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### Episode Transcript

# Dismantling Barriers with the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective

September 9, 2021 5pm

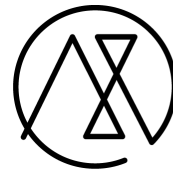
**Nandi Comer:** Hello and welcome to the Allied Media Projects Seeds program. I'm so excited to welcome you to today's event, Dismantling Barriers. We're grateful to share this virtual space with you, our guest moderator Cornetta Lane Smith of the Detroit Narrative Agency, and our featured guests the members of the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective. This event will have ASL interpretation and live captioning. Please be sure to turn on captions using the CC button at the bottom of the screen. Our events are recorded and made available in our archive and YouTube page. Subscribe to make sure you don't miss any upcoming events. We encourage you to ask questions to our guests and to say hi to new and old friends in the chat. Now let's give a warm welcome to Cornetta and the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective.

**Cornetta Lane Smith:** Hello, hello, everybody. What up Doe? My name is Cornetta Lane Smith. And I am calling from Detroit, Waawiyatanong, which is the land of the Anishanabee people. I am a Co-Director of Detroit Narrative Agency where we support Black, Indigenous and People of Color storytelling to foster collective healing, power, and liberation. Today we are in for a special treat. This audience will get a chance to get a sneak peek of "FYI," formally "The Undocumented Rejects." It is a short film made by the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective. After we screen the film, I will invite the filmmakers to join me on screen to talk about this work. And if we have time, we'll take some questions from the audience. So I hope you'll stick around. So a little bit about the film. "FYI," formally "The Undocumented Rejects," is a satirical short film on the triumphs and pitfalls of filmmaking. And without any further delay, please enjoy, "FYI."

'FYI' Begins

[ keyboard clicking ]





>> GIA: Hey, everyone.

It is so nice to meet you. Thank you so much for your time and for having me. Thank you so much for your time.

>> CASTING DIRECTOR:

(muffled, off stage) Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah.

>> GIA: I brought some of my own scripts that I've been working on. Would you like for me to do a segment on those as well?

>> CASTING DIRECTOR:

(muffled, off stage) Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah.

>> GIA: No? I'll focus on what you sent me. Would you like for me to start?

>> CASTING DIRECTOR:

(muffled, off stage) Blah, Blah.

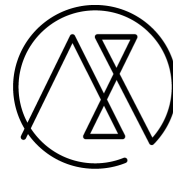
>> GIA: Okay.

Hi, my name is Gia Kaur. I'm a filmmaker and actress based in Los Angeles and I will be auditioning for the role as Isha for the movie "Nightspot." Hi, welcome to my dad's mini mart. Please come through, look at it all. We have milk, coffee, all you need right here.

>> CASTING DIRECTOR:

(muffled, off stage) Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah.





>> GIA: Okay. So you want me to say it again, but with an accent? So sound more ethnic? Uhhh, ok...

Hi, welcome to my dad's mini mart. Please come through, look at it all. We have milk, coffee, all you need right here.

[ keyboard clicking ]

[ sighing ]

>> GIA: They said they'd emailed me today.

>> GIA: We'll definitely finish this project eventually. You're not gonna stay in the vault forever. (tone)

>> GIA: Reading from the screen, "we thank you for your audition and for your interest in this film project. There were many great auditions however we regret to inform you that you were not selected."

[ phone pings ]

>> GIA'S SISTER: (off stage) "Hey! Mom, I, and everyone are doing well. I know you are worried about the recent raids, but we will manage. Hope your acting travels are going great." (ping)

>> DANI: (off stage) Hoping the best for the results you get today. Hope to see you at tonight's creative workshop. I highly encourage you to apply to the Writers and Actors





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Fellowship.

(music)

(siren)

[ computer swishes ]

>> GIA: (off stage) Trust me, you're going to love the story that I went with. Entirely different.

>> DANI: Went with? What do you mean?

>> GIA: Yeah, the whole story I wrote earlier literally can wait. I came up with something better. Let me show you. Okay. It's called "Reckless."

(clears throat)

"After receiving numerous calls from a private number"

>> DANI: Wait, is this a horror?

>> GIA: No. It's an action movie. I figured since drug dealer stories are popular, I'll give it a shot too. See?

>> DANI: Wait. Why did you switch from your original story though? Like, the one that you've been showing me for weeks?

>> GIA: Because my original story wasn't as interesting.





>> DANI: Okay . So what's going on? I like to believe by now I know who you are... I think based on our shared experiences that you have to face, I kind of want to know how can I best support you?

>> GIA: I feel... I just.. I feel I just have to play these characters. That's the type of way I have to be because that's what I'm expected to be and expected to do, like always. It's the narrative. It's what's on TV. It's what's selling.

>> DANI: But why though? Why is it do you feel that you need to write these characters or take on these characters?

>> GIA: Because I need to be successful. People need to watch and see me as someone with value. So I can save my family. I need to save them. So that we can stay here, okay? Because I'm... Oh my God... Because we're undocumented. Okay? And that's...If they can get money to make films about stereotypes, why can't I take ownership of some of that profit?

(sigh)

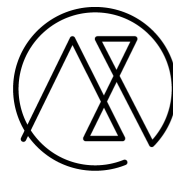
>> DANI: Gia, I understand

>> GIA: No, don't, don't even start. You don't understand. This is the only type of thing that makes me happy at all. And the one thing that I love, but guess what? It doesn't even give me the ability to support my own family.

>> DANI: But Gia, I.....

(music)





Video plays on screen:

>> Manny, Wave!

>> I want to be the person that has the ability and the privilege and honor of somehow connecting what's happening today to something that may happen in the future. And I think all of our stories are so important, so different, and so unique but they're all so connected. In my filmmaking is finding that connection of how us as human beings in the beginning and finding some intentional and intersectional way of bridging  
(phone pings)

>> DANI: I just want to apologize for what I said yesterday. I'm still going to be in today's creative Zoom session, if you want to join.

>> GIA: Hey.

>> DANI: Hey.

>> GIA: I want to apologize for earlier. I am so sorry. I didn't make my fellowship I applied to...and my sister keeps reassuring me that everything's fine back home despite all the recent I.C.E. raids, and I just keep replaying certain scenes in my head. You know, and even worse the constant barrage of hate I get from everyone for my family and I as we are some sort of terrorists or criminals in this country. I just want to exist.

(music)

>> DANI: You know, you don't have to be someone you're not. Or do what everybody else is doing. Or be this grand filmmaker that imitates whoever. You have a right to simply just exist. You are somebody. Your family is somebody. We are somebody. And you are valuable... and strong...and deserving of all the opportunities.





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(sigh)

>> GIA: Oh, God.

(Laughter)

Thank you. Thank you for saying that. And I'm so sorry. This is so awkward. I'm so sorry.

(Laughter).

>> DAN: Don't worry.

(music).

Film Ends.

**Cornetta Lane Smith:** Yes! Oh, my gosh, I loved it so much. I loved it so much. Hello, everybody. Again my name is Cornetta, and I am so excited to invite Amrit Kaur, Josaen Ronquillo, Edgar Aquino Huerta, Dorian Aidee Gomez Pestana, I'm so excited to invite them to the stage where we can have a whole conversation about what y'all just witnessed today. Hello, hello, everybody. Hello, hello. So let's just get right into it. So this film highlights a range of themes, including perpetuating stereotypes and harmful narratives in the media, living in fear of the violence of separation and deportation while also showing the everyday things like chasing after your dreams and rejection and conflict. It gave us a broad range of experiences. What does it mean to you all to release a film like this into the world and what impact do you hope that it will have? And I guess I'll open that up to whoever is ready to share.

**Josaen Ronquillo:** I can go ahead and start. First and foremost, thank you so much to Allied Media Projects, Brenda, Cornetta, and everyone for having us. I think this is a special screening we're having to be a partner with Allied Media Projects. And I feel





like it took so long to really like grasp that after you said, you asked your question, we really did touch so many points. And it's really wild because these are really things that we experience like on the daily, on the weekly, you know. Parts of the script are pulled from the scripts we have from being part of the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective. Some of these conversations we've had in meetings, in Zoom rooms that looked exactly like in the film, you know. Having heart to heart conversations, being community with each other. Doing tons of having fun, dancing, laughing. Ultimately it was through our shared experiences that we were able to make such an impact like this. If anyone else wants to join in and add anything as well.

**Dorian Gomez:** Yeah, I can go ahead. I think throughout this whole process, which by the way, we've been working on this since like almost the beginning of the year, it's been a crazy experience to see like how we came from it just being like one idea, right? And like actually having it come into fruition this way and I think like Josaen said, I think all of us really shared our experiences and we were able to portray that in a film. And I think for me specifically, it's really impactful to see myself being represented, my experiences being represented in a film like this and even better, by it being made by people who actually know what that experience is like. So I know all of us kind of put a lot of our energy, a lot of our love into this piece, and so yeah, I'm just I'm really, really honored and excited for all of us to be here today.

**Cornetta Lane Smith:** Thank you. Thank you so much. I have a ton of more questions, so in the audience, if y'all have other questions, please be just thinking about them. And if we have time, we'll try to get to them. The next question is, so you know Dan was DNA was in conversation with your fellow un docu filmmaker. I hear Set Hernandez Rongkilyo is in the audience. We spoke briefly about challenging industry standards of







the filmmaking process. Set talked about protagonist care and accountability and mitigating this hierarchy of decision making in the filmmaking process. So as members of the same collective, one, can you share more about the collective? And two, can you elaborate on some of these concepts that maybe you've applied to this film?

**Edgar Aquino:** So I actually just joined the collective, I think towards the beginning, maybe....no, towards the end of May. And at first I thought it was something that I didn't know existed. I didn't know spaces like it existed where you can just vent about things that you've been through as an undocumented filmmaker. Like I live all the way in New Jersey so we don't have many filmmakers out here. And even though we're all from different states, we don't really feel like we're far away because we just connect so well with sharing our experiences and coming up with these projects. And part of the script was actually something that happened to me when the main character Gia was trying to change her story. That happened to me in college, and I feel like it's happened to a lot of people where they set aside their own story to kind of like go with the flow with what so many think that's something we need to change. And I feel like this short film will motivate others to embrace their cultures but just to tell their story because there's always people out there that want to hear it. And these stories aren't really told as much because they're either told by somebody that's not even... like, it's not even their story they're telling and they don't tell it accurately. And I think that's what we want. We wanted the short film to do... to motivate others to be their voice, to tell their stories.

**Cornetta Lane Smith:** : Anybody else want to tackle that question?

**Josaen Ronquillo:** Yeah, I think



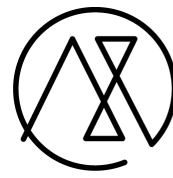


(Laughter)

Maybe we can tackle this one together as well, Dorian. But I think also highlighting like, you know, as Edgar mentioned about, you know, finding a community like this within Undocumented Filmmakers Collective, ultimately like as a collective you really want to build equity for undocumented immigrants in the film industry like where so much of the media and landscape around now has kind of put us as undocumented immigrants as part of the story and the narrative and we've been like systemically kind of excluded from the film industry as a whole as filmmakers, you know. And, you know, in spite of that, like as Edgar mentioned, like we can still find community within each other and find ways to like create films like "FYI" and, you know, be within community with us and the film industry as a whole. I don't know if Amrit or Dorian want to add to this as well.

**Amrit Kaur:** Yeah, I think the thing that was really great about this project, and not just this project but what it represents for us as a collective was the fact that it wasn't like just a typical narrative, short film projects where, you know, like there is a hierarchy, this is the director, these are the producers, these are actors and other crew members, right? It felt more like everybody else like, you know, including me as an actor, you know, was able to give input and was able to really like share our experiences. Because I'm queer undocumented woman and my experience is very different than other folks in this collective. And so for me, it was really important to show not just my family, right? So everybody we saw on the computer screen is actually my family. So it was like important for me to show that but also show where I come from and my specific experiences. And so Edgar putting that into the script of like, you know, making me as someone who has to deal with folks asking me to speak in an Indian accent or folks like, you know, basically thinking of me as a terrorist, which is actually real. People still to this day, in TSU, once they see my name, oh, this is weird. My dad is always, like, still

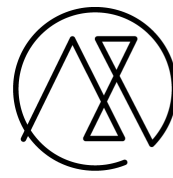




like dealing with xenophobia and stuff because of his turban and beard. Having those types of things put in this film and not just representation but as real life experiences, I feel like made this project really, really special. But also shows what our collective is about. And we're all about collaboration. And there's no hierarchies and no specific right or wrong with us. We're always trying to come up with things together and try to see where, you know, everyone's experiences can fall and making a very magical experience for everyone. Even when it is such heavy topics as this film. Watching it right now made me a little emotional. Oh, my God, this is like opening up so many different doors in my head of like oh, my God, I've gone through this. So I think that's the beauty of our collective, too, is we are here to heal together. We're here to grow together. And we're really, really here for one another.

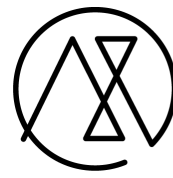
**Cornetta Lane Smith:** Oh, my gosh. My next question is for you, Amrit. So your acting was so phenomenal. Okay, my favorite part, let me tell you what my favorite part was. My favorite part was when, actually I have two favorite parts. At the beginning when you're sharing like I guess it was the audition and you had the Charlie Brown voice, that was hilarious. But the part I was oh, my gosh, yep, I definitely feel that, was after the conflict between you and Dani and like Dani like poured into you and like gave you some affirmations after you experienced some rejection. And then you were like... you just started laughing. You were like you know what? This is so awkward. (Laughter) I've been in that position where it's like you were mad at the person but it's like... you kind of like misdirected anger at the person. And you're like oh, my gosh. This is... this is ridiculous. But I'm glad you're here. So I loved that. But how did you personally connect with this character? I know you talked about it a little bit, but can you say more about like how you connected with the character?





**Amrit Kaur:** Yeah, absolutely. Thank you for asking that question. I... yeah, I think I know I connected well with this character because this is me right now. Like I deal with this all the time. Like, you know, whenever I send in my, so I'm a writer/director primarily. I'm not an actress. But I did it for this film. And I think as someone who's always writing, you know, screenplays as well as like different types of writing material and sending them in, it's interesting like I always....it's funny because I always end up like making it to like the finalist round or the final rounds of like a lot of these different fellowships and writing labs and opportunities but it always comes down to how... like how much more like trauma I can pour in to these like interviews and stuff. So it's like for me, I like really, really have been navigating the space of having to put out my trauma to be someone who's like seen as important or seen as someone who “deserves a certain opportunity.” So like this character, I think really spoke to me. Because I was like yeah, we really do face that, even during the pandemic. You know, like having to pour everything out there. Just for bread crumbs. And so I did feel really passionate about this film because I feel like that's how a lot of us are dealing with stuff now, even in the Collective but as filmmakers, as human beings. So, you know, it really spoke to me. And I think just this... maybe like this role was just made for me, because I went right into it. I was like oh, really? Express my trauma? Do this? Lash out at my mentor? Oh, I got this. This is totally me, you know? And so yeah. It was one of those things where I didn't really have to think much about it. And our director, was really great with sympathizing and empathizing because it was kind of a hectic scene like the one you are talking about where we had a little fight, and right after that we filmed the scene where we are having the reconciliation right and Dani is just encouraging me. So it was one of those things where like it was real for everyone. And I believe folks, when they were editing it as well, oh, my gosh, I remember saying when they saw it, oh, my gosh, I want to cry because I felt this too. So I think like that scene, I don't want to say



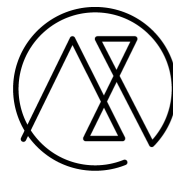


it's universal, but it definitely speaks to so many of us. And I think that like it was great to do that, because it made me just like think about how all of us go through this or have gone through this. And, you know, putting it onto film now is a great way to like show... I don't know, just have evidence of it. But like it is such a common thing that we all face, especially as like Black, Indigenous and people of color filmmakers but also just human beings, I guess, so yeah.

**Cornetta Lane Smith:** That was so beautiful. Thank you for sharing that with us. Thank you for that moment. That was beautiful. Holding on to that. Edgar, this is the next question is for you. You co wrote this film with Paolo. Can you share a little bit about your writing process? How did you come up with the concepts and I know like it's from real life experience, but can you dive a little bit more into your writing process?

**Edgar Aquino:** Yeah. So it was very challenging actually, because it's so personal and I think what helped me was working with Ame because he was a very good partner to work on this with. We went through like probably five or six drafts where we would like the story was always there. We would always change something every draft for us to go back to the original one. And it was like very... like I would drive to work every morning and think about the script. Okay, like I should add this, I should add that. I should take this out. I should take that out. And then like it was just... like I would get anxiety because like just writing it, like I just wanted to write it accurately. Like the way it does happen. And I wanted to keep it where people can like... kind of like what what the character... the one that played Gia, I can't pronounce your name. Like she said earlier, that like she just related so much to this character and just writing everything with Ame which was very, very helpful because I don't want to make anything not accurate. But yeah, it was definitely a really good experience. Especially





writing it with a whole group of people. Not writing it but doing this as a whole group with the whole Collective. Even though we're not in the same state, but just working together was really fun.

**Josaen Ronquillo:** Yeah, and real quick, I would like to shout out Paolo Rein, also known as Ame in the audience as well. He made a great effort and really putting us together as a glue. But I think also in the vein of like the collaborative process of making this film. Traditionally we'd see the... you know, the director like held up on the pedestal but he really wanted us to, you know, kind of put the Collective first. We all each contributed to the film. And yeah, just thank you so much Paolo/Ame. Yeah, thank you.

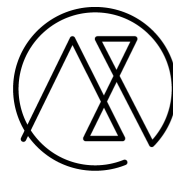
**Cornetta Lane Smith:** Amazing. Amazing. Yes, yes, yes. I love that. Again, like flattening out that hierarchy we typically see in the filmmaking process. I love when we can see examples of what collaboration actually looks like. Dorian, this question is for you. So I love some of the songs, the song choices in this film. What went into your decisions in picking the films and would you like to shout out any of the featured artists? Like are there any local artists or are these all national? Just curious.

**Dorian Gomez:** Yeah. So that was pretty much songs that I wrote myself.

**Cornetta Lane Smith:** What?  
(Laughter).

**Dorian Gomez:** Yes.





**Cornetta Lane Smith:** What?

**Dorian Gomez:** So in regards to the yeah, who do I shout out? I guess I can talk about some of the inspirations or the people that I really look up to when it comes to music. And I think some of the artists that I I kind of... that really inspired me throughout the writing and recording process are folks like Julieta Venegas, Jessy & Joy, like a lot of these smaller artists and honestly, I felt very nervous but also very honored with Paolo reached out to me about not only doing the composing but also to do sound assignment which is like the little like the peanuts voice that you hear in the background. That was also me with a kazoo because he was like let's go for a trumpet. But I don't have a trumpet and I don't know how to play the trumpet but I do have a kazoo. So why not do that. So yeah, I was very nervous throughout the process, but I was really excited to dabble into that because it had been a while since I had pretty much written anything musically. But yeah, I think whether it came to bringing this song together, because it's the same song but different renditions of it, different variations. So I had actually just returned from Mexico and it was my first time in 15 years returning to the motherland and so I was definitely in a very touchy place emotionally and also mentally, which I would say like I think those are the most perfect times to create. I think that's when like the most rawest feelings kind of come out. And so, there was a lot of feelings and emotion that is went into the song. And I think that I wanted to give off the feeling of when you're going through something really hard or you're having a difficult time at the end of the day, I think it's going to be okay. So the song that we hear especially in the last sequence, which is actually also me singing, is about someone who finds comfort in the people that they care about while also trying to find themselves. And throughout that process, you know....yeah, towards the end of the song basically that person finds the strength and the hope to live a life in their





most authentic self. So the title of the song is actually, “soñando en una vida mejor,” which translates into "Dreaming of a Better Life." So while I was trying to put the song together, I think that's kind of what went into why I decided to write certain lines specifically. And yeah, I'm excited to have gotten the chance to work with all these wonderful people that you're seeing on the screen.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** That is amazing. I had no idea you wrote... oh, my gosh. I love phenomenal job. Josaen, so, you know, COVID impacted, you know, our ability to make films safely. What were some of the technical challenges, surprises, or even lessons learned from making a film like this? Because this is essentially desktop cinema. So what were some of the challenges or surprises or lessons that you learned from making a film like this?

**Josaen Ronquillo:** Yeah, I think it's like really... we're a year and a half into the pandemic. More than a year and a half into the pandemic, right? There has been, you know, so much going on within the film world and film industry as a whole. I think honestly to me this is more of like a future and a new way to kind of think about things, although desktop cinema has been around for so long, we kind of took it to another level, right? Undocumented Filmmakers Collective is a national collective. We have Edgar from New Jersey, we have Dorian from North Carolina, you know, and I think this is like such an amazing way to bring all of us together. Like, you know, we're the low budget we have we were able to really kind of do everything in total through a Zoom screen. Something we're used to already. And we were able to, you know, just really put all of this together, you know, and kind of still work, you know, not needing to like fly everyone and kind of like... yeah, I feel like ultimately it was less challenging because we were already so used to it. I was so used to being on the Zoom screen







24/7 and navigating my way around that. So I kind of see it as more optimistic in the way that this is a future for us as a Collective to do more films in this desktop cinema manner.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Amazing. It's amazing work. I loved it. Last question that I have for the group is, you know, what's next for the Collective? And what's next for the film?

**Dorian Gomez:** That is a big question. I think, you right now as a collective we're definitely trying to figure out what's next. Where do we want our collective to go? You know, I think there's a lot of possibilities within the Collective that we could expand to and branch onto. Especially in a field that still lacks in a lot of opportunities and resources for undocumented artists. So that's still something in the works. And in regards to the film, I think right now we're going to start like the festival run, you know. And where we want this to be at. So that's kind of where we're at.

**Josaen Ronquillo:** And additionally, you know, we are, you know, so grateful to have to be screening here at this AMP Fall Series event, you know, and there's definitely, like Dorian said, a couple more things that we need to put together, like a few more edits and then hopefully getting into our film festival circuit for 2022. In terms of the Collective as a whole, definitely if you do want to see more filmmaking from us as a collective, please support the Collective's work and donate. Hopefully there's a link in the chat going up soon. Or if you want to see "FYI," Undocumented Filmmakers Collective in total, you know, to your events, please reach out to us Undocumented Filmmakers Collective for any events in 2022. Yeah, so I think ultimately our next steps are big, going big for us.





**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** That's amazing. Does anybody else want to answer that, what's next for the film or the Collective? I have one question from the audience if y'all are ready to move on. Okay. So we have a question from Nandi. So in light of the international alliance of theatrical stage employees threat in recent news, how do these organizations like the unions and guilds address undocumented filmmakers' needs and what do you need from these organizations, if anything?

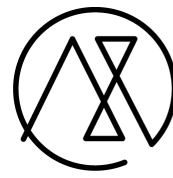
**Amrit Kaur:** I was going to make a joke. I was going to be we need money. Yeah, that's all I have to say.

(Laughter).

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** But that's real.

**Josaen Ronquillo:** I mean, I definitely, sorry, I don't want to take up too much space but I think definitely do want to highlight the concerns of, you know, the union and the guild, you know. There's so much happening in the film industry as a whole. And I think us personally as undocumented filmmakers and undocumented immigrants in the filmmaking industry, we're such a small slice of that pie, right? I think we, I can personally say 100% support the strike when it happens and I hope, you know, bargaining goes well so folks are able to, you know, move forward with their jobs in an equitable manner. But I think for us as the Collective, I think it's also important that we we always want to highlight that we really want to center the expertise of undocumented people, us as filmmakers and as immigrants. Not only sources of stories, we're also creators, artists. We're all filmmakers here. Everyone you saw as part of that film was undocumented, had shared that experience. So we're not just sources of stories. Like Amrit said, give us money, hire us, think about us also as a





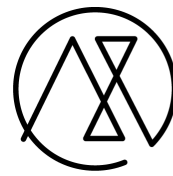
crew when thinking about stories, making of our stories, yeah.

**Dorian Gomez:** To add a little bit onto Josaen, right now there's a lot of conversations to what is equitable when it comes to telling other people's stories or even telling other people's experience. And to be honest, I think I would just say pretty much like look at us as collaborators. We're not subjects. We are not subjects. So I think there are certain stories that especially people that actually come from that experience are going to be able to tell that even more authentically and accurately without necessarily causing more harm than like good, you know? A lot of times people release stories, right? In hopes to shine a light to certain issues. But how are you also uplifting those communities? How are you making sure that even these artists and people with those experiences are thriving? You know, how are you making sure that you're not just profiting off of other people's stories.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Absolutely. You know, one of the things that we do at DNA is when we do any type of call for film submissions, we ask the question, you know, is the film that you're creating, are you a part of the community that you're talking about in this story? And if you're not, what is your case for making this story in the first place? (Laughter)

And I feel like, you know, we all have like this duty to, you know, be able to like hold up some of these values to say like you can't make a story without us. And like I hope that, you know, we all continue to just move into a space where we're, you know, protecting each other's stories, because it's important. That's so important. I have another question from the audience from Set. They said, I'm curious if the panelists can talk about other projects they themselves are working on and how we can support them as well as individual artists.





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**Amrit Kaur:** Thank you for asking that question, Set. Yeah, I'll just go first. I'm actually working on a narrative short film I've written and be directing in December. It's called "Life Again." And it's a really cool project about two south Asian folks who have to like reconcile and heal together whether some family members pass away. And it's an LGBTQ drama. So please go ahead and support that. We have a fundraiser going on at Seed the Spark and that would be really amazing because we're looking for folks who are not undocumented to really put their money where their mouths are, right? So we'd really, really appreciate that. And if you can just share some of our like social media posts, if you go on the link that Brenda put, if you scroll to the bottom, there's a social media flier you can share as well as a caption. So anything would help. \$15, \$25. \$500 is great. But I understand we're all here, you know, trying to make it work. So yeah. Thank you. And yeah, that's about me. But everyone else?

**Edgar Aquino:** I actually went to make my first feature film, my first indy feature film which I already made a short film about. But since film festivals are over for me, that was rejected from all of them. So I can finally upload it on YouTube and hopefully I can get more support because right now I'm selling merch, like I'm selling T shirts, hoodies, crew necks, stickers, just so that I can continue to fund for when I am able to make it into a feature. It's a story about literally about being an immigrant and also about using our privilege as people that were raised here, using our knowledge to educate foreign workers that don't know that... not that they don't know, but like letting them know they matter. That they have their own voice and their voice is powerful than anybody who wants to speak up for them. Yeah.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Dorian, are you releasing any music anytime soon?





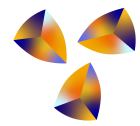
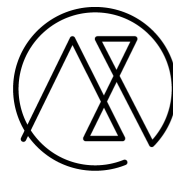
**Dorian Gomez:** I don't (Laughter) I don't want to say too much. I am writing a little bit more. Whether something will come out either next year potentially is a question mark. But I am definitely working on stuff. I don't want to say too much yet. Otherwise like I need to get myself to do it a little bit more. And stop being like so focused on other things that are not like stimulating my creative juices. So yes. To answer your question, I am working on stuff. But I don't want to give away too much.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Totally understandable. My prayer for you is that you, you know, find the time to introduce more things, more time in your life that brings you joy. That's my prayer for you. Did everybody share? Josaen.

**Josaen Ronquillo:** Okay. I'll share. Yeah, so for this film I worked as a technical director but by trade I actually work as an editor. Last week I had two beautiful premieres. One feature film and one short film at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival. It was, you know, such great support from there. But currently, current projects I'm working on, I'm working as a story consultant for editing for one short film that I can't talk about and I'm working on another feature film that I can't talk about as well that kind of has, you know, a decades worth of footage. It's super exciting to tackle some of this work. Yeah. Also hire me, maybe.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Right? Okay. If y'all need an editor, because he edited the shit out of this film. So last question from the audience, I'm thinking this is the last question. This is from Michael Betts. Michael asks, how do you believe this moment is benefiting you now? And what can we be doing as folks who are documented to support your work collectively?





**Dorian Gomez:** I would say that working on this film was very crucial for my own self growth. Mainly because I felt incredibly empowered just by working with the crew that I was working with. I think that was really important for me just to be as authentic to myself and even my experience, I think. To answer the second question, I would just say, you know, like aside from help fund our films, I would say uplift our work and get out there when like things are getting ugly because there's always something happening, especially in the justice system. There's... yeah. People are constantly at risk. So pretty much like just look out for your undocumented friends, man.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Period. Anybody else?

**Amrit Kaur:** I would also say, I'd urge folks to also like listen to the undocumented and immigrant folks in your specific area because I see a lot of performative activism online where folks will be sharing stuff from Move On and all this and sharing these posts but like in my actual community, these same folks would not be supporting my work or other folks' work or also just like whatever community movement that's going on at that moment, they will not listen to like the folks that are actually impacted and the folks that are actually doing stuff in their communities. So I would really urge folks to like, you know, if you have the capacity and you're able bodied to like step out and, you know, utilize your body and your voice in person. Obviously not during COVID right now, but when things are back, you know, please do do that. Because like a lot of us, undocumented folks, we do put our bodies on the line. Like when there's protests going on, when there's a lot of different movements going on like in our cities, and like some of us even like go to DC to mobilize for things. In our state Capitols and stuff. So like if y'all are able to do that alongside us, and not just as "allies," that would be





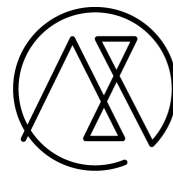
amazing. And I personally would really, really appreciate that more than anything. More than even like donate to go my freakin' film. If y'all can just do that, do your job in that way we'd really... I'd really appreciate it. Yeah.

**Cornetta Lane-Smith:** Do both. (Laughter). Do both. Well, that wraps, you know, the conversation tonight. It was so wonderful talking with y'all and meeting with y'all. Like I look forward to staying in touch with y'all. I know, you know, getting to know y'all, you know, was wonderful. I just at DNA just know that at any table we're at, any, you know, conversation we're having with folks, we're always talking about Undocumented Filmmakers Collective. Just like FYI. We're always talking about y'all. So, you know, we're sibling organizations, y'all. So just know that. The love is there for real, for real. So thank y'all. And thank everybody for joining us and listening in to the talkback tonight. I hope you all got a lot out of what was seen and then also what was spoken of. And I hope, you know, we all take what these filmmakers had to say tonight to heart. Not only, you know, support with, you know, supporting different political actions and movements, but also support with coins. That both go a long way. But I just wanted to say thank you all again for just sharing your hearts with us, for sharing your work with us tonight. And I look forward to staying in touch with y'all. Thank you, everybody, for listening.

**Amrit Kaur:** Thank you all so much. We really appreciate it, from the bottom of our hearts.

**Nandi Comer:** Thank you, Undocumented Filmmakers Collective and Cornetta for your work and for taking the time to share today. Thank you to the audience for sharing their energy in the chat and social media. A special thank you to AMP Seeds advance





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manager Brenda. I want to give a shout out to our CART captioner and incredible ASL interpreters. We would also like to thank AMP's creative digital communications specialist Molly who's been supporting us in the live chat. Up next is our final event of the season. Performance as resistance and that's on October 21. You can register for that. Watch past events and learn about future events by visiting [bit.ly/seedsseries](https://bit.ly/seedsseries). If you'd like to share your thoughts on today's conversation, please visit [bit.ly/fall2021feedback](https://bit.ly/fall2021feedback). We'd love to hear from you. Sign up for our newsletter at [alliedmedia.org](https://alliedmedia.org) to stay up to date on what's going on in our network.

