

## José Santos Woss Oral History Transcript

**Interviewee:** José Santos Woss

**Interviewer:** Kit Heintzman

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**Abstract:** Kit Heintzman interviews José Santos Woss regarding working as the Director for Justice Reform with the Friend Committee on National Legislation, a career in justice and equity, moving in with his partner early in the pandemic and buying a house in Baltimore, becoming engaged during the pandemic, postponing the wedding, becoming a foster parent, working remotely, moving, commuting, advocacy in Congress, the difference between religion and spirituality, and many more subjects.

**Kit Heintzman 00:03**

Hello. Hi. Would you please start by stating your full name, the date, the time and your location?

**José Santos Woss 00:10**

José Santos Woss, it is May 24 2002? No 2022. I was watching a documentary Sorry. It's 11:04am. I am in Baltimore, Maryland. But my organization is based in Washington DC.

**Kit Heintzman 00:32**

And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under Creative Commons License attribution noncommercial sharealike?

**José Santos Woss 00:42**

Yes.

**Kit Heintzman 00:43**

Thank you so much, would you please just start by introducing yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening to this.

**José Santos Woss 00:50**

My name is José Santos Woss. I'm the director for justice reform at the Friends Committee on national legislation, which basically means that I work on criminal legal system reform to make communities safer, while focusing on non-carceral solutions to violence. As well as making democracy more accessible to all at a quicker lobby.

**Kit Heintzman 01:17**

Tell me a story about life during the pandemic.

**José Santos Woss 01:21**

Wow. A lot of life has happened. I became a foster parent. And I was able to do a lot with doctor's visits with the teams after school programs and picking up from daycare while maintaining a full-time job and trying to enact federal policy change in Congress, which I have no idea how people did before the pandemic, because work from home has afforded that to me. I'm also not particularly great at stories. So, this is probably the best that I can do.

**Kit Heintzman 02:02**

May I ask when you adopted your foster child.

**José Santos Woss 02:05**

So, we haven't adopted we've only been fostering, which means that they were not in a good situation. So they are temporarily placed in our home until the court decides what is the next step. Usually, the next step means reunification with their family.

**Kit Heintzman 02:25**

And when did that start?

**José Santos Woss 02:27**

April 2021,

**Kit Heintzman 02:29**

April 2021. What was the process of getting a foster child like during the pandemic?

**José Santos Woss 02:38**

So, I'd say the only changes that it involved a remote learning component. I'm not sure if it if they did this in person beforehand. But we were in a training program, put together by Baltimore Department of Social Services, which looked at attachment style trauma, working with biological or bio families. And yeah, and then being up until three o'clock, two o'clock in the morning, because the baby's in the hospital getting evaluated, and then getting a little girl at seven o'clock in the morning. That's my experience. Everyone's different.

**Kit Heintzman 03:23**

What brought you to the decision to foster?

**José Santos Woss 03:29**

Love to say it was my great idea, but it was not. My fiancé has always said that she has been afforded a lot. She's been able to do a lot and she has a lot to offer. And she wants to provide space love and a home to someone who needed it. And I thought that was a wonderful idea and that we should do it. And I've been supporting her ever since.

**Kit Heintzman 03:57**

Pre pandemic, what was your day to day looking like?

**José Santos Woss 04:03**

Well, I didn't live across state lines. So, I was still living in Washington, DC. I'd walk quite literally two minutes to my office, review emails, see where things stood with just the political landscape, then more specifically criminal legal system reform. I'd look at what the various coalition's that I'm either on or leading are doing. And then I essentially add that into a body of knowledge that helps me with going onto Capitol Hill Congress and having conversations with staff have lawmakers of the House or the Senate to create policy change. Sometimes we get we get it right and it's an iterative process that spanned a decade like we did in 2018, with the First Step Act, which was a comprehensive piece of legislation that made the criminal legal system more fair by reducing criminal sentences for people who were convicted of drug felonies, as well as, as well as improving prison conditions and providing for services for folks in communities across the country who wants to get out. That was just one really great example of us getting a huge win for our communities across the country and seeing 1000s of people that are let out of prison. And then there are days where doesn't go as well. And we have a bill that would like that would like to make elections more fair, more just more open to all and provide for a federal solution to rampant voter suppression, which we're seeing across the country. So, we're, we're still working on that. I started working on that, before the pandemic, much of the work really was focused on campaign finance reform, because there's just so much money that gets thrown into campaigns, and regular people don't have a voice, or they don't have the voice that they should have in our system. So yeah, that's kind of an overview of what it was like, before the pandemic, I think, a lot more suits a lot more impressive meetings, a lot more metro to go from coalition meeting, the coalition meeting, a lot less read and buttons on Zoom. So, the work continues, is still the same work, still the same problems, but it's a lot less in person, and much more computer screens now.

**Kit Heintzman 06:53**

Would you share anything more about how the dynamic has changed in your workplace since moving online, and in the work that you're doing more generally,

**José Santos Woss 07:04**

I'd say, much better work life balance, one of my favorite things has turned into folding laundry during coalition meetings. So that's been great, which I obviously couldn't do in 2019. But the other thing is, it's made this more accessible, I can have a meeting with Senator Young's office and invite someone from

Gary Indiana to join the call, which would have been a lot harder to do before because it would have been me in person and one of the Senate office buildings, and trying to do a conference call, which sometimes isn't clear. So yeah, I'd probably say those things, just more work life balance, which has helped a lot, especially being a foster parent, and also opening up doors for people who probably can't make the trip out to Washington DC as much as they'd like to. And it makes it more more equitable. Because if you don't have the money to hop on a plane and go to a conference, you can just open up Zoom and part, be a part of a conversation to affect policy change. So, I think that that's been a big change in the pandemic. And also, probably the only other thing that I'd say is I think more gets done, because it's not this traveling from meeting to meeting, it's just clicking links. Now, I don't have to leave my desk to go hop on the red line, get on the metro, and go to Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, or near the White House for a meeting. I can just go on Zoom. And I can fit in more meetings. In my day, so yeah, I probably say those three would be the biggest changes.

**Kit Heintzman** 08:58

Has your personal relationship to productivity changed?

**José Santos Woss** 09:05

I think so, I think I can do a lot more because I'm not traveling as much. I don't need to be in Washington, DC to do what I do. So, I feel like there's more that I can do. Yeah, yeah, that's probably what I'd say. And just don't have the budget time between meetings for travel. I think just scheduled like today I have nonstop meetings from 10am to about one ish, one o'clock ish. And I probably couldn't have done that. Before the pandemic.

**Kit Heintzman** 09:49

What prompted you to move out of Washington and into Baltimore.

**José Santos Woss** 09:54

My fiance's family is here and also when you do good work, you forego salary to be able to do that, oftentimes, almost always, actually always. And it just felt like buying a home in Washington DC was getting three mortgages for the price of one. And just in Baltimore, you got literally twice the house for half the price. And the other issue was childcare, childcare is a literal mortgage in Washington, DC. And that's if you can find it if you can access it, because there's just not the capacity, there's not the space for these kids. Which sometimes really aggravates me because I had a friend of a friend who said that she was going to move in to her husband's base, because they have touted it as like, literally everything in this country, if it's connected to violence, or a gun, we provide for it, including daycare. And I think about that constantly. And it's just incredible to me that so many people profess to be quote unquote, pro pro life, but you still have to pay an arm and a leg for daycare, and pre-K and all these services aren't just free. So that's kind of a silent medium rant. But that's part of why we didn't choose Washington DC. And I have to apologize I have to just check on the door for my fiancé. Give me one second, sorry. She's

not here yet. But I'm gonna just be by the door. There's just been a lot of crime lately, and our neighborhood. So, I was just, I like to walk around.

**Kit Heintzman 11:53**

To the extent that you're comfortable sharing what have been some of your experiences of health and healthcare infrastructure prior to the pandemic?

**José Santos Woss 12:08**

The more I come into contact with the American healthcare system, the more aggravated I become. I had to go into surgery in 2014. And thankfully, they accepted my insurance, but there were hospital bills, which were separate from the providers bill, which was separate from the anesthesiologist bill. I don't know, it's just the human body here feels like it's commodified. And it's not seen as a human being in the healthcare space, because everything is so monetized everything has \$1 figure attached to it. That it's one of the things that really upset me the most about this country that health care healthcare isn't a right. And it's so hard to even work in that direction. Because any movement in that, in that direction is demonized as being socialism and communism is coming here and it's like no, just you believe in human rights and you feel like and and you think that if everyone if every life has dignity and rights, being healthy should also be a right and we should all contribute to that. And we do so we we do that a little bit when it comes to partly when it comes to individuals were indigent and also people who are old, but if you're not those two things, well, good luck. The Affordable Care Act has helped but there's still gaps and they're still enormous expenses that that are involved in this and give me one second sorry about that. Okay, yeah, so that's, that's what I would say.

**Kit Heintzman 14:22**

Do you remember when you first heard about COVID-19?

**José Santos Woss 14:33**

I want to say either February, or March of 2020. My cousin lives in lives right outside of London. And I think you shared an article about it. And I just I just remembered when there were certain countries are shutting down there. have borders and I was like, wow, this is a thing that's happening. This is really serious. I didn't follow it that closely. But when I started learning that you can get it and then does literally die. Which virtual is breathing in air then kills you, which is just unbelievable. That was pretty scary.

**Kit Heintzman 15:30**

Do you remember what some of your reactions were in the beginning and how you started changing behavior?

**José Santos Woss** 15:49

I try not move onto the Metro because enclosed space, lots of people when we close down the office make sure not to go to bars again in closed space, lots of people. Yeah, I think that those are the those are the main changes that I made. Most of I like to do anyways, kind of run. So luckily, I can still do that. And I can just go outside and go out for a run because it's outside. But yeah, those are probably two of the biggest changes that I made. didn't go anywhere near the Metro in DC. And I made sure to avoid enclosed spaces.

**Kit Heintzman** 16:40

What's it been like being in a relationship during the pandemic for you.

**José Santos Woss** 16:44

We've been able to sandwich like five years into one, so I was spending a lot more time with my fiancée. I moved into her place temporarily. Just so it doesn't get lonely. And we just work together a lot for that year for March 2020 to the end of 2020. We were together and it was all time because we're not we weren't going anywhere. And then towards the end of 2020 we bought our house here in Baltimore. So, then we moved to Baltimore. And we had been together which was literally just months after we met. Because we met at September 2019. So, it feels like September 2019 to March 2020 was that span of time. And then September March 2020. To the end of the year felt like three years because it's just so much time spent together. That brought conflicts to surface, it brought disagreements to surface, and we worked through them, and it was really intense and really condensed and are going to be married in a few weeks in three weeks.

**Kit Heintzman** 18:30

Congratulations!

**José Santos Woss** 18:32

Thank you.

**Kit Heintzman** 18:34

Did you get engaged during the pandemic?

**José Santos Woss** 18:36

Yes, January 10th, I believe. January 10th, 2021, we got engaged.

**Kit Heintzman** 18:42

Would you tell me about that?

**José Santos Woss 18:45**

Yeah. Luckily it went well which she said yes. Which is never given. Especially when you're meeting you're not into celebrations or events but I asked her best friend to come out with us to Rock Creek Park which is a beautiful expansive National Park in just the heart of DC with rock formations, small mountains, trees, creeks and it just went out for a hike and wonder about the water while was five minutes before then I passed my phone to her best friend, I said something dumb like, "oh when I look at this picture is great or something" so that she can have it ready to record us and then I got down on one knee and I proposed

**Kit Heintzman 19:58**

How did how did the pandemic shape, sort of the wedding plans?

**José Santos Woss 20:05**

We had to push it back. Originally, we wanted to get married on a palindrome. So February, February 20th 2022, which was a palindrome. And that was the height of Omicron. So, almost as it was just starting up. And then at the end of last year, we just decided that we needed to push it back. We pushed it back, we just told our guests that it would be late spring, early summer. And a few weeks ago, one of the few weeks of February March. We told everyone that was going to be on June 19. So yeah, it pushed everything back. Made getting resort reservations even harder because it was sort of sandwiched into a shorter timeframe. And folks didn't have as much time to book the rooms. But tis that side isn't the pandemic, I guess.

**Kit Heintzman 21:13**

I'm curious, 2020 to present have had so much going on beyond the pandemic. What are some of the other issues that have been taking up space in your mind?

**José Santos Woss 21:26**

Well, there are a lot of carjackings, armed carjackings in Baltimore, armed robberies, burglaries. People in Baltimore think that we can address it just by having more police. And it's more complicated than that. And the solutions are more long term, and they aren't going to feel as immediate, which is different than what law enforcement does, it makes you feel good, like you're safe, and just happen to have more cops on the street. But that doesn't get rid of poverty, it doesn't get rid of lack of investment in services in the community. And so crime still happened to me and if you see my police. So that's been taking up a lot of my mental space. Like just just something small. I'm always on my phone, I am always connected to my phone because of notifications. If something happens, I don't want to be there. I don't want to be there with my family. I'm always checking my messages to see when my fiance is getting home, so that I can be ready by the door to open the door and be there to receive her to come in. Because I never know somebody could be walking down the tree with a gun. And this is really terrifying. So that's really just changed my life and my perspective. And it's been really hard.

**Kit Heintzman 23:00**

With your experience in prison justice work, how do you what are your thoughts about COVID in the prisons in the US?

**José Santos Woss 23:10**

It's been really sad, we don't we don't think about it, I see it because I see the news covering prisons. But something as simple as washing your hands, you can't do that in a lot of prisons, and I'm gonna have soap. And so, something that's already so infectious, so communicable. It's ran rampant in prisons, and we barely thought about it, we will luckily had the Cares Act, which was a bill that passed summer of last, you know, even before that, I don't remember the timeframe it was sometime between the pandemic, probably late 2020, early 2021. And one of the elements of that bill was to provide for more home confinement or transitioning people out of prisons into their homes, just to get them to a safer place, especially if they have conditions that make them more susceptible to COVID-19, or makes them more deadly in their bodies. And also, just lightens the load on the prison system so that there's not a better but a slightly better response to it. But these are people who are in prison, and they have committed crimes, so society doesn't view them as having the same dignity and worth as just their neighbor down the street. And that's really sad because these are people. Yes, they've made mistakes, but they're human beings and their lives are being threatened much more than ours because of the conditions that they're in.

**Kit Heintzman 24:57**

What brought you to prison justice work?

**José Santos Woss 25:03**

It's very indirect. I used to be a social worker. And my focus was on refugee resettlement, and HIV AIDS and homelessness. I saw all of these problems and all these systems that are broken, and I wanted to do something that could affect change the macro level, something larger scale. So that's when I decided to get a job on Capitol Hill and work in Congress. I did that for about two years. And then I just got lucky, I managed to get a job at the American Friends Service Committee as their policy fellow. And within my portfolio ambitions was criminal legal system reform. And I learned a lot. And I saw what was happening to change the system at the federal level, which later I found out isn't as impactful as working on it on working on it at all the state levels, because the federal incarceration rate is about 20,000 people, the state incarceration rate is about 1.7 million people. But as far as a system is concerned, the federal system is the biggest system. So and once, you have changed there, it ripples outside of that as well. So, I just managed to get a start as a policy fellow at AFSC. And doing criminal legal system reform. And yeah, I just got really fortunate, and I stuck with it since about 2015, I'd say, yeah.

**Kit Heintzman 26:42**

I'm curious, what does the word health mean to you?



**José Santos Woss 26:52**

Your body's operating function, you feel comfortable, you feel safe, you feel well.

**Kit Heintzman 27:02**

What are some of the things you'd like for your own health and the health of people around you?

**José Santos Woss 27:11**

Healthy food exercise, which given everything that's going on has not been happening. And access, pay through insurance or otherwise, providers that can help with any ailments that you have.

**Kit Heintzman 27:37**

What are some of the structural changes you think, need to happen so that we can get there?

**José Santos Woss 27:45**

So, preface this by saying that we're really far from this, but we need to take the profit motive out of the healthcare system, it just needs to be like Medicare, expand that out and have that cover everyone. I think Medicare for all, is the solution to go with. It not only would have a downward pressure on prices for for healthcare services, but it also afford people the access to coverage and services that they need to be healthy. Obviously, then this spans out to something wider and more complex because we're you have to look at the availability of residencies and hospitals. In teaching programs, you have to look at the cost of medical education, which is very, very common for a young doctor leaving medical school with \$200,000 dollars in debt, which is a staggering figure even just think about but when you think about compounding interest on top of \$200,000 it's just astronomical. So, we have to also look at that. To look at education America, which that is a part of. So yeah, I would say just we need a robust public option so that every single person is viewed with dignity and not \$1 figure.

**Kit Heintzman 29:21**

What does safety mean to you?

**José Santos Woss 29:27**

You're free from harm, you have food, you have a way to self-actualize to do the work that you want to do that you're passionate about. Because that just helps your mental health with your purpose that everyone has that there's no want there's no need. I obviously can't predict the future. So, I can't say that will be the the elimination of all crime, but there'll be a drastic reduction in all crime. And that would create safety because so much of crime happens because of other root causes such as poverty, lack of housing, addiction, lack of indoor services, if you address these things, then you create the conditions for a better life for everyone. And then there's less.

**Kit Heintzman 30:23**

Thinking about safety in the sort of narrow confines of the COVID pandemic, what are some of the things that you've changed in order to feel safer?

**José Santos Woss 30:40**

I've recently become a little bit more comfortable with mass transit. So I've been taking some trains, but I've still been avoiding enclosed spaces, I always use masks. I don't touch any handles at all door handles, freezer door handles, refrigerator door handles at the supermarket. Just little changes like that, I'm always having hand sanitizer on me, just ways of being much more vigilant with touch points and being really calm.

**Kit Heintzman 31:15**

How's your relationship to touch changed?

**José Santos Woss 31:20**

I used to really like to shake folks hands. Now I don't like that as much anymore. I'll wave or I'll do an elbow bump. The spontaneity the occasional hug, but very occasional. But that doesn't really exist anymore. I don't do that, either. So yeah, I think that relationship has really changed out of fear.

**Kit Heintzman 31:51**

What are some of your coping strategies for managing the fear?

**José Santos Woss 31:55**

Feeling good about the precautions, hand sanitizer masks, washing hands regularly. Feeling like I'm doing the right things. And then understanding that I can't control it beyond that.

**Kit Heintzman 32:25**

In circumstances when you've been communicating with others, what are some of the ways that you've shared and negotiated boundaries about safety?

**José Santos Woss 32:40**

Say around February, March, when my office was transitioning to a hybrid model. I just was very clear about I don't feel comfortable because sure I'm vaxxed and boosted. But with an infant in our care. They literally do not have an immune system. So, I don't feel comfortable getting onto a train going into an office not knowing what to expect. So that's probably one of the clearest boundaries. And I said, beyond that. I haven't had this had many boundaries.

**Kit Heintzman 33:21**

How did you come to the decision to get vaccinated?

**José Santos Woss 33:26**

I didn't want to die. Just it just seems pretty obvious as we know how this works. People who get paid a lot more than I do people who understand the system, and science much more than I do have say that we need to do this. And we at this point have had more than 2 million people die. And I just thought that this is a very low cost for my life.

**Kit Heintzman 33:50**

How are you feeling about the immediate future?

**José Santos Woss 33:59**

Don't know, I just I just wish that I could see more happening in Congress, more actions being taken to prioritize the needs of people in the country. I just feel like we have our ways of thinking about things and our ways of thinking about the world. Like the only response to crime is police. The only response to someone committing a crime is accountability. And just not broadening up beyond that to look at root causes to look at societal factors to look at. We literally had hundreds of people stormed the US Capitol to commit a coup. Maybe we should look at how our education is educating people in the country to view their institutions. But no, we're barely barely reforming the [stumbles] Electoral Count Act. So, it's just it does not feel hopeful sometimes.

**Kit Heintzman 35:14**

What are some of your hopes for a longer-term future?

**José Santos Woss 35:27**

I think the world is changing, the country's changing. People who look like me are the majority. I think this creates a space of different understanding different ways of viewing the world. Some of the fastest growing economies are economies where people of color live. And this has, for me, that's that's hope, because we can transition away from the thinking that God is here. And with more people who think differently, the world is going to change. I think that gives me help. And I'm just going to tell us a story.

**Kit Heintzman 36:30**

Who's been supporting you over the last couple of years?

**José Santos Woss 36:34**

My fiancée, my family, my family, my fiancé, she's, she really pushes me to strive for better, even little, not little, but like my house, I want to "Yeah, that's fine. That'd be fine." I just, I'm just scratching my water. I'll just shrug things off. And then she just won't let me do that. If I'm thinking something, something's heavy on my mind, she won't let me just buried it down. She'll make sure that we talked about it. So, that's been a great support. And then definitely a different way of looking at life.

**Kit Heintzman 37:17**

What have been some of the ways that you've been taking care of yourself?

**José Santos Woss 37:22**

Well, at various points, various points in 2021, do more running. But I haven't been able to with just being a foster parent, and just work planning a wedding. watching Netflix, in other words, I've balanced and has been just throwing Netflix in the background and emptying the dishwasher. I've been watching this awesome documentary on f1. This has been really fascinating. And I also like to talk in spite of my age, it's not meant for me, but I like to talk and Twitter. And these things have been given me both information and joy.

**Kit Heintzman 38:13**

Tell me something about the importance of joy.

**José Santos Woss 38:18**

Life is fleeting and short. There's a lot of nasty things in the world. And it's something that counterbalance that you need joy, because every single moment is a death and this life is not promised and it's not forever. So as much as you can to to toy. You really just should just for yourself.

**Kit Heintzman 38:45**

I'm coming to the end of my questions, and the last ones are a bit odd. Okay. What do you wish more people knew about history?

**José Santos Woss 38:59**

I wish I had this African proverb. It's so good. I think it says until the lion learns how to write the history will be told through the eyes of the hunter. And so much of what we learn is through a white colonial lens. Manifest Destiny, you know, we were destined to centrally subjugating college have been Americans. And there's so much that I didn't learn until college. And then and then I realized how much I didn't learn in college. And then there were things that I talked to my fiance or talking to black activists, or just scrolling Twitter and seeing Twitter threads I have opened my mind to certain things that have led I'm going to do some more research. Learning about MLK's work on...that's one of the the crises of militarism, poverty and racism. Byard Rustin, a gay Quaker in the 50s, who was the master organizer behind Martin Luther King's, march on Washington in 1963. There's just so much out there. So much knowledge that has been actively suppressed. We're just not taught. And I've lost track of your question, but I think I've answered it.

**Kit Heintzman 40:49**

You have, could you tell me something about your relationship with spirituality.

**José Santos Woss 40:56**

It's been tough. I was raised very religious, which is not the same as spirituality. And spirituality is something I've developed since starting my job at FC and the Friends Committee on national legislation. One thing that I just find so beautiful that I think really describes spirituality well, is I wish I had the full quote, but it says that Quakers every every life, every day in life is a prayer. You live your faith, and your faith is informed by your life. And there's a connection that you try to foster in worship between you and God. That doesn't need to be facilitated by somebody at [unintelligible]. And I guess I should go back to I was saying before, that I was raised very religious, very Catholic, their sacraments, there are things and rituals that you that you read and sermons. It's very external, it's very done to you. Creed's that you read, here's the body of Christ, and Quakerism, which I am, I'm a Quaker, couldn't be any more opposite than that. It's no sacraments, no readings, nothing, it is just people who have a faith, who have an understanding that God is within all of us. And all we have to do is listen. And it's as simple as that. And because of that, it's, it's been tough for me, because I'm so used to having these external forces and factors be the way that I commune with something greater than myself. And now, something greater than myself is just within me and around me with nothing there that needs that, that then needs to facilitate that connection. And that puts responsibility on me to facilitate that connection. So, I've been growing my spirituality. My Sunday mornings have consisted more of bottle feedings and Quaker worship. So I'm looking forward to getting back into meeting a little bit more. But yeah, that's that's what I would say I just, it's been a pretty drastic transition from the face of my childhood to the faith of me as an adult. And that that spirituality is one of the beautiful but it's been difficult because I don't have all the tools to be able to do it. But every day I'm learning and I strive to perfect it.

**Kit Heintzman 44:05**

What do you think scholars in the humanities and social sciences so fields like literature and sociology and poli sci, what should we be doing right now to help us understand this experience of the pandemic?

**José Santos Woss 44:26**

I don't think that really the answer to that, I would, I would probably say, try to seek out the the words and wisdom of political scientists, historians, sociologists, anthropologists who are black, because so much of these systems are weighted against and harm people who are black, we have history all across this globe, that are anti-black And we see how people who are black because of their lack of access to health care, because of their various comorbidities, and different health issues are much more likely to die from COVID-19. I would, I would say, Just lean more heavily on people of these disciplines that are black because they're there. And that'll give you a really good perspective of what society is like what the world is like, for the least of us, because black people have been viewed as the least. And if we improve that, we can fix them and everything. Because so much of everything has been anti-black.

**Kit Heintzman 45:53**

How do you think historians of the future might remember this moment?

**José Santos Woss 46:04**

Another statistic recently, that said, white people in America, the average age is 58. For Latinos, the average age is 11. So, there's, there's going to be a drastic change in the in, in the generation coming the one after me, people who are in their teens and 20s and early 20s. And this is just going to be one of those moments in history where we're just like, "Oh, my God, like, how did they get there? Why did they do that? How do they not do anything about that?" And we're just going to be kicking ourselves into the wondering like, how the hell was this a thing. And it's just that underlying infrastructure of healthcare, mental health services, education, teaching of history, all these things are just adding to the fault lines, and the cracks in the infrastructure of our society, that this very diverse generation coming up, they're just going to be wondering, like, what were you doing? I think.

**Kit Heintzman 47:17**

I'd like you to imagine talking to a historian of the future, one far enough, from this moment that they have no lived experience of it, what would you tell them cannot be forgotten about right now?

**José Santos Woss 47:42**

We can't forget about the the link between the system that said, one human being can own another human being, and how that's intricately connected to capitalism. Because understanding that will help us see the fissures and the cracks in this whole broken system, which some people might be offended, they would say that the system was designed to be as it is not, it's not broken. But that relationship is so key to understanding so many of our problems today.

**Kit Heintzman 48:33**

I want to thank you so much for the generosity of your time and the thoughtful beauty of your answers. These are all of the questions I know how to ask at this moment, but I'd like to open some space. If there's anything you'd like to share that I haven't made room for. Please do so.

**José Santos Woss 48:50**

Yeah. I think I probably didn't go as deep enough as I should. What I talked about just the services that are available that deal with crime, because yes, people feel good on this...the police because it's like they're safely there. Sit through while who feel pretty safe, what police there are a lot of black people have been murdered by police. The other thing that I would say is here in Baltimore, they defunded after school programs that defunded all sorts of different services for people in the city, and kids in a school system. And then we wonder why are these kids doing these things? Why are they robbing cars and joyriding? And it's like, we're not providing the adequate services that they need to be kids and to learn and develop and be nurtured. But we aren't throwing a whole bunch of money at police. And just that lack that lack of vision and understanding that this generation will become the next group of people who are going to be making society and do we want them to have all the support they need? Or do we want them to just be committing crimes and then slacking them away to create brief criminality. We need to

look at the root causes, and help people and provide services at POW at school programs, sports, mental health services with me funding that and funding police for all of us.

**Kit Heintzman** 50:37

Thank you so much.

**José Santos Woss** 50:39

Thank you. Thanks for having me.