

Post-Production FILE

EPISODE 26 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2019 HONORING OUR INDIGENOUS  
SISTERS

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>> Welcome to Stories of Transformation an NRCVD Radio Podcast Production. I am your host, Yvonne Ortiz. Today, March 8, is International Women's Day, a global day of recognition and celebration marking the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Each year, NRCVD celebrates International Women's Day by commissioning or purchasing a piece of artwork that honors the struggles and successes of gender equity and justice. This year, we joined the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center to honor the survival and resiliency of Native women.

Cody Hammer is a member of the Cherokee Nation and descendant of them as Cody Creek Nation. His photo, The Silenced Sister, depicts a Native woman standing in a crowd, staring at the viewer. On her face is the red handprint. All others in the crowd are facing away and in black and white. Cody uses his image to bring awareness to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls by representing the woman or girl who was silenced and was always in the crowd. You can view the image at [NRCVD.org/IWG](http://NRCVD.org/IWG). We are honored to have Cody join us today to discuss his artwork activism, MMIWG, and raising strong, young women.

>> Hi, Cody. How are you? Welcome to our show.

>> I'm good. How are you?

>>> Good, good, good. So you are the father of three little girls. Have you been changed by them?

>> Oh, yes, of course. I became a dad, really young.

So, you know, I kind of grew up with them early on.

I learned quick that I wasn't worried about myself anymore and right away, I understood like that true love that your parents have for you. I got to experience that with, of course, my first daughter. So it was a awesome experience. And they've kind of just -- they came to me in my life at the right time. I was still in college, and it just it just felt right when they were there, and I'm

not saying I had a bad direction going. I just -- they gave me more of a purpose to do what I was doing.

>> So, you know, as a father, a guy, how can you -- is there is there a way that you can just create social change or help creating social change in our world?

>> I believe so. I think that with my girls, I wanted them to know you -- well, of course, it's important that I take an active role in my life.

Of course. And I want to give them like a sense of security and protection.

It's really important to me that they understand like their self-value and, and just that in the world, the future, everything gets tough and it gets hard. And I don't know, I want people to look up to them, in a sense, to show that that they are doing it, that they're going -- because girls can do it just as good as boys. And I want them to believe it, and I don't want them to feel any lower than that. And it just means a lot to me that I'm able to try to show them that a way I think they should be treated and to not expect anything less, because all I have a daughter is so nice. And I feel like that they live in that way as they get older that it will also impact other women in their live and even each other, because they're all sisters.

>> Beautiful. So let's talk about your artwork. For DC at the NRCDV commission, one of your pieces. And it's really powerful. And we are very, very excited. We're going to be sharing your artwork through all of our friends, family members, people in the domestic violence movement that worked really hard. So tell me about this image. It looks like maybe it's a march for the for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Is that right?

>> Well, it was actually back in January. The Oklahoma City here in Oklahoma was doing a women's march. And part of the women's march had something to do with MMIWG the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. And so it was kind of a mixture of both at the state capitol, and I like I said, I do photography. So I went -- my wife -- I was going actually to stay home with our youngest daughter. She wasn't feeling too great, but I thought, "Well, this would be a good day to get some photos, and to kind of cover something that's impactful." And it goes back to me having the daughters. I knew it's something that they would see and would have an impact on them.

So it was just kind of one of those spur of the moments, because the lady in the picture is actually my wife with the handprint. And she just happened to look at, and the sun was hitting there just right, and there was just a perfect leading line to her, and it just felt right at the moment. And so it was nothing staged. It just it just worked out the way it was supposed to, and I snapped it pretty much. And it actually was in color. But I thought the black and white made it more -- I don't know what do you call that? Like if she was alone and nobody noticed her, and I just -- it just felt right when I did it. And I couldn't have been more happier. And I'm glad that it has an impact, or its impact people the way it has. And not just with all of you guys, like even people with here that we live around her or that I posted around friends and stuff. And I heard , "Man, it's such like an empowering image, but it's also kind of emotional. And so I'm glad that it's -- more or less people are inspired by it, and I'm glad it can do that.

>> What's with your connection, and there's an obvious connection with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and I'm not saying the acronym because I would mess it up ,

especially because my Spanish starts to come out. But what's your connection? Are you involved with them that you work with them?

>> Well, my mother-in-law is actually a domestic violence director here for the Osage Nation in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. And other than that, I have never really done or been around any kind of thing like that before, except, of course, you hear stories and stuff. But as the older I got, you hear statistics. There's stuff like that and like the Indigenous Native women are always up really high, just like any kind of minority. The women are always higher in like the abusable or abusive terms. And so since my mother-in-law has been with that, I kind of hear stuff, not really of her clients, just stories, and so it's just been very kind of impactful, because in my mind and growing up, with my dad, my dad was a certain way, and so you respect women and just all that stuff. So I could never imagine girls going through anything like that, and then, like I said, I didn't realize how much of an impact it was towards like Native women.

So, then of course, having three daughters, I just -- it's you know my eyes look to it. It breaks my heart for like the families and the girls that have to go through that and the women and the mothers and daughters, because I know that I cannot physically be there to help them, but I want to try my best to get like a voice out there to let them know that not all men or like that. You can trust whoever, and I want to be able to be that voice for good men. You know, I'm not trying to sound conceited about it, but it just it just drives me crazy that women and girls go through that, because that could be my mom. That could be my grandma. I could be my daughter, my wife, and I just feel there is no excuse for a woman to have to go through that. And I just want to get it out there.

>> Thank you so much. It's a very, very powerful message. So tell me, you are definitely an artist. What inspires you?

>> Well, what inspires me would probably be my family, my kids, my wife and of course, just my whole family in general because I'm very close with my family and even my wife's family. We're all very close. And I don't want say they make me, but they push me. And I love being pushed, I guess. I love a challenge. I love stuff like that, so whenever it comes to pictures, it just naturally kind of comes, and I've always kind of had a creative edge. And I never knew what it was until the day I picked up a camera, and ever since then, it's been there for me. And it's just another way to kind of get away, 'cause a lot of people get real uncomfortable in front of a camera. So when I'm behind one, I actually feel really comfortable because I do feel like nobody notices me, and I can see it through a whole different world, I guess. And so just really -- it's just the creative mindset in my family that really push me and inspire me a lot to do what I do.

>> Great. So just one more question.

>> OK.

>> You are a member of the Cherokee Nation, right? A descendent of the Muskogee Creek Nation. What can hiring allies like myself and non-Native. How can we get involved and support our Native brothers and sisters?

>> I think just speaking up and doing stuff just like this, like what we're doing, this interview, because I think with all this stuff going on towards Native people like the mascots and stuff like that, like we're put off -- it gets put off like no big deal, when really it is, and just like with the

girls, it just gets put off because it's like, "Oh, it's another Native problem." It really it's an everybody problem, because we're all people. We got to try to come together, Native, non-Native Hispanic, anything. Just, we've got to come together as people and try to be the best we can for each other and just keep trying to make the world better.

>> Wonderful. Great message. Well, thank you so much, Cody. It's been a pleasure, and I want for everybody, we're going to be posting and sharing the image on social media. And of course, we're going to share Cody's information, if you want to look into more of his art. So thank you so much, Cody. It's been a pleasure and an honor to have you as one of our International Women's Day artists. Thank you so much.

>> Yes. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.

[MUSIC]

>> You just listened to Stories of Transformation, NRCDV Radio Podcast Production. Thank you to Cody Hammer for joining me and for sharing your story and talents with all of us. And thank you to the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center for connecting us with Cody. Visit him on Facebook at Reduced Lunch Photography or Instagram at the Cody Hammer. To learn more about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, visit [NIWRC.org](http://NIWRC.org). Follow us on Twitter, Facebook. and Instagram at NRCDV. To hear more NRCDV podcasts and to access additional resources on gender-based violence and related topics, visit [NRCDV.org](http://NRCDV.org). Stories of Transformation is NRCDV Radio Podcast Production brought to you by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Support is provided by the Administration and Children Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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