

>> [Music] The Last Ride, a deep dive into a shocking unsolved mystery. >> These two young men disappear off the face of the Earth and the last person to see them alive was this Sheriff's Deputy. His stories were so unbelievable. >> Listen to The Last Ride podcast, part of the NPR Network. >> Throughout this entire process, you like had a question for me again and again. >> Well, it seems to me that a subtheme of what we're doing here is family. And, it just makes me wonder how you're processing this, hearing how German families are processing, just what are you thinking about your own family history? >> Well, and you kept asking me that, you know, like aren't you curious, and my answer was pretty consistently like no, I'm not that curious. And, that's an -- it's an honest response, you know, like why have I never actually been that interested in my own family history. >> Why don't you want to know, because the things I would love to know that I don't have ready access to, and they're painful things. So, I just -- that's why I was kind of prodding you, like why don't you want to know. >> When I really sat down and started to try to process like why was I not curious, it's because that history of my ancestors doesn't have any bearing on who I am today, what I do today, what I think is right or wrong. And, I think that as I was sort of turning all that over in my head, I felt sort of these words forming or this idea forming, well it was just so long ago, and it doesn't have any bearing on me today. And, I say those words out loud and immediately bite my tongue. That thought's there. >> Why are we here? If the past has no bearing on the present, why are we here? >> Exactly. [Background Noise] So, this is -- let me make some space here, my grandmother's high school yearbook. >> John Marshall? >> John Marshall, mm-hm, the Marshallite 1923. That was the year she graduated high school. She was born in 1906 in Richmond. So, in this yearbook, my grandmother was a savor. She had all these things tucked away, and one of the things that was tucked away [paper wrestling] was this. >> Oh. Well, there's my byline [laughter]. And, I suddenly feel about 20 years older than I actually am, which is pretty old. Did I interview your grandmother? >> You did. You interviewed my grandmother. >> Wow. >> And so, this is an article from the 70th reunion of her high school class and it was tucked in this yearbook in my mom's closet that my that my grandmother had saved. >> Wow. >> And, you wrote it. >> Oh, boy. Okay. I'm a fossil [laughter]. >> That's your conclusion? It wasn't -- it was 1993. >> Okay. Well, that's almost 30 years ago. >> Do you have any memory of writing this article? >> Yeah, I remember it. It was not an unpleasant assignment. Everyone was nice. And, I'm not -- I've done class reunion stories, so it wasn't something terribly unique. I knew the history going in that John Marshall had once been an all white school, so certainly was not surprised at what I found. My sister-in-law is a graduate of John Marshall, class of 1970, I believe. And, my sister-in-law was part of a group that entered a predominantly white John Marshall and by the time they left, it was well on its way to being predominantly black in a very short time. So, you know, all of that, of course, is in my mind when I go to cover this reunion. It was a very different school, in a different building, but a totally different history. It's almost like two different histories. And -- but that's Richmond. >> The article,

you reference just in one sentence that history. I think it's right here. You want to read that for me? >> At that time, John Marshall and Armstrong were the only high schools in Richmond, they said. Armstrong was attended by the city's black students. "You had the separation in those days" Whitehurst [assumed spelling] recalled. The separation [laughing]. >> The separation. >> That's a -- that's the way to put it. >> [Music] So that's like sort of the only reference in the story about the fact that, you know, this high school that they attended was segregated. >> Just kind of reinforces that Richmond was a very separate world and that your family was part of the white world. >> Yeah. [Music] So, in this episode, it's time for me to learn more, to no longer be content with the generalities of my family's history, but to go seek the specifics. Because it's those specifics that allow us to take the next step, justice. Once we accept culpability, well then what? What does accountability look like individually, collectively, and even generations after? [Music] I'm Mallory Noe-Payne. >> And, I'm Michael Paul Williams. >> And, this is Memory Wars. >> A podcast exploring how society confronts sin. [Music] >> Before we dive into my own personal history, let's zoom back and look at one of the ways Germany tried to get justice for the victims of the Holocaust. They turned to the legal system, trials. I mean, it's a common way societies seek accountability and Germany is no different. But as I learned, that often came with more failure than success. [Rain] >> I got a little wet this morning [laughter]. >> That's good. >> Hi, nice to meet you. >> Hi. >> Oh, my God. [inaudible 00:07:37] is the upcoming [inaudible 00:07:40] -- go, go, go, go, go [laughter]. >> I had to dry off before I could enter what is arguably one of the most famous courtrooms in the world, home of the Nuremberg Trials. >> I'm going to see the courtroom. >> Yes. >> Yeah. >> Let's go inside. >> Axel Fischer [assumed spelling] is Research Associate here. He says it was in this courtroom that the allies believed they could hold Nazi leaders accountable for their crimes. >> The winners of the second World War could have easily executed a lot of Nazi perpetrators, but they handed them over to a court. >> In 1945, immediately after the end of the war, the allies decided to hold an international trial. They wanted to show the power of enacting justice through procedure and systems. Each country agreed. They would bind themselves to the court's decision. >> And, with this act, they limited themselves. Yeah. They handed over these persons to a court that would then, in a very slowly and long-lasting procedure, is meticulously proving their guilt. And, this is a very, very important aspect. >> I had an almost romantic vision of the trials, as a grand affair with lots of emotional testimony, but really, they were largely a dry business based on tens of thousands of documents. At the initial trial, only a couple dozen top Nazi officials were on the stand, charged with conspiracy, war crimes, crimes against humanity. The first time that had ever been a thing. Sitting in the courtroom, I asked Fischer what else the trials achieved. And, I was struck by what he didn't immediately say. >> You know, it's interesting you mentioned stability, you mentioned portraying a certain image. [Music] You didn't mention justice. >> Yeah, well justice is included in this [laughter]. But justice is, I mean, they ditch talk a lot about justice, but a court does not create justice, it

creates a verdict. And, if you are very, very lucky, this verdict can be assessed just. [Music] >> When I first thought of the idea of justice. A courtroom was what came to my mind. And, so part of my reluctance in learning more about my family history was that if I did learn my ancestors had done something terrible, well they could no longer face justice in the way I was imagining it. They're dead. But is that what justice is? A guilty verdict, a prison sentence? I was beginning to realize that long lasting responsibility, true justice, takes decades. So, maybe that means there's still something to be done, even if I've started seeking it decades later, because as it turns out, in the years after the Holocaust, Germany wasn't all that interested in bringing people to account in a courtroom, at all. Mary Fulbrook is professor of German history at University College London. She's studied how Germany, both East and West, reckoned with its Nazi past through its legal justice systems. I asked her how she'd characterize criminal accountability in Germany after the war. >> I would say it's a very mixed picture. So, West Germany has got this huge reputation for announcing its shame and taking on the moral and mental of responsibility, but it did not bring Nazi perpetrators to trial in the courtrooms to the extent that it could have done and should have done at the time when so many of them was still alive, fit to stand trial, and could easily have been found guilty. >> Fulbrook says if you look at the numbers, it's staggeringly awful. In her best estimate, several hundred thousand, probably more than three quarters of a million were directly involved in killing Jewish men, women, children, the elderly and sick. Those murders were facilitated by enumerable others, including members of the civilian administration, but only thousands of former perpetrators were ever criminally convicted. >> So, we're talking about a tiny, tiny, tiny number of people being brought to justice in the courtroom. So, in that sense, justice was not done. >> Fulbrook says some members of the West German Judiciary seems to understand and sympathize more with Nazi perpetrators than with their former victims. In the post war years, throughout the 50s and 60s, there was even collusion between former Nazi's who were now in the police forces and defendants, plus West Germany was choosing to try Nazi's under a narrow definition of murder. The rule of thumb was that if someone could say they were following orders, they were off the hook. >> You were only obeying orders that were given to you. This is not your own individual intention and motive, and you were not being nasty and brutish and sadistic, because you were motivated to. You were simply following orders. >> It was an excuse used to devastating consequences. For instance, the trial of the perpetrators of Bellshats [phonetic]. Bellshats was an extermination camp that worked the way it was intended. >> Eight of the perpetrators at Bellshats who'd been responsible for getting Jews into the gas chambers were put on trial. Seven of them, who had processed half a million Jews into the gas chambers, half a million people had been murdered, were found not guilty of murder, because they argued they'd only followed orders. >> Only one person was found guilty of the crime of killing five hundred thousand people, and that person served two years in jail. [Music] To me, this represents just how limited the criminal justice system can be and how much it's inherently shaped

by the politics of the time. The democracy of West Germany was riddled with former Nazi's. The priority was reintegrating them into society. The new government decided they didn't want a justice system saying everyone was guilty of mass murder. [Music] But throughout the 1950s in Germany, that message had a flip side. It was that the stories and experiences of Holocaust victims and survivors didn't matter. By its very nature, a trial is a perpetrator centered event. But what if a trial was a victim centered event, a way to tell a story and change the narrative. In 1961, there was a single trial of a single man that did just that. [Music] Adolf Eichmann had been a Senior Nazi Official, although not a public facing politician. He was a bureaucrat, a bureaucrat responsible for organizing Jewish deportations. In this way, he was responsible for millions of deaths. When the war ended, he escaped and went into hiding in Argentina, and there he lived until one day a Jewish German refugee, who also lived in Argentina, became suspicious. The tip that Eichmann was living in Argentina made its way to a prosecutor in Germany, a man with a reputation for really going after Nazi's, but the prosecutor didn't act on the information. He was afraid Eichmann would be tipped off by someone in the German system and then he would escape, as so many others had. So instead, the prosecutor took the information to the Israeli's. Israeli agents entered Argentina with fake papers. They tracked Eichmann down and kidnapped him. They drugged him and brought him to Israel. And, that's how in 1961 a Nazi, who had successfully evaded justice for more than a decade, came to be standing in a courtroom in Jerusalem with the world watching, a trial unlike any before, because this time, it was the state representing the Jewish people, the victims sitting in judgment. [Music] [Foreign Language] >> Here with me at this moment [foreign language] stands six million prosecutors. >> This is the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner's opening statement. Israel paid for Eichmann's defense. He was guarded 24/7. A second guard watched the first, and a third watched the second, and for added security, none of them had lost relatives in the Holocaust. Israeli officials wanted to get this right because they had big plans for this trial. They wanted this event to be larger than a single individual. They wanted to use it to tell the story of the Holocaust. >> [Foreign language] But at last, they cannot rise [foreign language] to [inaudible 00:18:31] finger of accusation in the direction of the glass dock [foreign language] and [inaudible 00:18:37] against the man who sits there. [Foreign language] Because their ashes have been piled up in the mounds of Auschwitz and the fields of [inaudible 00:18:55], all spilled into the rivers of Poland, and their graves are scattered throughout the lengths and breadths of Europe. [Foreign language] Their blood [inaudible 00:19:05] to heaven, but their voice cannot be heard. >> Hausner had also the idea that the trial should be some sort of history lesson for the world. >> Andreas Eichmuller is a historian in Munich at the National Socialism Documentation Center. >> The world should know about the Holocaust in all its -- well, in its beginnings and its outcome. He wanted to achieve this goal primarily through the testimony of the survivors. >> Unlike the Nuremberg trial where there was very little witness testimony, Hausner and his team got more than a hundred survivors to testify, much of it quite

dramatic. The trial was a world media event. >> In preventing these eyewitnesses before the court, Hausner wanted, as he put it, to reach the heart of men, because former trials, including the Nuremberg trial, he felt didn't reach this goal. >> Today, we know what the Holocaust was, what happened, and survivors, their stories are listened to with great reverence. >> But was that the case at this time in 1961? >> Well, that's the point [laughter]. That wasn't the case. Most of the times nobody wanted to know about the stories of the survivors. And, the trial was one of the first, well maybe the first, opportunity for them to tell their stories to a greater public. And, well for this reason, this trial was really readily important and very special. [Music] >> Accountability is a big complicated idea, so much bigger than a courtroom. Part of that big idea is having a true narrative, one that reflects reality. And, how can we do that if we don't choose to listen to the voices and stories of the aggrieved. [Music] Had I been purposely avoiding the voices of the past? I was telling myself that justice has an expiration date, a lifetime, and in the case of my ancestors, that expiration date had passed. It was gone. But does accountability have the same expiration date? Maybe each generation should seek its own accountability, and how can I do that if I'm choosing to ignore the stories of the past? [Music] This is what was in my head as Michael poked and prodded and questioned about my own family history. So, back home across the Atlantic, I set out to find the specifics, to learn what I had been content to ignore, to only know in generalities. I did what you do. I started on the internet, armed with a treasure trove of documents kept in my parent's closet. I went down the rabbit hole of Ancestry.com and I began to piece together a family tree, the ancestors of that grandmother Mike had interviewed back in the 90s. I knew she had been the descendent of European immigrants. Her father was born in Britain and her grandfather in Germany, but I thought they had all moved here after the Civil War, that in this particular line, that history wasn't mine. [Music] And then, I found a photograph of an unmarked grave in a Richmond cemetery. It had been uploaded to findagrave.com and underneath it was another image, documentation of military service in the Confederate Army. I had known I had a German immigrant ancestor. I did not know he had also been a Confederate soldier and that was just the beginning. [Music, Background Noise] >> Hello. >> Hello. >> Come on in. >> Thank you. I'm Mallory. >> Good to see you. Good to see you. >> Good to see you. >> Jeffrey Burden is an amateur Civil War historian in Richmond and a volunteer at Shockoe Hill Cemetery. I went to visit him because he was the one who had uploaded the photos of my ancestor's grave, alongside his Confederate military records. Joseph Nagelsmann, my grandmother's grandfather, had immigrated to the United States as a young, married man. He seems to have been living in Richmond when war broke out. Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and Joseph immediately enlisted in the Confederate army. >> He gives a little background information. He enlisted April 21, 1861 in Richmond. It shows him for the period of July and August 61 present. >> I was baffled. Why would a new immigrant join in this fight on the side of the South, no less. Turns out it wasn't all that unusual. >> But yeah, there's a huge push

and you can imagine the bells are ringing in Richmond, the flags are out -- the Confederate flags are out, you know, it's tremendous excitement, and for a young guy, whether or not he deeply believes this is the best thing to do, he caught up in the excitement and, yeah, what better way to prove you're a member of that community, foreign born as you are, then signing up to serve in its military. >> In fact, Joseph joins a regiment made up almost entirely of German immigrants. Records show they fought in a few initial skirmishes that summer, and then something interesting happens. Just a few months after enlisting, there were all these unusual documents, a series of letters, including a notarized affidavit written in difficult to understand, slanted, cursive handwriting. Burden helps me fumble through the text. >> I believe that Joseph Nagelsmann, citizen of the Kingdom of Prussia, did not intend permanently to remain in the Confederate states, but contemplated removal there from at some further day. >> The letters are essentially petitions [multiple speaker], one even from a German consulate -- >> Part of that -- >> -- arguing that [multiple speaker] Joseph shouldn't be forced to fight because he's a German citizen. >> He has never taken any steps to be naturalized, has no property, has -- >> I mean, he's trying to get out of it. >> Trying -- having done it and for whatever reason, he's saying yeah, but you can't make me do it. I did it on my own. You can't make me serve. That's my guess. >> Joseph wanted out. He says look, I'm German. I plan to go back to Germany. I've got no dog in this fight. And, it seems to work. Even though the war drags on for four more years and there are drafts, there's no more record of him serving, but he does not go back to Germany. He lives the rest of his life in Richmond working as a grocer, and in 1915, dies at home when my grandmother was 8 or 9 years old. I had grown up hearing about the grocery store on Broad Street and an ancestor called Papa Joe [assumed spelling]. I guess [background noise] it wasn't that long ago, but this was a search for awful specificities. And, as it turned out, there was more to be found. [Background Noise] Scrambling down another branch of the family tree led me to the Library of Virginia, sitting in front of a computer and looking at a haunting image of a man named Thomas Pierson Payne [assumed spelling]. A floppy hat on his head, a pipe in his mustache mouth. He has these deep-set eyes that mirror my dad's. >> He's got a shotgun and his two dogs, two bird dogs next to him, very proudly standing next to a chimney of a log cabin, and it says Ferney Hope Place [assumed spelling]. >> With the help of Senior Archivist, Vincent Brooks, I had been able to trace this family back multiple generations, all consistently in a place called Spotsylvania County. >> So, yeah, it's real, I mean the Payne family seems to have been fairly well documented. Now, this is kind of where this one peters out. They don't have anybody [inaudible 00:28:49]. >> So, I have a big question about the Payne family. >> Uh-hum. >> Did they ever own slaves and how would I learn that? >> Hmm, well -- >> The books point me towards something called a slave schedule. Officials kept documentation of enslaved humans and who owned them. Those records are kept today by the library. We searched through the last one before abolition, 1860, searching for the name Payne in Spotsylvania County. >> God, there's one, two, three, four

pages of Paynes. It's a common last name and I ran my finger down the list. Here. >> Spotsylvania Pierce [inaudible 00:29:40]. >> We find the name Pierce Payne, but we don't have a Pierce Payne. >> Let's locate [inaudible 00:29:46]. >> The name doesn't match any on the family tree we've constructed. For a moment, wishful thinking has me holding my breath. Maybe it's a different Payne, unrelated to me, until [multiple speaker] oh, here. >> Here's [inaudible 00:29:58]. >> We find the name again written differently. Not Pierce, but Pierson. Well, I just -- that has to be someone, because Pierson is a family name. >> Yeah. >> My wishful thinking -- >> It's spelled differently. >> -- evaporates. >> We have -- >> A register of deaths document from 1881 provides the final link showing how Pierson Payne links into the family tree, one generation farther back than we had gone. >> 80-year-old males were -- >> [Multiple speaker] Brooks pulls up the digital archive of the slave schedule, a scanned copy of the original page, and there it is in front of me. Pierson Payne, his name on a document alongside six rows, each representing a human being. Brooks takes to it quickly -- >> Sorry. >> -- as I struggle to keep up. >> He has six total, I see. >> Oh. He has one, two, three, four, five, six. >> I see someone who's 60, a female 60, females 30, a male who's 8, a male who's 6, a male who's 4, a male who's 2, so I wonder if this is the mother of these children, [inaudible 00:31:04] this is the mother of this person. There are no -- he does not seem to have any males of this age but, you know, it's not uncommon for the fathers to be determined to be from, you know, neighboring properties or that sort of thing. >> Or for him to be the father? >> That's certainly a possibility as well, yeah. Although, now I will say, you'll note that they are all listed as black and not mulatto. That might be an indication that that was not the case. [Background Noise] >> With the half-constructed family tree, the internet, and literally a single day of effort, I'd found a German Confederate soldier and a slave holder. [Background Noise] [Background Noise, Nature] I went to Shockoe Hill Cemetery. Even though it's in the middle of Richmond, I had never been before. I sat beside Joseph Nagelsmann's unmarked grave. Sitting on a bluff overlooking the highway, I take the time to look more closely at the information I got from the Library of Virginia. I stare at it, more slowly processing what the archivist explained to me. It's uncomfortable just to read the words, but what I want to do next is say the words out loud to myself. I feel like I need to practice that. This is information I'll have to tell my family. I want to tell my friends. I don't want to run away from it or deny it. For me saying the words aloud is a way of making them reality, [music] of acknowledging the truth. [Music, Background Noise] Here's a document from 1860 called the Slave Schedules. Here's a name, Pierson Payne. It doesn't give the name of the human beings he owned, just that one was a 60-year-old woman, another a 30-year-old woman, and then four children, all boys, an 8-year-old, a 6-year-old, a 4-year-old, and a 2-year-old. [Music, Background Noise] That's a pretty nauseating feeling. [Music, Background Noise] I don't know, I think the bottom line is that there's actually a difference between knowing in the abstract and knowing in the concrete. [Music, Background Noise] I had clearly been in denial. Pierson was a farmer

who owned land in Spotsylvania and six human beings, grandfather to Thomas, the man with the hunting dogs and deep-set eyes, [music] father to Freeman [assumed spelling], father to David [assumed spelling], father to Steven [assumed spelling], father to Mallory [assumed spelling], an unbroken line leading straight from him to me. [Music] As far as I know, Pierson had never been tried, put on trial for his crimes against humanity. So, what do we do when the ones who hold the guilt are dead and long gone. For starters, I hold Thomas Pierson Payne responsible for claiming ownership over other human beings. That is an unequivocally immoral thing and there's no way to undo it today. I don't deny the reality of it, nor do I try to justify or downplay it. I acknowledge that this is where my family falls in this terrible history. [Music] I had never learned this truth until now, which means somewhere along the line, generations before me, someone decided it was not a truth worth remembering and sharing. That is a choice I will not perpetuate. The terrible sin at the heart of our country is not something outside of me. It is of me. All of this is the beginning of accountability. Just the beginning. [Background Noise, Nature] >> I'm glad you did this research. You are microcosm. What you're describing is America at large, millions of people who have made decisions or not made decisions to go there. Individuals have power that they don't fully realize and just because you may feel limited does not mean you shouldn't go there. >> But I am frustrated by the limitations of what it feels like I can achieve with this knowledge, and the limitations of the knowledge itself, like I want to learn more. I'm frustrated by the fact that there aren't names on this document, that I can't learn more about the enslaved individuals or their descendants or what happened to them upon emancipation. And, like I think about this land in Spotsylvania County that the Payne family continue to live on, like where did the formerly enslaved people go and live on, did they ever get wealth from land or housing. >> I would not get frustrated. Just commit to put in the work and use your voice, then perhaps will lead other people to put in the work. You don't know names, but you're putting names out there on your end. How do you know someone won't hear this and connect the dots for you? >> I guess I don't know that. >> Yeah, I think you're declaring defeat too soon here, and this could be -- this is just the start of your journey, and who knows where you take it. You have more resources than most to pursue this and who knows where it goes from there. >> I think we need to acknowledge that we're holding people accountable for things that they didn't directly do. I'm not Thomas Pierson Payne, I did not enslave someone, but I do take responsibility for that, I choose to be accountable for that harm. And, to choose to take responsibility is to choose to participate in the country as we know it today, to acknowledge that there are ancestors who did irreparable harm and you're a part of a society and a country that was built on irreparable harm and I can be accountable to that. >> The systems that allowed your ancestors or your ancestor to own human beings have taken on a different form, but they still exist and they still oppress. And, until we acknowledge that, there will be no accountability. >> Okay. So, I learned that Pierson Payne owned human beings and I saw the census and I also saw like how much land he owned and I

don't know what happened upon emancipation at the end of the Civil War. I don't know if he was given money for those people. I don't know if -- the census records are from 1860, so that's before emancipation. Maybe he sold them and made money before emancipation. I don't know. He's a farmer. How much wealth did he build upon on their labor? And, the very first thing I thought about was that I went to college without debt thanks to money from my grandmother. She paid my college tuition. And so, the legacy of slavery is that it's not just a harmful and immoral act, it's a harmful and immoral act that creates wealth, that created wealth. And, that's deeply uncomfortable for me today. >> So, what do you do with that? What do you do with the knowledge? >> For me, the first part is just to sort of acknowledge it and acknowledge that it's linked together. And, even though I can't like trace the financial, like oh this money did this much to this much, because there is a part of you that kind of wants to do that and it's like, no you're not going to be able to do that. So, just acknowledge that you have wealth that was stolen, and then -- that's why I think wealth distribution is so important. >> Given that this was a national sin, a national systemic sin that we still live with, we could have a national program that would say send black kids to college for free. >> Creative policy proposals -- >> Yeah. >> -- that are funded by robust tax collection, right. Like, I do give money to charity. I donate wealth, but that's not what I want. What I want is a robust program that everybody has bought into together and that we all acknowledge this is important and helps provide education and healthcare. >> Yeah. We toss out stories and statistics about the disparities, but we don't move beyond the information. How do we build wealth in this nation? You're not owning slaves in the 20th Century. The main mechanism of building wealth is home ownership and that was something that was largely denied black people through all sorts of programs in the government and the GI Bill, the redlining, all sorts of systemic measures to keep us from accumulating wealth. You take that data and you use it and you come up with ways to provide a level of recompense. So, yeah, we have a lot of the data, we just don't act on it in a sustained way. >> But I think those structural sustained well-funded programs are important as a solution because everyone buys into them and then you have a collective narrative of responsibility, and I do have this fear that individual stories is something that people turn to to get themselves on or off the hook of participation. >> I think the individual stories are important because they provide detailed evidence of the larger problem and they build a moral foundation to do something about the problem. It takes it out of the abstract and if you knock it down to the individual level, as you are experiencing, it's more difficult to view it abstractly. It's real. It exists. It inhabits you. It is part of a problem that you are part of -- >> Yeah. >> -- not a problem that somehow exists in some sort of orbit above you. How has this changed you? You feel changed. When a black man gets shot 60 times by a police officer, my sense is you would have processed that with a certain level of remorse and reform, but just -- >> Absolutely. >> -- what does it feel like now? Does it feel any different or the same or? >> It's not like my sense of right and wrong has changed, it's not like my moral compass has changed. It's

not even like my political opinions have changed. What has changed is my reaction to little things, the way that I connect the dots. When I pass the corner in Richmond and I see the black homeless man that I give cash to commonly, there's a dot that's connected. There's like who's descendent is he. How were they related to me? There's this little dot that's connected when my mom picks a bunch of gardenias from the garden and puts in a vase and gives it to me to take home and says, this was your grandmother's crystal glass, and I think where did that money come from. There are these small points of connection that have been occurring to me ever since and I don't think will leave me now.

>> How will you answer the skeptic who says oh, you're just riddled by guilt?

>> Of course I feel guilt for something terrible and immoral that I've benefited from. I just don't think that guilt is a bad thing. I think it's a starting point, an important starting point, and if it's what you have to go through in order to feel responsibility, that's okay. We should all feel guilty for what happened in America and continues to happen. We should all feel really badly about it. >> Stolen land, stolen people. It just makes you think about so many things that are wrong, wrong in the present, wrong in the past, and how the sins of the past visit us every day in the present. Yeah, it's -- I feel a perpetual discomfort, and sometimes we want you to feel it too. >> Well, I'm here now. I feel deeply uncomfortable. >> You know, it's got to be about something larger than what we feel, and you know, it's about the future on so many levels. We've got to commit to making this a different and better place. And, you know, it's an awful history [music], but you know, we went through it together and it seems like we should be able to find our way out of this together. [Music] >> For me, it seems so long ago, given how far we've come, but this journey actually began with the simple question about monuments, so we figured that's where we end, with the conflict and contestation over space. How do you create places unencountered where you just can't look away from the past? >> Who lived in the house and who was persecuted and what happened with that person? Was he deported, was he killed? >> The story of a single cobblestone coming up on the final episode of Memory Wars. [Music] Memory Wars is a production of RadiolQ distributed by PRX. This research and the resulting podcast were made possible in part by a grant from the German/American Fulbright Commission. I'm Mallory Noe-Payne and you also heard from Michael Paul Williams. Oluwakemi Aladesuyi is our story editor. Additional editing from Caitlin Pierce. Original music is by Sun Rain and Spooky Fish [phonetic], with sound design and mixing by Chad Skinner and Dani Ramez at Half Moon Audio. Ruth Tam designed our logo and feature image on our website. And, we recorded this episode at a studio of Virginia Video Network. This episode features audio from the collection of the Israel State Archive. Special thanks to Chelsea Higgs Wise for her early contributions to this episode. And, special thanks to all the families who have been open and vulnerable, Haley's [assumed spelling], Charlotte's [assumed spelling], and now mine. You can find out more about the show and a link to suggested reading at RadiolQ.org. This podcast is supported by RadiolQ and the listeners who donate to that member station. If you appreciate innovative reporting like this, you can join this listeners by donating

from the Memory Wars website. Thanks for listening and we'll be back in two weeks with our final episode. [Music] [Dinging] >> PRX.