

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Elizabeth Rule

JVN [00:00:00] Welcome to Getting Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every week I sit down for a gorgeous conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about something that makes me curious. On today's episode, we are joined once more by a guest who I love so much: Elizabeth Rule, where I ask her: How is Washington, DC, a Native capital? Welcome to Getting Curious. This is Jonathan Van Ness and we have the most exciting returning guest who we love so much who, like, I just really do adore you. I learned so much and I'm so excited because you've done so much since we saw you back. So without any further ado, welcome back to the show, Dr. Elizabeth Rule, honey. Also I just need to preface you guys, and I don't want to be, like, you know, rude to any previous guests' earrings, but I don't think I've ever seen this beautiful of earrings, like, ever in our Getting Curious history. And they're just so beautiful. And it actually completely derailed my intro because they're so beautiful next to your smile, queen. I just was, like, okay! But anyway, so if you were, like, under a rock for our previous episode, just so you know, a little bit more about Dr. Elizabeth Rule, she is a Chickasaw scholar and activist who is based in Washington, DC. She's an Assistant Professor of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies at American University in Washington, DC. Ah! And back in 2020, we had the honor of getting to speak to her all about contemporary Native American politics and culture. And in that episode, we discussed her Guide To Indigenous DC, which is an amazing project that highlights Native sites across the US capital. That project has since inspired *Indigenous DC*, a book published by Georgetown University Press—yes, queen!—that explores the suppressed history and continuing presence of Native Americans in Washington, DC. Ah! How are you?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:01:42] I'm doing so great and thank you so much for having me. I'm just so excited to be here again. It was so much fun doing the show back in 2020 and being here now in 2023 is just, you know, incredible. It's great to catch up with you and thank you so much for inviting me. I also have to shout out: these earrings are by Copper Canoe Woman. Check her out. She has amazing Native jewelry.

JVN [00:02:08] I mean, they are just the most beautiful, stunning, captivating earrings of all time. Okay, but sidebar, we need to do an episode about, like, time, because, like, what is it? Since then, like, just generally, like, what's happened for you?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:02:24] So a lot has been going on. It's been a big three years. I transitioned from my position as the Director of the Center for Indigenous Politics and Policy at George Washington University over to this new position on the tenure track as an assistant professor of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies at American University. So that's been very exciting. Of course, we're going to talk today. I wrote a book based on one of my research projects, and I also used that app that we discussed last time as a jumping-off point to create a company that builds these apps that examine sites of Indigenous significance in different cities, states, tribal territories. So I've since launched two additional ones, one for the state of Maryland and one for the city of Baltimore. And then I also have just recently started a

three-year residency at the Kennedy Center as a Social Impact Fellow, building on my work with Indigenous communities, the local DC community, and also, I'm excited to say, moving into a different direction again, merging academic work with public-facing work. So I'm writing a television screenplay, all—

JVN [00:03:35] Ah!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:03:36] All about Native women's reproductive justice issues.

JVN [00:03:40] Yes! How amazing! Is it giving documentary? Is it, like, a scripted series about the stuff that, like, Native women go through in terms of reproductive justice? Like—what is it, tell us everything. Well, or can you not because you're, like, literally a sought after fucking TV screenplay writer and you are not going to be, like—

ELIZABETH RULE [00:03:57] It's still in the early stages. It's going to be a dramedy. If anybody is listening and interested in producing it, hit me up.

JVN [00:04:04] I'm interested! That sounds ah-mazing. I'm so excited for you. Okay, I'm gonna —

ELIZABETH RULE [00:04:09] Thank you.

JVN [00:04:10] But also I do want to talk about Indigenous DC because I do think it is, like, such a gorgeous natural fit from app to book because you had to do so much research and there's so much in the app that was exploring different stories. So, like, what was your story behind writing this book?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:04:26] Yeah. So I launched the Guide to Indigenous DC mobile app in 2019, and it was this great resource that I created primarily for my Indigenous students that were coming to DC for educational purposes. But then quickly it caught on with also members of the general public. And I found that it struck a note with people who were local, who wanted to learn more about where they lived. And then, of course, the millions and millions of tourists that visit DC because it's our nation's capital. So there was all of this sort of public interest, which was really amazing. And I decided I wanted to transition to offer a more in-depth look at all of these sites that are also explored on the app. So in the book, readers are going to find a more in-depth description of the sites that currently exist in the app, but also additional sites. In so many ways, this is a project that never fully concludes because there are constantly new places and stories, Indigenous stories coming out of DC. So the book was a new way to incorporate additional material. And again, it's for people that want to do a deeper dive.

JVN [00:05:41] I love that you moved into this direction, and I cannot wait to, like, fully dive in myself. We learned a lot in our last episode. I think we all know at this point that the US is built

on Native land. Washington, DC, though, is, like, even more of a reflection of this reality. Can you tell us, like, give us all the archeological historical records that are relevant here, queen! Please!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:06:01] There are so many. I mean, first of all, you're absolutely right that all of this land that we consider and know to be the United States is originally Indigenous land. And Native people still maintain today those connections to these territories that are their traditional ancestral homelands. What's really interesting to me about Washington, DC, is that we have those peoples with those historical connections that they're maintaining today in a really strong way. But also we have this influx of Native peoples from tribal nations all across the country who come here precisely because it's our nation's capital. This is where Native people can come to work with the federal government, negotiate things like treaties or, you know, contemporary relationships, do things like economic development, but also leave a really strong and interesting and vibrant and diverse cultural imprint. And that's where we also get places on the physical landscape that are really strong in Indigenous arts. So we have, again, both this urban, contemporary diaspora of Native people in Washington and also people who understand this to be part of their traditional ancestral homeland.

JVN [00:07:20] Does that mean, like, all the treaties were, like, negotiated in Washington, DC., like, through history?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:07:26] Yeah, so not necessarily, but a lot of them were. You know, in terms of a historical record, right, we have, you know, many tribal delegations, groups of Native people traveling to Washington in order to meet with political representatives and governmental leaders to talk about, you know, "What are going to be the policies that shape day-to-day Indigenous life, what are going to be the treaties? How can we renegotiate treaties? How can we as Indigenous peoples bring our grievances to Washington?" And that has a really interesting interplay then with contemporary Indigenous activism that we see. So it's really this exciting place. And one of my main points in my book, my thesis is really that Washington, DC is actually the political capital of Indian Country because we have this unbroken history of Native people coming from all of their tribal nations to DC in order to advocate.

JVN [00:08:25] Ah! Okay, wait, so that's incredible. Can you, like, introduce us to some of these sites and what are the stories behind them? Like, what was the one for you as you were researching the book that just reached out and was, like, the one that just had you in, like, a—giving Erin Brockovich when she's, like, learning about the hexavalent chromium and, like, the water sites, you know, and she just can't stop learning about it, like, from that guy, you know? What was that that just grabbed you, like, your first one?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:08:49] I mean, really, there were so many. But I have a particular connection to one site, which is the Spirit of Haida Gwaii sculpture that sits outside of the Canadian embassy in downtown DC. And this site was so interesting to me because it just

really revealed the need for this project, for this research project. So at the time, I, as a Chickasaw person, am living in downtown DC, I'm working at George Washington University, bringing Native students in every semester and working with them. And I had to travel for work to Vancouver for a conference. And I'm in the Vancouver International Airport and I'm looking around at all of this incredible Indigenous art that we just don't see represented in airports here in the States. So I'm looking around, I'm super excited. I'm taking pictures, and I see this sculpture that was just amazing. It's huge, beautiful and sort of understated. It's, you know, culturally relevant and it represents these cultural and spiritual figures from Haida Belief and Haida culture. It's an Indigenous group in sort of the Pacific Northwest area.

Bill Reid is one of the most widely recognized Indigenous artists, and he himself was Haida. And so I'm looking at it, and I'm reading the little plaque and it says right there that there's actually the sister to this sculpture, same sculpture, cast in a different color, in Washington, DC. And it turns out that this sculpture was actually less than a mile away from where I had been living for the past couple of years. And so to me, you know, this just resonated on so many levels. Not only do we have the masterpiece work of this internationally acclaimed artist, Bill Reid, who was Haida, but also, you know, people like me—I mean, I'm the target audience, I'm Indigenous, I like the arts—and I didn't know that I was living, again, less than a mile away from this incredible piece of work. And if I don't know that, surely, you know, members of the public who are perhaps less engaged, less connected, or less interested also don't know about this. So again, it just really represented the whole reason why I was doing this project.

JVN [00:11:07] Because did you learn, like, for all the stories in the book, did you kind of know of them from your previous research for the app? And then this, you just got to, like, break the egg open and go, like, all up in there?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:11:19] That's exactly right. So I had a general sort of working familiarity with most of the sites, but there were a couple of others that were new, and so I included them in the book as well. Another really just sort of interesting story about this project that has struck me is the National Native American Veterans Memorial, which sits on the grounds of the National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian Institution dedicated to Indigenous peoples of the Americas. And this was really interesting to me because at the time of launching the app, this memorial did not yet exist. It was created to pay tribute to the Indigenous peoples who serve in the U.S. armed forces. And actually, Indigenous people serve in the armed forces at a per capita rate higher than any other group. So that's a little known fact. What ended up happening was the pandemic hit, right? COVID happened and construction on the memorial basically halted. And so what I ended up having was this pinpoint on my map of a place that didn't yet exist. And what that really again illuminated for me was the fact that this project is about not only Indigenous histories in Washington, DC, and not only relaying the idea that Native peoples are still here, that we're contemporary modern people with an urban presence, but also that this is going to always continue to be an Indigenous place, right? It was a really strong message about Indigenous futures there. And so that was, you know, a real learning experience for me. It made me think about my

methodological approach in a different way. And again, think about this project as so much more than just the physical sites themselves, but really the stories they tell and what they represent to Native peoples here.

JVN [00:13:09] That is so beautiful. So often in our history, like, colonialism has tried to, like, kill and suppress into nonexistence so many different types of groups of people, has tried to assimilate so many types of groups of people. And in the case of Native Americans, that attempted suppression and genocide failed because there is this prosperous, thriving, beautiful, diverse group of Native American people and also Indigenous people all over the world who suffered, like, so much shit at the hands of colonialism and are still, like, doing the damn thing. Which then makes me think about, like, narratives.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:14:52] I mean, I think that the story I'm telling in the book is, you know, inextricable from the story of colonialism as well. And it's important that we know that colonialism is not only a historical event, right. It's, it's the whole structure under which we live today. You know, there have been other nations in the world that have decolonized, for example, and we haven't had that history in the U.S. So this is still very much an ongoing process of colonialism under which Native peoples continue to live. And so working on this project, you know, I was inspired very much, particularly by the moments of Indigenous activism and seeing how things like activism and policy work and cultural work come together to combat the violence of colonialism and that attempted eradication of Native peoples and the policies of extermination that we were just talking about. But absolutely, there are frustrating moments in that as well. I mean, the fact that Native peoples need to continue to protest and need to continue to fight for things like their land or their environmental concerns, and even just the general respect for treaties. For instance, I have several sites that are taking up this subject, particularly around the Dakota Access Pipeline and fracking. And that was a big moment, probably the most prominent Native American issue in the last decade or so, maybe even longer. But fundamentally, you know, what that was about was about the US government totally disregarding the treaties that it has with tribal nations. Right. And on a government-to-government, nation-to-nation basis, a binding legal document, the fact that Native peoples need to continue to rally both in the streets and in the courtrooms and in Congress, around the basic respect of these treaties—again, these legally binding documents—is still mind blowing to me.

JVN [00:16:05] Yes, like, cause a treaty isn't up for debate, but then it does end up being up for debate because, like, a lot of the judges and people who end up enforcing them don't really enforce them in the way in which they're written and, like, agreed upon in the first place.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:16:18] Right, right, exactly. It's still this sort of back and forth that, you know, different presidential administrations can decide basically how they're going to proceed with Native peoples is itself indicative of this larger problem of federal government interference with, again, the sovereignty of tribal nations, the failure many times over to uphold treaty rights. And even, again, the idea that that could get wrapped up in political

agendas that would change from administration to administration is troubling because it's actually very clear and on the books. It is exciting, though, you know, we have wins for Indian Country, like the McGirt case.

JVN [00:17:00] That was the Oklahoma thing, right?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:17:02] Right, right, and basically what that said—you know, from the Supreme Court—was that just because, you know, states have been out of alignment with treaties doesn't mean that they're just automatically null and void. It means that you've just been out of alignment with them and need to get back in line.

JVN [00:17:21] I think for me, something can be, like, kind of burning on fire and at the same time you can find joy because, like, as queer people, like, we kind of have to, like, find that duality, like, to exist and, like, live through stuff. But I think a lot of times the parts of our narratives that get highlighted can be, like, the trauma and the doom. But I really like reclaiming the narrative of, like, queer joy and queer people thriving. And that actually we have such a wide array of emotions. And honey, we're feeling like a lot of those—the good ones and the upsides of them—like, way more than, like, necessarily the negative ones that get so often highlighted. So what has been like some of the, like, most hopeful and exciting parts of, like, being able to reclaim narratives and center other stories that are of Native, like, thriving

ELIZABETH RULE [00:18:08] So there's a great story about one of the places included in the book, and it's called Dumbarton Bridge. It's this bridge that is actually famous for being a curved bridge. But that's not what's most interesting to me! [LAUGHTER] What's fascinating about this bridge is that it was created in 1915 to connect the Georgetown and Kalorama neighborhoods in Washington DC, and the whole intention behind it was very colonial in its decoration, right? The idea was that they wanted to pay tribute to this idea of Manifest Destiny, the closing of the frontier. And of course part of that is the “vanishing Indian,” right? That Native peoples have been sort of conquered, conquest has been realized. And so the bridge architects and designers wanted to bring in these sort of Western motifs, if you will. So they put these, you know, life-size buffalo sculptures on either side. And they decorated the underneath, the sort of arc part with the head and bust of a Native man. And at the time they really didn't give two thoughts about who this person actually was. This was designed to be this sort of nameless, faceless stand-in for Native people. So extremely colonial, very violent in its narrative that was being, again, brought to the capital as a story to be told about the rest of the country.

What I like about this is the subversive reading that we can do. So the person whose face they incorporated more than 50 times on the side of this bridge was an Oglala Lakota leader by the name of Kicking Bear. He came to Washington, DC as part of those tribal delegations again to negotiate with the government for his people, for their rights, for their living conditions. He came here in 1896, and while he was here, he connected with folks at the Smithsonian, and

they made this “life caste,” they called it of his, his likeness, right? And then that sat in their holdings until, you know, these bridge designers pulled it out and used it to adorn their bridge. So the subversive reading comes in where we think about this bridge that was designed to relay this idea in Washington about the rest of the country being free of Native people, fully colonized, conquered. But actually, what they did was they replicated the face of this strong, anti-colonial tribal leader all across this bridge unknowingly. And to me, that is just the peak of Indigenous resistance.

JVN [00:21:00] I love that because he's like, “Uh, actually, like, you won't be forgetting me fuckin' at all. Bye! Ah!”

ELIZABETH RULE [00:21:07] Right, right.

JVN [00:21:08] Good for him! Okay. I love that story. I love the subversive reading of the story, is how I love it.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:21:13] And that's the story I want people to know. You know, I want people to not just be, like, “This is a curved bridge,” or, “That's, you know, Americana with a Native person's head on it.” That's actually a real person who was doing real advocacy work.

JVN [00:21:28] Yes! I'm obsessed with everything you're saying, ohmigod. Okay! So one of the focuses in *Indigenous DC* is the history of tribal leaders, which we were just talking about, meeting with US politicians—like Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War did not know this story! Can you tell us, like, this Abraham Lincoln Civil War story?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:21:45] This is like so many things in history. There are both positives and negatives, right? So, of course, the Emancipation Proclamation dominates our understanding of Lincoln's legacy. But I've actually had the privilege to work on part of the committee and academic advisors to the centennial celebration of the Lincoln Memorial here in DC and the creation of an exhibit surrounding that. And what people often don't realize is that Lincoln ordered the largest mass execution in U.S. history in 1862. And that was in response to the military conflict between the Indigenous people and the U.S. military.

JVN [00:22:27] We need to do an episode about that. So historically, like, do a lot of these delegations start, like, in the 1800s?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:22:35] Yeah, so again, we have these delegations that are coming to DC, basically from the 1800s forward. And there are actually today about two dozen tribal leaders who are buried in the Congressional Cemetery. And these are people who came and they, in some cases built their careers and made their homes in Washington, DC., lived out the rest of their lives here. In other cases, their fate was more tragic and they succumbed to illness or accident while they were traveling away from their families. But again, in the Congressional Cemetery, we have this legacy present on the physical landscape about Native peoples

coming here to Washington, DC. As they would come, they would meet with government representatives, folks from the Interior Department, folks from Congress, the federal government, in some cases the president, and also museum officials or anthropologists, ethnographers. So it, it was always a diplomatic mission. And I think that's something that can be hard for people to totally grasp when they're inundated with this idea that Native people were, you know, "uncivilized," just sort of aimlessly roaming around until colonization happened. No, these are organized, you know, diplomatic missions. And today we continue to see that reflected through things like embassies that continue to exist in Washington, DC, like tribal nations are nations, they're governments. And they've always been such. And so we have DC being the home to Embassy Row, which everyone's very familiar and comfortable with. But there may be less familiar with the idea that there are 574 tribal nations today in 2023, and that several of these have embassy outposts in Washington where they, you know, carry out governmental and political and policy-oriented goals. That's just a story that doesn't line up with, you know, being sort of this aimless, wandering group of people. And that's not the reality. The reality is that these were diplomatic missions in much the same way that we can think about any other country or nation interacting.

JVN [00:24:59] And then, like, ultimately, like, they did accomplish tribal sovereignty through treaties, except for, like, then just the United States government does United States government stuff and, like, didn't acknowledge them or, like, doesn't like, enforce them in the way that they were agreed to.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:25:16] Right. That's, that's exactly right. And in a lot of ways, that's sort of the history of U.S.-tribal relations. We have from the beginning of colonization treaties, hundreds of treaties that outline the fact that the U.S. government recognized these various tribal nations as legitimate political entities, that they could enter into binding legal contracts with. I mean, the way that I teach that is I ask people if they've ever signed a lease and if they've ever signed a lease with someone who they thought wasn't really going to provide a living space for them. You just wouldn't do that. You wouldn't enter into a contract with somebody who you thought was an illegitimate party. So the fact that we have hundreds of times over replicated between the U.S. government and these various tribal governments, that is a recognition of inherent tribal sovereignty that tribes have always had and will always have. Now what comes into question is the extent to which their ability to operate and exercise their sovereignty is either facilitated or limited, but the sovereignty itself never goes away.

JVN [00:26:31] Does the government ever, like, try to do some treaties better and other ones worse, like, to try to pit people against each other? Like, has that happened?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:27:42] That has definitely happened. And I mean, we can even see, for example, this idea of the "five civilized tribes."

JVN [00:27:51] Oh!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:27:52] Who, you know, were forcibly removed from their homelands. And I'm Chickasaw, the Chickasaw Nation is part of this group. We were forcibly removed from our homelands in the 1830s under the Indian Removal Act. Nevertheless, there was this, this term, right "civilized," used to indicate that perhaps these tribes were more, you know, similar in their ability to relate to settlers than other tribes.

JVN [00:27:20] Wouldn't they come up with that, like, through, like, eugenics! Like wouldn't they say, like, "Evolutionarily, like, these five have more similar to us, to the Europeans and so they may be more like, you know, 'civilized' and the, like..." They would say shit like that, like, they would literally try to justify it through pseudoscientific means.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:27:37] Oh, definitely, definitely. And through things like blood quantum, through things like measuring, you know, who is sort of a "full blood" versus a "mixed" Indigenous person. Also just things like clothing, right, and language, things that, you know, are taught and learned, but also forcibly imposed upon Native peoples as part of the colonization process, as part of residential boarding school policy and so on. So absolutely, there's a strong theme of sort of pseudoscientific racism, eugenics at play. Definitely.

JVN [00:28:17] Okay, wait. And then you said blood quantum, which I think I learned about from you. Isn't the point of that to try to make it so that, like, no one will have sovereignty at some point? Because if you can't prove, like, doesn't the blood quantum need to be, like, negotiated out so that there will always be tribal sovereignty or something or do we—what do we think about this blood quantum? Is it good or is it bad for Native American people?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:28:40] It's very controversial. And I think that everybody will agree that it is not a good thing. It is a colonial imposition. It's not rooted in Indigenous ways of relating to one another or deciding who is or is not part of their community or nation. But the way that blood quantum is utilized today is through tribal laws. So tribes, as a function of their sovereignty, have the ability to create laws that either utilize or do not utilize blood quantum and that have different levels of, you know, blood quantum cutoffs if they do utilize blood quantum. So there are some tribes that use a quarter, for example, and there are other tribes that may use 1/32 or something like that.

JVN [00:29:29] Do you have to get tested or something? Like, how do they know?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:29:32] And then this is where the federal government comes back into play, is that they continually regulate and utilize blood quantum. So for example, when somebody is looking to find out what their blood quantum is, you wouldn't necessarily do a DNA test because that's not actually going to give you a representation of what blood quantum is. This is a metaphorical way about talking about blood and belonging. And so the U.S. Department of the Interior actually keeps records and issues what's called Certificates of Degree of Indian Blood, which is a card. I mean, I have one. Most Native people have one. And then the way that this actually came to be was, again, in the 1830s, you know, mid-1800s.

As tribes were being removed from their homelands and settled onto reservations, there was also this idea that we need to break up communally held reservation land into individual nuclear family plots. And when that process happened, government agents actually went out and they took a census of, you know, "Who are these families that are going to receive these plots of land?" And along with their names, their age and so on, they also included people's blood quantum, in a fraction. So it would literally say, you know, "John Doe, age 30, full" or "half" or something like that. And those documents continue to be the basis upon which Native people today trace their federal blood quantum.

JVN [00:31:15] Oh, Jesus. Yes. Okay. Wait. So does that mean that, like, some random soldier from the government, they come to the, like, to the reservation, and how would they be, like, "You're half and you're full?" Like, would it just be from, like, looking at someone or someone being, like, "My mom married," or like—

ELIZABETH RULE [00:31:32] Right. So you're getting a sense of how bonkers this whole thing really was.

JVN [00:31:38] Okay, yes! Because wasn't there also that case about, like, in the Cherokee Nation, like, a few years ago, because they were trying to say that if you were Black, then you don't qualify, because that was this whole, like, slavery thing from, like, 1860s?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:31:52] Yes. Going back to the idea of race, right. Blood quantum is basically the pseudoscience of race for Native peoples. And so then you also have the complication of having Black folks who live amongst these Native communities and are of course intermarrying, having children, and so on. And in many cases, like the Cherokee Nation example that you brought up, there was a separate census—or roll, is what they're called—for people who, you know, phenotypically were read as Black, but who may be both Black and Indigenous. Or Black, Indigenous, and white. In the same way that the Native peoples on the roll could be Indigenous or Indigenous white.

JVN [00:32:34] But then if you were, like, too much, like, air quote, "too much Black," then you didn't get to have the rights or, like, the benefits of the Native American tribe?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:32:44] Right. So if you were included on the "Freedman's Rolls," which is what they were called as a Black person, you were not entitled to the same rights that the Native people who were included on their tribal rolls were. So this is a whole process of making Indigenous peoples into a race and depriving Indigenous peoples of their rights on the basis of race.

JVN [00:33:10] Colonial impo-fuckin'-sition, that's crazy, this whole thing!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:33:14] So that there would eventually be the idea that Native people would no longer exist.

JVN [00:33:19] So sinister.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:33:22] Because if you, if you regulate this and you keep track of who's marrying who, who's having kids. If Native peoples don't just marry and have kids with one another, eventually the idea is that the government would be able to say, "This blood quantum is so low. Do you really qualify as a Native person? We're going to say 'no,' and therefore we don't need to uphold your treaty rights. We don't need to recognize you as a sovereign government. You're not really Indigenous." This is part of the insidious plan.

JVN [00:33:50] So then would it be—because there's 574 nations, like, active nations, right? Is there, like, a cute—not cute, I don't know why I say "cute" in front of everything, you're a hard-hitting journalist, Jonathan. Is there, like, some sort of, like, Congress among the Native American nations, like, where, like, everyone meets and, like, talks about, like, "None of us want to do that anymore because these fucking, goddamn American governments are going to come and take away our hard-earned rights if they can track us below a certain amount." Oooh! Or could everyone just make it so, like—or I could just not solve other people's problems because I'm codependent? Oh my God, what are we going to do? What are you guys going to do?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:34:24] It is actually a mess. This is a major sort of controversial issue in contemporary Indigenous affairs. People are on both sides, right? I mean, some people are, like, "We've always used this." Some people say, "This is colonial, we're going to get rid of it." But I think what's important to me is that we recognize that tribes are sovereign and they have the ability and the right to decide individually for themselves, how they want to address the issue.

JVN [00:34:53] Fuck, yes!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:34:54] Yeah, that's sort of where I come down on it.

JVN [00:34:57] Okay. I love that. Thank you for taking on that detour of curiosity. We're going back to the book now. We're obsessed. So for all the tribal advocacy happening within DC buildings, there's also a rich history of activism *outside* of these buildings. How have Native communities cast DC as a site of protest?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:35:14] So just, like, you know, Embassy Row or its international relations, DC is of course also famous for being the site of national protest. And this is part of our national identity, too, is that this is where people come and they hit the ground to make, you know, their statement about any particular cause that they're passionate about.

JVN [00:35:38] Yeah, storm a Capitol building. You know, you could do that for one group or like you could, you know, not storming the Capitol building if you're the other groups. Just saying, I'm sorry, I freaked out.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:35:50] You know, again, protest and activism is an area where Native people are still left out. And we don't know a whole lot about that. But again, you know, ever since its creation, there has been really strong activism unfolding in the district. So in 1972, for example, we have the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where tribal activists came again from all across the country. And that's a theme. People are always coming here from elsewhere. They came here, they caravan and they stopped at different communities, reservations all along the way, gathering support. They were supposed to meet with government officials, but actually those meetings ended up being canceled. And so the activists said, "Hey, this is the Bureau of Indian Affairs. We are those said Indians. We are going to occupy the building." And they actually occupied this building downtown for a period of six days. And again, just coming full circle with Indigenous DC. We have the activism and the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is part of the Department of the Interior. For so long this has been this very paternalistic agency that tells Native peoples what to do. And, you know, it's so exciting now that we have a Native person in charge of the Department of the Interior, and of course that's Deb Haaland. So it really comes very full circle.

JVN [00:37:17] We love Deb Haaland!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:37:19] We do love Deb Haaland. So you have really significant moments like that from the seventies, from sort of the Red Power movement all the way up to contemporary moments of Indigenous activism surrounding things like environmental concerns. The Dakota Access Pipeline had a major presence here through protest. Things like the Cowboy and Indian Alliance, where Native peoples are working with non-Native groups in solidarity around shared causes, and even things like youth runners, right, coming from places like South Dakota and running on foot to arrive here. Right, to raise awareness, to meet again with governmental representatives.

JVN [00:38:00] Oh! Running all the way to DC?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:38:03] Yes. Yes. In an action that, you know, has cultural roots, that, that type of running and bringing of messages. But also, of course, like, gathers attention and people are excited about it.

JVN [00:38:14] Yes! It's giving me, like, Native American activism, with just, like, a whisper of Forrest Gump in the moment when he, like, runs cross country and that everyone becomes obsessed.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:38:23] Right.

JVN [00:38:24] There is just something about, like, running cross-country, just like all of a sudden, like, that just gets you on the news, honey! Like, people just—what is that? It's, like, a thing, I love that.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:38:33] People love it. People love it. And Native people utilize that strategy, which I love.

JVN [00:38:39] And they probably stole that fucking strategy on Forrest Gump. You know what I'm saying? Like, Forrest Gump probably heard about that and, like, they fucking stole it. Okay, wait, no, actually keep going because I, I'm practicing not interrupting, which is not going that successfully. But DC has been a site of protest when it needs to be.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:38:55] Right. Right. And I would just say again, something that's really fascinating to me when we think about DC is—as the political capital of Indian Country—is we have things that we're familiar with like Standing Rock, like that movement was hyper local, right? We had the prayer camps. Everybody was going out there. It was a battle that was being fought very much on the ground at Standing Rock. But the other place where we see that momentum happening is in Washington, DC, where Native peoples come together also around that issue. And that's because this is a place where real, material political change can happen. So I like to use that example, too, because we have such a hyperlocal example that also pops up in DC as a place of action.

JVN [00:39:44] Okay, so: nations are nations, tribal sovereignty, which means that, like, I guess it depends on the treaty, but, like, you can make your own, like, laws and enforcing of laws. Which then made me think about Roe v Wade because that got overturned since we saw you last. And obviously there's, you know, 574 different nations but like, were people pissed, were people, like, “We're going to try to,” cause like, I haven't heard in the news, like, any of the nations being, like, “We're still going to preserve that for our people.” Or, like, has there been that? And I just didn't hear about it because, like, the media! Or what, what's happening.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:40:17] Yeah. So with the overturning of Roe v Wade, I would say the main way that Native peoples, you know, got kind of dragged into that conversation was there was suddenly this pressure primarily from, you know, white groups. And that sort of brand of white feminism to have tribal communities become abortion havens, basically—with the idea that tribes have the ability to create and enforce their own laws. But the problem with that actually is that tribal communities actually have more limited access to abortion and reproductive health care than, you know, your average person that doesn't live on a reservation. And that's because their health care that is, you know, accounted for in treaties is provided, then, by the federal government. And there's a policy that the federal government can't use its funds to support abortions.

JVN [00:41:18] Oh, the Hyde Amendment! The Hyde Amendment!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:41:20] Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And so what happened was this sort of, you know, half-informed idea that reservations could become abortion havens. But actually, you know, this is ignoring a much longer history of Native peoples' having stifled access to reproductive health care.

JVN [00:41:40] And neglect!

ELIZABETH RULE [00:41:41] Major neglect And also outright violence, you know, through things like forced sterilizations in the 1970s.

JVN [00:41:48] I was reading this article today in The Atlantic that was talking about, like, the Supreme Court justices. I'm sorry, I'm going on another tangent, but I am. But there is this case going on right now about affirmative action. And one of the lawyers said something about how, like, racism is still a current issue. And, like, one of the liberal justices said, like, you know, "Yeah," like, it's, I think they were actually talking about colonialism. And apparently Gorsuch, like, visibly put his head in his hands and was, like, visibly irritated and, you know, miffed at someone saying that, like, racism is still an issue. And sometimes I just think about, the fact that, like, Native Americans were forcibly sterilized in your lifetime, like, in our current living, breathing lifetime, like, if you don't think that that has, like, ripple effects into, like, how we think of things now? Like you're literally in denial, like you are literally in denial. And maybe that's part of the grieving process, but I need you to grieve fucking faster that you've been living in a goddamn fantasy world because fuck me sideways. That is just goddamn crazy.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:42:27] It is. It's totally crazy. And also, I just have to bring this in because of what we're talking about: it's not over, right? Like, when I teach Native American law, right. We talk about how first there was military conflict, literal war between the U.S. government and tribal nations. And then we sort of transitioned into a policy period of assimilation. And that's where we get residential boarding schools. That was because the military conflict was too costly and not that successful. So we switched focus to something like boarding schools, which were truly horrific. And there's a lot of good attention to that issue right now. Okay, but then the policy shifted toward things like adoption and foster care abuses as a way to get Native children out of their homes and communities and identities and political participation and into this, you know, whitestream America. Well, right now in the Supreme Court, there's currently a case that's taking up the Indian Child Welfare Act, which is a piece of legislation from the 1970s that specifically intends to redress the cultural genocide from boarding schools and these foster care and adoption care abuses. And it's being hotly debated in the Supreme Court right now. And what's really dangerous about this is that many of the arguments are that Native children and Native family members and adoptive homes are receiving a "race-based preference," which, of course, would be unconstitutional. But what happens is if that argument holds up and the court rules in favor of that argument, the whole basis of tribal sovereignty can crumble because this is not a race based right or privilege. These are the rights of sovereign nations with citizens that are political members of this group. This has nothing

actually to do with race. And so that's, that's just to say that these battles continue to unfold. They're still very much in the air—

JVN [00:45:56] Because basically it's the Supreme Court trying to say that, like, the very system that the government itself set up, if that were to hold up, is like null and void.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:45:05] Right. Right. Right. Exactly. And again, it's really very insidious because this case is not really actually about Native children and adoption and foster care. This is much more about the basis of tribal sovereignty and how Native people are able to exercise particular rights and privileges on the basis of their sovereign citizen status.

JVN [00:45:31] So, who's bringing that? Like, it's like a white person or—

ELIZABETH RULE [00:45:36] Yeah. White adoptive families. Because what the Indian Child Welfare Act stipulates is that when child custody proceedings are initiated, Native children have a step-by-step program that they have to go through for placement. So every effort must be made to place them in an extended family member's home. If not an extended family member, every effort must be made to place them in the home of a family from their tribe. If not that, then any Native American family. And only as a final recourse, a non-Native family. So literally, what's happening in this case is there are family members of these Native children who are in, you know, this custody situation who are coming forth, and they're basically battling with these white adoptive families over who has custody. And that's why the Indian Child Welfare Act is being questioned. And, you know, they're considering if it's constitutional or not.

JVN [00:46:38] Because it's just not race-based. It's, like, tribal sovereignty, like, treaty. Like, that was, like, negotiated with—

ELIZABETH RULE [00:46:43] Right, this was legislation that was introduced in the wake of boarding schools, like, we have this national policy that's about taking kids away from their families and putting them into these assimilation institutions where there's horrific violence.

JVN [00:46:58] Is there anything that the 574 nations could do to, like, do some sort of, like, joint legislation so it doesn't even matter at the Supreme Court says because they could just be, like, "Bitch, we don't fucking do your, we don't do that shit any fucking ways," or, like, you know, legalese for that?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:47:12] No. Because tribal nations still have to abide by federal law. And so federal law is still, you know, the king in this situation. And ICWA, the Indian Child Welfare Act is federal law. What tribes have done is come together for the proceedings. They've inserted their support into the briefs. So they are very much working together. But ultimately, what the Supreme Court decides will have an effect either for positive or negative.

JVN [00:47:44] And so for people who exist outside of, you know, like, the Native American diaspora, how do we need to, like, be aware and make sure that, like, is it something that we can voice our support to, like, our elected leaders about?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:47:57] Yes, absolutely. I mean, this is, of course, wrapped up in who the Supreme Court justices are. So next time we have to decide who a justice will be, you know, get involved, pay attention to that. But also, right, fundamentally, what this comes down to is sovereignty. And if sovereignty, you know, is going to be something that we continue to uphold, if we continue to be in alignment with treaties or if we're going to continue just ignoring them and being out of alignment. These are all contemporary issues that everyone plays a part in. And the best thing that you can do is just become informed and educated about the issue. Keep up-to-date with, you know, tribal news outlets is a great way to stay current, but understanding that, like, right now, in 2023, there's a Supreme Court case that is wrapped up with Native issues and tribal sovereignty. Like, again, I think we need to understand that this isn't something about the past. This is still very much going on right now and will have a tremendous impact either for the positive or negative.

JVN [00:49:06] So in the best case, the Supreme Court would uphold...

ELIZABETH RULE [00:49:12] ICWA.

JVN [00:49:13] ICWA.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:49:14] We want the Indian Child Welfare Act to be upheld.

JVN [00:49:17] And getting back to *Indigenous DC*, which we are so proud of you for, we love so much. You all have to read it. So for you, as Dr. Elizabeth Rule, what have the stories behind the stories in *Indigenous DC*, like, left you with? What do you feel after having written this project in the world? What was resonating with you.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:49:34] What's continually surprising to me is that your average person, members of the general public, really don't know much about this material. And that is striking to me. I mean, I've done public speaking engagements recently where I asked, "How many tribes do we think are in the U.S. right now?" And people have said zero because they think that Native peoples don't exist. They think that we're extinct or that we're, you know, just sort of a cultural minority that doesn't have any political standing. And so for me, having this project and transforming it from a public-facing mobile application now into a book that does do that deeper dive, that gives people more information and more context. You know, I just hope that people read it and that they learn more and that they can translate their interest, perhaps in our nation's capital, or even their interest in the history of this country into, you know, an interest in Indigenous history and Indigenous lives, because those stories are totally connected.

JVN [00:50:42] So this is interesting. So we talk a lot on the show about the complexities of museums, monuments. I think that for you, this is, like, a major duality, I would just imagine. Because of the things we've already said, like as a contemporary Native American woman who is researching Native American history and contemporary, like, what Native Americans are going through, like, I would just imagine that it would bring up a lot. So what are your thoughts on, like, Native artifacts in U.S. museums?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:52:09] Right. This is a really important issue. And we have some federal legislation called NAGPRA, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Even though we have this legislation on the books, which, you know, dictates essentially that Native American objects that hold particular cultural significance or that were used in funerary proceedings, for example, need to be returned and repatriated. That is still another example where we have a mismatch between legislation—so what's actually on the books—and what actually happens on the ground for Native peoples? And so I would encourage everyone to think about if your institution is in compliance with NAGPRA. And also it raises this really important issue where there's a conversation around repatriation of Native American objects that goes something like, "We would like to give these items back to tribal communities, but we're concerned that they're not going to take care of them or that they might even destroy them if we give them back." The answer to that from a stance that supports Indigenous communities and supports tribal sovereignty is that these are groups that are totally capable of determining if they want you to keep their items or if they want them back, and also that that there's no right that you or the public have to seeing items that are not intended to be seen. And we have examples like that, you know, items that are not intended to be wrapped in plastic or kept in storage because they're thought to be living items, you know, with spiritual significance or items that are only supposed to be viewed or handled by particular ceremonial leaders that are just on view for millions of people to see. And so even if that answer is maybe not satisfactory to what you would want and if you would like for particular access to that item, I think we really need to think about is that because I want access to that or do I want to do what actually supports tribal communities and actually be a real ally which involves repatriating these items?

JVN [00:53:24] Yeah, I mean, if someone broke into your house and stole your shit and then was, like, "Well, if I give it..." like, that wouldn't be cool. Yeah. No. Okay. So what are some of the DC monuments that, like, need to go and need, like, not a Queer Eye makeover but need, like, a Native American allyship makeover because, like, why are we glorifying these people who did these things.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:53:44] Yeah, I mean, for me the big ones would probably be just Columbus and Andrew Jackson as historical figures that have many, you know, statues and monuments throughout the country. You know, the Columbus Day debate is still hot and raging, which is kind of mind boggling to me. But again, I like to think about the Indigenous engagement with these spaces. Right. Like, you know, activists are engaging with them as sites of protest, which is exciting. And then Andrew Jackson also was sort of the architect

behind Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears, the Indian Removal Act of 1830. And yet we have statues of this person.

JVN [00:54:31] Yeah. \$20 bill. Is there any stories about, like, Native American people getting to come back to their ancestral lands and, like, getting to, like, reconnect with, like, their ancestors and their culture more and, like, a reestablishment of those cultures?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:54:45] Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we're living in the current policy age known as the "self-determination era." And what that means is that now, perhaps more than ever since colonialism, Native peoples are self-determining their policies. And one of the big focus areas are things like cultural revitalization, language revitalization. And so, you know, I think that all just goes along with this idea of, you know, there have been so many attempts throughout history, but also in the present moment to undermine Indigenous peoples, to either kill us physically or kill our culture, you know, prevent our identity, and political participation from continuing. But still, we have these amazing innovations in areas like language revitalization, cultural participation, and that's all still very much going on today.

JVN [00:55:43] Ah, love! Your evolution in, like, how you've covered DC. from the app to the book. I just love it so much. And how do you, what's your hope for how people will approach DC. going forward?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:56:58] I hope that when people come here, they learn that this is a place that is significant to the rest of the country. But that part of that significance has to do with its Native American history and its relevance for contemporary Indigenous communities. I hope that people channel their interest in things like the National Mall and the national monuments into also understanding the land that they're on and the many notable features across the district that are significant to Indigenous peoples, the first Americans.

JVN [00:56:31] Ah! Okay, now also we're almost done, I swear to God, I'm sorry I went over, I just love you so much I can't help it.

ELIZABETH RULE [00:56:37] No, this is great.

JVN [00:56:39] Because now that you've done this, like, historical work in DC, you've also done it in Baltimore and Maryland. Like, how can listeners kind of start to remap Native histories and learn more about it in their local area?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:56:50] The fundamental premise of this project is that all land is Indigenous land. Even if you are in a place that doesn't have a tribe nearby, that doesn't mean that that land wasn't once someone's ancestral homeland and that those connections don't still exist. So I would encourage everybody to think really critically about where they are, how they engage with the land in the space around them, how they see markers of Indigenous presence, but also perhaps colonial presence through their landscape, things like bridges,

monuments, statues, markers. And just to do the work of, of understanding what that means in a contemporary context. If I could go on a little bit of a tangent too, I would say that land acknowledgments are really popular right now and people are engaging them as a way to acknowledge the space that they're in. But for everybody who's thinking about land acknowledgment or doing a land acknowledgment, I would encourage you to take that one step further and actually actionize that acknowledgment. So, you know, metaphorically, it's like taking your water bottle or your laptop and just saying, "I have Jonathan's laptop, I have Jonathan's water bottle," and you're, like, "Okay, great. Give me my water bottle back. Like, I don't need you to just declare that you have it. I actually want it back." And so, you know, it's important that people understand the politics behind land acknowledgments in that way and that they don't just become a practice that people utilize to feel like they're engaging with Native peoples when there's actually nothing sort of materially beneficiary to Indigenous peoples about that practice.

JVN [00:58:39] So it could more be, like, "We're on X land *and* I'm contacting our representatives to fucking make sure that they tell the goddamn Supreme Court that if they don't uphold ICWA," then we're not exactly Republican again, which, obviously the Republicans would never do that. But I'm just, you know, that's a separate subject. But yes, it's, like, yes, actionize, yes. So basically that was kind of a lowkey read on, like, performative bullshit. And we love that Dr. Elizabeth Rule, didn't see it coming and I love it. Okay, wait, so— I don't know when I developed the tick of saying, "Okay, wait," I think it's because I'm really excited to talk to you and my brain is moving so fast when I talk to people. So I'm excited about that, I'm actually saying, "Okay, wait," to myself, just so you know. Now that you are teaching critical race in a, like, literal university, like, do ever, like, young Fox News-esque students take the class to try to, like, poke holes all up in your class, like, from within. Or is that not that—they don't do that?

ELIZABETH RULE [00:59:35] I personally have not had that experience. I mean, I think fundamentally what people don't understand is that critical race theory is a theory. It's been around for many decades. It's having a resurgence right now and being tacked on to very conservative political agendas in a way that actually has nothing to do with critical race theory. Fortunately, I haven't had too many trolls actually, you know, in the class or even online. But it does open up that possibility. And it's one of the ways where I see things like activism and being a public intellectual and being an academic all align and come together.

JVN [01:00:17] Yeah.

ELIZABETH RULE [01:00:18] Yeah, I do every once in a while, get the student review that says, "Dr. Rule is really, you know, sort of, like, left thinking," and that they didn't appreciate that. But it's also because I teach classes that are called, like, "American Dreams, American Lives," and we investigate the origin and actual reality behind some of these concepts.

JVN [01:00:40] But I think I mean, not that I get it, but I think that, like, when I started to learn about some of these things, which, like, I wasn't learning about it in college, it was just, like, on my own later on, I did take things personally and did think, like, "Eh!" Not that that's cute, but it's just that happens. And then you're, like, "Oh, that's, that's the unlearning. That's what that feels like." Like, you didn't realize that you were, like, in the toxic soup.

ELIZABETH RULE [01:01:03] Right. And unlearning is such a big part of what I do. And I hope that we can eventually get to a place where, you know, the next generation of adults doesn't have to go through that process of unlearning. I mean, that's probably the first half of my Native Studies classes that I teach is unlearning, confronting those stereotypes, confronting all the ideas that we think we have and know about Native peoples that actually are not true. And we have to unlearn that and erase that and work through it before we can even start from zero. There's actually a great book called *Everything You Know About Indians is Wrong*, that I would also really recommend to people.

JVN [01:01:44] Have to read. Okay, I also have, like, one more, like, left field sidebar question only because I watched the first three episodes last night and then I knew that we were doing this today. It's not why I watched it, I just, I keep seeing this guy who I follow on TikTok talking about it, and I was, like, "Oh, I'll start watching it cause I've been watching *Downton Abbey* for, like, the fifth time in a row." And I was, like, "Jesus Christ, Like, I need to, like," I must try something. so okay, so I'm on like episode three of *Yellowstone*, maybe four. Three or four. Isn't it giving, like, not great contemporary, like, there was a few things are, like, "Mmmm! I don't know," like it's kind of, like, not great, right?

ELIZABETH RULE [01:02:20] Yeah, I mean, I don't know, I haven't seen it. I want to watch it. But I would say something that sort of gives me pause out the gate are the set up, the plot about sort of like the West and, you know, just sort of from the beginning, I'm like, "Do we really need *another* story that's set in this sort of, like, Wild West-evoking feeling that we have about Native peoples." Like, I would recommend that everybody watch *Reservation Dogs*, watch *Rutherford Falls*. You know, diversify.

JVN [01:02:52] I think I got confused with *Yellowstone* and that other Helen Mirren one that's, like, the precursor to it. But because I heard that there was, like, a prequel, I was, like, "Oh, is it giving, like, ruffled dresses? Like, in a house?" Like, I was—cause I'm really triggered by *Downton* and it's, like, a period thing. Like, not because of the bad stuff. I think it's just like the hair and makeup of contemporary hairstylist doing their spend on like the 18, like, whatever, like, I'm just, like, "Oh, I love, like, a 2023 finger wave. They're so pretty." And then I just lose all my mind. Like, I just lose all of my, like, ability to, like, judge history and stuff. Okay, wait, so I'm going to my last question. I'm so proud of us that we got there. It was, like, ah, I love you so much, I can't see that. But what's next for you in your work? Where can we be following you? Like, what's the tea?

ELIZABETH RULE [01:03:32] Yes, so many exciting things for what's coming next. The work never stops but that's what I like about this. So you can follow me on Twitter at @ERuleDC. I'm also on TikTok under the same name and on Instagram. It's at @ERule.DC. So I'm on all the social media. And you can also follow our accounts for the Guide to Indigenous DC, The Guide to Indigenous Maryland, The Guide to Indigenous Baltimore and my company that's housing all of these projects, The Guide to Indigenous Lands Project. Our website where you can learn more is GuidetoIndigenousLands.com or I have my own website, which is ElizabethRule.com, so you can get in touch and I would love that. What's coming next also is, of course, we have the book coming out in April. You can pre-order it now on Amazon or on Barnes and Noble, and that will be launching in April. I'm also working on an exhibit for the National Mall that is collecting oral histories about these sites in Indigenous DC, actually from peoples own perspectives and experiences. So those videos are going to be eventually embedded into the app, but also curated into an exhibit that I'm taking onto the National Mall this summer. I also have this Kennedy Center fellowship. So I'm going to continue working in that direction. And I have to say, Jonathan, I'm also starting a podcast. I'm very inspired by the podcast, so and so. Myself and a friend, colleague of mine, Dr. Mali Collins, are starting *rlty101*. That's *rlty101* where we're going to investigate and analyze reality TV from an academic perspective.

JVN [01:05:25] Yeah. Oh my God, how exciting. Oh my God.

ELIZABETH RULE [01:05:29] I'm also coming out with a line of swag for *Indigenous DC*, so you can get that soon on GuidetoIndigenousLands.com. We're going to have, you know, swag, shirts, clothes, stickers.

JVN [01:05:43] Gotta have a good hoodie in there.

ELIZABETH RULE [01:05:46] Buttons, right. All this stuff. If you want to rep Indigenous DC, if you want to get a different type of tourist souvenir or if you are an Indigenous person who has been in or worked in or lived in DC and want to sort of represent that, we're going to have that merchandise coming soon.

JVN [01:06:04] I've been thinking it since we started, but I was, like, "I can't go in with a double compliment of, like, earrings and brows." But then My A.D.D., like, violently attacked me as you were answering that question, because these brows you guys, like, we're going to get a picture of this for socials, right, because you're just—no, the glam today is fucking glamming, and it's really just, like, do you need to do a tutorial on your TikTok about, like, brows?

ELIZABETH RULE [01:06:26] Oh, my gosh, thank you so much.

JVN [01:06:28] Dr. Elizabeth Rule, I'm so grateful for you and your work and everything that you've shared with us. You are just, like, the most amazing teacher. And if I was in college, like,

you would be my literal first choice. Thank you so much for just being like, so, like, patient with us and just an amazing teacher. I took so many notes. I just learn so much from you every time you come and I'm just so grateful for you and your work, and we can't wait to see you again on Getting Curious.

ELIZABETH RULE [01:06:51] Oh, thank you so much for having me. It's been so much fun, and I'm just really honored to be here and have the opportunity to talk about this, especially with you and all the good work that you do. So thank you.

JVN [01:07:02] I love you to pieces, thank you so much for coming back. You've been listening to Getting Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. Our guest this week was Elizabeth Rule. You'll find links to her work in the episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on. Our theme music is "Freak" by Quiñ - thanks to her for letting us use it. If you wanna follow us on Instagram & Twitter @CuriousWithJVN, go for it. We also may be starting a TikTok soon! Our editor is Andrew Carson. Getting Curious is produced by me and Erica Getto, with production support from Julie Carrillo, Chris McClure, and Erin McKeon.