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TO



WHO WE BECOME

A STORY OF KAPWA

Directed by PJ Raval

Produced by Cecilia R. Mejia

Featuring the song *Activation* by **Kimmortal**

OFFICIAL VIEWER'S GUIDE

whowebecomedoc.com

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UNRAVAL PICTURES AND REMEDIAS PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA THE ASIAN AMERICAN FOUNDATION AND REZONATE

"WHO WE BECOME" LAUREN YAP MONICA SILVERIO JENAH MARAVILLA DIRECTED BY PJ RAVAL PRODUCED BY CECILIA R. MEJIA

EDITED BY KATRINA DE VERA CO-PRODUCERS SAMANTHA RENSHI SKINNER ERWIN FALCON ORIGINAL SCORE BY TIMO CHEN

FEATURING MUSIC BY KIMMORTAL EXECUTIVE PRODUCER THERESA NAVARRO CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KATWO PUERTOLLANO

KAPWA

Tagalog / k'apwə / noun

how we are the same, equal, and connected to our fellow human beings

Kapwa means togetherness, means neighbor

It is a recognition of a shared identity, an inner self, shared with others.

It is "unity of the one-of-us-and-the-other"

The root of kapwa is unity. In a culture of American individualism, kapwa reminds us of the power of community and family, however you choose to define that for yourself. With this documentary, we encourage everyone to think about the role one plays in their community and the support that we both give and receive from being a part of something larger than themselves.





FOREWORD

Although Filipino Americans are the [first Asian group to migrate and form settlements in the United States](#), they remain disproportionately underrepresented in most mainstream media. In fact, despite being one of the [largest Asian American groups in the U.S.](#) — as well as the U.S. having a long and complex history with the Philippines — the majority of Americans learn very little about the history of the Philippines, or the experiences about Filipino Americans. It is because of this invisibility that it has become vital for Filipino Americans, ourselves, to ensure that our histories and our stories are told — in books, in music, in film, and in all forms of media. So, when critically-acclaimed Filipino American filmmakers PJ Raval and Cecilia Mejia created a documentary film that tells the story of three young Filipino American women and their experiences at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, they did not just document American history, they also shared the perspectives of a group that is often forgotten or overlooked.

WHO WE BECOME is such an important work because it tackles so many contemporary issues affecting Filipino Americans, Asian Americans, and young people in general — from the intergenerational conflicts that arise between immigrant parents and their children, to the social political awakenings that many young people experience upon learning about anti-Black police violence or anti-Asian hate crimes. The film addresses the cultural and generational clashes on topics like mental health treatment and political activism, as well as the [inherent colonial mentality](#) that many Filipino people developed as a result of 4 centuries of oppressive Spanish and American rule.

At the heart of the film is the Filipino value of *kapwa* — which loosely translates to the interconnectedness that is felt by Filipino people — across the Filipino diaspora and within Filipino families. Filipino and Filipino American psychology scholars have described [how kapwa affects all aspects of the Filipino psyche](#) — particularly in putting the needs of one's family or community above one's own. Each of the protagonists comes from a Filipino family that is grounded in collectivism, reciprocity, and the desire to take care of each other. So, even when one may not fully understand another family member's perspectives, they are still able to love, support, and respect each other — despite the many complicated emotions that are involved.

WHO WE BECOME also tells the story about how Filipino Americans can work collectively with other communities of color to advocate for racial equity and justice. Historically, [Filipino Americans have built coalitions](#) with Black Americans, Latinx Americans, Indigenous Peoples of North America and the Pacific, and other Asian American ethnic groups. Filipino Americans have also been found across many other movements — including the Women's Rights Movement, the LGBTQ+ Rights Movement, the Immigration Justice Movement, and more. The film's protagonists demonstrate that this spirit of *kapwa* and allyship continue to persist among younger generations. They remind us that when historically minoritized groups work together, we are stronger and more effective in fighting against systemic oppression and violence.

FOREWORD

Further, the film teaches us that there are many ways that young people can become involved in social justice movements. Some may reflect upon the discrimination and historical traumas faced by previous generations, as well as the many movements created to fight against these – from the fights for Philippine independence and the People Power/ anti-martial law movements in the Philippines to the [many ways Filipino Americans have fought for Civil Rights in the U.S.](#) Others are moved to action and find ways to use their voices to instill change – whether it be through joining political organizations, participating in peaceful protests, or initiating difficult dialogues with loved ones about stigmatized or controversial topics. Through the perspectives of these three unique storytellers, the filmmakers remind us that all forms of social justice activism are crucial and that every single person can contribute to changing the world.

Finally, **WHO WE BECOME** demonstrates an idea that has been shared often through the [Filipino American National Historical Society \(FANHS\)](#) – the oldest existing national Filipino American organization in the U.S., whose mission is to preserve and promote Filipino American history. Through our founders Auntie Dorothy and Uncle Fred Cordova, FANHS members are taught that our individual and collective stories are all important and that sharing our family histories contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of American history. Through the lenses of Lauren, Monica, and Jenah (and their families) – we gain a brief snapshot of three different Filipino American families, living in Texas, during a life-changing global pandemic. While they may not represent the entire Filipino American population, they capture the essence of multigenerational Filipino American families navigating issues of race, health, politics, and justice, in a historical time of uncertainty and conflict. For these reasons, they model for us that all Filipino American stories are significant and that Filipino American history is American history.



Kevin Nadal, Ph.D.

Distinguished Professor, City University of New York
Author of *Filipino American Psychology* and more
President of Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS)

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

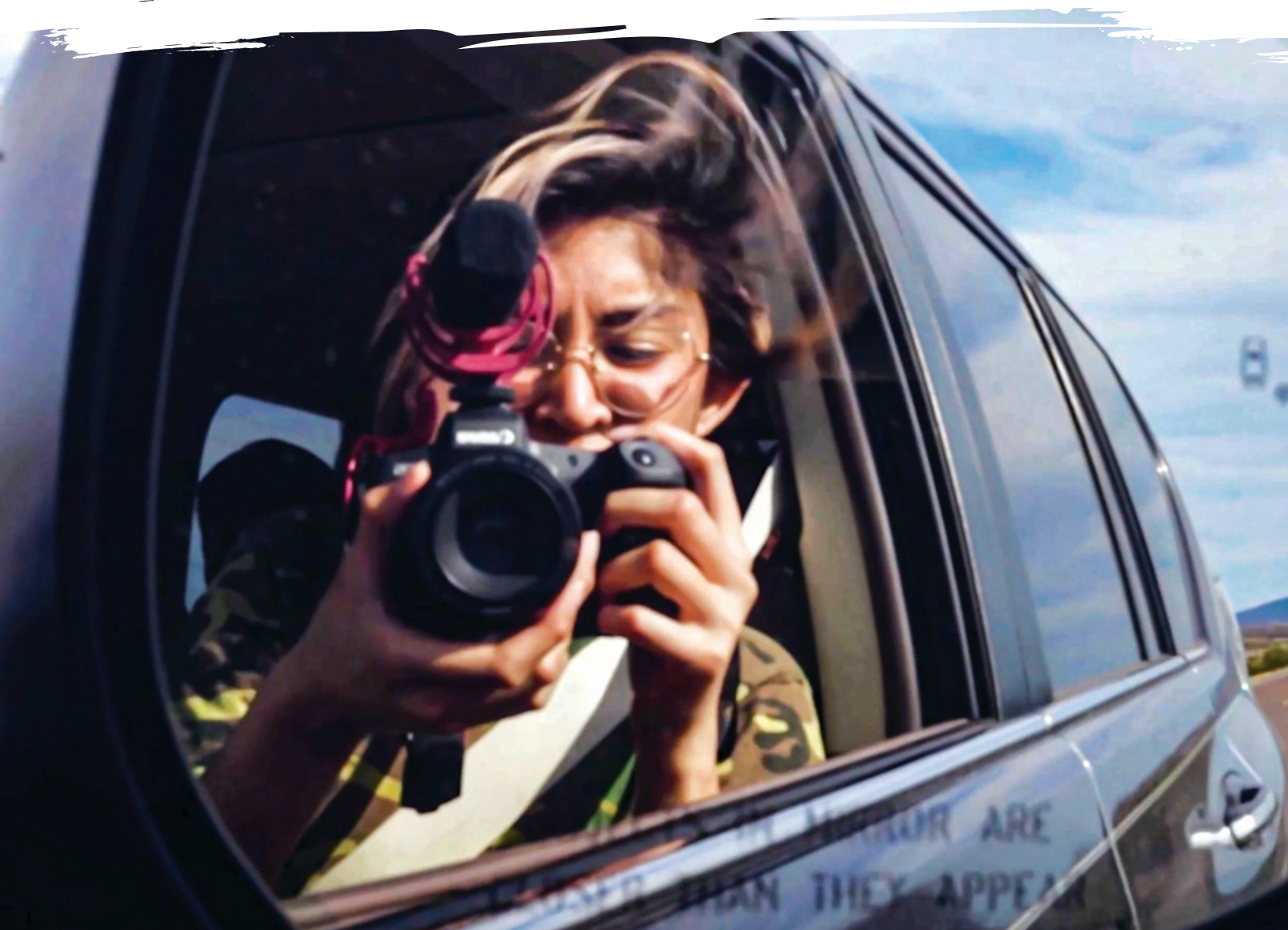
This viewer's guide is designed to spark and deepen discussion around the issues that arise in the feature documentary, **WHO WE BECOME: A Story of Kapwa**. It is also intended to inspire individuals to consider taking personal action and becoming more civically engaged.

Through this viewer's guide, we hope that individuals, organizations, schools and communities are encouraged to:

- Watch **WHO WE BECOME: A Story of Kapwa**
- Think about and feel safe to openly discuss some of the issues and experiences in the film, such as COVID-19, mental health, intergenerational differences, politics, police brutality, racial injustice, interracial solidarity, empowerment, and civic engagement.
- Reflect on how each of the three protagonists took action in different ways and the unique obstacles they faced.
- Take action and get involved.

We hope by viewing **WHO WE BECOME** and utilizing this guide, viewers will reflect on the many issues of the film and how they impact the world we live in, and take concrete action that moves us closer to social justice and equality for all.

ABOUT THE FILM





ABOUT THE FILM

WHO WE BECOME is a story of kapwa. Kapwa, a Tagalog term meaning “togetherness” or “neighbor,” is a recognition of shared identity; an inner self that is shared with others. **WHO WE BECOME** follows three Filipino women each coming into their political consciousness and discovering themselves during a pivotal moment in their lives.

Lauren (22) never expected her final college semester to take place under a pandemic lockdown. Uncomfortable with unmasked family gatherings, Lauren drives home to Bedford, TX to experience her Zoom graduation with extended family. When the trip home turns into an unexpected moment of openness and healing, Lauren grows closer to her parents in ways she never thought possible.

When the world is shaken by the brutal murder of George Floyd, Monica (24) tells her parents she's thinking of attending a Black Lives Matter protest only to be encouraged to stay home and pray instead. After defying her parents' wishes and with the impending 2020 election, Monica takes a risk and sets out to use her social media platform to reach across the aisle to undecided voters and to her conservative parents who see Monica in a new light.

Isolated by the pandemic, Jenah (28) begins to question her life path having left a career as a nurse to pursue her calling as an activist and artist despite the concerns of her parents. With the on-going violence against the black community and attacks targeting Asian Americans escalating, Jenah struggles to find ways to help the community ravaged by hate crimes. After being shaken by the 2021 Atlanta Spa Shootings and with the help of a friend, Jenah finds her power again and leads her community into a crucial moment of solidarity and healing.

During times of crisis triggered by the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, blatant racial injustice, and a Trump presidency, Lauren, Monica, and Jenah give audiences an honest and intimate look into “kapwa”. Through self-documented intergenerational conversations and resilience, **WHO WE BECOME** demonstrates the unbreakable bond of Filipino family and community.

ARTISTS' STATEMENT

PJ RAVAL, DIRECTOR

As a child of Filipino immigrants, growing up in a small predominantly white conservative town in California's Central Valley, I often felt isolated. The generational and cultural differences left few opportunities to connect with my family and the larger community. In recent years, political divisiveness has deepened these divides, making it harder to remember what binds us together. While shared values may transcend cultures and generations, our perspectives and lived experiences remain vastly different. It wasn't until I was introduced to the word "kapwa," that I finally felt I had a framework to understand these challenges that I have felt as a Filipino American in our current moment.

Despite our differences, we are still bound together—whether as family or chosen family—through shared respect and love. As the world rapidly changes around us, it feels more important than ever to make the time and create the space to reflect upon these connections. It is this support and care that can help us navigate these difficult times. Moments where we can laugh together, cry together, or even disagree with one another are what strengthens these bonds between us.



With **WHO WE BECOME: A Story of Kapwa**, I wanted to explore the self-reflections and critical conversations happening within Filipino families and communities while also highlighting the voices of those bringing change to the forefront. 'Kapwa', after all, is about togetherness, and together the stories of Lauren, Monica and Jenah build bridges across generations and communities. I hope their stories inspire viewers as much as they've inspired me. Watching the film and engaging in these vulnerable conversations offers an opportunity to make space for critical discussions. Now is the time to use these dialogues to shape the future we want—together.

ARTISTS' STATEMENT

CECILIA R. MEJIA, PRODUCER

It was at Sundance a few years ago when PJ and I got into a conversation about Filipino representation in the media, but it was mostly centered around our everyday lives and stories. We each grew up, children of immigrant parents from the Philippines, on opposite sides of the country (PJ in California and me in NY). Our experiences were different, but also similar. This seemed to be the case with everyone we spoke to within our small community of artists. Although the experiences were very different, the one throughline was this strong sense of family and connection. This sense of togetherness and connection, which is often defined by our shared experiences. This desire and need to connect felt much stronger when COVID changed everyone's lives.

Much like PJ, and the rest of the world, my everyday life was disrupted. I had to pivot so much of my work and personal life, but it was the isolation away from my family and friends that felt the most disruptive to me. I felt forced to look within and really reflect on what mattered the most. With the world on fire, racial tensions high, and the fear of financial instability I was also forced to reflect on what I stood for. It was in many ways a reckoning for me, and I assume for many others as well.

Developing the film over this period was in many ways a healing process. Peeking into the lives of some incredible Filipinos in our community and how they were tackling this current climate we were in inspired me.



All their stories were different, but the same, with the common throughline of remaining connected to family through difficult times. While we only witnessed a fraction of their everyday lives, it was enough to feel the incredible sense of connection that guided both PJ and I in our journeys.

I am an accumulation of shared experiences from my work in the nonprofit space to education, to the arts; and mostly my connection to friends, family, mentors, colleagues, and students. For me, this film, this experience, has come to mean so much more than telling stories of our Filipino-American community, but more so this strong sense of building community.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

PJ RAVAL, DIRECTOR

PJ Raval is a queer first generation Filipinx American filmmaker whose work examines social justice issues through the voices of queer and marginalized subjects. Named one of Out Magazine's "Out 100," Raval's feature credits include **TRINIDAD** (Showtime) and **BEFORE YOU KNOW IT** (PBS), a film about three gay seniors hailed by indieWIRE as "a crucial new addition to the LGBT doc canon." His film **CALL HER GANDA** chronicles the events surrounding the murder of trans woman Jennifer Laude by a US marine in the Philippines. **GANDA** broadcast on POV (PBS) in 2019 and was nominated for a Philippines Academy Award for Best Documentary and anchored an impact campaign with over 150+ community screenings including a meeting with the US State Department. The film also inspired several Philippines human rights organization chapters in Texas.

An accomplished cinematographer, Raval shot the Academy Award-nominated documentary **TROUBLE THE WATER** and is a co-founder of the NEA supported queer transmedia arts organization OUTsider. He serves on the steering committee of the Asian American Documentary Network (A-Doc) and is a Soros Justice Fellow, a Guggenheim Fellow, a USA Artist Fellow, and a member of both the Producers Guild and Writers Guild of America and the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

CECILIA R. MEJIA, PRODUCER

Cecilia is a second generation Filipino-American born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She has worked for over a decade in development for nonprofit organizations, including NGOs at the United Nations. Cecilia has a number of producing credits on films focusing on critical social impact issues, including the award-winning feature film **YELLOW ROSE** (Sony) and Isabel Sandoval's **LINGUA FRANCA** (Array). She has also worked on a number of projects as an Impact Producer, including the award-winning **CALL HER GANDA** by PJ Raval and the upcoming Hybrid Documentary, **ASOG**.

Concurrent with her work, Cecilia is also an adjunct at NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Her documentary and narrative film work have been screened at festivals including Tribeca Festival, Cannes Film Festival and CAAMFest; she has been featured in numerous profiles and has published widely about the impact producer profession. She was one of the 2022-2023 recipients awarded NYU's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Faculty Award which acknowledges outstanding faculty who exemplify the spirit of Dr. King through scholarship, justice work and who promote his principles in their research, teaching, leadership, and community-building efforts. She was most recently named as the new Vice President of External Affairs for American Documentary.



**CRIES IN
TAGALOG**



PROTAGONISTS

LAUREN YAP

Lauren is a queer, first-generation Filipinx American filmmaker whose work includes producing various commercials, music videos, and live events.

They are drawn to projects that spark conversation and highlight voices that are typically underrepresented. Lauren is a protagonist and collaborator for **WHO WE BECOME**, a documentary that follows young Filipino women during the pandemic as they engage in much-needed intergenerational conversations about the COVID-19 crisis and growing racial injustice during the Trump presidency.

Lauren's passion for amplifying Queer and BIPOC stories inspired them to develop the documentary, **I NEED SPACE**. Their aim is to shine a light on the resilience of the Austin queer community, who—like many others nationwide—are fighting simply to exist.

Currently, they are the Associate Artistic Director for OUTsider, an Austin-based transmedia nonprofit that celebrates the creative nonconformity of the LGBTQ+ communities through the presentation of provocative and overlooked film, dance, theater, performance art, music, writing and visual art.

MONICA SILVERIO

Monica Silverio is a Filipino-American filmmaker based in Austin, Texas, but was raised in the Rio Grande Valley within a tight-knit Fil-Am community. In addition to filmmaking, Monica also directs music videos for local artists and enjoys creating fun filmmaking content on TikTok/Reels. As a subject of **WHO WE BECOME**, Monica is seen using her filmmaking skills to spotlight important stories during the 2020 election, and to tell her own story throughout the documentary.

JENAH MARAVILLA

Jenah Maravilla is a storyteller. She permanently pivoted away from healthcare when co-authoring *Filipinos in Houston* with mentor Christy Poisot in 2018, diving headfirst into community organizing. While active in UniPro Texas, FANHS Houston, and Filipinx Artists of Houston, Maravilla read her poetry and facilitated workshops for local and national audiences.

Notably, in 2024, she held a counter-cartography workshop for Kristi Rangel's "Witness Series" and was integral to Lualo Studio's programming for "Cian Dayrit: Liberties Were Taken" exhibit at the Blaffer Museum, prodding themes of decolonization, belonging, and land. In 2023, she wrote the foreword for *The Kuwento Book: An Anthology of Filipino Stories + Poems*, and in 2022, she was a featured artist in DiverseWork's "Overlapping Territories" exhibit, where her poetry served as a springboard into experimenting with other mediums. All of Maravilla's work centers around honoring those that came before, empowering those present, and shifting the conversation to radical vulnerability.

TAKE ACTION





KEY ISSUES & NEWS IN THE FILM

Immigrant Perspective

- Asian American
- Filipino American
- Traditional Filipino Values
 - Kapwa
 - Catholicism / Christianity / Faith

COVID-19

- Worldwide / Nationwide / Statewide shut down
- Mental Health Crisis

George Floyd & Subsequent Protests

- Police Brutality
- Black Lives Matter
- Racial Inequality

Atlanta Spa Shootings

- Anti-Asian Hate Movement
- Model Minority Myth
- Interracial Solidarity



FAST FACTS & HISTORY

History of Filipino Immigration to the United States, via [Migration Policy Institute](#)

- After the U.S. annexation of the Philippines in 1899, the first wave of Filipino immigrants arrived in the United States.
- The 1934 Tydings–McDuffie Act put the Philippines on track to independence, but also imposed a limit of 50 Filipino immigrants per year.
- The combination of the removal of national–origin quotas in U.S. immigration law in 1965 and Filipino policies that encouraged labor emigration contributed to higher levels of migration from the Philippines to the United States. Between 1960 and 1980, the Filipino immigrant population grew from 105,000 to 501,000. By 2000, it nearly tripled to almost 1.4 million.

History of Filipino Immigration to Texas, via [Filipinos in Houston](#)

- The Manila Galleons made annual trips between Manila and Acapulco from 1565 to 1815. Cultural exchanges, as well as Asian goods, were traded between the Gulf of Mexico and the Texas coastline.
- Another migration of Filipinos to Texas began after the Spanish–American War. Philippine officers working for American soldiers came to Texas as US nationals, since the Philippines was a new territory of the United States. The census showed six Filipinos were living in Texas in 1910, and by 1920 there were thirty.
- The Immigration & Nationality Act of 1965 abolished the quota system. According to *Asian Texans* by Irwin Tang, the Filipino Texan population was 3,442 –with the ratio favoring women.
- The census showed an increase of migration between the years of 1950 and 2000. The number of Filipinos in Texas went from 4,000 to 75,226, the seventh–largest population of Filipino immigrants in the country.



FAST FACTS & HISTORY

History of Asian Americans & Interracial Solidarity, via [Van Jones \(CNN\)](#)

- Frederick Douglass advocated for Chinese and Japanese immigration (1869).
- During the Philippine–American War, Black leaders and soldiers opposed US colonization (1899–1902).
- After the murder of Chinese American Vincent Chin, Jesse Jackson joined forces with Asian American activists to demand justice (1982).
- Asian Americans support Black Lives Matter (2020).

On the Model Minority Myth, via [Learning for Justice](#)

- The myth of the model minority is based in stereotypes.
- Like all stereotypes, the model minority myth erases the differences among individuals.
- The model minority myth ignores the diversity of Asian American cultures.
- The model minority myth operates alongside the myth of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners.
- The model minority myth erases racism against Asian Americans
- The model minority myth is harmful to the struggle for racial justice.



FAST FACTS & HISTORY

On Asian American Queer Demographics, via [The Williams Institute at UCLA School of](#)

[Law](#)

- In 2021, 4.5% of all Asian American and NHPI (Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander) adults identify as LGBT. This translates to an estimated 685,000 Asian American and NHPI LGBT adults, a two-fold increase from 324,600 in 2013.
- 30% of Asian American and NHPI LGBT women have been diagnosed with depression compared to 9% of all Asian American and NHPI non-LGBT women.
- 21% of Asian American and NHPI LGBT adults have been diagnosed with depression compared to 7% of Asian American and NHPI LGBT non-LGBT adults.

On Filipino American Mental Health

- [The prevalence of depression among Asian patients in primary care settings is estimated to be around 14%, with higher rates among Filipinos, compared with Japanese and Chinese.](#)
- [The prevalence of depression among Filipinos may still be underestimated, because of the cultural tendency to deny, somatize, and endure emotional problems.](#)
- [Filipino Americans considered interpersonal factors, such as time with family, friendship, and support groups, as treatments for depression.](#)

On Asian American Eligible Voters (2024), via [Pew Research](#)

- Asian Americans have been the fastest-growing group of eligible voters in the United States over roughly the past two decades and since 2020. Their number has grown by 15%, or about 2 million eligible voters, in the past four years.
- [Compared to 2020](#)
 - More than 11 million will be able to vote this year, making up nearly 5% of the nation's eligible voters.
 - From 2000 to 2020, the number of Asian American eligible voters more than doubled, growing by 139%.



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

The following discussion questions can be utilized as discussion prompts for dialogue after screening the film to your classroom, group, club, or organization.

Community Agreements

Because some of the questions may elicit sensitive responses, we recommend going through the community agreements below with your group before the discussion:

- There is no “right” or “wrong” answer to these questions. We are all in process.
- If someone’s opinion or experience is different from yours, please engage with curiosity and respect. This is not meant to be a debate.
- Please be mindful of how much time you speak so that others also get a chance to share.
- Please use I-statements (ex. “The youth always talk back! Elders don’t listen!” vs. “From my experience, I feel unheard when...”)
- Maintain confidentiality in this session

General Questions

- What are some of your biggest takeaways from the film?
- What surprised you?
- Who did you relate to in the film and why?
- In what ways did you see yourself reflected in this story? How does your reality differ?
- Did you learn anything from this movie? If you did, what was it?
- What is the message of this movie? Do you agree or disagree with it? What are the themes being brought to the surface through this film?
- Was there something you didn’t understand about the film? What was that? What were you thinking as you finished watching the film?



DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Bridge Building

- What are your thoughts about intergenerational dialogue? What is challenging about them? What is rewarding about them? Do you feel they are necessary?
- In what ways have you built bridges for and with your community, whether about mental health, politics, or other challenging topics? What is that experience like?
- The film opens and closes with Kapwa, meaning *how we are the same, equal, and interconnected*. Given the current socio-political moment, what does kapwa mean to you? Why is kapwa relevant today?

Identity

- What did you learn about the Filipina experience in Texas after watching the film? How does this film relate to your own ethnic/racial experiences?
- What are your experiences with mental health? How do you feel talking about mental health across generations?
- Religion is a major theme in the film. How does religion show up in your families? How is religion challenging and/or supportive in intergenerational dialogues?
- Part of Jenah's story is about finding her purpose as an organizer, and letting go of her nursing career. What has been your journey finding your purpose, and how do you navigate family dynamics in that journey?

Action

- What motivates you to get active in your community and stay civically engaged?
- What did you feel compelled to do after watching the film? Were you inspired to take action? If so, how and why?
- Who is missing in the room? Who do you feel would benefit from seeing this documentary and having these discussions? What actions could you take to make that happen?



ACTIVITIES

Excerpts of Poems Featured in the Film & Prompts (can be done in groups or individually)

From "Ode to Kapwa (Do Not Weep for Me)" by Jenah Maravilla

Do not weep for me, for I have been loved dearly.

*there is a knowing of what we share,
the bones of who we are—
That you are me and I am you and we exist past we.*

Do not weep for me, for I have been loved dearly.

*This has a life beyond you and I,
born by our ancestors
and clasped in our children's hands—*

So please, do not weep for me, for I have Kapwa

Prompts

- What were your immediate thoughts as you read the poetry excerpt?
- In what ways does this poetry excerpt resonate with you? In what ways doesn't it resonate?
- *Kapwa* is a Tagalog term defined as "how we are the same, equal, and connected to our fellow human beings." What is your definition of *Kapwa*?
- Create your own ode: What is a strong value that you want to pass down or to honor? What has been passed down to you?



ACTIVITIES

From "Anak ng Tokwa" by Jenah Maravilla

*I've learned
my rage becomes love
becomes a shift in the tide
—no longer something white hot,
but stronger and deeper in pull*

*I am angry for injustice
because I love harder than the frustration.
I unclench my jaw
to speak*

*and no longer do the words
spilling out
burn my throat,
but water those around me.*

Prompts

- What were your immediate thoughts as you read the poetry excerpt?
- In what ways does this poetry excerpt resonate with you? In what ways doesn't it resonate?
- What is a characteristic that you've had to change about yourself?
 - Why?
 - How, instead, can it be transformed into something else?
- Write about characteristics you have 'inherited'.
 - In what ways can these be grown into new cycles?



ACTIVITIES

From "Psalms 8:5" by Jenah Maravilla

*I started needing Ma again,
head on her lap,
weeping about the shift before.*

*Had Jesus cried on mother Mary?
Had his hair been stroked with
with tenderness and love?*

*How often has this biblical scene
taken place
in all the time
we have existed?*

Prompts

- What were your immediate thoughts as you read the poetry excerpt?
- In what ways does this poetry excerpt resonate with you? In what ways doesn't it resonate?
- Think of a time that was difficult for you.
 - What other stories did you relate to in that time?
 - What comforted you about these stories?
- What do you hold close that makes you feel like a part of something larger?



ACTIVITIES

Journal Prompts

- What are the things you would like to talk to your family about but can't?
 - Why not?
- What are things you thought you couldn't talk about, but now do?
 - How did that change?
- Think about the three protagonists of the documentary, which journey did you most relate to?
 - What is one thing you admire about each?
 - What are three things you admire about yourself?
- [The Golden Circle](#)
 - *What do you do? → How do you do what you do? → Why do you do what you do?*
 - When it comes to knowing yourself, this tool can help synthesize what guides you.
 - Remember to revisit this over time when you find yourself changing or growing.
 - The concentric circles can be filled in in any order. Still, the important part is knowing that when you are conversing with others, there is a cohesive understanding of you and your motivations.

ACTIVITIES

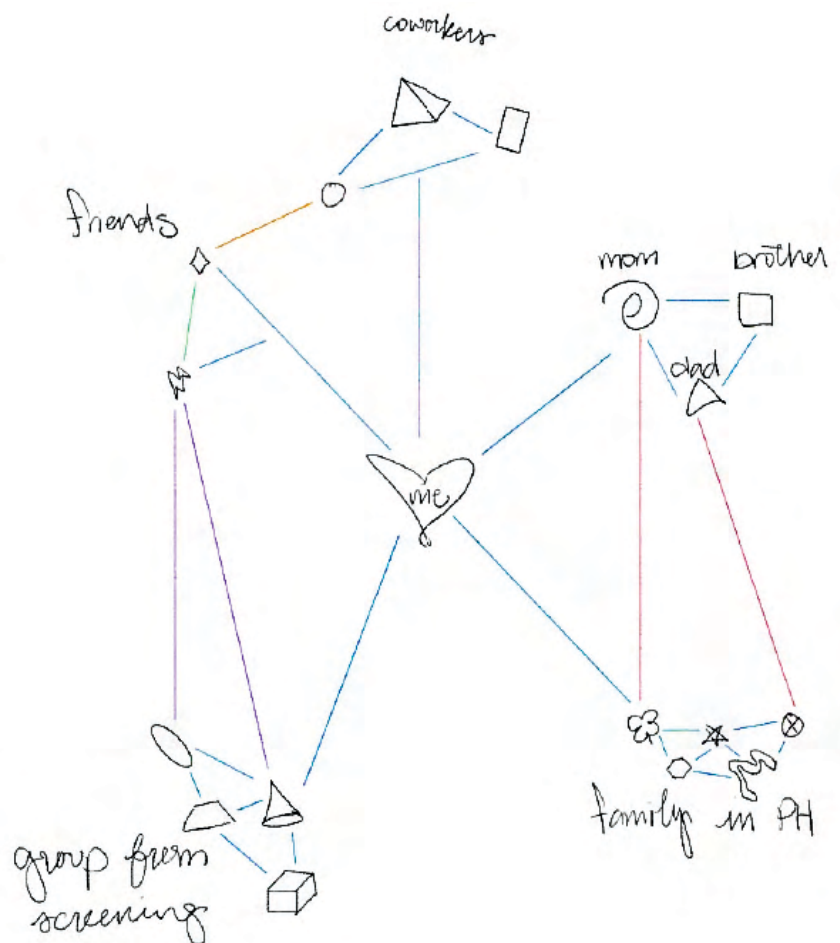
Constellation Mapping: A Practice in Kapwa, based on [Aboriginal Traditions](#)

- See also: (Instagram Reel – 10mins) [Tiriki Onus & Leah Manaema, on Self Sovereignty, Part 1](#)
 - *"I'm here, this is who I am becoming..."*
- Indigenous Australians were considered the first Astronomers –taking note of the stars in navigation, time measurement, and in relation to the other tribes they encountered, passing their knowledge back through song.
 - This exercise shows how interconnected we all are and how the responsibility for each other's well-being, safety, and liberation are intertwined.
- **Kapwa** is the Filipino Value that ties the documentary together.
 - Definition; Tagalog (*n.*): How we are the same, equal, and connected to our fellow human beings.
 - "While kapwa is a concept of shared or collective identity, it is also about the way interpersonal relationships function and are maintained within this collective identity. It is about emphasizing the community over the individual." – [Maharaj "Raju" Desai](#)
- (.docx) [A more intensive guide to this exercise](#), via Co-Culture
- To set up:
 - Preferably in a group, get some paper and some colored drawing / writing utensils / possibly ruler or straight edge to create lines
 - No drawing experience is necessary
 - If drawing is not in your skillset, use symbols & doodles
 - We're going for connection, not perfection.
- Instructions for this exercise:
 - Each person draws themselves in the center of this 'constellation'
 - For 15–20 minutes, you draw people (symbols, stick figures) in clusters of how you categorize them:
 - Immediate family
 - Extended family
 - Friends
 - Friends from College / HS / Elementary / Family-friends
 - Coworkers
 - Community colleagues
 - Group from the screening (if not part of these clusters)

ACTIVITIES

- For each primary connection (those you know personally), choose a color
 - For each secondary connection (one or few members of a cluster knows some or all of the other cluster), choose a different color for differing connections
 - If done in a group, can connect everyone's papers where they are located on another person's, and folks can share how the connections work out.
 - See Also: (Instagram Reel - 7mins) [Tiriki Onus & Leah Manaema, on From Self Sovereignty to Solidarity, Part 2](#)
 - "Our self sovereignty and that which we want to become over and over and over again in our becoming..."

Example Map:





ACTIVITIES

Family Values

Using the table below; talk about when these values appear in the documentary & how they appear in your family dynamics.

- In what ways are these values hindering? Helpful?
- What are some stories you all can share that illustrate these values?

Filipino Values per Virgilio G. Enriquez

Surface Values	Hiya (Shame/Integrity)	Utang na Loob (Gratitude / Solidarity)	Pakikisama (Companionship / Esteem)
Core Values	Pakiramdam (Empathy)	Kapwa (Shared identity)	Pagkamatao (Shared humanity)
Societal Values	Karangalan (Dignity)	Katarungan (Justice)	Kalayaan (Freedom)

Spitfire

As a group, what is the first thing you think of for these sentiments in the documentary?

- There's no depression in the Philippines
 - (Even with how hard life was/is in the Philippines)
- Just pray about it.
- We don't alienate people when we disagree with them.
- We don't really rock the boat.



DISCUSSION TIPS

Tips on Discussions with Loved Ones You Disagree with

- Remember, it's not your responsibility to change their mind
 - Pick it up only if you have the capacity for it
- Listen first before responding
 - Validate their feelings, but give them a perspective / point that they can relate to
- Keep in mind that this person cares about you
 - Emphasize why you care
 - Use "I" statements
- Take a breath / take breaks
 - If you have to put down the conversation for a while, do so



RESOURCES

Filipino American Films to Watch

AMERICAN ADOBO

Directed by Laurice Guillen

A humorous and heartwarming slice-of-life story about family and friends, dealing with the everyday struggles of people trying to bridge two cultures, as well as their attempt to find happiness and security in their new homeland.

BITTER MELON

Directed by H.P. Mendoza

Bitter Melon is a “home for the holidays” dark comedy where a Filipino-American family plots to kill an abusive member.

CALL HER GANDA

Directed by PJ Raval

When Jennifer Laude, a Filipina trans woman, is brutally murdered by a U.S. Marine, three women intimately invested in the case—an activist attorney, a transgender journalist and Jennifer’s mother)—galvanize a political uprising, pursuing justice and taking on hardened histories of US imperialism.

CAVITE

Directed by Neill Dela Llana & Ian Gamazon

Flying back to his home country, an American man is informed that his mother and sister have been kidnapped and will be killed if he doesn’t comply with certain demands.

LINGUA FRANCA

Directed by Isabel Sandoval

An undocumented Filipina transwoman falls in love in Brooklyn.

THE DEBUT

Directed by Gene Cajayon

A young man struggles with his desire to study art when his family thinks he’s headed for premedical studies. Conflicts between Filipino traditions and expectations vs. personal dreams in the contemporary world erupt at his sister’s debut.

YELLOW ROSE

Directed by Diane Paragas

A Filipina teen from a small Texas town fights to pursue her dreams as a country music performer while having to decide between staying with her family or leaving the only home she has known.



RESOURCES

Ways to Get Involved

- Which role in the [social change ecosystem](#) do you resonate with the most?
 - Seek out spaces that uplift your role. Change does not happen in a vacuum.
- Organize a community screening
 - Be intentional about audience demographics: Are we centering conversations around intergenerational, interracial, or inter-organizational dialogue?
 - Host story circles about the conversation surrounding the film.
 - Once you've done a screening, who is *not* in the room?
 - Host *another* screening in collaboration outside of those who were there primarily; see how the discussion shifts.
- Our voices matter! 2024 is a Presidential election year and your local nonprofits may be hosting events / have voter registrars at hand to help register folks to vote.
 - This can be a nonpartisan action – it's important that everyone participates in their right to vote.
 - Next time you or your organization hosts an event, reach out to these organizations if they'd like to have a table, spend a few minutes making an announcement, or have a fully programmed event ready so your team doesn't have to!
 - Encourage folks in your circle to vote!
 - Utilize voter guides in your area and read up on who aligns with your values.

Voter Rights & Initiatives

- United States government resources on [how to register to vote](#) in federal, state, and local elections.
- United States Election Assistance Commission: [Language Access Resources](#).
- The national, nonpartisan [Election Protection coalition](#) works so all voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.
 - **866-OUR-VOTE** (English, 866-687-8683) (English, administered by the [Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law](#))
 - **888-VE-Y-VOTA** (Spanish, 888-839-8682) (Spanish, administered by the [NALEO Educational Fund](#))
 - **888-API-VOTE** (Asian Languages, 888-274-8683) (Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Tagalog, administered by [APIAVote](#) & [AAJC](#))
 - **844-YALLA-US** (Arabic, 844-925-5287) Arabic language hotline (administered by [Arab American Institute](#))
- [Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#) is the first and largest organization dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and their families. [Protect yourself and others](#) who experience difficulties while trying to cast a ballot, stand up against voter suppression, and stay safe in the midst of historic anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.
- [League of Women Voters](#): The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy.

RESOURCES

Asian American & BIPOC Mental Health Resources

- [Asians for Mental Health](#) (Directory): Asians for Mental Health was created to help Asians feel seen, heard, and empowered in their journeys towards better mental health.
- [Asian Mental Health Collective](#) (Directory, Fund, & Resources): AMHC aspires to make mental health easily available, approachable, and accessible to Asian communities worldwide.
- [Inclusive Therapists](#) (Directory, Matching service, Resources, & Community): Inclusive Therapists is a social justice and liberation-oriented mental health directory, community, and resource hub.

For Further Reading on the Asian American Model Minority Myth

- Articles
 - [‘Model Minority’ Myth Again Used as a Racial Wedge Between Asians and Blacks](#) by Kat Chow
 - [Asian Americans and the Model Minority Stereotype](#) by Neil G. Ruiz, Carlyne Im and Ziyao Tian
- Book
 - *Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans Facing Racism, Second Edition* by Rosalind S. Chou and Joe R. Feagin
 - With their apparent success in schools and careers, Asian Americans have long been viewed by white Americans as the "model minority." Yet few Americans realize the lives of many Asian Americans are constantly stressed by racism. This reality becomes clear from the voices of Asian Americans heard in this first in-depth book on the experiences of racism among Asian Americans from many different nations and social classes. Chou and Feagin assess racial stereotyping and discrimination from dozens of interviews across the country with Asian Americans in a variety of settings, from elementary schools to colleges, workplaces, and other public arenas. They explore the widely varied ways of daily coping that Asian Americans employ –some choosing to conform and others actively resisting. This book dispels notions that Asian Americans are universally "favored" by whites and have an easy time adapting to life in American society. The authors conclude with policy measures that can improve the lives not only of Asian Americans but also of other Americans of color.

For Further Resources on Filipinx Diaspora


- Books
 - *Brown Skin White Minds* by EJR David
 - Filipino Americans have a long and rich history with and within the United States, and they are currently the second largest Asian group in the country. However, very little is known about how their historical and contemporary relationship with America may shape their psychological experiences. The most insidious psychological consequence of their historical and contemporary experiences is colonial mentality or internalized oppression.
 - *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* by Catherine Ceniza Choy
 - In western countries, including the United States, foreign-trained nurses constitute a crucial labor supply. Far and away the largest number of these nurses come from the Philippines.



RESOURCES

- Why is it that a developing nation with a comparatively greater need for trained medical professionals sends so many of its nurses to work in wealthier countries? Catherine Ceniza Choy engages this question through an examination of the unique relationship between the professionalization of nursing and the twentieth-century migration of Filipinos to the United States. The first book-length study of the history of Filipino nurses in the United States, *Empire of Care* brings to the fore the complicated connections among nursing, American colonialism, and the racialization of Filipinos.

- Video

- Why the US has So Many Filipino Nurses (11mins):
 [Why the US has so many Filipino nurses](#)

For Further Reading on Filipin/a/o/x Queer Voices

- Articles

- [Queer Filipinx / Pilipinx Poetics: Celebrating Filipino American History Month](#) by Kay Ulanday Barrett
- [The Rise of Filipino Queer Content on Netflix](#) by Francesa Jana Millenna D. Santiago

- Books

- *With Love: What We Wish We Knew About Being Queer & Filipino in America* by Dustin Domingo
 - *With Love* is a groundbreaking project that captured the stories and perspectives of 50 LGBTQIA+ Filipinos living in the United States. This project culminated in a published book which includes a collection of letters written by individuals to their younger selves to address “what we wish we knew about being queer and Filipino in America.” Common themes existed across these letters. As the primary author and editor, Dr. Domingo framed these themes in this book as 10 life lessons we wish to impart to the community.
- *Beyond the Nation: Diasporic Filipino Literature & Queer Reading* by Martin Joseph Ponce
 - *Beyond the Nation* charts an expansive history of Filipino literature in the U.S., forged within the dual contexts of imperialism and migration, from the early twentieth century into the twenty-first. Martin Joseph Ponce theorizes and enacts a queer diasporic reading practice that attends to the complex crossings of race and nation with gender and sexuality. Tracing the conditions of possibility of Anglophone Filipino literature to U.S. colonialism in the Philippines in the early twentieth century, the book examines how a host of writers from across the century both imagine and address the Philippines and the United States, inventing a variety of artistic lineages and social formations in the process.

For Further Resources on Interracial Solidarity

- Article

- [How Afrofuturism Can Heal Divides Between Black & Asian Communities](#) by Rohan Zhou-Lee

- Library of Congress User Guide

- [Building Identity and Solidarity: Asian American activism of the 1960s and '70s](#) by Olivia Hewang



RESOURCES

■ Books

- *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa
 - Originally released in 1981, *This Bridge Called My Back* is a testimony to women of color feminism as it emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Through personal essays, criticism, interviews, testimonials, poetry, and visual art, the collection explores, as coeditor Cherríe Moraga writes, "the complex confluence of identities—race, class, gender, and sexuality—systemic to women of color oppression and liberation."
- *The Karma of Brown Folk* by Vijay Prashad
 - "How does it feel to be a problem?" asked W. E. B. Du Bois of black Americans in his classic *The Souls of Black Folk*. A hundred years later, Vijay Prashad asks South Asians "How does it feel to be a solution?" In this kaleidoscopic critique, Prashad looks into the complexities faced by the members of a "model minority"—one, he claims, that is consistently deployed as "a weapon in the war against black America."
- *Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans* edited by Fred Ho and Bill V. Mullen
 - With contributions from activists, artists, and scholars, *Afro Asia* is a groundbreaking collection of writing on the historical alliances, cultural connections, and shared political strategies linking African Americans and Asian Americans. Bringing together autobiography, poetry, scholarly criticism, and other genres, this volume represents an activist vanguard in the cultural struggle against oppression.
- *AfroAsian Encounters: Culture, History, Politics* by Raphael-Hernandez and Shannon Steen
 - *AfroAsian Encounters* is the first anthology to look at the mutual influence of and relationships between members of the African and Asian diasporas. While these two groups have often been thought of as occupying incommensurate, if not opposing, cultural and political positions, scholars from history, literature, media, and the visual arts here trace their interconnections and interactions, as well as the tensions between the two groups that sometimes arise. *AfroAsian Encounters* probes beyond popular culture to trace the historical lineage of these coalitions from the late nineteenth century to the present.



RESOURCES

■ Documentaries

- [BLURRING THE COLOR LINE](#) (2022)
 - BLURRING THE COLOR LINE follows director Crystal Kwok as she unpacks the history behind her grandmother's family, who were neighborhood grocery store owners in the Black community of Augusta, Georgia during the Jim Crow era.
- [IN SEARCH OF BENGALI HARLEM](#) (2022)
 - From filmmakers Vivek Bald and Alaudin Ullah, IN SEARCH OF BENGALI HARLEM follows Ullah from the streets of New York City to the villages of Bangladesh to uncover the pasts of his father, Habib, and mother, Mohima. Alaudin first discovers that Habib was part of an extraordinary history of mid-20th century Harlem, in which Bengali Muslim men, dodging racist Asian Exclusion laws, married into New York's African American and Puerto Rican communities – and in which the likes of Malcolm X and Miles Davis shared space and broke bread with immigrants from the subcontinent. Then, after crossing the globe to visit the former homes of his parents, Alaudin unearths unsettling truths about his mother: about the hardships and trauma that she overcame to become one of the first women to migrate to the U.S. from rural Bangladesh.
- [THE NEUTRAL GROUND](#) (2021)
 - In 2015, director CJ Hunt (who is Black and Filipino) was filming the New Orleans City Council's vote to remove four confederate monuments. But when that removal is halted by death threats, CJ sets out to understand why a losing army from 1865 still holds so much power in America.
- [FINDING SAMUEL LOWE](#) (2014)
 - Filmmaker Jeanette Kong tells the story of how three successful black siblings from Harlem discover their heritage while searching for clues about their long-lost grandfather, Samuel Lowe. Their emotional journey spans from Toronto to Jamaica to China, reuniting them with hundreds of Chinese relatives they never imagined existed.

■ Videos

- Grace Lee Boggs (2mins) : [▶ AAPI Civil Rights Heroes – Grace Lee Boggs](#)
- Larry Itliong (3.5mins) : [▶ The almost forgotten Filipino American history](#)
- Yuri Kochiyama (3mins) : [▶ Yuri and Malcolm](#)



CREDITS

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WHO WE BECOME

A STORY OF KAPWA

Directed by PJ Raval

Produced by Cecilia R. Mejia

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