But the fear of fear can paralyze you in those situations. Things that you think people are doing because they are trying to hide something, and their nervousness maybe because they're nervous about you. It may not be that they're not telling the truth. So I watched that, and then when they got off the bench, I had to explain my colleague that you miss this thing that the public defender didn't explain it to you, but you're having this conversation, or that matter to this person. And so I think that I enjoy doing those things. Now I am a man that gets tired. About six years, you've brought people along the way because you say what is the truth and sometimes you don't say it in the most eloquent way because you want the result in a hurry, and I think I've learned how to be better about that. But here's what I'm gonna say, send help. Send help to TCU. Have TCU at the forefront of these types of things when we examine ourselves first on campus, and then see how it may operate in other areas, and that's straight. That's what we do here. It will be my first project here, will help other people understand. So all I ask is send help. I'm forty two, I know you think that's young, but it ages you on the bench.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

I have one more question.

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Sure.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

One final question for you. What does reconciliation mean to you?

ZUBERI WILLIAMS:

Yeah, reconciliation, means to me, the sides. Alright. So I have a lot of landlord tenant cases. And one side will come in and say, the landlord will come in and say, "Judge, they owe us very to pay rent, two months for three months, say three months? \$3,400." I'll turn to the tenant, and I'll say, "do you owe the money?" And they'll say, "sure," I say how much they'll say, "oh, you owe them \$500," and you know what I do? I look at them both. I say you need to go outside and talk about this, or I'll postpone this for one week, so you can compare your letters, and you know, what we call that process? Reconcile. So for me, reconciliation, especially when it comes to race, is that one side thinks they have an accountant, and the other side says, "that's not fair. I've paid some way along the way, and I've done something," and what you do is you force the parties to go outside, compare their letters, and then you understand on what days they say that the payments were made, or what accident the party has done that they think that they've paid rent or paid something. And you have to sit down and be honest with your views about it, to try to figure out what the real number is. And if there is a disparity at the end of the day, you know, the reason there's a disparity you think you pay us for cutting the grass, because we think that we said this team because we didn't put it in writing. And those are things that then people can come back and make decisions about. When two sides go outside of my bubble, and try to figure out what the real number is, and have a tough conversation on all the promises they made to each other, and all the things that they did in the past and have a real accounting of it, that is reconciliation. Oh that is profound. Well, we want to thank you for your wonderful testimony and words of wisdom. Well, I'm thankful you got it. I love this campus with all my heart. I love it.

DR. SYLVIANE GREENSWORD:

And it shows. You put your money where your mouth is. They're working on it, trust me.