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Anjali: Welcome to Media at Risk, a podcast from the center for Media Risk at the Annenberg School for communication at the University of Pennsylvania. This podcast is being co-sponsored across the Center for Media at Risk and the Media Inequality and Change Center. My name is Anjali DasSarma, and I'm a doctoral student here at Annenberg and a steering committee member at the center for Media Risk and a fellow at the Media Inequality and Change Center. I'm joined here today by Joseph Torres, who is the co-creator of Media 2070, a media reparations project. He's also the author of The New York Times best seller News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media with Juan González. Joe and I met a few years back, and since then, our conversations have been some of the most nurturing and generative of my PhD so far. So, Joe, thank you so much for being here, and I really appreciate your time. And I'm excited to get chatting about media policy, reparations, race and history. So first, can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your background in journalism.

Joe: So yeah, I was born and raised in New York City. Parents came from Puerto Rico. Father went to a vocational high school. My mom didn't graduate high school. She got a GED when I was in middle school. So learned how to type so she can get back to, you know, help to make the family make more money. Then I went to the College of Staten Island. You know what, college? I said I'm just going to go to college in my neighborhood. And that all you needed was basically a high school diploma to get in because it's one of the Cuny schools, which is Cuny is awesome, you know what I'm saying? So, for this reason, for, you know, and… I was taking classes, you know, all the different electives and I didn't know what I wanted to study. And I came across a class that was taught, I took a class, I was taught by a professor named Kathy Hospell [sic], and she would bring in alternative publications to examine how, like the mainstream media coverage compares to, like other alternative publications and how they were covering these issues. And it made a huge impact on me. I was like, I was so fascinated by it and what and I was one of these people who I went to college like, I, I went to college, and I dropped out for a year. Then I went back, you know, I was which I was grateful for, Cuny, you know, because it can do that.

Joe: Right. But yeah, it was fascinating. And this is like the points of teachers, you know, and professors. I would talk to her after class about this stuff, you know, like I would go to the front room and maybe I was preventing her from getting to the next place you need to get to. But it was like she spoke to me, man. You know, she took the time to. I told her I don't have a major. And she said, well, if you're interested in communications and you know, it's not a journalism program, but it's communication program, maybe you take more communications classes. And just her encouragement of talking to me about this, it just made an impact on me, you know? And it just really helped me to, you know, get a communications degree. I can't remember a lot of my classes, but I do that class that I always remember, you know? And so I had a friend whose future husband worked at the Staten Island Advance, which is a new house paper, and it's a mid-level paper, really, at the time, with the circulation, it was like 80,000 to 100,000 circulation. And I was a copy boy. They called them where you just take the faxes back, then take the faxes mail. And the editor of the paper really liked me. And I got to write a couple of stories, and then I got an internship, and one of the folks who was working in the newsroom back then was Rich Eisen, you know, of NFL, ESPN fame.

Joe: And it was a really nice guy, man. He was just he was he was awesome person. He'd be like, hey, Joe, we're going to the Yankee game. You want to come with us? You know? And so I was I was still in college and he was a transportation reporter, if I remember. Then I got a job in DC covering US Hispanic politics with a publication called Hispanic Link Weekly Report. That's no longer around, but it's been a training ground for a lot of journalists. I never thought I was going to be a writer or a journalist because I hated writing. I avoided writing, right? And this is where I started to learn to write. It was a weekly publication that was mailed out to folks, and it covered us Hispanic politics. And that's where I started to learn about really like structural issues and race. And because I didn't know really a lot. I grew up in New York City. I don't remember having any teachers of color ever. I didn't learn anything about history of racism or even, you know, despite all the Puerto Ricans in New York about Puerto Rico or anything like that, even in college, you know, and so, like I learned here, the Hispanic link, I learned [about] Latino issues. And it started it was an awakening for me. You know, it was a further awakening.

Joe: And I was in my 20s and it was a great job. And that's where then I went to the National Association of Hispanic Journalists after that, and I was working on communications and then became eventually deputy director. But that's where it was like all this media consolidation was happening just beginning early in the Bush years. And when the Bush administration was calling for massive deregulation of the of the broadcast industry and folks were upset because of the Iraq war was happening and the media was, you know, the lies they were telling, you know, pushing, you know, the hawkish. And after September 11th and there was a drumbeat, but the media was pushing this war, you know, and so a lot of folks were upset. Millions of folks were upset and they were not happy about this consolidation happening. And Juan González ran for president back in 2002. I knew Juan a little bit before then, through my other work, through my previous work with Hispanic Link, but it was really unique for a journalist to do. He ran on a platform in 2002. His major platform was we have to stop media consolidation because it's destroying newsrooms. We have to have a more diverse. And he won. And then, you know, I learned about media consolidation when I was working at NASA and all this consolidation was happening. I was like, this is not good. Yeah, but I can't explain why.

Anjali: Yeah.

Joe: And then I read this book, Rich Media Poor Democracy by Robert McChesney. And I was on the train going to work in D.C., and I read it on the train, and I is like, I like I couldn't tell you why. That explains the why. And so when I became president, I was already there intellectually on the same page there. And so we started working closely together, getting involved and trying to get other donors of color involved and voicing our concerns questions, because a lot of journalists didn't want to come out against consolidation then. And so we had to ask questions. So we had journalists. We can ask questions. How would this impact this? How would this impact that? And then we wrote a white paper. How long must we wait? Right. It came out in 2004 for the Union of Journalists of Color convention in D.C., and from there we got asked to write a book. Again, learning more and working on that book and working one through all those years. Yeah. You know, him being another mentor to me. I mean, just a critical mentor led me to, like, doing the work at Free Press. And I worked at Free Press starting in 2007 doing all that work. But when it came to like working with my colleagues, the black staffers at Free Press, to start 2070, I was already in my life. Work was it was already dedicated to this very issue, the very project of what is the role of media companies and the media institutions, government policies for media. You know, they didn't uphold white racial hierarchy. They've always have been. And so that's how I got from A to Z.

Anjali: And then it's been over a decade since News for All the People came out. So I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about the process. It's such a generative book. It's been such a resource to me. And I'm curious if you can talk a little bit about how you went about putting the book together. It's huge. It's like every single sentence is full of research and full of tracing these histories of racial hierarchies as well as doing the, like, political economy, consolidation critique. So can you talk a little bit about that?

Joe: It's something that we started with: How long must we wait?. There's like a 24-page essay, we had it in a pamphlet form that we handed it out. We were just trying to explain the history of racism, and we were trying to get journalists involved in, in, at the at that time, in 2004 and five, when we got the book deal to understand the importance of like, like our media institutions are well, first of all, get journalists involved, but also to understand, like, what's the function of our media system? What's the function of government policies, like getting people like to really understand government policies as well. How like the creation of our media system at the government's central role in the creation of media systems, each media system right there. The first investors and developers of like media systems and how they turn over power.

Anjali: Right.

Joe: Powerful interests and those interests are also upholding white racial hierarchy and in supporting violence against black folks, black folks, indigenous folks. It's part of the colonial support, imperialism, the taking of lands right within. What's our continental United States now? Right? And what was the role of media in this? Right. And then and how when the government turned over control of these new media systems, folks like Victor Penn talk about this all the time, about the postal worlds and the development of postal roads and the delivery of newspapers was like the main function of government employees in the early history of this country, and then how the telegraph and how it spread misinformation and disinformation. Right. And yet the telegraph could have been different in how it gave access to everyday people. It was decisions made that it was going to be one that really was controlled by the ruling class, you know, and but then at the same time, whenever we had these media systems being developed, there were black and brown people who were trying to use that media system to tell their stories, to fight for their communities. We're coming up on a 200th anniversary of the black press, right? It was in, you know, in 1827. Then you had the Cherokee Phoenix, the first Native American paper. At the same time, coming out roughly, you know, like a year later. And then the first Spanish language newspapers were earlier than that. And so, like, there was all these newspapers created.

Joe: Then when radio came along, black folks and other folks of color were embracing radio as a as a communication tool to be able to use in that community. But whenever we centralized control of it and put it in the hands of corporations that were aligned with government interests. Basically it. And of course, you know, we're living under white racial hierarchy, and we're living under Jim Crow segregation, where public interest rates don't really even though like stuff is supposed to be done in the public interest when it comes to like federal agencies like the FCC, they're not, you know, because black folks and other folks of color really don't have those rights in our society. We trace that. We talk about that a lot. And I think that was the contribution. And we talk about journalism and the role of journalism in this to perpetuate this stuff. And so it's really been gratifying the reception we received and continue to receive for the book, but it also describes how there's other folks who've written about this as well. So we're not the first by any nature. Right? But the thing is, why are we just learning about this stuff, whether it was 2011? Now on the research we worked on the 2070 project, we're saying stuff like, there's even more things. Yeah, I learned personally that. Why are we learning this? Why isn't the public fully aware?

Anjali: Right.

Joe: Why isn't this being taught in colleges? That this is common knowledge. This is a this is a common sense being developed about the role. And so it's thrilling to be able to, to put something together that's meaningful. And it can be used by folks to apply. But it's also very frustrating at the same time and angering actually that like we as in this situation we are now and we have little knowledge about or even a common sense understanding the function of media institutions in our society. So yeah, the racial function, the and their role, like any other institutions created in our country to uphold racial hierarchy.

Anjali: Right.

Anjali: I think one of the amazing Facets of the book is that it's tracing both the hegemonic mainstream white history and all of its many ventures into violence against people of color. As well as tracing this alternative press that reclaimed these technologies to tell their own stories, like Freedom's Journal or Cherokee Phoenix, and that there's nuance to those stories. And I think operating and writing a history that is trying to do both of those things is there's a lot of flattened journalism history that is only telling one side of that coin.

Joe: Yeah, there's resistance, right? I mean, look, there's journalism being produced by in a, in a, in the 1900s stuff that's, you know, the owners were capitalists, many of them as well. And they wanted to make money. But also, you know, by the nature of what was happening in society, they had to challenge, right? You know, because it would be under attack by government as well. The government was trying to shut them down and silence their voice during World War one and World War Two. In times of, as you're saying, that black newspapers, we're still learning about black newspapers that were destroyed, the press is destroyed, whether it's Ida B Wells presses or the daily black newspaper in in Wilmington, North Carolina, when there was a where white militia working with the Democratic Party, the party of white supremacy back in the 1890s and stuff were overthrew the multiracial government in Wilmington, North Carolina. And the person who helped to lead that effort when one of his chief main leaders who orchestrated this was the publisher of the Raleigh News and Observer. Right. And they ran the black publisher of the newspaper, not just out of town, but they sent people to track him down to try to, like, searching for him. And he was on the run for several years, you know, even when he was up north. And so, you know, it's a great book that came out that put more detail on it. It's called call like the woman tell woman can lie. That came out like four years ago or something like that. That's a really like it's about the, the, the massacre that happened because like, you know, at least 40 people were killed, maybe even more in like, black folks were, were at least 2000 people were like shipped out of town and on trains.

Joe: We don't know this. We don't know we don't know this. And so the journalism we have today, you know, that's failing us. Yeah, right. In the meanwhile, there's a lot of great journalists doing great work. I just want to put that like it's not like, but they're working within a system. Right. That's going to limit and try to silence these narratives and themes. Right. There's a lot of people doing great work. Always have been people trying to do great work, but you're up against a system that is trying to maintain and support racial hierarchy. They're part of the US project. You know, these powerful owners. So yes, that's what we try to describe in there. And very grateful, because that work I was able to do on one. One was like, you know, just a huge mentor. He still is like a huge mentor to me, you know. But yeah, we were able to, you know, incorporate a lot of those learnings into 2070 and go deeper in some areas a little bit and develop it more because why not? Maybe he always says like there's more things to learn. Can you continue to go down. And so we continue to learn more things. And so 2070 project is allowed us to go deeper on these themes and issues.

Anjali: Yeah. Can you talk a little bit about Media 2070? I mean, even your narrative about the News and Observer, these kinds of stories were incorporated into the media 2070 essay. And that was how I found your work. First was through that essay. I had a really great post-doc instructor at Brown, Sophie Abramovitz, who assigned it to our class, but that was released in 2020. And that was a particular moment where I think a lot of journalism organizations were. The systems were purporting to make some kind of, you know, racial reckoning. And so it came out in that moment. So I'm curious if you can talk a little bit about how the essay came together and some of the goals and just a little bit about the project itself.

Joe: Yeah. The essay came together. We started to work on it in 2019. There was a lot of conversations within the organization about race and how to address race and racism, and there were a senior black leaders within Free Press, and it was a you know, the reparations movement has been around for people have been fighting for reparations for, for centuries, you know, and so in 2019, it was it got a lot of notoriety because you had a congressional hearing on it in the House. And Ta-Nehisi Coates testified. Others testified, and it received a lot of attention, you know, and the idea of Juan and I are talking about in the in the book. Right. I think honestly, this is true of like. I like to think this is true of like a lot of people of color, black folks and people of color who are working to try to change the system. We want redress, basically. Right. There's like a lot of folks want redress. My colleagues were like, what does the work our work need to do when it comes to media? And it was like, it's reparations, it's redress, right? We have redress this history. And so we set out. It was supposed to be like an it was supposed to be like a column. But we spent it, you know, we spent a, a year on it in the pandemic happened.

Anjali: Right.

Joe: We were able to work on it during the pandemic. And we, you know, and to put out this essay and it was just collectively we worked on it. And then also like the design of it, right of essay, you know, it was my colleague Colette Watson, you know, was really like that was her idea, like make it artistic as well. The presentation is beautiful looking document, you know.

Anjali: Yeah.

Joe: And so it captures like the essence of what does, you know, like a reparative future, you know, like a future repair where, where repairs happen, you know, it's trying to capture redress. And so we put out this essay and that's calling for reparations. And it goes through a lot more a lot of history, you know, from colonial newspapers where the publisher was the, the also the printer and the go between the buyer or seller of enslaved people by the ads that they put in their paper. And like the idea that colonial newspapers, it was an important profit center, the selling of enslaved people and through putting ads in their paper and the idea of like, yeah, our papers were involved in, in the slave trade, you know, and it's like, is that taught in journalism schools? No. Or like our newspaper, like our newspapers were involved in putting ads for, like the capture of enslaved people, the selling of enslaved people, even all the way up to, you know, the end of enslavement, you know? Right.

Anjali: Yeah.

Joe: You know, while we were ready to publish, the LA times included it at the last minute because it was like we were about to hit send in in, in the LA times apologized for its history of racism. And since then, other papers have too. And they talked about, like we were a paper of white supremacy for our first 80 years and say, the LA times says, and it's going to be more than 80 years, but let's say 80 or like The Oregonian said that its early founders want to ensure that Oregon remained a white state or the Baltimore Sun, saying, we have ensured we played a role in supporting Jim Crow, especially in housing that still reverberates basically in society today. You know, they just could be full blooded racist about things. And then when you have the publisher of the newspaper, for example, Los Angeles Times, talking about in the 1970s. He's talking about like black and Latino people don't want to read the LA times because it's too complicated, you know, and the idea that newspapers were also redlining our communities. Right. You know, up to like the, you know, the probably folks are still doing it and the idea of like, who are the desirable readers for advertisers, right. Who do they want their paper or their media product to be read by in order to increase advertising? And too many black and brown people are not going to do well for the project. If that's your stance, then you're definitely not trying to serve black and brown people with your news coverage, you know, or you have the.

Anjali: Moneyed, moneyed customers.

Joe: Moneyed customers. Then you have, of course, the development of local television news formats, which would be The Philadelphia Inquirer had a great article about that a few years ago about how Philadelphia was the birthplace of our local news format. And, you know, it's straight up about making money by racializing folks as threats to society. This continues today in a lot of ways as just straight up racist, of course, but also in very insidious ways as well. Right. And so this needs to be addressed if we're going to have a multiracial democracy, if that's even, is that if that's possible, then narratives have to change, because narratives isn't the one. And I in the book, and also in 2070 narratives serve a political goal, right? Narratives are political, right. These narratives are political. And so like anti-black narratives, right, are political in the goal of upholding racial hierarchy, you know, and so you can't, you know, it's hard to pass policy of any sort without a narrative about like, who can be helped, who should, who deserves help, you know, how are you going to financially resource communities? How are you going to financially resource communities that have a history of racism and not just racism, but terrorism against our communities and have been destroyed in or took place, like Tulsa, right where two black newspapers were destroyed in Tulsa. Right.

Joe: And the community is still fighting. And there's two living descendants of the Tulsa massacre, and they still can't get their lawsuits, move forward on seeking repair, you know. Yeah. And so to me, it's, you know, the story of America when you enslave people and you colonize people and this population now makes up, it's going to soon make up the majority of the so-called United States. But the situation of the communities are they're still being harmed, right. And marginalized. Right. What does redress look like? I mean, how are we going to how can we not redress this and fully realize democracy? You know what I'm saying? Because democracy is technically, you know, we've had democracy since like the 1960s. You want to equate it with voting and the restoration of some of the Reconstruction Amendment, like the 14th Amendment's equal protection of the law. But there's been a regression, Of course on that. Yeah, you know, on that. So where do we go from here? Kind of a thing with Doctor King asked in his last book, where do we go from here? Chaos or community. Right. This is kind of like where we are now. Where do we go from here? Chaos or community? That's really the question that Doctor King asked at 67, his last book. And it's still the question. I think that's still a question.

Anjali: Yeah, yeah. We've talked a lot about racial capitalism in our conversations over the past year and, and bringing together doing history for the purpose of the future, which I think we've said many times together. And I think that the way that the Media 2070 essay outlines media reparations as hope and as actual redress is really powerful. I'm hoping you can speak a little bit to bringing conversations about racial capitalism into media policy. Given your work and bridging that gap between the theories of reparations and actual practice of reparations into our futures.

Joe: Yeah, yeah. So this is important. The history of harm that we're talking about, too, is also is done not just for white racial hierarchies, but also it's part of the subjugation, let's say is, is part of what's fueling our economy. You know, when you enslave people, that certain economic interests of the powerful. Right. And same thing with colonization and stealing of lands. Right. It's all serving. It's extractive. Right. It's extracting to further the interest of business landowners and other powerful business interests. And so what 2070 we talk about this in the essay. How do we get out of it. Right.

Anjali: Right, right.

Joe: And the thing is, is what's challenging for a lot of activists and stuff is we often responding to harms in the present moment that drains us of the capacity to imagine something different. Yeah. Not that folks don't want something different, but, like, what are the things that we need to do to get us to a more liberated world? And that's hard. We're trying to create worlds that we haven't really seen or that hasn't existed in our society is seen. Right. We're the 2070 project. We're big on the idea of dreaming, you know, and imagination.

Anjali: Yeah.

Joe: And how to imagine, like, what would it look like if we had liberated media system? What would that mean? And we can start writing this down and we could start, like talking about this. What would that mean? For liberating, you know, not just to stop the harm. Stop the harm is important. It's a part of this process. Right? In order to get to liberate media system, it also has to be efforts to stop harm. But it's not the destination just to stop the harm. It's part of the process to get to a liberated future. Right. There's so many steps I need to take to create that liberated future. What would it look like for the health and wellbeing of communities to be served? How can you tell? For instance, let's say we had a healthy media system. Could you actually measure that? Yeah. Could you actually measure that in the health and wellbeing of the community itself? This is the part we're still working on, right. And it's the part we're always going to be working on because we've got to continue to refine it, because even our thoughts today could be also limiting. You know, like we are not seeing the whole picture. Right. And, and but the thing is that work has to be deliberated. Right. And folks have to have a general that disagreements and discussion about what the future is.

Joe: But the but too often there's not enough time and space in our movements in, in, in movement circles to actually spend time on this question. It's responding to harm in a current moment, which you, you know, like totally understandable. Of course you know that. But it's like, can we still take these places? Like, how does this struggle in this fight here? What is next? And for me, like, you know, questions of power and what where do people get power from. And to me, it's still a very much a ownership issue in control of the infrastructure of our media system, like our media system infrastructure. But who owns and controls it? For what purpose? And to me, that's like we have to spend more time understanding, like what does ownership model look like where everyday people and in communities that most, you know, they have historically been harmed, like black communities and other communities of color, own and control the infrastructure in a way that serves a public good, not to serve capitalist interest and say, you know. So anyway, that's the kind of stuff we, we've, we talk about in, in, in our projects, only four years old. So we're still growing our ideas and beginning to put it out into the world and trying to build. Leaning into that future.

Anjali: Yeah. I mean that leads me to my final impossible question, which is what does the future of journalism look like to you? And specifically, we have talked about how the rhetoric of the future of journalism can sometimes omit or dismiss these histories, and specifically the histories of racial hierarchy, racial capitalism. But I want to recenter those ideas when we're talking here today. Yeah. What does the future of journalism imagined look like to you?

Joe: Yeah, no, I think to me this is like a really important fight that's happening. And a lot of folks aren't aware, especially and even folks who work on media, whether academically or within the profession itself, that there is this big debate happening across the country on like what to do about the loss of local journalism. And states are my organization, Free Press has played a role in this in like in New Jersey. It played a leading role in helping to pass a bill in New Jersey that that the state was going to sell back to the government several stations that it owned apart the station, the government reclaiming spectrum for an auction, for wireless auction. It was like, hey, you can't just sell back those stations without putting money to fund local journalism. And so through that, a bill was created that a consortium of universities basically are there's money allocated by the state is it's still not a lot of money, but it's the concept that's it's more important, you know, like the idea of like the government has a role in funding the infrastructure for journalism. And so the money has gone up. I think it's around 4 million a year now and stuff. And it's and it's been like all grants going to all these different groups in New Jersey because New Jersey, for example, doesn't have its own media market.

Joe: It's Philadelphia, New York, so it doesn't have its own. So, you know, there's bills being passed and, and they're not that satisfying. You know, like what's happening in in California, for example, a bill passed that really isn't we feel like it's going to serve the interest of, you know, communities who need this money and to serve the interests of the community. For me, 2070’s perspective, you can't how are we going to have so this conversation happened with the future of journalism and these apologies. The Philadelphia Inquirer is one of these apologies like these apologies over the past 20 years. But most recently it's like it never happened. These folks were saying we were paper, these powerful Kansas City Star. We were involved in supporting segregation. We were a part Of whites and whites. We were like the only times that we had paper of white supremacy. We were paper white supremacy. And that paper went on to own broadcast stations as well during this time. Right. And so that is not an anomaly. That is a story of dominant newspapers in every city, probably in this country, supporting racialized capitalism, you know, and the interest, you know, and so, like, you can tell these stories, whatever. Just pick whatever city.

Anjali: Right.

Joe: Right. And now we want to fund local journalism and not address this when it's like, how do we have a news media that serves the health, the health right and interest of the communities to reflect? If you're in California, a majority so-called minority. So it's like white folks are minority there, right? Who should be helped? Who are the people that should be that should be helped. Like what communities have been excluded that are not being served. What is a local journalism ecosystem look like in a place of folks whose histories have been excluded? Right. Same thing in Philadelphia, same thing in New York City, Chicago, so forth, so on. Are we future facing with these policies to understand, like what do we need to take in order to have. Because if you already talk about journalism around democracy, right. Democracy, democracy and journalism are intertwined. But there's never been a golden age for journalism, for black folks and people of color. These institutions, these media institutions, have been responsible, playing a role in upholding white racial hierarchy that has harmed our communities. And like, we're not going to address that when it comes to the future of journalism. The point is it's these debates are happening, these discussions are happening, and these growing debates and differences are happening without recognizing what the role of these media institutions have been and naming them of why we need to correct that, because, you know, it's not serving the needs of our communities, like these debates that folks have been having for a long time about the failure of traditional media. And I've been a part of that in other iterations, you know, and now 2070, which is like so gratifying about it, is, you know, in the past when I first got into this work, it was always about like diversity, right?

Speaker1: And representational politics.

Joe: Representational politics, right. What I'm so thrilled that 2070 is about is like, it's about redress.

Anjali: Right?

Joe: It's about ownership and control. Can, you know, we have questions in our essay like, what do we look like? We had a media system where black people owned and controlled the distribution, the creation and distribution of their own narratives. There's some institutions, obviously, that have that, but we're not at the scale that it needs to be because our institutions are not financially resourced. Well. So the BIPOC, there's a lot of BIPOC media and BIPOC like new like movement journalists doing great work, right? Always have been, but they're not resourced at the level. And here's a chance to bring resources to these institutions that exist and others that need to exist. But that's not the central focus in a fight for multiracial democracy, you know? So that's my fear. That's my fear. I'm really concerned about this, these debates, and it creates precedent. And people just copy what came, you know, different states will copy what comes and the federal government will copy that. And it's going to set a precedent. Again, like with policy, who do you help and who do you harm? You no harm, even by inaction, right?

Anjali: Yeah.

Joe: Potentially harm but harm but neglecting. Yeah. So those are my thoughts on the future of journalism.

Anjali: And yet we still have some hope. I think that's where the roots of media reparations as operating on the past, the present and the future is a very hopeful thing. And I think talking to you and talking to other folks at media 2070 reminds us that we can actually be operating on all of these temporal levels at once, and that's what we need for this future, you know?

Joe: Yeah, it has to be a practice, right, to, to ensure that you're working on all those different stages because it's hard, you know, it's hard. None of this is easy. Right. And of course it's going to be hard. Right. Like this is the fights always a little hard. But it's like it's possible.

Anjali: Right.

Joe: It's possible. You know, that's the thing. And but we have to be iterating on the past, the present, and the future. You know, like we have to be iterating on all this. There's things we need to reclaim to give us greater understanding of, like, even more understanding of the problem that we're trying to solve. There's victories along the way that's making things better. But to make it sustaining and to fill our communities with abundance, we have an abundance of resources to be able to tell our stories. Create them. Distribute them. Inform our readers. We have an abundance. Dreaming and imagining is. I think sometimes folks can get a little down on that stuff. But like, not all, but some. Listen, you know, like a lot of the reason you and I are here and other folks of color doing things, black folks and other folks go through these things because there was imagination and dreaming happening, you know, so, you know, it's within it's within our DNA, I think, to dream of something different and better, you know. So yeah.

Anjali: Think that is a perfect way to end on possibility and imagination and power, taking that with us in our longer conversations. And I just want to thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me and thank you for all of these conversations over the past, over a year now, of weekly conversations about all of these things operating on all of these levels.

Joe: I love them, I learned so much from you and the idea that folks like yourself and so many others that I've met who are early in their career, let's say, and have a just a, you know, just a great understanding and analysis. And so I continue to learn a lot from a lot of people, including you and others, because knowledge has been withheld from us. We're still learning. We're still we're still, you know, we're still learning about all this stuff. And that excites me, you know what I'm saying? So and it needs to be we share knowledge, you know, with each other and it needs to be a lot more knowledge sharing spaces because we learn from each other, you know. So I always appreciate those conversations. So, you know, we have them, you know.

Anjali: Thank you.

Joe: You're welcome. You're welcome.

Anjali: You can find more information about Media 2070 at mediareparations.org. I'd like to thank Joe so much for his time and to thank the staff at the center for Media at Risk and the Media Inequality and Change Center staff for making this podcast possible. Barbie Zelizer is the director for the center for Media at Risk, and Sarah Jackson, Victor Pickard and Todd Wolfson are the directors of the Media, Inequality, and Change Center. Learn more about the Center for Media at Risk at www.ascmediarisk.org and more about the MIC center on Annenberg's website. This has been Anjali DasSarma and thank you so much for joining me.