

Transcript

2062 - Ep.1 - A Live Just Work It Event

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Ausma Malik:

This episode of 2062: Beyond a Cartoon Future for Millennial Workers is hosted by me, Ausma Malik, and was recorded on January 23rd 2019 in front of a live audience, so please expect live audio. Just a note that this episode contains language that some people may find offensive.

Now, on to the show!

Ausma Malik:

From Isabel Bader Theatre in downtown Toronto, welcome to Just Work It!

2062: Beyond A Cartoon Future For Millennial Workers is our third series on decent work.

Tonight we're wrapping up our first year of production with this special event and we couldn't be happier that all of you have come to be a part of it. Thank you! You could be home watching Netflix but you're here and I commend you.

You can tweet and share photos tonight on your favorite social media platforms with the hashtag JustWorkIt2062. There will actually be prizes for the best of the night so don't be shy. Hey, incentivization is part of a part of the game right?

This event is about imagining the future of work for millennials like me. By talking about what we're doing today to make it brilliant for absolutely everyone. Not a caricature of the future like we see in cartoons but a real future a true future and one that we're excited to create together.

Whether it's avocado toast, or being in our feelings, or living in our parents' basement, too much about our lives has become a punchline. I love memes, anyone who's been on a text chain knows that. Yes. Yeah. And I'm also a bit of a Boomerang Queen if I do say so myself.

We can joke around. But here's the truth. We ain't no joke. Yes -- we're no joke.

We are the largest living generation. We're more woke and more broke -- and we've got a lot to lose but we're definitely not lost. We're building a new ground game because of a lot of what we used to count on is up in the air: the fate of our planet, the fortunes of entire communities and the difference between fact and fiction in our public discourse. The gravity of the situation is not lost on us.

So for the next hour we're going to set our sights on the year 2062. 43 years from now I'll be 76. Hopefully, if the planet still exists -- and you might ask yourself how old you'll be. Do some quick math, pull out your phone, let us know!

We chose this year because it's not so far into the future that it's beyond comprehension. Just 43 years ago it was 1976. Some decisions were made back then that we're living with today like parliament voting to abolish the death penalty, the completion of our beloved CN Tower and the founding of the Apple Computer Company.

2062 is also the year that set the stage for the Jetsons: a space age family conceived in 1962, the year cartoons made the transition from black and white to colour. This was mind-blowing technology back then but nothing compared to the 4K HDTV's you've left at home that now ask you, "Are you still there?" I'm always there...I'm always there. They never have to ask.

The show aired for one season but lives on to this day for its wacky hijinks and often cringeworthy depictions of the future.

But now let's meet the fam who will be making cameo appearances tonight.

There is George, the patriarch and breadwinner. Jane Judson who's only described as "the wife". George and Jane have a teenage daughter named Judy and a young son Elroy. Our favourites in the supporting cast of characters are Rosie the Robot maid, George's boss Cosmo Spacely, the owner of Spacely Sprockets and the Family Dog Astro, of course.

They live in a place called Orbit City where workers show up for a few hours twice a week to push a button or two. We're looking back on this cartoon future to help us look forward to a real one. We're going to be doing this through three lenses: social inclusion, technology and power -- and through the stories of our guests who I'm thrilled to introduce now.

Both guests are shaping the future of work by challenging our cultural norms. They're known for keeping it real while making it fun, which I know we're all up for.

I'm going to start by introducing my friend, Max FineDay, who is nehiyaw activist from Sweetgrass First Nation. I practiced that too. I did. I called him up and asked him to say it again.

My friend Max FineDay is an nehiyaw activists from Sweetgrass First Nation. He does the important work working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth on reconciliation as executive director of Canadian Roots Exchange. Welcome Max!

Let's give it up for Max!

Next I'd like to introduce our guest who has come from New York City to be with us tonight. I'm a big fan so this is really exciting. Please join me in giving an enormous and warm welcome to comedian, podcaster and organizer -- and the guy who we have to say has the best hair on comedy -- Hari Kondabolu!

Alright, so thank you both for being here! I'm going to jump right in and I'm going to get started with a hashtag throwback to your first job.

My first job was at a home decorating and fabric store in the suburbs. I was a teenager. I was just starting high school. And there's this strange thing in Ontario called a youth minimum wage, it still exists today. So you basically do the exact same job as your older coworkers but you get paid a lot, lot less because of your age. And I remember taking my meager paycheck to my accountant dad and asking him "What's EI? And why does it get so much of my money?"

That's employment insurance for all of us out here. So I want to start with you Hari. What was your first job and what was memorable about it.

Hari Kondabolu: I think the first job I had where it's an actual responsibility was as an organizer. I was working in Seattle as an immigrant rights organizer. I was working with refugees and immigrants. A lot of the issues that we talk about today in the mainstream we were talking about you know 10 plus years ago. So that is like the first real job I had where there was real responsibility.

Ausma Malik: That's amazing. What about you Max, what was your first job was memorable about it?

Max FineDay: So my first job was delivering flyers around my neighbourhood and I was like and now reformed like environmentalist. You know, I understand the horror of what I was doing, and you know what was memorable about it was just how seriously people take their flyers. I mean, I don't know if this was a Saskatchewan thing you know like times were tough or what. But like I would deliver flyers and there's like coupons obviously, right, in the flyers and I'd have these suburban parents come out and chase after me asking if they can get another Safeway coupon.

So I learned pretty quickly that I could get a little side hustle going on and be like, "Oh how much is it worth to you?" You know what I mean, "You're trying get double the air miles or what? Let's talk." So I ended up actually getting released from that job, if I can put it that way for maybe doing the old double dip -- something I don't do anymore. You know, I learned the error of my ways. That was memorable.

Ausma Malik: My mom still loves the flyers that she gets in the Mississauga News. That's where you see the deals. That's where you know what to compare online. She's all about it. And I have to say I love my parents. They're so supportive of me. They're behind me every step of the way but I still get those phone calls from my mom after she comes from those Auntie/Uncle parties, she's like "They were all there they were talking about their lawyer sons and their doctor daughters and I just didn't know how to describe to them what you do."

So what do your parents actually think of your job now, Hari?

Hari Kondabolu: Again, we have to put the word job in quotations.

I'm a stand up comedian which is hard to explain to relatives in India, first of all, and then I'm a podcaster which you don't really mention it to relatives in India at all.

Neither of those jobs, it's like, I'm like a shitty Renaissance man. I mean, like this is a sculptor, painter, inventor. I'm a podcaster-comedian. OK. It's not even a renaissance man. Those are two things.

I got lucky for the most part that I had parents that really supported what I was doing despite the fact it wasn't the easiest route. I also know I'm lucky because I have, I know a lot of friends who had a lot worse parents who, I mean understandably, you leave everything behind and you come to another country and your kids like, "I want to take a risk!" It's like, "We already took the risk. We took the risk for you. We left everything behind. There's no more risk to take."

Ausma Malik: That's so true. I mean. And then, I have to give them that extra credit for just being supportive and keeping it to themselves at a certain point.

How about you Max, how do your parents feel about your job now?

Max FineDay: I mean, so you know, my parents know that I run a national charity, Canadian Roots Exchange. You can donate at CanadianRootsExchange.ca.

So they know that's sort of what I do. My mom has, like you know, so I also go around traveling the country talking about reconciliation to Canadians at conferences, different events. My mom's like, "Why did they want you to talk to them?" And I love her to death. You know, that's my mom, keeps me humble. Number one fan.

My father is a residential school survivor. So he is just thrilled that I'm in such demand. And to the point where my dad would be like, "Oh yeah, Max you know, he goes around the country all over the place, you know, and he's probably going to go over to England talk to the Queen pretty soon." My dad is my hype man. He's my manager. He is my booking agent. He is everything. You know, he's just thrilled that that I'm successful, in his eyes.

Ausma Malik: Well, you can't ask for anything better than that. Feel like there's some hype people in our audience today for all of us too -- channeling your dad tonight.

Hari Kondabolu: Does your father Google you all the time?

Max FineDay: All of the time!

Hari Kondabolu: Yeah I got that too. I got to be careful what I tweet.

Max FineDay: He'll put up on Facebook, he'll put up something that I've written, he'll be like, "That's my son." He has 13 Facebook friends -- they're all his siblings. They know dad, they know. I love my dad.

Ausma Malik: Well, coming into the auditorium tonight was going down memory lane for me. I was a student at U of T. I studied International Relations, and actually maybe even in this auditorium, we learned a lot about the influence of the U.S. economy and culture on

Canada. And there's a favorite phrase, it's that "When America sneezes, Canada catches a cold." And I know it was a bit of an epic journey to get here today, Hari, from the States.

We were feeling you. We were watching all the videos of the TSA agents who aren't getting paid. And that's one of the things that I wanted to make sure that we asked you tonight was what should we take or leave from what's happening to people and their jobs in the U.S. right now?

Hari Kondabolu: Oh I forgot the question. I just heard the word leave, and I'm like, "Yeaahh."

A few things. One, it shows the dysfunction of the country right now. Like, this is one of those things where, you know, government workers should get paid for the work they're doing. It seems pretty straightforward. The Bill that they had to pass for that to happen, pretty straightforward. But the idea that it's being held hostage by the President, I guess we'll call him, it's shocking and it's embarrassing. And at the same time it's part of a proud American tradition of not paying its workers, which I believe began with slavery. So it's a little retro.

But no, it's obviously it's horrendous it's confusing.

I mean, is Trump a thing that Canada can catch? Is a cartoon character running for prime minister here? Can you run for Prime Minister here?

Ausma Malik: Yeah. You can run for office all right. It is a democracy.

Hari Kondabolu: I know this is a separate -- but isn't it a parliamentary system?

Ausma Malik: It is.

Hari Kondabolu: So the party that has the most power, they, don't they put their person up?

Ausma Malik: Yeah. Okay. In that way yes.

Hari Kondabolu: I know more than every American about your system.

Ausma Malik: I wasn't expecting that. But why wouldn't you. Of course you'd know about us.

You've mentioned something that is actually really interesting to us because I think there's a lot of lessons that we're looking at about how not to move forward when it comes to justice and work.

But there is also incredible organizing that we've been tracking in the States from organizers like Ai-Jen Poo and the National Domestic Workers Alliance in the U.S. Particularly the Caring Across Generations campaign that some of you might be familiar with. And it's been a real source of inspiration because of their recent announcement

about Alia. It's the world's first portable benefits platform and it seems to us like a huge leap forward into the future -- and definitely a break with the past for people accustomed to precarious work like you're describing.

So in The Jetson there is a very iconic character, Rosie, and we call her a robot domestic worker. And her prospective employers Jane and George Jetson have the first cameos of the night, as we slip right into our Jetsons inspiration and we're going to start by showing a clip.

This clip is the one in which Jane introduces Rosie to George for the first time.

Turns out -- this is important for all of us -- it turns out there are only white characters in the year 2062, according to The Jetsons, and robots just become convenient stand ins for race class and gender stereotypes.

So let's take a look at this.

The Jetsons Clip begins [00:15:32]

Announcer: And now back to The Jetsons.

George Jetson: What's that doing here?

Jane Jetson: Rosie is our new robot maid, George.

Rosie the Robot: Good evening, sir.

George Jetson: New maid! With The boss coming to supper and me trying to make him think we're poor. [Slaps head]

Jane Jetson: But George, she isn't costing us anything.

George Jetson: Out! Out! Beep beep! Understand? Out!

Jane Jetson: She's completely free George and...

George Jetson: And she doesn't cost anything, ha! Out! Out! Oh you mean she's free?

The Jetsons Clip ends

Ausma Malik: So this clip tells me a lot about the labour society values, and not just back in 1962. Racialized workers make up 29 percent of the labour market here in Ontario and most of us are doing low wage work. The labour market is set up to exclude mostly women of colour -- Indigenous, Black, racialized women. And it's really an uncomfortable truth about how racism and sexism is baked into the world of work.

And I personally can't imagine a future that isn't diverse. So it's really weird -- and even eerie -- that the creators of The Jetsons could.

We all actually work in industries that are predominantly white. We can say that about philanthropy and activism and from what we see about comedy. So Hari, what's that like for you as a comedian?

Hari Kondabolu: Before we get to that, I kind of find it strangely accurate in a way because you know if I remember the Jetsons they're in space because the earth got so polluted that they ended up -- that's why there's these really large buildings that are big enough to get past the earth, right. So to me the idea of a bunch of white people who are potentially better off up in the sky to avoid the earth -- that's basically what the rich people are trying to do with Mars anyway. So it's actually about right. Like it's not Mars but it's essentially like, yeah the poor, we, will inherit the earth. They get to be in the sky.

Ausma Malik: And inheriting the Earth doesn't really seem that great a prospect.

Hari Kondabolu: We inherit the earth when nobody wants it anymore. It's like the earth becomes a lemon basically.

Ausma Malik: But in your experience as a comedian of colour in a white industry, I think that there is a lot to say about that experience that does give us a few clues about what might need to happen in order to make 2062 to a different place.

Hari Kondabolu: Sure, I mean, it's dramatically improved. I mean I'll start from a positive place. I feel like when I started going on, we're talking like 2005, going up outside of a university setting, going up every day performing. You know, even in 2005 I was dealing with expectations of, "Why isn't he using an accent, why is he talking about political things?" It was a lot of layers.

You know, humans are multilayered, complicated beings. But when you've never seen someone who looks like me have multiple layers and a complex voice, it threw everybody off. Even in Seattle where I started to do standup, so I think that's a huge improvement -- having to fight against people's disbelief that I exist. You know that's a hard thing to stop. They used to say you have to call the elephant out in the room and the elephant in the room was: I have dark skin, and my heritage is Indian. It's like, well I mean that's not weird for me. I only realized that when people pointed out constantly, you know what I mean, I don't walk around every day "I'm Indian, I'm Indian, I'm Indian. I'm oppressed, I'm oppressed, I'm oppressed, I'm Indian, I'm oppressed." You know, doesn't really happen.

Ausma Malik: You don't? How unusual.

Hari Kondabolu: So I feel like that was the first obstacle. And now, I mean it's gotten more nuanced, certainly, I think we're a little bit -- I shouldn't say we. We is a very large word and includes a lot of people. There are a lot of communities that are still at that point, right. And I feel like there's a lot of different types of oppression and different groups that have to deal with different struggles now but certainly that particular struggle that I think my community, let me narrow this down: it's gotten better for straight, cis, Indian dudes.

Somebody like Aparna Nancherla, who's an amazing comedian, she has to deal with, "Oh

my God it's a woman onstage. Oh my God it's an Indian woman on stage. Oh my God she has a high pitched voice. Oh my God, she talks about weird things." Those are four different things, she's all those things and that's hard for people to even understand. I don't know of any major trans performers who've broken mainstream who are South Asian in the U.S. I think the thing we're fighting with is complexity -- the fact that we're multilayered like, ok, we exist but 'we' doesn't mean one thing and that's the newest. We're trying to show that we have all the complexities that any other group of people has. It feels like even when people are trying to show diversity, it's like South Asians or people of colour are depicted as victims. You know, gay people are depicted as victims. And there's the other part of that which frustrates me too. It's like, we're not all victims. Some of us are assholes. That's the complexity of identity is that we're not all one thing. And that means that the oppressed can also oppress others. It's not that just because you're oppressed in one way doesn't mean, you know, you can be the victim of racism and still be homophobic or transphobic.

Ausma Malik: You know, those complex layers there also you know ones that we talk about when it comes to Indigenous communities, as well, and I'm sure you face that also as an activist for Indigenous justice Max. I feel like there's so much that resonates about being in spaces that are predominantly white, being who you are, and then for the things that you're speaking about and struggling with that are just your reality. What's your experience been?

Max FineDay: Yeah, it's funny. Me and Hari were backstage -- we'd never met before that but we really bonded over being cis, straight, Indians, you know, and having that common experience.

Hari Kondabolu: I was wondering which one of us was going to crack that joke.

Max FineDay: I got it in early! I got it in early! Yeah. But, I mean I didn't even listen to the question, right, because I needed to get that in.

I think there is, you know, such a, particularly in the nonprofit sector right now, there's this, like reconciliation is so sexy, you know, like it's very trendy, it's cool to be native right now, I'm digging it. I don't know how y'all are feeling about it but, you know, of course that leads to people who have decided that they have really good ideas about what Native communities should have, or what programs they should bring to Indigenous communities across the country and they have a lot of ideas. And I was sitting with another nonprofit executive who works in this space, he's a white guy, and I asked him a question about fundraising. He was like, "Oh well, you know, one of our board members' uncle's was the chief executive officer of this particular company." And I was like, damn. And then I thought about my latest fundraising event and I was back home for Christmas and my auntie was like, "I have 12 bucks." You know, I was like, wow. She was like, "I see what you do on Facebook. I just love you, my boy. I have 12 bucks." I was like, all right. You know, so there is this power dynamic that still exists, even when Native people are trying to do the things that we know need to happen for our communities in this sector, or in any other sector. It's still non-Indigenous people that have the access to the money, the resources, the networks, the connections, that leave me at a disadvantage. And that's why I have to be so overly charming and good looking just to compete with them. It's wild. I'm an

asshole! I want to be an asshole, you know.

Hari Kondabolu: I just want to add on to -- not the part about you being an asshole -- but I think that's a consistent thing for I think both our industries is, money rules all. It's really about capitalism. Like when you were talking about the idea of like being Indian is in right now I think it speaks to the idea that, you know, when you're going for grant money as a nonprofit, you need to structure things not based on your needs. You have to structure things based on what they're going to give you money for. So you have people competing for the exact same resources. You have people not actually addressing the things they need to address because they're not going to get money for it or they have to find a way to get the money, address what they need to address and then shape it so they can you know get more grant money and so that sounds awful, and I feel like the same is true in my industry. It's like, the increasing diversity of our voices honestly has something to do maybe with us pushing the issue, wanting change, standing up for ourselves. That's a part of it. But to be honest, and this is very cynical, but I think the bigger part of it, is that the people who control the studios and the networks realize, "Oh those communities have money? They're going to spend their money too? I want some of that money." I think that's what it is. I mean, when you see a YouTube star having hundreds of millions of followers and they're Asian all of a sudden it's like, "Hah, we excluded the Asian community for so long because who gives a shit about them. And then I found that there's like millions of them, we're like, I give a shit about them now."

Ausma Malik: And you talk about that. I mean, your first comedy album was called "Waiting for 2042", which is the year according to the U.S. census that non-white people will be the majority in the United States. And we actually -- those are strong numbers for us!

Max FineDay: Some people are counting down in here.

Ausma Malik: They're also waiting for 2042 right alongside you! And we actually found out that in Canada we're supposed to hit that milestone six years earlier in 2036.

Hari Kondabolu: I'll say even more cynically that even if the number is like 2042 and that's technically when non-whites get the majority, I think it's actually longer because I think white is a state of mind and there's a lot of non-whites who -- it's going to take longer.

Ausma Malik: And that is something that is so honest and true...

Hari Kondabolu: James Baldwin said it.

Ausma Malik: We've seen how power plays out even when you have these demographic numbers. And what I really want to ask each of you is, what's one thing that you're doing to make sure that our 2062 doesn't look like the Jetsons, right? That you know some of those pieces around who has the power, what that state of mind is -- what's one thing that you're participating in that's going to shift that?

Hari Kondabolu: Well, existing for one. That's a big one. Being willing to speak up publicly and claim space. I mean clearly that wasn't happening back then. I think that seems like,

that's a big one.

Ausma Malik: What about you Max?

Hari Kondabolu: Yeah, I think, you know -- it's funny, I didn't know that Canada was going to hit it sooner. That's wild.

Ausma Malik: I think Indigenous communities actually have a lot to do with that. Growing faster than the general population by four times.

Max FineDay: Literally, the fastest growing population in this country. Native people. That's right. That's right. There is not a lot else to do on the reserve y'all. There's just not. We love it. So, that's us. Truly exciting. You know, was that too far? I think that's not going to make it into the final cut of the podcast. I think that's a bit much.

Hari Kondabolu: I really like that, like, fuck colonialists out of the country.

Max FineDay: Yeah, we're very literal people. We take it literally. Yeah. Exactly.

Ausma Malik: Well, there are certain things that we want to take into the future, and some things that we want to leave in the past. It is as personal a decision, as much as it is a collective one, right. There are choices we've got to make for each of us, and ones we've got to make together. So it's time for us to move to a very fun part of this conversation, if I do say so myself.

Max FineDay: Finally!

Ausma Malik: I mean, I don't know what you've been seeing up here, but it's going to get even more fun. And that's because we're going to include all of you in this!

Are you ready for that?

All right. We're going to do a segment called "Take It or Leave It." And you received a card like this when you came in. Yeah. Well, I'm going to say something and you'll tell me if you want to take it into the future by holding up this colourful side -- and cheering because we have to make sure that everyone knows at home. And if you want to leave it in the past, hold up the black and white side and cheer as well so we also know.

Have you got it? Yeah. Pretty simple. So, you know, the Jetsons ran for just one epic season, if you can actually believe that. And you know why it was canceled?

Max FineDay: Why?

Ausma Malik: Because of colour.

Max FineDay: Really?

Ausma Malik: The Jetsons was produced to broadcast in colour using the latest

technology at the time but in 1962 less than 3 percent of American households had access to it.

The show in black and white was entirely different. It was dreary and one dimensional, and from the photos that I've seen, a little bit dystopic too. The bright and technicolour future of the Jetsons was lost on most viewers, and it took a decade for colour televisions to reach 50 percent of American households.

That's how we kind of see the future of work too. Depending on your access to technology and opportunity, the future can look really bright or very bleak. Got it?

All right so we're going to practice this and you have to be a part of it too, all right?

I'm going to pass one down to Max. OK. So hold up the bright and colourful side and cheer if you think we should take it.

All right, and hold up the bleak colourless side if you think we should leave it.

All right there we go. I like it.

We're gonna get into this, so the first thing -- this is all rapidfire: diversity quotas.

Take it? Then you have to hold up your card and cheer if you want to take it. Oh, all right!

We heard you Take It folks.

Leave it? Let's see who wants to leave diversity quotas -- and cheer. You got to cheer! All right?

I mean, it seems to be a Leave It audience. What have you got to say?

Hari Kondabolu: This is in 2062?

Ausma Malik: This is from now what are we taking into the future.

Hari Kondabolu: Yeah, for 2062. I mean that's tricky because I feel like diversity is important but at the same time do whites need the diversity quota in 2062?

Ausma Malik: Well, I think we want to be a little bit of a different 2062. So I mean you've asked a big question.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean, I guess we could include them if we have to.

Ausma Malik: We'll go to our next "Take It or Leave It" because I think what you're getting at is what is actually a threat to whether diversity quotas will be effective, to how work is experienced.

This one is, white fragility.

Take it into the future?

Or are we going to leave it as a relic of the past?

Ausma Malik: All right. Do you have anything to say about that? Are you with the crowd?

Max FineDay: I mean, it's so fun to make fun of people with white fragility. I'll miss that.

Hari Kondabolu: It just doesn't seem like an evolutionary advantage. Especially as the world is changing that kind of constant, like, fear of confrontation. Like as a minority you have no choice but to confront racism, or confront being outnumbered, or confront being left out. If the numbers switch and you truly are the minority, not the minority in America people, white people, are claiming they are because they don't have all the power anymore. Like, that's not a winning strategy, if you're going to survive -- and that's not how we've survived -- we've survived by being resourceful and having a double lens.

Ausma Malik: And what you're speaking to is a world in 2062. And what you do in a world where there is no race based stress. And that's what we witness in the Jetsons in 2062. There seems to be only work worries in that world.

Take this next clip that we're going to be watching, in which George it gets passed over for a promotion and gets a new supervisor -- a robot!

You'll hear a co-worker being tormented by their new boss while George looks on from the sidelines. This is a good one. Let's roll it.

The Jetsons clip begins [00:32:46]

Spacely Sprockets Employee: Huh, what the?

Robot Supervisor: Back to work. Back at work.

Spacely Sprockets Employee: Well you must be kidding George. He looks like a refugee from a horror movie. Hey didn't I see you once in a shock theatre.

Hey George! Tell him to put me down.

Robot Supervisor: You're fired. You're fired. You're fired. You're fired.

George Jetson: What a temper. At least you could have waited until he had his coffee break.

The Jetsons clip ends

Ausma Malik: There is a lot of evidence in this series that technology was invented to improve lifestyles only. So making morning commutes faster, walking made unnecessary, and most of all, human bosses obsolete. And I can't think of any technology that improves

livelihoods in the show except in this case -- to reduce labor costs and to deliver higher returns to Spacely Sprockets shareholders.

So watching that clip what feature or characteristic stands out for you in this about our future robot overlords?

Max, you want to take a shot at this?

Max FineDay: Oh my God. Yeah. Yeah it's, it's dark times, it's troubling times. You know. I am convinced that I am very easily replaced as an executive director to begin with. So I feel as we get more and more automated.

Ausma Malik: As the robot overlords come closer and closer.

Max FineDay: Yes. Yeah. As the current robot overlord I'm very concerned with the future. But I think it speaks to the precarious nature that I hear from other young people where they are having trouble accessing good paying jobs, right. They can only find an unpaid internship. Or something that only lasts for a year. The Jetsons was written in the 60s, or whatever, we're actually seeing like a lot of that come to pass now and a lot of the worries that young people have for finding good jobs like our parents had. That's going to be so much more difficult. Maybe it's not going to be this robot that throws you down the trash chute but it's going to be a different work environment than what our parents had, and I think that's scary you know. Will I ever own property? I'm not sure you know. That's like a millennial thing.

Hari Kondabolu: I feel like it's a strangely optimistic because, you know, in this particular clip it's like the robot is the boss. But humans are still in the picture. The way I see it humans are not going to be in the picture. It's all going to be automated like the idea that we even have a presence there is scary. It seems like there's the big human boss and then all the things that are automated where humans become really unnecessary and the only ones making the money. I mean, if you get rid of the human cost of labor, companies make more money. You know, basically robots were what slaves were you know except not human. Which makes it easier for the guilt, right. But that's what it's going to be and then you have a bunch of people without employment. And since you know capitalism isn't really a thing that allows for the wealth to be spread the way maybe you know there was the promise of that, "Like it'll little trickle down and we'll all have something and the robots will take over and we'll all be on the beach." And it's not that at all. And so, I feel like that that is strangely optimistic because we haven't been annihilated altogether.

Ausma Malik: And there is that piece around imagining all the different ways that tech can be utilized. And I guess what we know from our experiences and just the way that we live life is that tech in and of itself isn't a problem or a solution and everything hinges on who uses it and how it's used and what it's used for. And it can help or harm. That's absolutely true. And it can create more isolation or build stronger communities, which we've also seen. Tech is definitely revolutionizing our work and workplaces. And I think the big question is, what is it doing to, and for, workers?

And I know, for me, a lot of that centered around digital media. For example, when it

comes to things like Twitter, it's like, am I one tweet away from being a breakout star -- or from having a complete breakdown. It's that fine a point. And with tech has come new expectations about creating a personal brand that has professional power. I know that's something that I feel a lot of. And we've had conversations about that too.

So the question I want to ask each of you, is how has tech messed you up or made you in your work? Let's start with you Hari.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean I think creatively it's been stunting. You know, it's as a comedian like you have these ideas -- and especially the kind of comedy I do, it's not one-liners, right. The things I think of usually, they have long setups and stories and they build and they involve a lot of different pieces. And I'll tweet something and then I forgot that I ever wrote it, because I get the instant reply of like, oh there's a retweet. And people like that. And meanwhile it's like no, that was -- you should have developed that into a more complex thought that you could have shared with an audience but you forget that this isn't real. You're not actually -- you have like a sentence which kind of encapsulates, like summarizes, a bigger idea but you haven't actually gotten deeper. So I feel like it's hurt me creatively even though it's helped build an audience like, I've gotten so many people to come to shows because of it. People sometimes find me on there and then they watch my standup after. But it comes at the cost of art. When I decide to be an artist I didn't think that I had to also get a major in advertising right and marketing. I just wanted to create art and never have to do real work.

Ausma Malik: Ugh, capitalism strikes again! How about you Max -- messed you up or made you?

Max FineDay: Yeah. I feel like if we go down the rabbit hole of all the ways in which I messed up, we'll be here a while, so let's talk about the making me. You know, there's a study done a few years ago that talked about how Indigenous people are some of the most digitally connected people in this country. What I've seen from working with young people is that finding a voice, and telling of story, and sharing opinions and all this sort of stuff. And sometimes that can look like multimedia projects -- looks like people making music videos or whatever. Sometimes it's sharing like you know, "Fuck you, Canada" meme. You know, and that's great too. I've really used social media and I'm sort of glued to my phone. Maybe that's one of the ways that I'm not so good. But I've used it to make these connections with young people across the country. I was talking to somebody from Pond Inlet this morning about a mental health program they're doing in their community and how we might be able to support that. So it's really been a tool for building bridges and connecting struggles whether you're in Pond Inlet or a downtown Toronto or Saskatoon or on Sweet Grass.

Ausma Malik: As much as we use tech as a tool, there are these deep-seated anxieties that you both touched on from that clip. And a third of people worldwide are now worried about losing their jobs to automation, according to a global study on the workforce of the future. But I want to ask each of you what skills do you have that no robot or algorithm could ever replicate?

Max FineDay: Literally nothing. Nothing. There is no hope. You know, I, skill, skill, skill,

skill. I make some pretty tight braids, you know. That's the shoutout that I wanted for my hair tonight. It took time. It took time. I think the ability to share story. I think that's so important, I think that's something we all do in our work that builds bridges or builds connection or tries to come to that common understanding of where we come from -- There's not a lot, but for the few white people here tonight, what we want is for them to understand our communities a little bit more, understand how Canada, and the States, were built on the oppression of Indigenous people, of Black folks, and where you know communities of colour still face that oppression in a very high key sort of way. So you know, I think that storytelling that person-to-person dialogue is something that no machine will ever be able to do.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean that's my only skill as well but I use quotation marks for the those in the home audience. But I don't know with AI becoming increasingly sophisticated. It feels like you know what order stories are just as a series of ideas and details in an order and a structure. A robot can figure that out right?

Max FineDay: Fuck.

Hari Kondabolu: Yeah I know. Like I don't know.

Ausma Malik: I guess we're really honing in on how tech is messing up, all of our jobs are on the line.

Hari Kondabolu: It just feels so endless, and it just feels like all the science fiction things that we saw when we were younger, which I guess were supposed to be warnings of like a dystopian future apparently was a blueprint for some people like they didn't treat it like, "Oh 1984? That's a good idea."

Ausma Malik: They just mapped it out for us, no problem. Did half the work for us, right.

Ausma Malik: Well Hari, you've talked about people not seeing stand up comedy as a quote real job. We're in a time where so many different types of work are not seen as quote unquote real jobs and so-called real jobs are at risk of being automated or outsourced. So in some ways you're actually ahead of the curve on this one.

So what can you tell us about what it's like to be in a job that's not considered a real job?

Hari Kondabolu: Man, did my mom write this one?

Ausma Malik: We feel like you have unique insights to share, guide us, guide the rest of us.

Hari Kondabolu: I feel like, you know, I imagine two types of futures right, where I have no value. And a future where the world actually, and the environment destroys us all. Nuclear annihilation. We're living just with basic things to survive. I have no skills to offer anyone in an Armageddon-type scenario, other than, you know, I could be a good meal.

Ausma Malik: That is a service.

Hari Kondabolu: That is a one time only service.

And then on the other end of it, if art is something that is easily duplicated, and created, I also worry that -- does the human experience or the human ability to create art, is that still gonna be valued? It just feels like everything -- it's always been like this, but the idea of like focus groups, and people telling you what they want, and everything being tailored to a particular audience. There's something really robotic in that already. It's just so manipulated and focused. You know, it feels like we're a couple of steps away from it just being done for us. So yeah. I mean, hopefully, you know, by the time that happens I'll be gone. We can only hope.

Ausma Malik: On that important note, we are going to go back to our next Take It or Leave It session. Maybe some hope there about what we want to take into the future so that we can make the most of our experiences and our storytelling and I think that's an important part of this.

So everyone ready with your cards. Let me see them.

Ausma Malik: So our first take it or leave it for this segment is the sharing economy. Who is taking it? You gotta cheer. Otherwise we don't know. OK.

Sharing Economy. Take it one more time. Give us another one. All right.

Ausma Malik: The sharing economy? The one that exists right now, the way it exists right now.

Yeah. That's the trick.

All right shall we do it again? All right.

The sharing economy as it exists right now. Are we taking it?

It's shifted, it's shifted.

Are we leaving it here? All right.

What do you guys have to say about that?

Hari Kondabolu: Yeah I think I. I think I understood some of the confusion. Tell me if I'm wrong but initially where you think, "Oh shit. Yeah. Socialism!" and then all of sudden, "Oh you mean like Uber and shit. Nah."

Ausma Malik: That's exactly what happened. So they're leaving it behind, they're like no, not taking that in to the future. All right.

Ausma Malik: Our next one is privacy. Take it?

All right. Who wants to just leave it here? Forget that. Popular opinion.

Hari Kondabolu: Exhibitionists.

Ausma Malik: So privacy is one of those words whose meaning has changed with the times. It's meant being discreet and keeping secrets in the past. But now it's all about the power dynamics between the individual, the state, and the market.

Now we're going to play another clip and I'm going to ask you to see if you can identify what The Jetsons think of as a "private trouble" that is also a public issue. And let's talk about what it has to do with power.

In this clip there's a family crisis that brings everyone together, even Astro, their human sized dog. George has been fired from the company he loves and hates. Let's roll it.

The Jetsons Clip begins [00:47:34]

Announcer: Now back to the Jetsons.

Cosmo Spacely: You're not even a janitor around here you're fired!

Jane Jetson: Now don't you worry dear, you'll find another job.

George Jetson: After all my years with the company, to be treated like this.

Judy Jetson: We'll help out Daddy. I'll get a job as a bubble hop at a Space Burger fly-in.

Elroy Jetson: And I'll help out too Pop. I'll deliver tape papers.

George Jetson: Oh thanks kids but I'm used to Spacely Sprockets.

The Jetsons Clip ends.

Ausma Malik: I've got to say, I watched a lot of The Jetsons and George frets about getting fired a lot over the 24 episodes. And when he's not worrying about it, he's actually getting yelled at and fired by his boss. There's no evidence that he belongs to a union. Maybe because unions were written out of the script because they played a major role in supporting and funding the civil rights movement at the time. It's an important connection.

So what we see here is a man and his family on their own essentially. There's no talk of filing for a grievance or going to arbitration to get his job back. There's no evidence of a social safety net. Believe me, I watched. We don't see any neighbours or community groups coming alongside. He's in a precarious situation, that's for sure.

So in a situation like this, where would you put the blame for this family's precarity? And where is the power to fix it?

Hari Kondabolu: Oh God, there's just so many layers. I mean, first of all that the isolation,

you know, the nature of their homes. Like when we talk about like gated communities and stuff, it's like one level worse because they're in these homes that are separated by space. There's no backyards, there's no streets. It's all this open room so you don't have the things that most communities have, like there are no protections. The facts like you know he says something, which I feel a lot of workers say, it's like I only know how to do this. I don't know what else to do. I just know about sprockets. It's the only thing I do and sprockets could be coal or sprockets you know be working in a mill, whatever it is. I don't know what else to do. You know I think the major thing is the idea of job retraining, and actually thinking about like, what are things that people can practically do. Can people learn to code? I feel like we're not really reinvesting -- you know instead of talking about, oh coal will come back, we'll invest in coal again. It's like coal? We're talking about going into space. What is this coal business? This seems like a system where we -- they invested more in technology than the human being.

Ausma Malik: And where's the power in this dynamic? So the retraining, the thinking more innovatively -- who's responsible?

Hari Kondabolu: I mean, clearly you know The Capitalist like Spacely owns a company. He does not give a shit about any of his employees. He's getting rid of people and replacing them with robots. Man, this in black and white must've been devastating! It's weird because I was watching this and I'm like, this is like a shitty Futurama. And then you watch it, imagine it in black and white. That was some death of a salesman type shit. That was sad. You take the colour out of that. Oh God.

Ausma Malik: And you know, that's absolutely right. Because the power to give work and take it away. That is the kind of invisible force that's driving our economy and shaping the future of work.

It's the kind of power that makes the man who is currently the president of the United States -- it is the kind of power that made the man who is currently the president of the United States famous, isn't that right? Since 1855. "You're fired!" Has meant you're discharged, like a rifle.

The original phrase was actually "fired out" and sometimes involved burning down your house or your desk. Yeah, it's pretty brutal. It doesn't come from a gentle place.

But modern euphemisms like being downsized or outsourced may sound better but they feel just as painful and destructive.

So this last segment that we're going into is about power at work and how we use it today, individually and collectively, to create decent work and a fair economy in the years ahead.

So I want to start with you Hari. You're an entrepreneur.

Hari Kondabolu: Oh God.

Ausma Malik: You are an entrepreneur. In this economy, that's what they call people like you. You may not have a typical boss but we all know The Man. If we're taking it back to

the 60s -- the capital T capital M -- The Man like the big boss, Mr. Spacely. Someone who calls the shots when it comes to your work. So I want to ask you: Who is The Man calling the shots in your work?

Hari Kondabolu: It's strangely democratic because it's the audience, right. If the audience does not find me interesting or stops laughing, I'm not going to get rebooked. And then on the other end, if people at studios and various production companies don't want to invest in me, I can't make other types of art that are included in entertainment. So you know, I think it kind of splits. For me it's strangely -- unlike a lot of other jobs, this actually seems...kind of fair, which sucks. So, like, if I'm not good enough because you all stop laughing, I'm done, cause I'm not doing a good job. I get fired by everybody.

Ausma Malik: OK. So how is The Man, or this force, treating you right now?

Hari Kondabolu: I mean, again, I have a weird job like I'm not so -- like I'm a freelancer essentially, I'm a contract worker, and it's a very privileged kind of freelance, and a very privilege type of contract. But you know, if we're dealing with serious economic crisis, I kind of think entertainers who talk about Armageddon are the first to go, d'you know what I mean? In the worst times you don't need a killjoy. A killjoy is I think in a lot of ways the privilege of generally economically stable periods. God, this is really depressing. I think I'm in this weird position. I don't think it affects me as much as, let's say my parents and my friends and people I know that either work for a company or work for the government or, you know, have a part of this bigger system. I think for me, I'm getting loose chunks of money from lots of different sources.

Ausma Malik: And there is a power dynamic to that, right? And we're talking about how it exists right now. If you were to change it so that it's different by 2062, how do you think it should work instead?

Hari Kondabolu: In my particular field, I would like to see more people of colour as not just the talent and not just as a couple of writers who get the work in but as producers, as directors, as the people who are calling the shots because ultimately it comes down to, do I understand what this is? Can I bring it to fruition? And do I find this like economically feasible -- will it make me money? And if you're someone who doesn't have the lens of the writer or the lens of the story it's going to not look the way it's supposed to look and certain voices get cut out or misrepresented. Like, every time there is like, we're going to cast this dude as a Trans actor -- you can get a Trans actor. Why are you casting this cis dude to do this? And if that happens when you don't look -- I would like to believe in an environment that is truly diverse where you have not only woke people but the actual -- I would rather a person who represents a community -- it's a terrible way to phrase it -- but you know what I mean, like someone who's actually from the community make decisions versus a woke person who's not in the community. Because, you know, when you're woke that doesn't mean -- people do lots of shitty things when they're awake. Just because you know what's going on doesn't mean you're going to do the right thing. So I feel like you know that's the big change. I want us to not just have the power. Look, people of colour and minority groups entertaining the majority. That's not that new. It's it looks different. It's a little more complicated but we've done all sorts of different things to entertain the majority. But to actually tell honest stories and get to entertain ourselves first, and then

everybody else can figure it out, that's new and that's why I'd like to see.

Ausma Malik: That's a power dynamic shift I can get behind.

Ausma Malik: So how about you Max, as a nonprofit leader your boss is your board of directors and you're actually the boss at the office. Believe it he's in charge, yeah? But you know The Man too. Who is that in your work?

Max FineDay: Yeah. I mean the man has, you know, for Native people always been Canada. Canada has always been The Man you know and the person getting in the way of things and the person who's like, you know, treating us super poorly. Canada is the shittiest person to work with in terms of like, you know, workplace freedom. We have an employment agreement like we've been talking about treaties tonight right. It's like OK. So you've got health care and education, and blah blah blah. But it's like when we go to pick that up, when we go to claim it, Canada's like, wellllll. I mean Canada has always been this awful, evil boss, just like Mr. Spacely. I was in, I was in Montreal just last week and I had this woman come up to me and she was like, "You know why are native people so bothered." Bothered, bothered. But I was like, "Listen," I like fix my braids, you know, I was like, "Listen, I don't know if you're not paying attention, we're a little more than bothered." You know like this was it, right. And like I think this is the story of Canada right now is that you know we've we've gone through -- and there's been some things that yes have bothered native people about how shit's gone down.

You know what I mean but cannot Canadians have like been educated in a system where they still think they're so great, right, and that this Canada, that this country is the international defender of human rights, and is the nerdy kid in class, always doing right by everybody and is super great, we're so proud to be Canadian. Sorry, whenever we bump into somebody on the street -- and it's like no, no, no, we're Mr. Spacely, you know what I mean, native people are George Jetson. You see that like, two-and-a-half-year-old child being like, "I'll go get a job, Dad." Listen, this is like truly like, if I can add my own hashtag tonight: Capitalism is Colonial. You know what I mean.

Can I just say that we have we have this very realistic situation where somebody loses his job and all the family has to pitch in and blah blah blah. My auntie was out of work for like a week and a half. And like, on the first day, there was like casseroles showing up. You know. She was openly sobbing, you know like all this? She was in between contracts. But the community still came around. You know and we're there to support her in that week and a half of employment transition. I see like you know Canadians and they lose their jobs and it's like no man's land. Nobody's there to support them you know. And I just think, we're the savages? That's to me, that's to me, that's a little wild. I don't know. That's what I see.

Hari Kondabolu: Can I just add something to what -- I don't know if I really can add anything, you've said all of it. By the way, we should be friends, man.

I think the thing you said you know just saying Canada. I think that's true of the idea of the state. I feel like all countries are so desperate, especially the ones who've historically had power. They're so desperate to keep their sovereignty and their power like the whole world

is globalizing people are traveling all over the world. Money's going all over the world but they're so desperately trying to hold on to this idea of borders and that we still have control and we still have limits and it's like, do you though? You know, I mean the surveillance state is not just the government it's like all the you know all these companies are watching us too, and we're signing in, like I have TSA PreCheck CLEAR. I gave up my eyeballs and my my fingerprints to a company because I wanted to save 10 minutes. I mean, to me, the government like is just desperately holding on to whatever it can hold on to at least in the U.S. -- I mean it seems like the biggest thing we have to hold on to is we still -- at least as the government we have the threat of violence. That's the biggest thing that gives us power because we have these weapons. But other than that they're holding on to dear life because they know that it like it really is antiquated.

Ausma Malik: And these systems are deep and they're really entrenched and they've been built over so much time. But we also see that history has shown us that when people get fed up they also get organized, and they get results.

Big collective wins like ones that we've reflected on tonight in many different ways. But that comes to mind is like employment insurance. It happened after years and years of community organizing. And it benefits all of us, or at least it should. And there's smaller more personal wins that come from creating accountable systems and structures that are designed to rebalance power -- and that there is a really strong and crucial role in government around that. In Ontario we have the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal and the provincial office of the worker advisor. This is about people getting active getting organized taking all of this feeling of being fed up, at your wits end and doing something about it.

And I want to ask each of you what's the best thing you've ever won in your organizing work? Let's start with you, Hari.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean first of all I mean I know you called me an organizer earlier which is very generous, but I haven't organized really in a decade. No I haven't. I used to be an immigrant rights organizer from '05 to '07, longer than a decade at this point. So I'm not going to take that title.

Ausma Malik: Can I say something though? Maybe it's also the view that I mean maybe it's personal. We also take it as a group an organization is that being an organizer is someone who is capable of bringing people together around a cause and pushing for a change of thinking, a way of being, a system that isn't working the way it is. And in that view, I definitely think that you qualify as an organizer.

Hari Kondabolu: I think that's very generous. I know people who are making little to no money working in the trenches spending their lives -- and organizers don't work nine to five jobs, right. Sometimes they don't get that they might get paid part-time but they're working like a job and a half. And that's what it means to be an organizer, and it's really neat that, you know, I get called that because I say things that people are willing to hear because there's a punch line potentially at the end. But again like I feel like you know that's certainly why I'm not in it for that. You know I'm in it to entertain people. And so the people I know who really do the work like, I think they deserve to be in it in a separate category because they put in the work and they take the -- you know, the being when I was an organizer you

know, it was hard. The amount of like, the stories you hear. I worked with people who are, a lot of people, who are refugees from Somalia and I hear horrific stories about you know how they came to the country. How they're -- now that they've escaped -- how they're dealing with you know racism in their employment like, the kind of trauma that they haven't been able to heal from. And you know you bring people's stories with you, and I only did that for a couple of years. Imagine someone doing that decades hearing stories of families being separated and death and destruction and just the corruption within the system. Like, I'm not carrying that home with me every night. So again thank you. But that that's a higher title that I don't deserve.

Ausma Malik: All right. What about you Max?

Max FineDay: Yeah, well, as like as I can Native activists I'll let you know when a win happens, for sure. You know I'm not sure that we've we've experienced a whole bunch of them. You know, for me it's about little wins. Am I trying to dismantle the state? Of course, who isn't, right? But you know, I'm also, I also get the great privilege of talking to Canadians you know. Don't get me wrong, some of my best friends are Canadians so I really like Canadians. Good, good people, work really hard. My mailman is a Canadian actually, and a good guy. But you know, I was talking to a guy in Mississauga and after my talk, he came up to me he was like, I didn't know that -- the last residential schools closed in 1996.

Hari Kondabolu: Wow.

Max FineDay: I didn't know that, you know, this that and the other thing that I talked about, that the suicide rates of Indigenous young people are astronomical compared to the rate of Canadians, that we have lower outcomes in terms of health or infant mortality and all this sort of stuff. He said I didn't know that, but I'm going to go home and read some more about it, right.

And to me, you know, it's about getting to people at a systemic level, but also getting them one on one -- and changing their hearts and minds. And there's no reason why we can't do that all tonight after we leave. We have that the ability -- our most knowledgeable elder, right -- Grandma Google, is there to support our learning. Isn't that, isn't that our most -- isn't that our Elder? So I'm thinking about how we change this country, how we change this worlds and it's about people taking responsibility, finding out what they don't know, and then doing do something about it.

Hari Kondabolu: It's so amazing how people don't know about Canada's demon-ry, like it's so bizarre. I mean, because in the U.S. you know we like, oh that's oh, it's our haven. That's where we go because we're liberal cowards. And we don't want to do the hard work but like it's so amazing. You know, I read how like in Australia that their stolen generation is such a you know it's such a famous thing. But the residential schools they set up were based on the Canadian system.

Max FineDay: For sure. Colonialism's a hell of a drug, man. You know it is. Yeah. And it's contagious too, it's a disease. It's all so funny, right. You hear Americans, "You know if Trump wins, I'm moving to Canada!" I'm like, guess what, you know.

Ausma Malik: Well with that in mind. OK. You've all been very modest about your organizing. But if we look out, see what's on the horizon. Things that you feel passionately about changing. What is the next big win that workers need? Hari?

Hari Kondabolu: That's a huge question.

Ausma Malik: It's a huge question. I think you're up for it.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean so much of the workforce is like working like Walmart and fast food restaurants and they're not livable wages. I mean, again, I don't know what it's like here, in the U.S. like certainly working at a fast food restaurant. You might be working a full shift, you aren't getting paid enough. And often a lot of these companies they don't let you pay they work 40 plus hours because then you're eligible for insurance so they make it limited to be part time, right. Which in theory was like, oh for high school kids they're only working part time, but it's not high school kids right. These are people who are struggling to make ends meet. So I think the first thing is a livable wage. People cannot live on one or two jobs.

Ausma Malik: Absolutely. And we have an amazing campaign, the Fight for 15 and Fairness.

Are you in the house?

That have been doing amazing work around pushing to ensure that people have a \$15 minimum wage and that's just the beginning, right, in terms of work that is decent and dignified and, and there's so many ways to support that campaign here. So thanks for raising that.

How about you Max?

Max FineDay: Yeah, I think you know when I when I go across this country and I see all the you know all the hope that exists in this generation of mine, and even younger, all of the ideas in Indigenous communities and reflecting on what does what does the economy of you know 2062 look like and and is you know knowledge and background of indigenous people, of reconciliation, how are we going to rise to the challenge of including our fastest growing population who are literally banging at the doors of higher education, waiting to be let in, waiting to join this economy to add billions of dollars to turn to the GDP of this country. How are we going to make space for them? How are we going to make room? How are we going to prepare ourselves and our workplaces so that we don't have somebody smudging in the bathroom because they're afraid --you know do it like real quick here and you know. All right good to go. You know and all that sort of stuff. We shouldn't have to compromise our culture to work on Bay Street we shouldn't -- and after I just called Capitalism colonial....Listen, all right I'm trying to get that bread to OK. This costs. The way I'm dressed costs. You know we shouldn't have to compromise our culture to be successful in the workplace and that's what we've had to do. Assimilation has been the name in the game for the 150, what one years, that Canada's been a country, even longer. And I know that extends beyond just Indigenous people too. That newcomers,

refugees feel pressure to conform to Canadian values -- one of which is hating Native people. We'll park that one, we'll come back to that one. But we shouldn't have to do that. And so when I think about -- you know when I work with young people that I work with I want to instill in them that pride that hasn't been there for our parents' generation, our grandparents' generation, so that they can walk as a proud nehiyaw napiyo in the towers on Bay Street, in nonprofits, in the entrepreneurial world, or in stand-up comedy. I think that's what I see. That's what I hope for and that's what I hope you get to.

Hari Kondabolu: Oh don't put stand-up comedy in there.

Max FineDay: I'm trying to make you feel good, Hari.

Ausma Malik: I want to see more of that. I'm all about that. I like it.

So this takes us to our final take it or leave it for the night. Do you still have your cards on you? Yes. Yeah. We still got it. All right.

Ausma Malik: So this one I feel like, I don't know how the audience is going to be around this one: coworking spaces, as they exist right now. Take it.

One big, strong champion.

Leave it.

Hari Kondabolu: I would I would take it.

Ausma Malik: Yeah? What about it?

Hari Kondabolu: I would take it for two reasons. One reason why I would take co-working spaces is that selfishly, like I work alone and that gets very lonely.

And the second reason is that implies all of us are still working which considering an automated future is a very good sign.

Ausma Malik: It's very hopeful, that's true. All right.

Ausma Malik: And our last one is 9 to 5. Take it? Not the song, like the actual thing. 9 to 5, take it? I got to hear you. If I can't hear you, I don't know.

All right.

And leave it.

Ausma Malik: Big shoutout to leave 9 to 5 behind. Can you talk to me about that a little bit?

Max FineDay: Leave it. I'm not a morning person, you know. I'm a night owl. I get things done at 4 o'clock in the morning when nobody else is up and around after I've gone

through every meme account that I follow on Instagram I'm like, All right it's 4 o'clock. I'm ready to get to work. I'm ready to reconcile this country. And so that's when it happens.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean it feels weird, it seems so it doesn't fit the kind of work many of us do you know. I mean my mom works in a hospital like she needs to put in the hours. It's not like I'll do all my work in three hours then, no. Patients don't work that way. "Aah, you got a heart attack but like you know we're only doing three hours today." So I mean, I get why that you know sometimes there are jobs that are longer but I think for a lot of us it just feels like a very antiquated idea to have set hours. And you know on the weekends just these two days and then you work the week. It's very. I don't think it's it's practical. And to be honest I think most of us and maybe I shouldn't speak for all of us but most of us only do 15 to 20 minutes of work in a week.

Ausma Malik: That's the truth telling we're about tonight. Well, also like many of you I'll be at my desk tomorrow morning at 9:00, right, yes? Many of you? Yes.

Ausma Malik: So it's time for us to wrap up and I'm going to wrap up with one last question.

Hari and Max, tell us about someone or something giving you hope for the future of work.

Max? Someone something giving you hope for the future of work.

Max FineDay: Someone something... you know, I can't stop talking about how proud I am of my nieces and nephews, my cousins, my community who have come through so much in the last you know last little while and are still reaching out with an open hand to Canada ready to reconcile. Ready to put right everything that has gone so wrong for so long in this country. I think that's a real gift for Canada, to Canada, and I get mad at Canada sometimes -- you guys are assholes sometimes. And you know, I'm always reminded by the generosity and the love of young people who who just want to have what our ancestors envisioned and that's peace, prosperity, and mutual respect. And to me I think if we can build...if we can build a country. If we can build an economy, if we can build a workforce on those values then it will be good for everybody.

Hari Kondabolu: I mean, I'm really inspired by a lot of the art I've seen recently. Look I believe in art that challenges power. I believe in art that can bridge these gaps in communication and culture. I believe in thoughtful choices. And, you know, I saw If Beale Street Could Talk and I think the work of Barry Jenkins is so beautiful and the storytelling is so well done. And the fact that he was able to take a Baldwin book and make it into this piece, I think it's absolutely incredible. The work of my friend W. Kamau Bell. You know, Kamau has a show on CNN called the United Shades of America -- what I love so much about it is that when he goes to different communities and talks about different cultures, whether it's the Sikh community, whether it's going to San Quentin and talking to inmates, he lets the people that the topic is about talk for themselves. And I think that's something that we need to do a lot more of. Often we end up having people talking for large groups like, no I think I can talk for myself -- just give me a chance. And I feel like that's inspiring to see someone who is successful without compromising his values. And at the end of the day he knows that like this is about getting as many voices out there. It's about us -- a lot,

like us having the right to humanize ourselves and complicate our own stories because representation has real life impacts. Whether we get hired, how we get paid, how we get treated, often that gets dictated by what images we've been programmed with. So I think those are just a couple of examples of people that are keep me going.

Ausma Malik: And those are incredible examples. Thank you both so much!

Ausma Malik: And I get a chance to also tell you it gives me hope. And what gives me hope is all of you -- the both of you -- and everyone who's out here tonight. You know the old saying "Never doubt what a small group of thoughtful committed citizens could...never doubt."

Well it's such a good saying that I'll say it twice. Margaret Mead, all respect. May you rest in peace. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Who's heard that one before? Yes.

But we also know that people with privilege and conventional power will continue to write history if we don't show up. They're also the ones who have the time and resources to imagine the future and make it a reality, if not an inevitability. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Jetsons in 2012, The Smithsonian Museum actually asked the public how expectations might have changed if George had taken a flying bus to work instead of a car. What if Jane had worked outside the home? Or what if Judy or Elroy even had one Black friend?

Far from being frivolous our imaginations are powerful. They can envision solutions to problems, conceive and choose from among options, and set ambitious yet achievable goals. They can conjure up worthy dreams not just slicker versions of the present with its persistent inequalities intact.

And then we can embody them, live into them and make them real. It starts by slowing down to connect with each other. Take in the big picture maybe even excavate the absurd and profound, and recommit to a vision of what's possible.

Like George I think we all want to step off that fast moving sidewalk. "Jane get me off this crazy thing." That's what he cries at the end of each episode. And in that cartoon future he doesn't have a choice.

But we definitely do.

We can get out of this rerun and move beyond it. We can choose something much better for ourselves and our future grandchildren -- and fight for it.

Thank you all for choosing to be here tonight. And thank you to all of our listeners around the globe for choosing to subscribe to Just Work It.

Please join me in thanking our incredible, smart, brilliant guests Hari Kondabolu and Max FineDay. Let's give it up for them.

And a special, a very, very special word of thanks to Radiyah Chowdhury, who is our producer, who is the producer of tonight's podcast. To Laura Ziemba, from Paperchase who has been our event producer. To the irreplaceable Nora Cole. Our Executive Producer, Pat Thompson. And everyone else who has had been helping behind the scenes.

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