

THE COMIC SERIES

GREAT IMMIGRANTS



GREAT AMERICANS



EVERYONE
CAN BE A
SUPERHERO





INTRODUCTION

In this comic book, naturalized U.S. citizens tell their immigrant stories in their own words: how they built careers, fled war zones, united with family, found belonging, created a new home, and made America a better place.

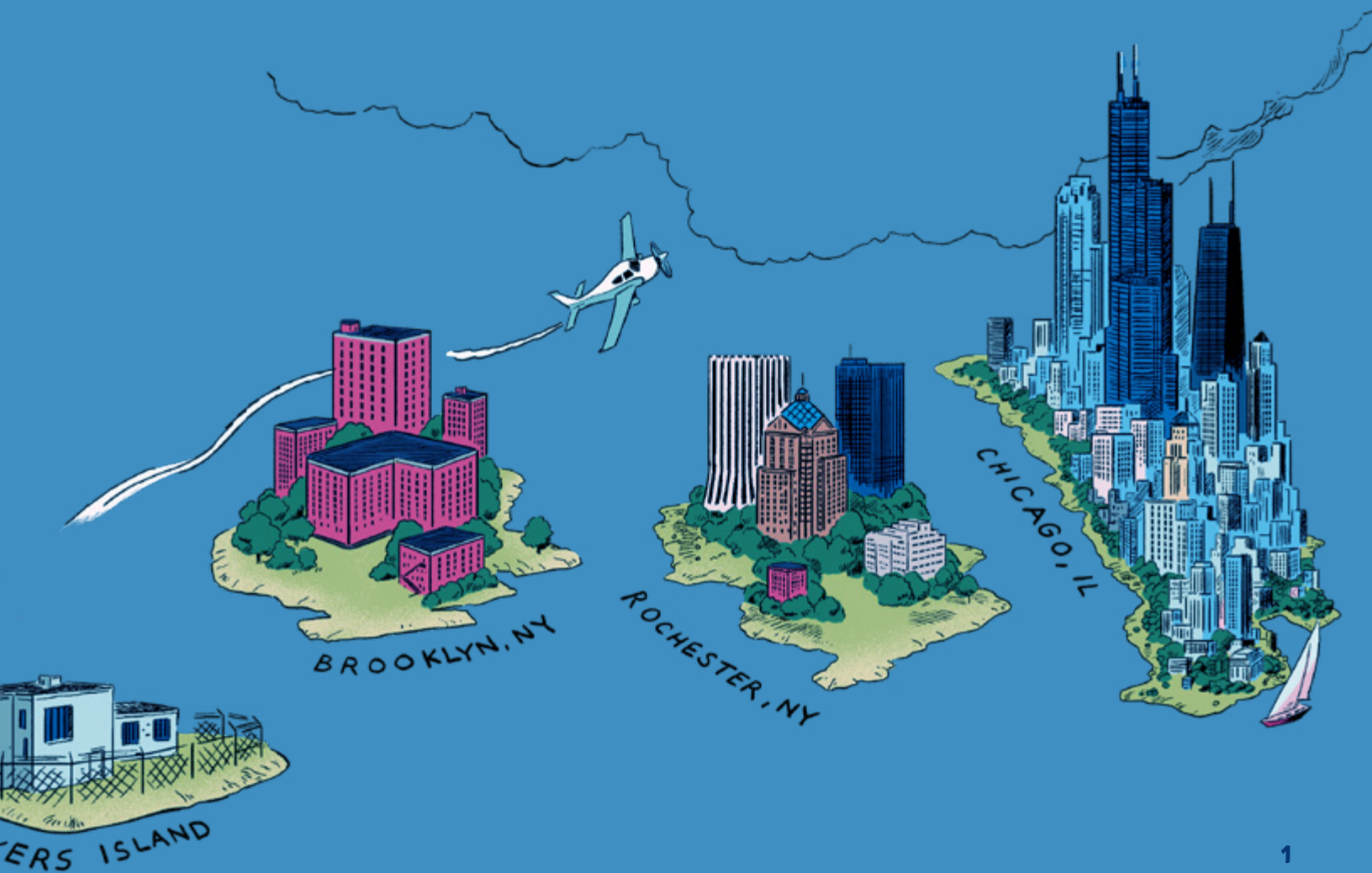


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JIM LEE, a legendary comic book artist, writer, and publisher from South Korea, holds a world record for the best-selling comic book of all time. **PAGE 4**



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DAVID BYRNE, a groundbreaking musician from Scotland, encourages his audiences and all citizens to vote. **PAGE 8**



KATALIN KARIKÓ, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist from Hungary, helped create the COVID-19 vaccine. **PAGE 10**



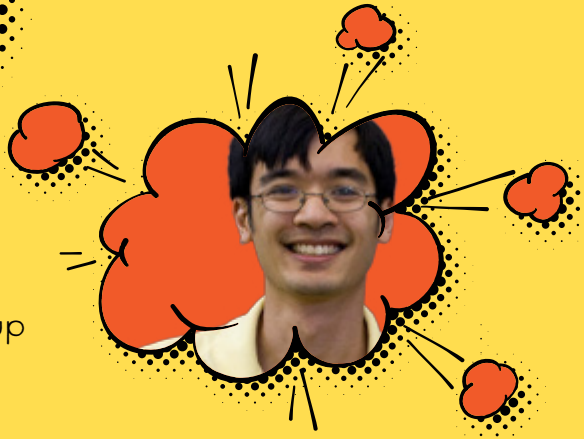
MO AMER, a Palestinian comedian from Kuwait, talks about difficult topics in a way that makes you laugh and think. **PAGE 12**



BETTY KWAN CHINN, a humanitarian from China, has served nine million free meals to people in need. **PAGE 14**



JEAN-CLAUDE BRIZARD, an educator from Haiti, tries to save kids from ending up in prison. **PAGE 18**



TERENCE TAO, a math prodigy from Australia, is one of the world's great problem solvers. **PAGE 20**



HOMA NAFICY, an Iranian librarian from France, created a place for immigrants to learn how to become American citizens. **PAGE 22**



RAJ PANJABI, a doctor from Liberia, helped lead us out of the pandemic. **PAGE 24**



MEL LAGOMASINO, a financial adviser from Cuba, serves as a mentor for other entrepreneurs. **PAGE 26**



YANN LECUN, an AI pioneer from France, tries to understand the nature of intelligence. **PAGE 28**



PAUL MULDOON, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet from Ireland, writes poems that make sense of life. **PAGE 30**



JIM LEE

A KEY CONCEPT WITH SUPERHEROES IS THAT THEY HAVE SECRET LIVES.

AS AN IMMIGRANT KID GROWING UP IN MISSOURI IN THE '70S, I COULD IDENTIFY.

THERE WAS ME AT HOME, EATING DIFFERENT FOODS AND SPEAKING A MIX OF KOREAN AND ENGLISH.

AND THEN THERE WAS ME AT SCHOOL, HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS AND TRYING TO FIT IN.

THIS IS A MATH LESSON ...

IF YOU INSIST ON MAKING PICTURES OF ...

... NOT AN ART CLASS.

WHERE DID YOU LEARN HOW TO DRAW LIKE THIS?

ART HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CONSTANT IN MY LIFE, JUST LIKE SUPERHEROES HAVE BEEN A CONSTANT IN MY LIFE.*

WHEN WE MOVED TO THE MIDWEST, IT WAS FOR MY FATHER'S JOB. THERE WAS A PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE IN THE U.S. AT THAT TIME, SO THE COUNTRY BROUGHT IN IMMIGRANT DOCTORS TO FILL THE GAP.

EVEN AS A LITTLE KID GROWING UP IN KOREA, I REMEMBER WATCHING THE MAX FLEISCHER "SUPERMAN" CARTOONS.

*FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS MAKE UP 13.1% OF ARTISTS AND RELATED WORKERS IN CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS. SOURCE: IMMIGRANTS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, AUGUST 2019

MY PARENTS WANTED ME TO BE A DOCTOR AND FOLLOW MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS, BUT I WAS JUST CONSTANTLY DRAWING. IT WAS THE THING I LOVED AND FOUND SOLACE AND ESCAPE IN.



EVERY SUNDAY, I WOULD MEET UP WITH MY FRIEND BRANDON CHOI AT CHURCH, AND IN THE HOUR AFTER SUNDAY SCHOOL ENDED, WHEN THE ADULTS' SERMON WAS STILL GOING ON, WE WOULD DRAW.



HOW LONG SHOULD WE MAKE THE TUSKS?

LONGER THAN THAT.

WHEN I FORMED IMAGE COMICS IN THE '90S, SOME OF THE CHARACTERS WE CREATED IN THOSE SESSIONS ACTUALLY ENDED UP BECOMING CHARACTERS IN OUR COMIC BOOKS.



IF I LOOK BACK AND CONNECT THE DOTS, I COULD SAY THAT BEING AN IMMIGRANT WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WAY I LOOKED AT STORYTELLING.

... BUT I MUST HAVE FELT A KINSHIP WITH THESE OUTCAST CHARACTERS WHO DIDN'T FIT INTO SOCIETY AND HAD SUPERPOWERS AND SECRET IDENTITIES.

AND JUST LIKE THEM, I WAS NEVER STRIVING FOR THAT ONE UNIFIED IDENTITY.

AT THE TIME I WAS JUST THINKING, "OH COOL, THIS GUY SHOOTS BEAMS OUT OF HIS EYES," OR "THIS GUY HAS SUPER STRENGTH" ...

I FELT MORE COMFORTABLE BEING ABLE TO HAVE DIFFERENT SIDES TO MYSELF AND ASSIMILATING WHEN NEEDED ...

IT'S JUST LIKE IN THE COMICS: WE CAN BE CLARK KENT AND SUPERMAN.



... WHICH I THINK IS A BIG PART OF THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE.



JIM LEE IS THE PRESIDENT, PUBLISHER, AND CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER OF DC. HE IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL COMIC ARTISTS AND WRITERS OF ALL TIME. HE HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS ACCOLADES, INCLUDING A HARVEY AND MORE. HIS FUNDRAISING HAS SUPPORTED COMIC BOOK STORES, HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE, AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

MONA HANNA



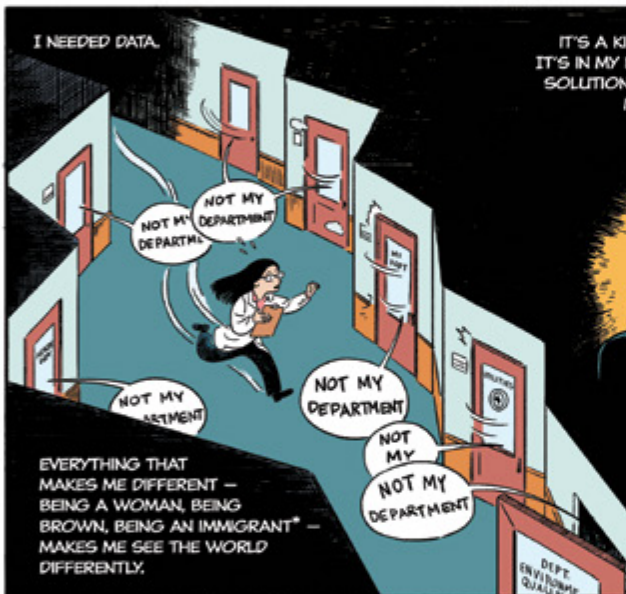


BUT THE PEOPLE OF FLINT WERE TOLD TO RELAX. EVERYTHING WAS FINE!



I GREW UP PINCHING MYSELF, GRATEFUL TO HAVE IMMIGRATED TO THIS COUNTRY WHILE MY COUSINS IN IRAQ GREW UP IN AIR RAID SHELTERS, AFRAID OF THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT.

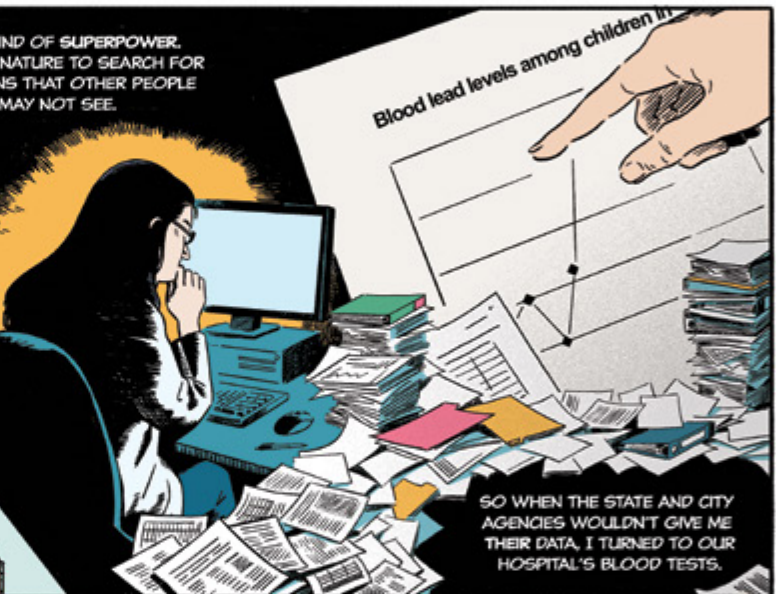
NOW, 30 YEARS LATER, MY GOVERNMENT WAS FAILING TO PROTECT ITS MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS, AND IT MADE NO SENSE. THIS WAS AMERICA. THIS WAS THE 21ST CENTURY.



I NEEDED DATA.

IT'S A KIND OF SUPERPOWER. IT'S IN MY NATURE TO SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS THAT OTHER PEOPLE MAY NOT SEE.

EVERYTHING THAT MAKES ME DIFFERENT — BEING A WOMAN, BEING BROWN, BEING AN IMMIGRANT* — MAKES ME SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY.



Blood lead levels among children in

SO WHEN THE STATE AND CITY AGENCIES WOULDN'T GIVE ME THEIR DATA, I TURNED TO OUR HOSPITAL'S BLOOD TESTS.



WHEN I WENT PUBLIC WITH MY RESEARCH, THE STATE TRIED TO DISCREDIT ME AND MY NUMBERS. BUT IN THE END, THERE WAS NO WAY TO DENY WHAT WAS IN THE WATER.

FOR HIGH-RISK GROUPS, ESPECIALLY INFANTS ON FORMULA, WE WOULD SAY NO TO TAP WATER.



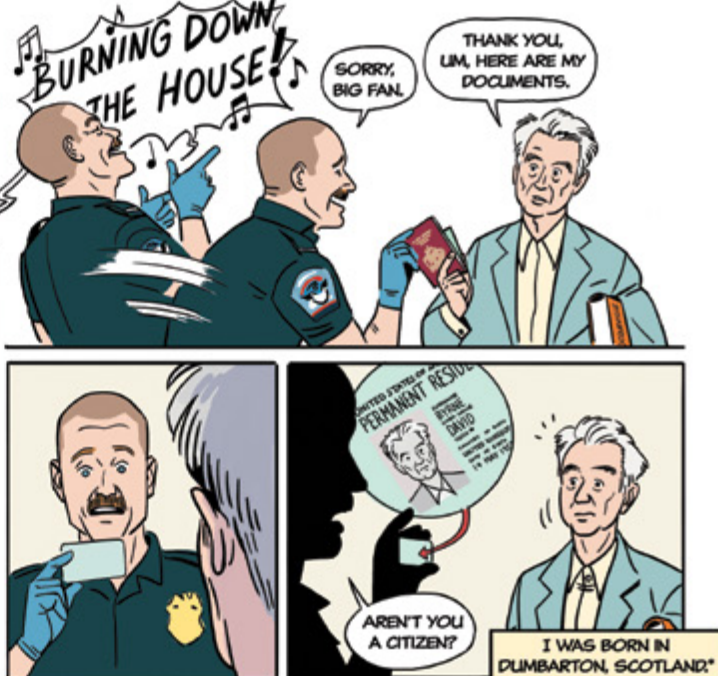
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SEPARATE ME FROM MY BACKGROUND.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SHAPED ME LED ME TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN.

MY STORY IS AN IMMIGRANT'S STORY.

FLINT STOPPED USING FLINT RIVER WATER IN 2015. FOR HER ACTIONS, MONA HANNA RECEIVED MANY AWARDS AND WAS NAMED ONE OF TIME MAGAZINE'S 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE. SHE CONTINUES TO SPEARHEAD INITIATIVES TO HEAL YOUTH POVERTY AND ITS EFFECTS. FIND MORE INSPIRING STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

*26% OF PRACTICING PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS IN THE UNITED STATES ARE FOREIGN-BORN.
SOURCE: IMMIGRANT HEALTH-CARE WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES, MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE, APRIL 2023

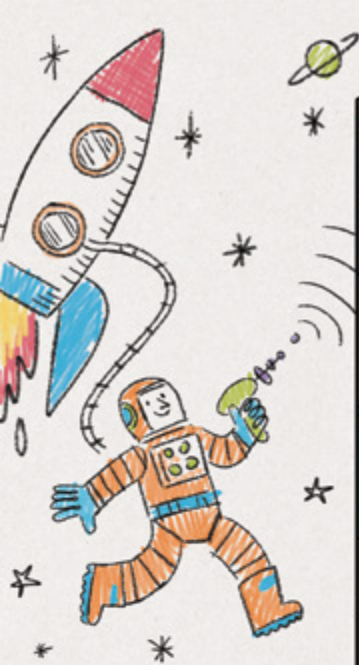


- 1) Hold food in place with fork (left hand); cut with knife (right hand);
- 2) Put down knife and switch fork to right hand;
- 3) Spear food and eat;
- 4) Repeat as necessary.



- 1) Cut food with knife in right hand; eat with fork in left;
- 2) Repeat as necessary.





IN JUNIOR HIGH, I STARTED TO DRAW COMICS AND CARTOONS ABOUT THE THINGS THAT SOMEONE MY AGE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN.

HEY! MR. TAMBOURINE MAN, PLAY A SONG FOR ME AND THERE IS NO PLACE I'M GOING TO

THEN I STARTED HEARING POP MUSIC FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I THOUGHT, SOMEHOW, SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, THERE'S THIS SECRET NETWORK OF PEOPLE, PERCEIVING THE WORLD IN A VERY DIFFERENT WAY.

AND I THOUGHT, IF I COULD PLAY IN A BAND, WHAT WOULD THAT FEEL LIKE?



WHEN PEOPLE SAY THAT THEY FIND MY WORK MOVING, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO THEM.

A LOT OF THAT CAME FROM MY EXPERIENCE AS AN IMMIGRANT — OF HAVING JUST A LITTLE BIT OF DISTANCE, SO I COULD ASK THE QUESTIONS:

HOW DO PEOPLE RELATE TO ONE ANOTHER? WHAT DO THEY DO? WHY DO THEY DO THINGS THAT WAY?

BUT I HAVE THE ABILITY TO STEP BACK AND LOOK AT MYSELF AND THE WORLD I LIVE IN WITH KIND OF DISPASSIONATE EYES.

SO I HELD ONTO THAT GREEN CARD FOR A LONG TIME — UNTIL, TO VOTE IN ELECTIONS, I HAD TO BECOME A CITIZEN.

I EVEN STARTED MENTIONING IT FROM THE STAGE ...

OKAY, I'M A CITIZEN NOW, AND THIS IS THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO VOTE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS — THEY ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DECIDED OUR FUTURE.

Local election voters, NY (= 23%)

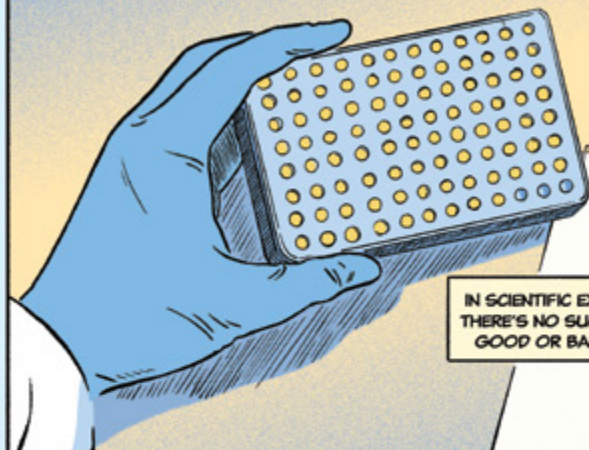
I WOULD SHINE A LIGHT ON A PERCENTAGE OF THE THEATER AUDIENCE, AND MAYBE IT GOT SOME OF THEM TO GO AND VOTE.

THIS IS SOMETHING WE AIM FOR, RATHER THAN SAYING "THIS IS WHO WE ARE," IT'S ABOUT WHO WE CAN BE.

PASSPORT

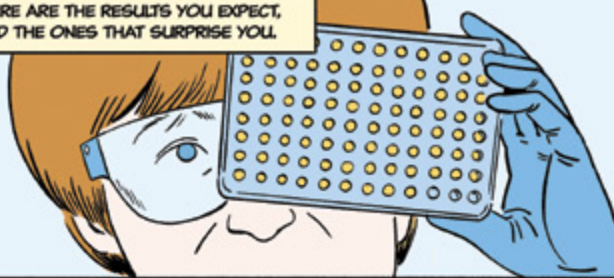
DAVID BYRNE WAS THE LEAD SINGER AND GUITARIST OF THE SEMINAL ROCK BAND THE TALKING HEADS AND HAS BUILT A MULTIFACETED CAREER AS A MUSICIAN, RECORD PRODUCER, CONTEMPORARY ARTIST, AND FILMMAKER. HE HAS WON A GRAMMY, TONY, A GOLDEN GLOBE, AND AN ACADEMY AWARD. WORKING WITH HEADCOUNT, HE PROMOTES VOTER REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

KATALIN KARIKÓ



IN SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GOOD OR BAD RESULTS.

THERE ARE THE RESULTS YOU EXPECT, AND THE ONES THAT SURPRISE YOU.



mRNA: see above
tRNA: Control - No immune reaction?

I'VE SEEN THIS IN MY WORK WITH RNA: HOW SOMETIMES THE MOST SURPRISING RESULTS ARE THE ONES THAT LEAD TO BREAKTHROUGHS.

PENNSYLVANIA, 2005

DREW, HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT tRNA DOESN'T CAUSE ANY OF THE INFLAMMATION WE'RE SEEING WITH THE SYNTHETIC mRNA?

WHAT?

TAKE A LOOK.



GROWING UP IN HUNGARY, I WAS A CURIOUS GIRL, ALWAYS ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT LIFE THREW AT ME.

MY FATHER WAS A BUTCHER, AND WHEN HE OPENED A PIG, I STARTED ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BODY. I PUT MY HANDS IN THE HEART, AND PUSHED MY FINGERS THROUGH WHERE THE BLOOD FLOWED.



BOLÓGIA VERSENY



THIS LED ME TO BIOLOGY, AND I WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL AT IT. IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, I COMPETED IN COMPETITIONS AND WAS THIRD BEST IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY.*

*IMMIGRANTS HAVE BEEN AWARDED 40% OF THE NOBEL PRIZES WON BY AMERICANS IN CHEMISTRY, MEDICINE, AND PHYSICS SINCE 2000.
SOURCE: IMMIGRANTS AND NOBEL PRIZES: 1901-2023, NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN POLICY, OCTOBER 2023

I STARTED WORKING WITH RNA WHILE I WAS IN GRADUATE SCHOOL IN THE 1970S. I SAW POTENTIAL THERE, BUT CONVINCING OTHERS WASN'T ALWAYS EASY.

UNFORTUNATELY, MY LAB IN HUNGARY LOST ITS GOVERNMENT FUNDING, BUT I FOUND A NEW POSITION AS A RESEARCHER IN PENNSYLVANIA.

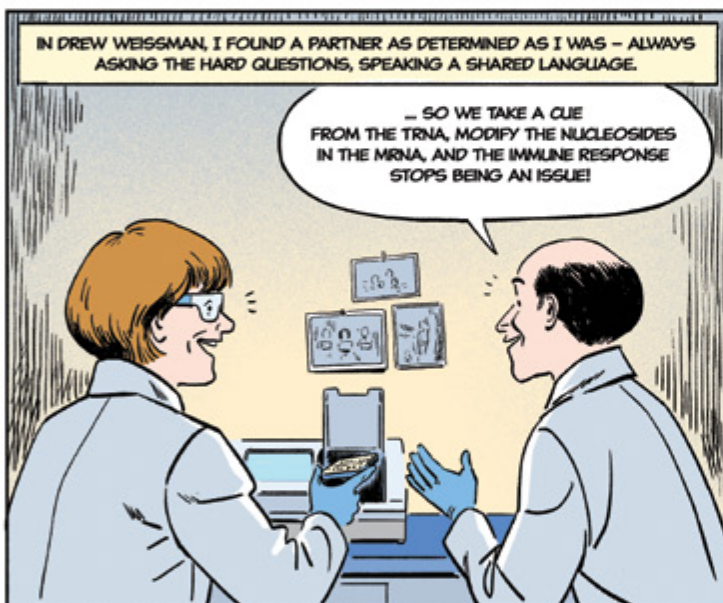
SO I STITCHED ALL OUR MONEY INTO MY DAUGHTER'S TEDDY BEAR, BOUGHT ONE-WAY TICKETS TO THE U.S., AND SAID GOODBYE TO OUR HOME.



IN THE U.S., MY FOCUS STAYED ON RNA, AND ITS POSSIBLE THERAPEUTIC APPLICATION. INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON FUNDRAISING AND TENURE, I SPENT SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS EXPERIMENTING AT MY BENCH.

IN DREW WEISSMAN, I FOUND A PARTNER AS DETERMINED AS I WAS – ALWAYS ASKING THE HARD QUESTIONS, SPEAKING A SHARED LANGUAGE.

... SO WE TAKE A CLUE FROM THE tRNA, MODIFY THE NUCLEOSIDES IN THE mRNA, AND THE IMMUNE RESPONSE STOPS BEING AN ISSUE!



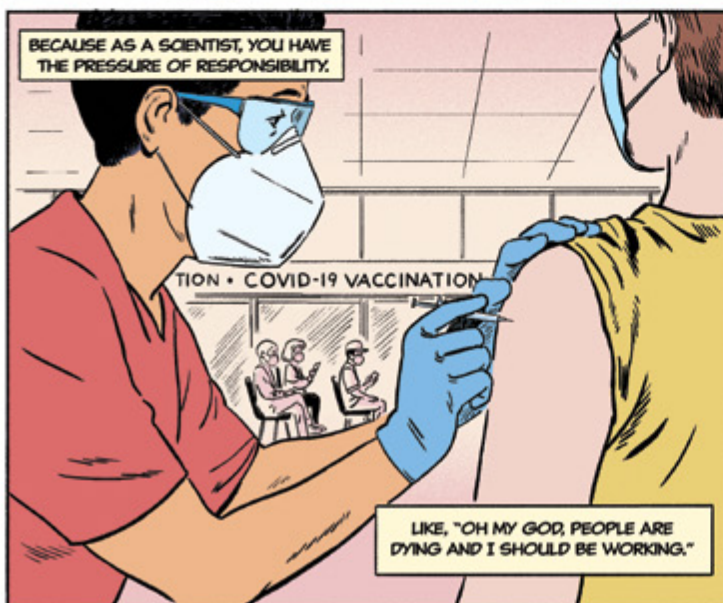
WHEN COVID ARRIVED, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO PUT OUR RESEARCH INTO ACTION.



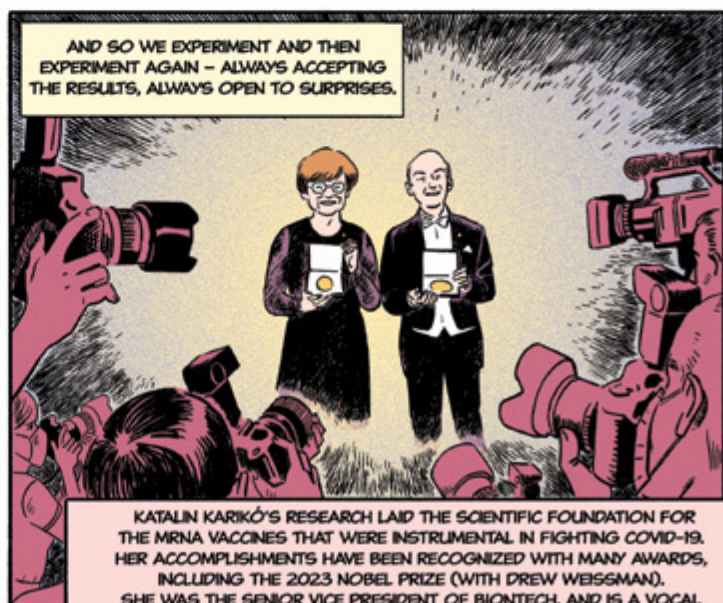
BECAUSE AS A SCIENTIST, YOU HAVE THE PRESSURE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

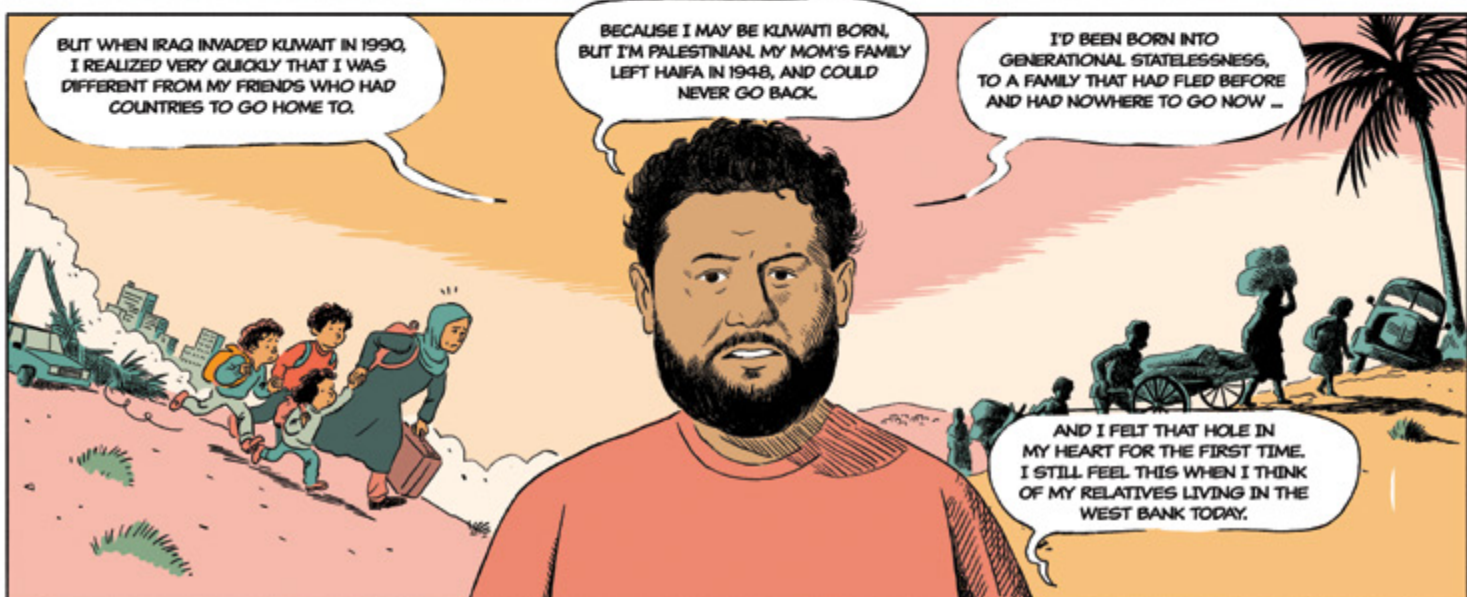
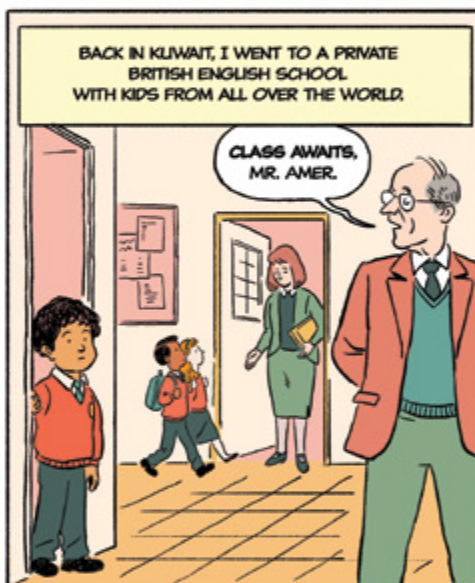
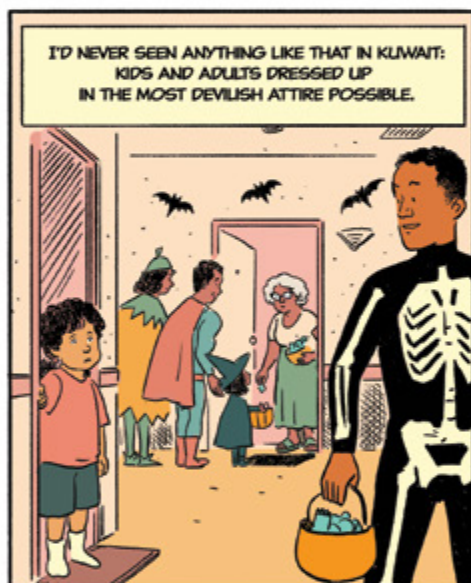
LIKE, "OH MY GOD, PEOPLE ARE DYING AND I SHOULD BE WORKING."



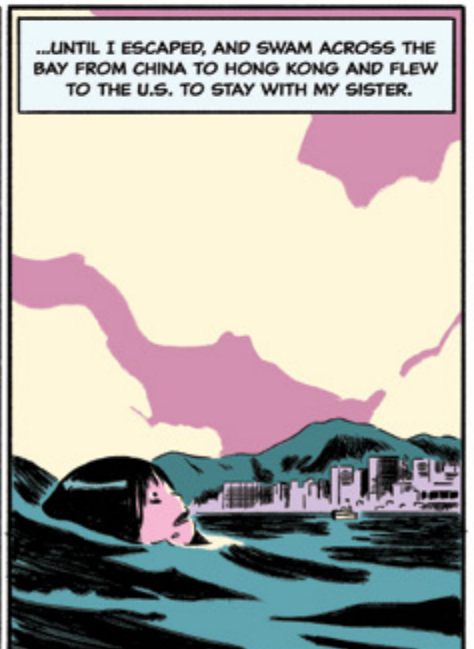
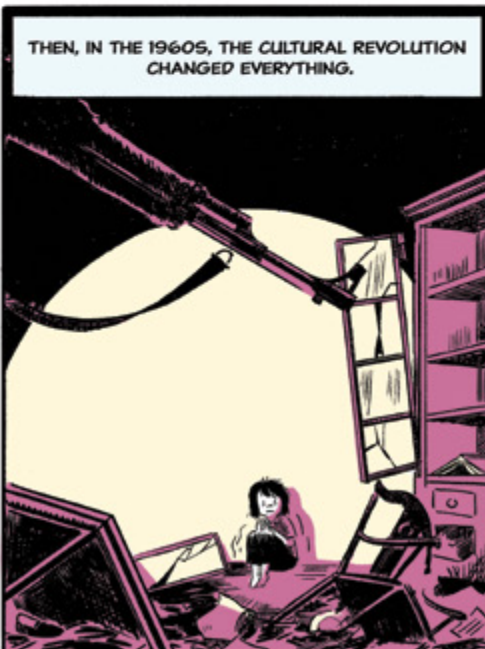
AND SO WE EXPERIMENT AND THEN EXPERIMENT AGAIN – ALWAYS ACCEPTING THE RESULTS, ALWAYS OPEN TO SURPRISES.



KATALIN KARIKÓ'S RESEARCH LAID THE SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION FOR THE mRNA VACCINES THAT WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN FIGHTING COVID-19. HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED WITH MANY AWARDS, INCLUDING THE 2023 NOBEL PRIZE (WITH DREW WEISSMAN). SHE WAS THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF BIONTECH, AND IS A VOCAL ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT [CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES](https://carnegie.org/immigrantstories)



BETTY KWAN CHINN



"SAIL ON SILVER GIRL, SAIL ON BY, YOUR TIME HAS COME TO SHINE. ALL YOUR DREAMS ARE ON THEIR WAY, SEE HOW THEY SHINE. OH, IF YOU NEED A FRIEND I'M SAILING RIGHT BEHIND"



THE BIGGEST MEMORY FOR ME IS COMING OUT OF THE AIRCRAFT AND HEARING THE SONG "BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER."



I WAS ALWAYS BAREFOOT IN CHINA, BUT MR. ROGERS TAUGHT ME HOW TO PUT SHOES ON MY FEET.



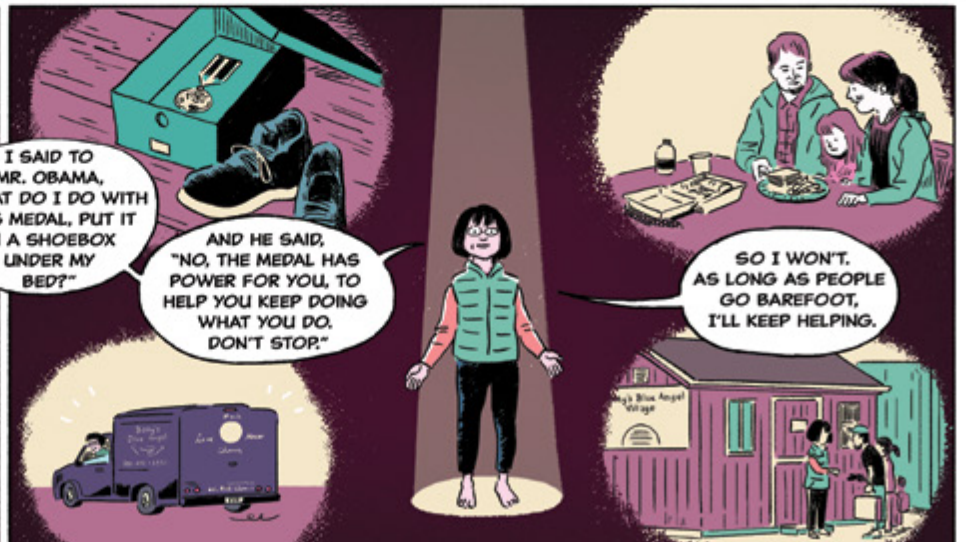
YEARS LATER, I GOT MARRIED, AND WORKED AT A SCHOOL IN EUREKA, CALIFORNIA.



MY SON'S FRIEND, A GIRL IN THE FIRST GRADE, KEPT ASKING MY SON FOR FOOD.



SO HE GAVE ME THE PRESIDENTIAL CITIZENS MEDAL.



SO I WON'T. AS LONG AS PEOPLE GO BAREFOOT, I'LL KEEP HELPING.

BETTY KWAN CHINN HAS SERVED MORE THAN NINE MILLION MEALS SINCE SHE BEGAN FEEDING HER COMMUNITY IN 1984. SHE HAS ALSO SUPPORTED EUREKA'S UNHOUSED POPULATION THROUGH THE BETTY KWAN CHINN DAY CENTER AND A SHORT-TERM HOUSING FACILITY. FIND MORE INSPIRING STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

DID YOU KNOW?

THERE ARE
48 MILLION
IMMIGRANTS IN
AMERICA, 14.3%
OF THE POPULATION.

HALF OF ALL
IMMIGRANTS, 24 MILLION,
ARE NATURALIZED
U.S. CITIZENS.

2.8 MILLION
IMMIGRANTS ARE
CHILDREN.



IMMIGRANTS FILL
ROUGHLY 1 IN 4
JOBS IN THE FIELDS OF
**AGRICULTURE,
CONSTRUCTION,
AND STEM.**



Source: American Immigration Council, 2025



**3.9 MILLION IMMIGRANTS
ARE ENTREPRENEURS – THAT’S**

**24% OF ALL
BUSINESS
OWNERS.**

WOW!!

**IMMIGRANTS
PAY SOME
\$652 BILLION
IN TAXES
EVERY YEAR.**

**230
FORTUNE 500
COMPANIES
WERE FOUNDED BY
IMMIGRANTS OR CHILDREN
OF IMMIGRANTS.**



**35% OF
IMMIGRANTS HAVE A
COLLEGE OR
GRADUATE
DEGREE.**

**23 MILLION U.S.-BORN RESIDENTS
LIVE WITH AT
LEAST ONE
IMMIGRANT
PARENT.**

**3 OUT OF 4
IMMIGRANTS ARE
PROFICIENT IN
ENGLISH.**

JEAN-CLAUDE BRIZARD

MY FIRST FLIGHT WAS IN 1976 WHEN I WAS 12 YEARS OLD, AND IT TOOK ME FROM HAITI TO NEW YORK.

I COULDN'T WAIT TO FINALLY BE REUNITED WITH MY PARENTS, WHO'D FLED THE DICTATORSHIP FOUR YEARS EARLIER.

BUT GOING OUT THE AUTOMATIC DOORS AT JFK, THE COLD AND THE NOISE HIT ME SO HARD THAT I RAN BACK INSIDE.

I WALKED INTO THIS PLACE AND EVERYONE LOOKED LIKE ME — BLACK AND BROWN KIDS. THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS, MY STUDENTS SURROUNDED ME.

YOU MAY GET ME, BUT I'M GOING TO GET AT LEAST ONE OF YOU. WHO'S IT GOING TO BE IT?

IT WAS A TEST TO SEE IF I WAS SCARED OF THEM. AFTER THAT, I KNEW WHO I WAS TEACHING, AND THEY WERE MUCH NICER TO ME.

ABOUT A DECADE LATER, I NEEDED A JOB AND NEW YORK CITY WAS DESPERATE FOR TEACHERS. I WAS SENT TO RIKERS ISLAND TO TEACH PRISONERS.*

THE ONE KID WHO DIDN'T STAND UP THAT FIRST DAY TURNED OUT TO BE BRILLIANT.

WHAT DO YOU CALL THIS AGAIN?

ALGEBRA.

ALGEBRA'S EASY.

BUT IT WASN'T A PLACE I WANTED TO BE. I WORE A TIE EVERY DAY AND GREW A BEARD BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID I WAS GOING TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE INMATES AT RIKERS.

TOWARD THE END OF THE SEMESTER, I WAS DONE. I TOLD THAT KID, "LOOK, YOU BROUGHT ME JOY IN THIS PLACE, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?"

HOW ABOUT A SANDWICH?

*IN THE U.S., 9.6% OF WORKERS IN K-12 AND 17.4% OF WORKERS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE FOREIGN-BORN. SOURCE: IMMIGRANTS AND THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, AUGUST 2021



ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO, TO CONQUER MY FEAR OF HEIGHTS, I GOT MY PILOT'S LICENSE. I WAS HOOKED IMMEDIATELY.



AS A TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM, I COULD IMPACT 30-35 KIDS. WHEN I BECAME A PRINCIPAL IN BROOKLYN, MAYBE 2,000.

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN FROM THERE, YOU DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THE MUCK.

THE SAME IS TRUE WITH EDUCATION.

YOU SEE THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF NATURE, AND OUR IMPACT ON IT.

RIKERS ISLAND

BROOKLYN, NY

ROCHESTER, NY

CHICAGO, IL

IT'S LIKE ARCHIMEDES SAID: GIVE ME A LEVER LONG ENOUGH AND A FULCRUM ON WHICH TO PLACE IT, AND I SHALL MOVE THE WORLD.

NOW, IN MY CURRENT ROLE, I WORK ON EVERYTHING FROM GETTING K-12 STUDENTS ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET TO FIGURING OUT HOW TO HARNESS AI TO IMPROVE LEARNING.

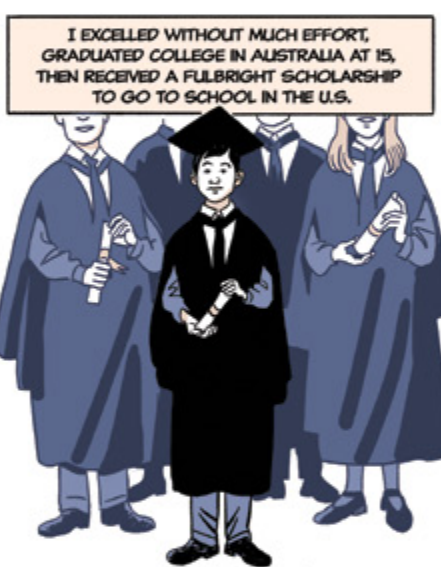
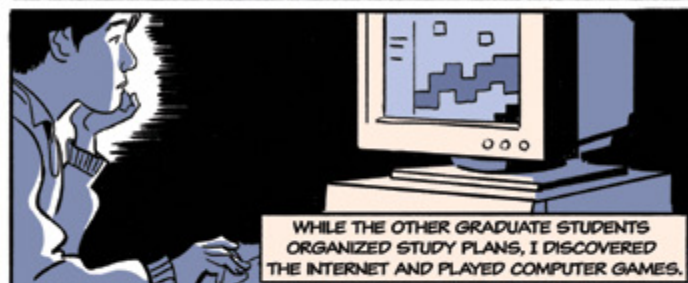
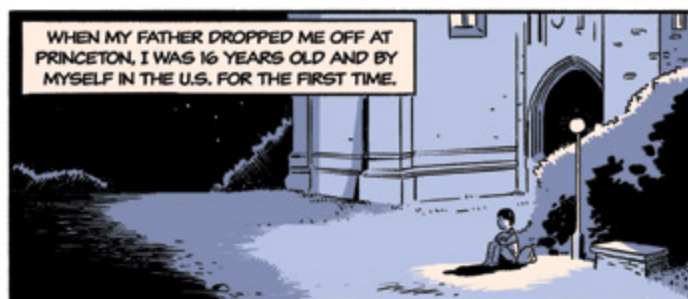


THIS IS GLOBAL STUFF.



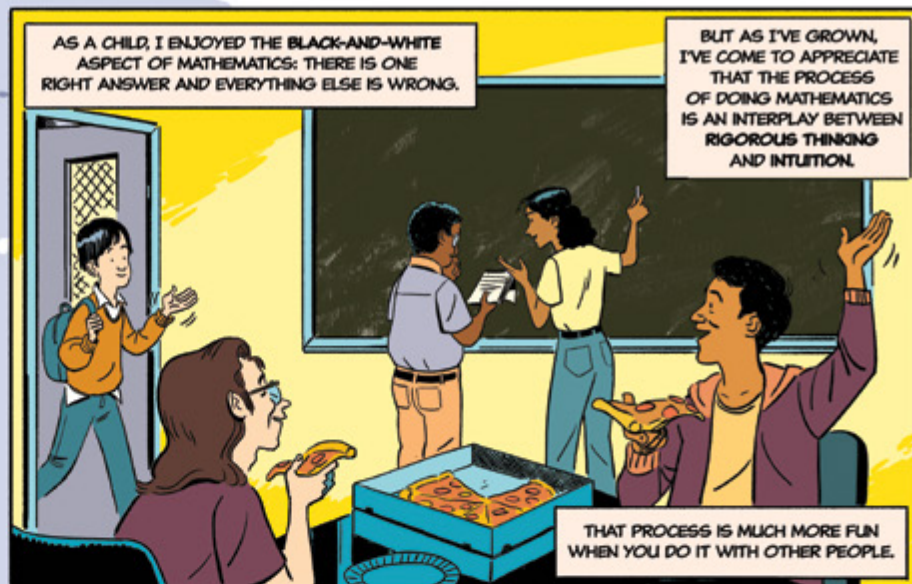
FOR FOUR DECADES, JEAN-CLAUDE BRIZARD HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO EDUCATION. HE CURRENTLY SERVES AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF DIGITAL PROMISE, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WORKING TO USE RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM LEARNING FOR ALL LEARNERS.

READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES.





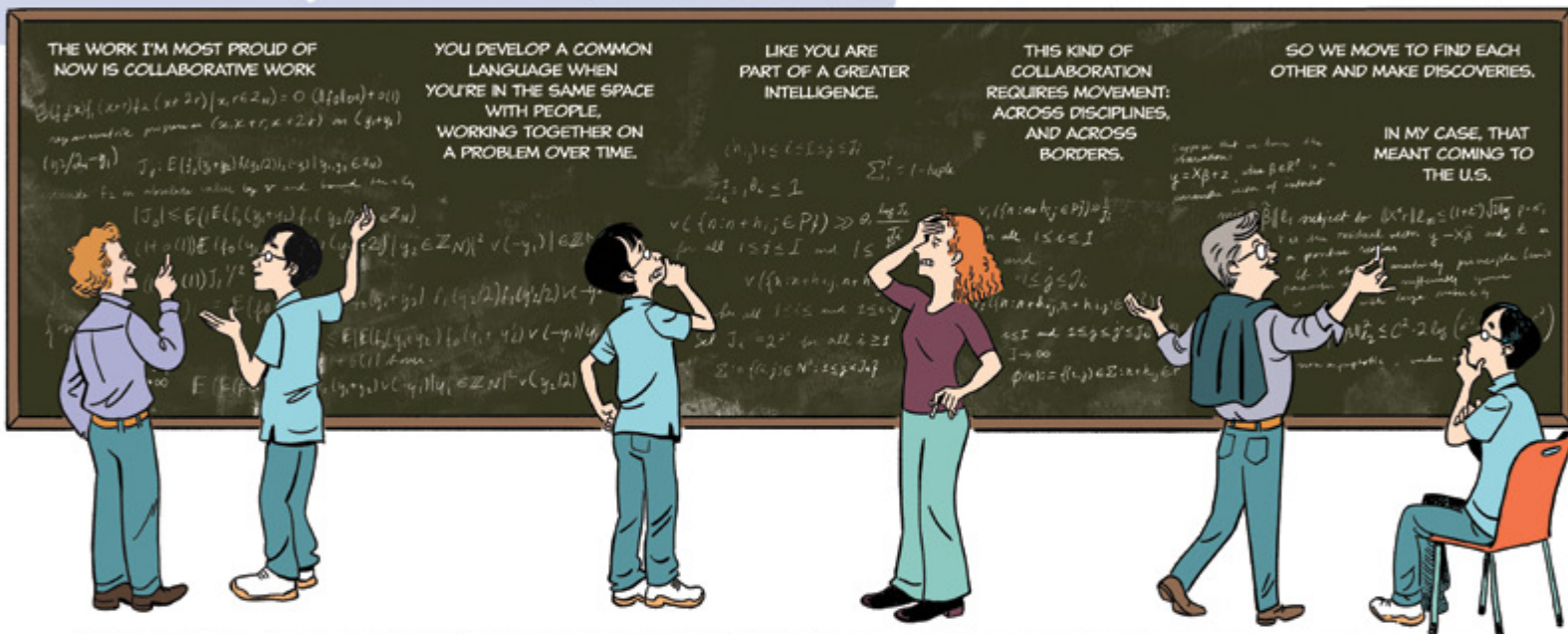
I SURVIVED THE EXAM, BARELY. MY ATTITUDE DIDN'T.



AS A CHILD, I ENJOYED THE BLACK-AND-WHITE ASPECT OF MATHEMATICS: THERE IS ONE RIGHT ANSWER AND EVERYTHING ELSE IS WRONG.

BUT AS I'VE GROWN, I'VE COME TO APPRECIATE THAT THE PROCESS OF DOING MATHEMATICS IS AN INTERPLAY BETWEEN RIGOROUS THINKING AND INTUITION.

THAT PROCESS IS MUCH MORE FUN WHEN YOU DO IT WITH OTHER PEOPLE.



THE WORK I'M MOST PROUD OF NOW IS COLLABORATIVE WORK

YOU DEVELOP A COMMON LANGUAGE WHEN YOU'RE IN THE SAME SPACE WITH PEOPLE. WORKING TOGETHER ON A PROBLEM OVER TIME.

LIKE YOU ARE PART OF A GREATER INTELLIGENCE.

THIS KIND OF COLLABORATION REQUIRES MOVEMENT: ACROSS DISCIPLINES, AND ACROSS BORDERS.

SO WE MOVE TO FIND EACH OTHER AND MAKE DISCOVERIES.

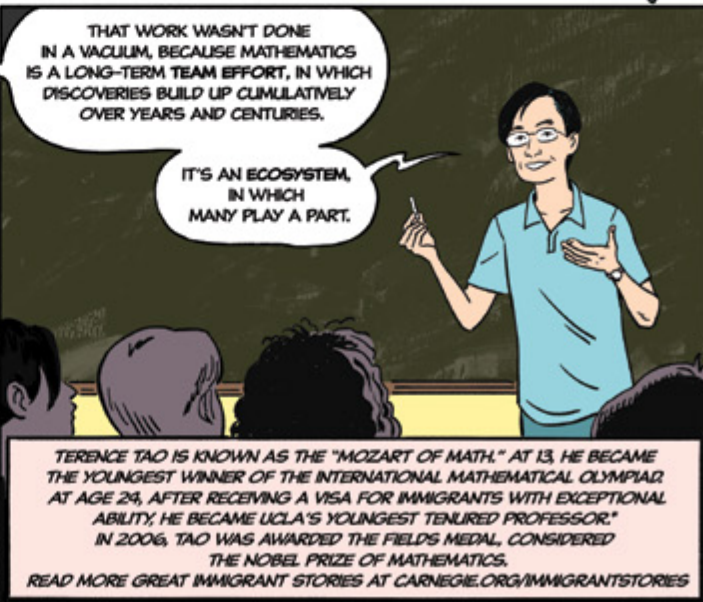
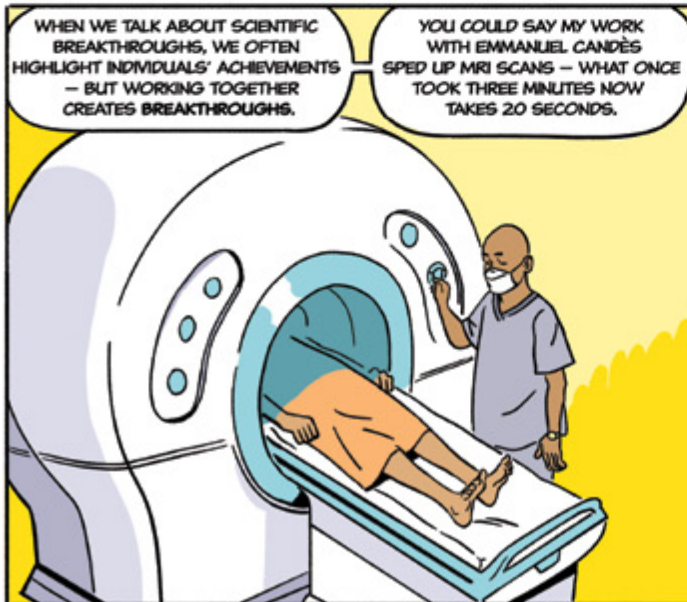
IN MY CASE, THAT MEANT COMING TO THE U.S.

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS, WE OFTEN HIGHLIGHT INDIVIDUALS' ACHIEVEMENTS — BUT WORKING TOGETHER CREATES BREAKTHROUGHS.

YOU COULD SAY MY WORK WITH EMMANUEL CANDÈS SPED UP MRI SCANS — WHAT ONCE TOOK THREE MINUTES NOW TAKES 20 SECONDS.

THAT WORK WASN'T DONE IN A VACUUM, BECAUSE MATHEMATICS IS A LONG-TERM TEAM EFFORT, IN WHICH DISCOVERIES BUILD UP CUMULATIVELY OVER YEARS AND CENTURIES.

IT'S AN ECOSYSTEM, IN WHICH MANY PLAY A PART.

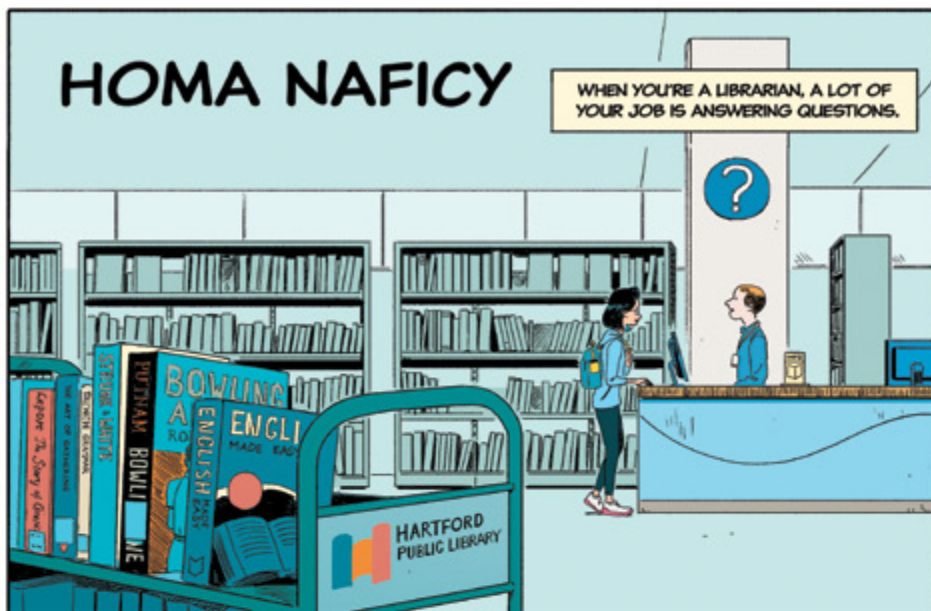


TERENCE TAO IS KNOWN AS THE "MOZART OF MATH." AT 13, HE BECAME THE YOUNGEST WINNER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD. AT AGE 24, AFTER RECEIVING A VISA FOR IMMIGRANTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL ABILITY, HE BECAME UCLA'S YOUNGEST TENURED PROFESSOR.* IN 2006, TAO WAS AWARDED THE FIELDS MEDAL, CONSIDERED THE NOBEL PRIZE OF MATHEMATICS. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES

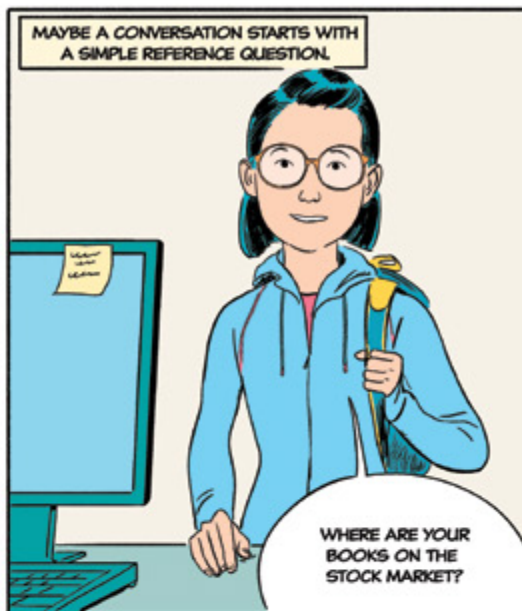
*THE O-1 VISA, WHICH IS RESERVED FOR "PERSONS OF EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY," WAS LIMITED TO 40,040 AS OF 2024. SOURCE: HOW THE UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION SYSTEM WORKS, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, 2024

HOMA NAFICY

WHEN YOU'RE A LIBRARIAN, A LOT OF YOUR JOB IS ANSWERING QUESTIONS.



MAYBE A CONVERSATION STARTS WITH A SIMPLE REFERENCE QUESTION.



WHERE ARE YOUR BOOKS ON THE STOCK MARKET?

OR ONE THAT'S NOT SO SIMPLE.

HOW MANY CHROMOSOMES ARE IN A RADISH?



BUT SOONER OR LATER, THE CONVERSATION TURNS PERSONAL, AND YOU START LOOKING FOR WAYS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS TOGETHER.

¿CÓMO REGISTRO A MI HIJO EN LA ESCUELA?



¡HOLA!



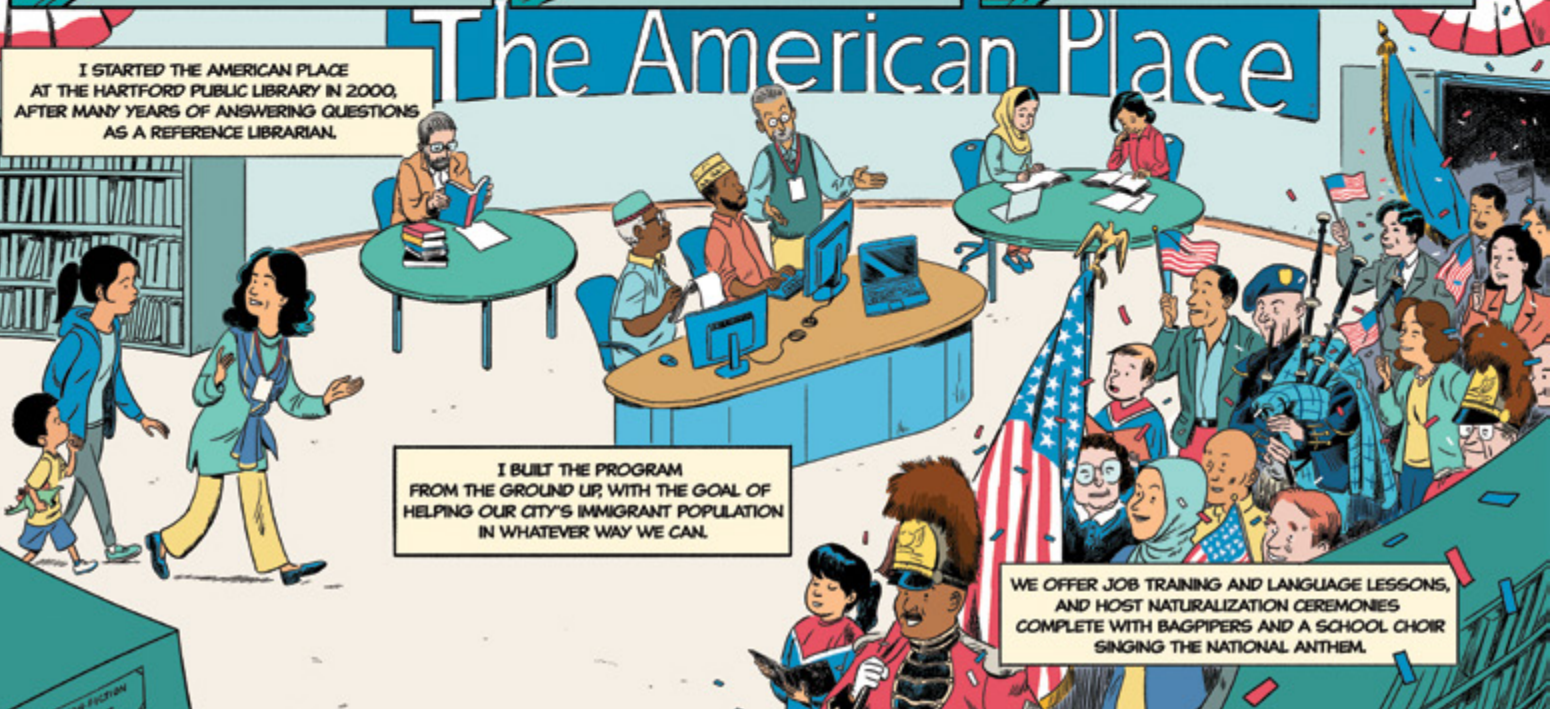
AND THAT'S WHERE I COME IN.

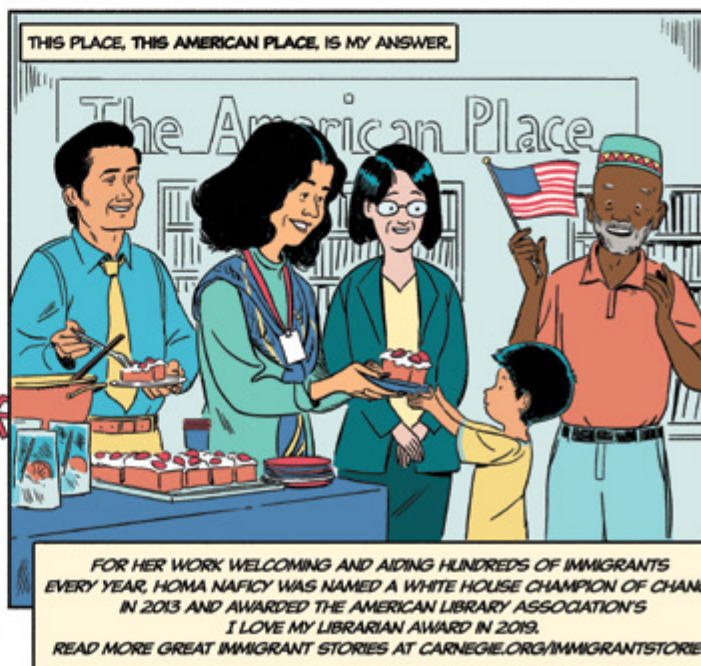
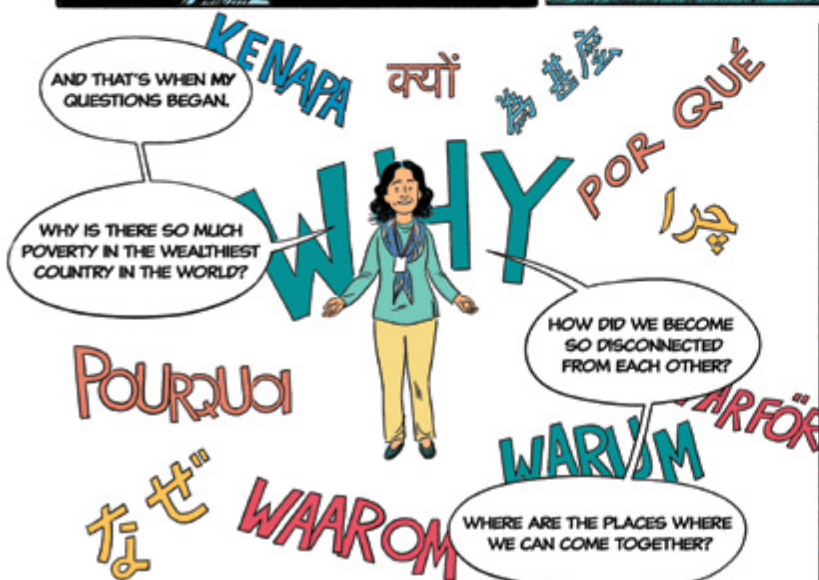
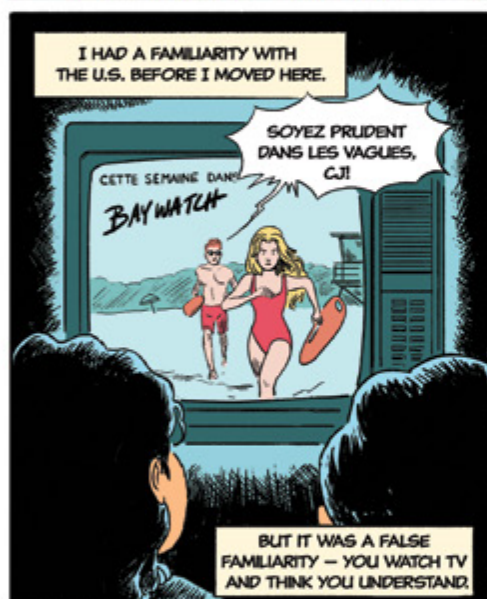
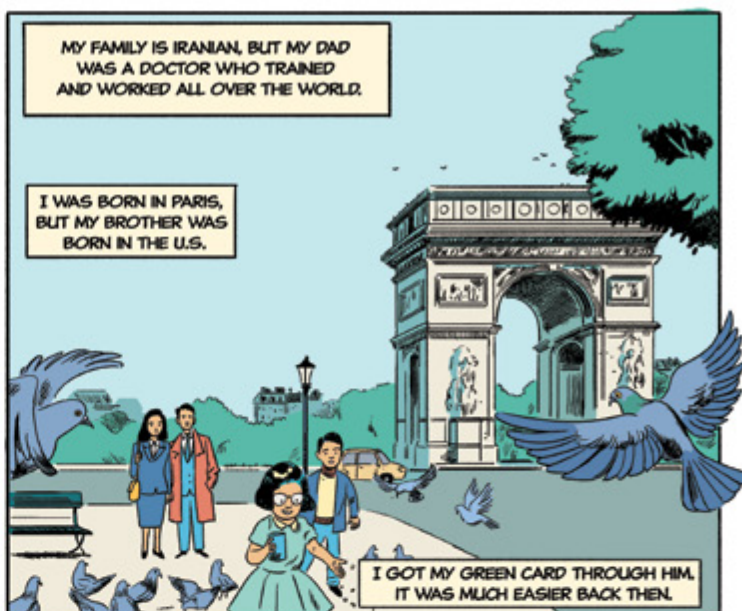
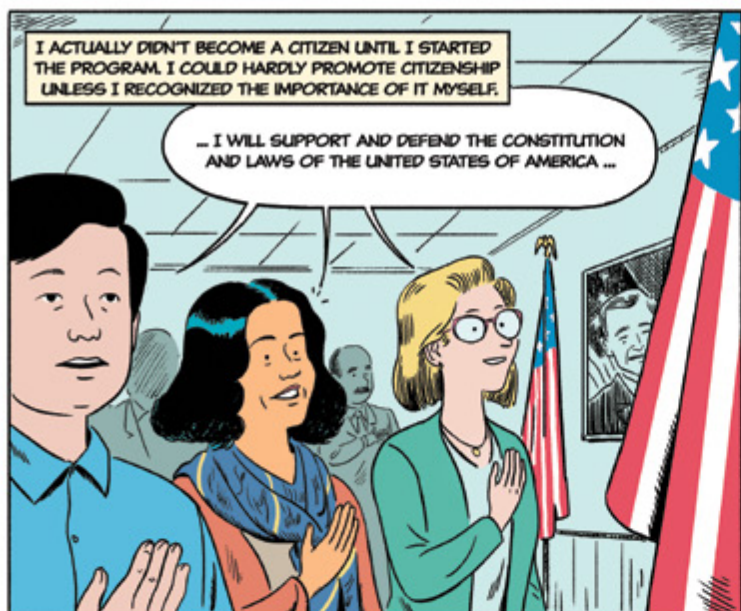
I STARTED THE AMERICAN PLACE AT THE HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY IN 2000, AFTER MANY YEARS OF ANSWERING QUESTIONS AS A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN.

The American Place

I BUILT THE PROGRAM FROM THE GROUND UP, WITH THE GOAL OF HELPING OUR CITY'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN WHATEVER WAY WE CAN.

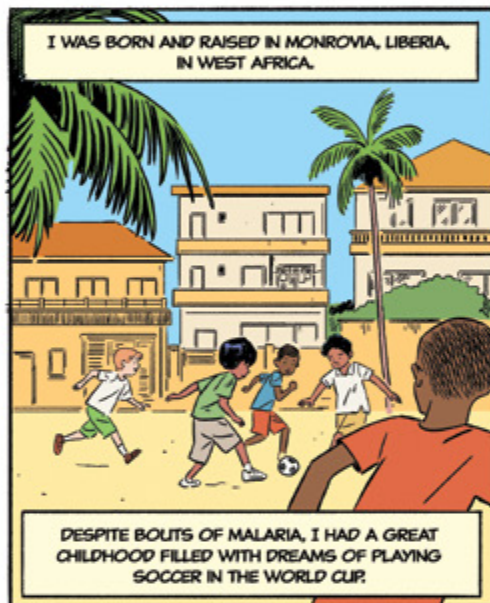
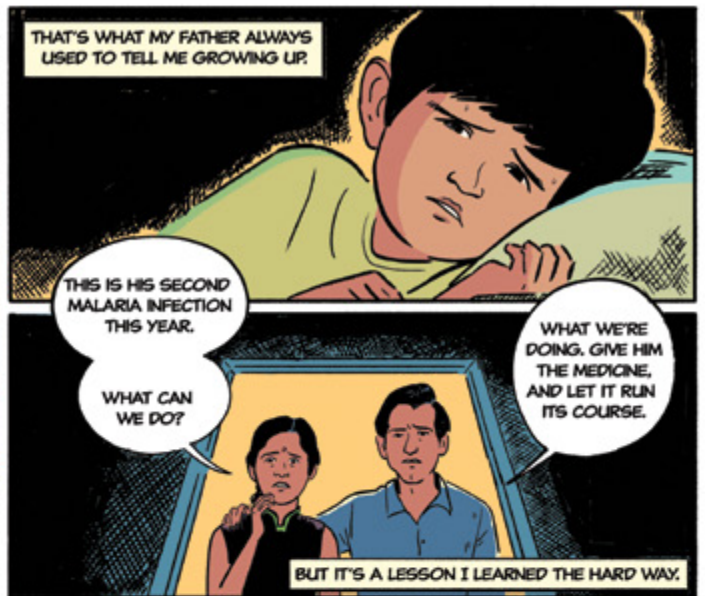
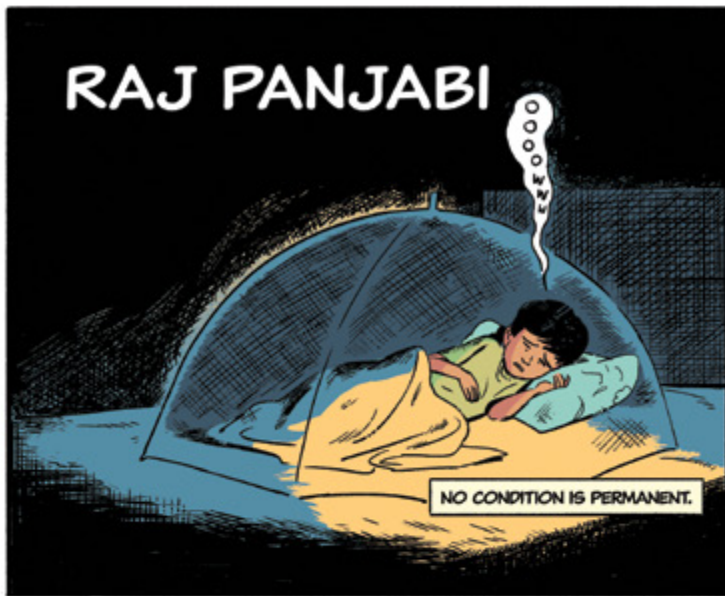
WE OFFER JOB TRAINING AND LANGUAGE LESSONS, AND HOST NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES COMPLETE WITH BAGPIPERS AND A SCHOOL CHOIR SINGING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.





*IN 2023, 35% OF ALL 42.2 MILLION IMMIGRANT ADULTS AGES 25 AND OLDER HAD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER, A RATE SIMILAR TO THAT OF U.S.-BORN ADULTS. SOURCE: FREQUENTLY REQUESTED STATISTICS ON IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES, MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE, MARCH 2025

RAJ PANJABI



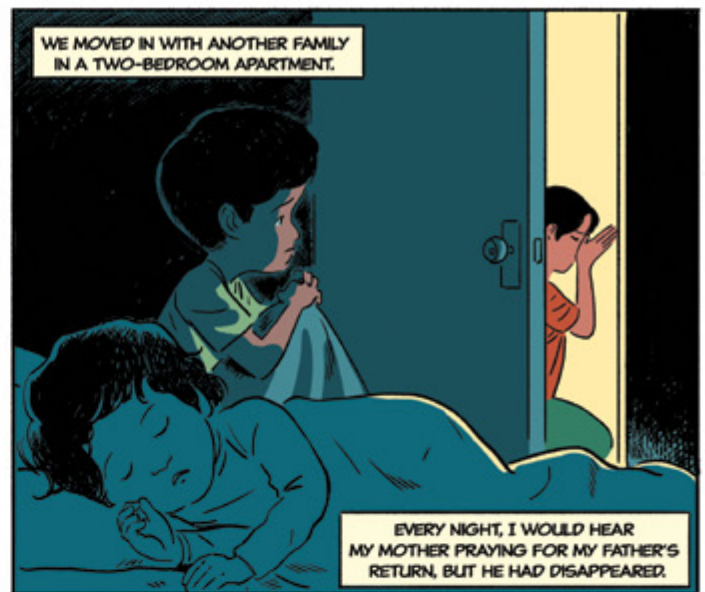
*SINCE 1975, 3.5 MILLION REFUGEES HAVE FLED TO AMERICA TO AVOID PERSECUTION IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES. EACH YEAR, THEY PAY TENS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN TAXES. SOURCE: STARTING ANEW: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REFUGEES IN AMERICA, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, JUNE 2023



WHILE MY FATHER STAYED BEHIND
TO HELP OTHERS ESCAPE THE WAR ...



... THE REST OF US ARRIVED
IN NORTH CAROLINA.



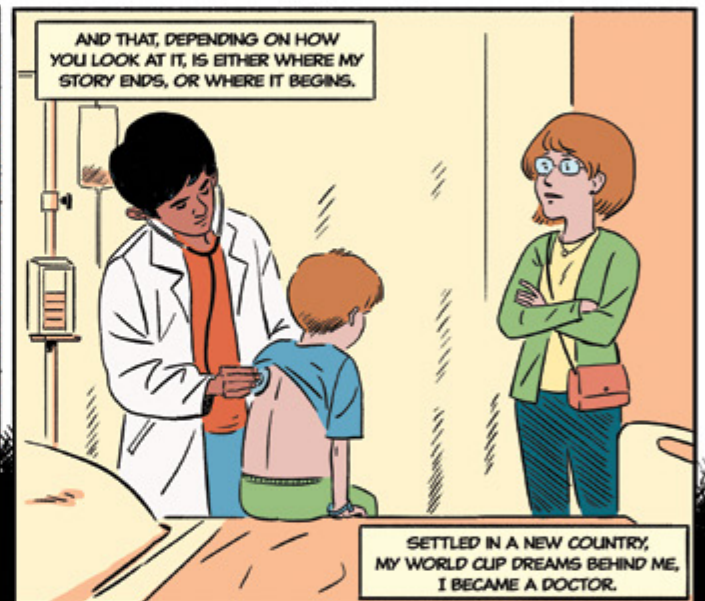
WE MOVED IN WITH ANOTHER FAMILY
IN A TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT.

EVERY NIGHT, I WOULD HEAR
MY MOTHER PRAYING FOR MY FATHER'S
RETURN, BUT HE HAD DISAPPEARED.



THEN, JUST AS MY MOTHER
HAD LOST ALMOST ALL HOPE ...

HELLO,
MY LOVE.
I'M ON
MY WAY.



AND THAT, DEPENDING ON HOW
YOU LOOK AT IT, IS EITHER WHERE MY
STORY ENDS, OR WHERE IT BEGINS.

SETTLED IN A NEW COUNTRY,
MY WORLD CUP DREAMS BEHIND ME,
I BECAME A DOCTOR.

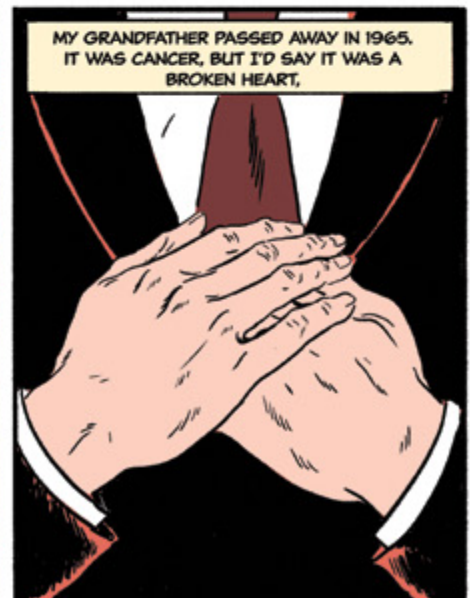
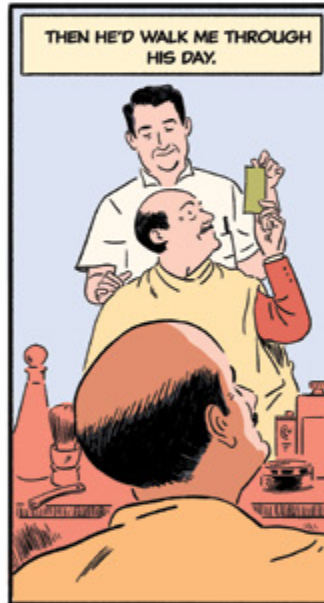
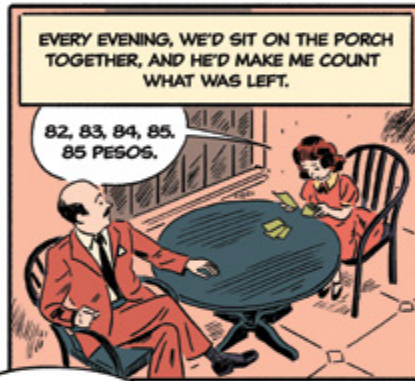
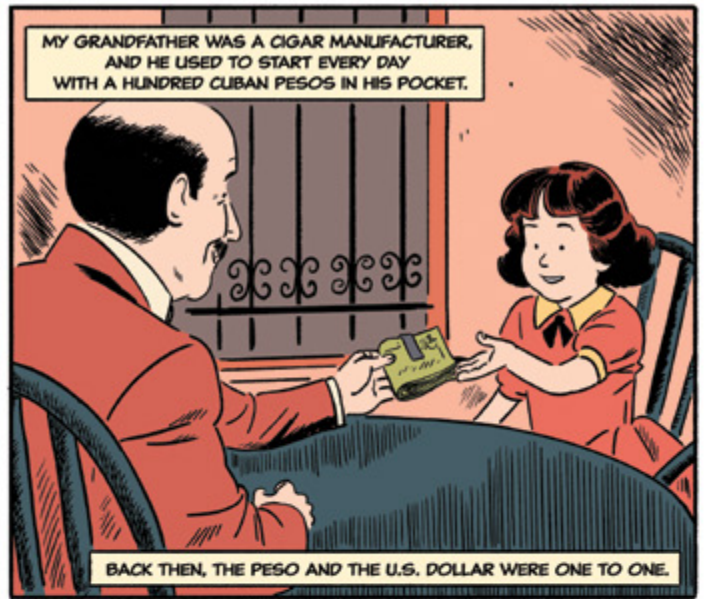
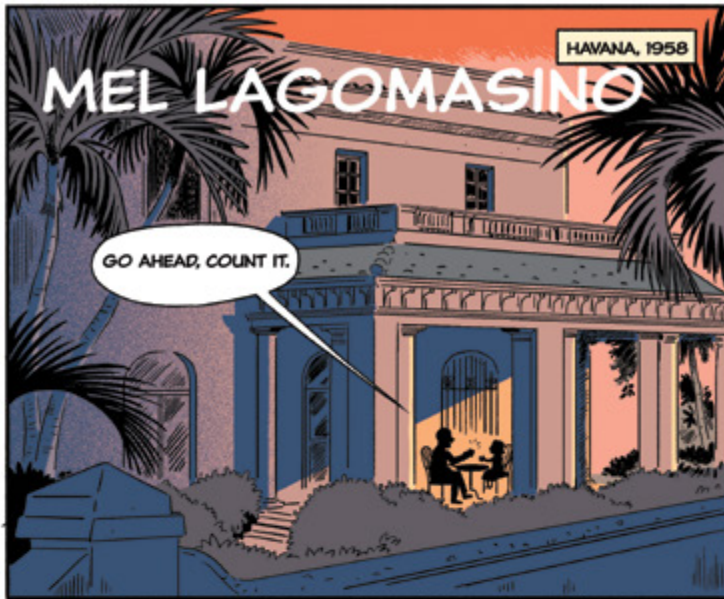
I NEVER FORGOT WEST AFRICA, AND
RETURNED THERE WHENEVER I COULD.

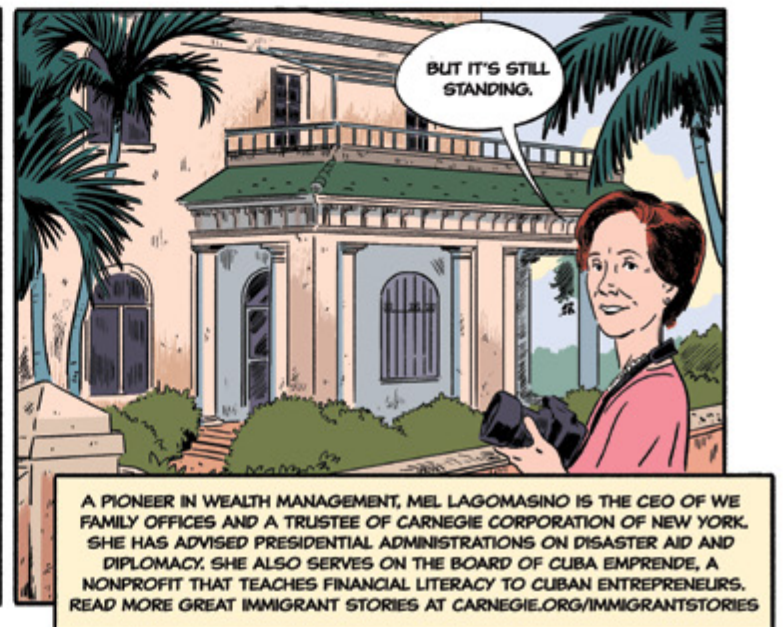
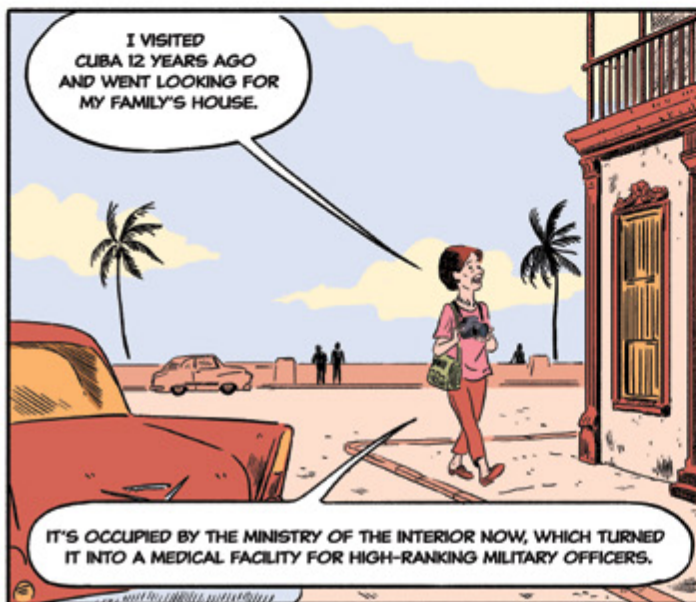
THERE, AND IN AMERICA, I'VE HAD THE HONOR
TO WORK ALONGSIDE LOCAL PEOPLE WHO MEET
THE GREATEST HEALTH CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME
HEAD-ON — FROM EBOLA TO MALARIA TO COVID-19.



THEY ARE MY INSPIRATION,
AND THEIR SERVICE IS A REMINDER
OF MY FATHER'S WORDS:
"NO CONDITION IS PERMANENT."

RAJ PANJABI SERVED AS THE TOP PANDEMIC AND HEALTH OFFICIAL AT THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL FROM 2022–2023, PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN THE LARGEST VACCINATION CAMPAIGN IN HISTORY AGAINST COVID-19. HE IS ONE OF TIME MAGAZINE'S 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE AND COFOUNDER OF LAST MILE HEALTH, WHICH BUILDS COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES. READ MORE GREAT IMMIGRANT STORIES AT [CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES](https://carnegie.org/immigrantstories).





*FOREIGN-BORN WOMEN MAKE UP 64% OF THE FINANCE INDUSTRY IN THE U.S.
SOURCE: A SNAPSHOT OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, JUNE 2023

YANN LECUN

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON BUILDING MACHINES THAT LEARN SINCE THE 1950S AND 1960S.

I TOOK ON THAT WORK MYSELF IN THE 1980S BECAUSE I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF INTELLIGENCE: WHAT IT IS, AND WHERE IT COMES FROM.

"WHAT I CANNOT CREATE, I DO NOT UNDERSTAND."

THAT'S A QUOTE FROM RICHARD FEYNMAN, THE AMERICAN PHYSICIST.

AND THE BEST WAY TO UNDERSTAND SOMETHING IS TO BUILD IT.

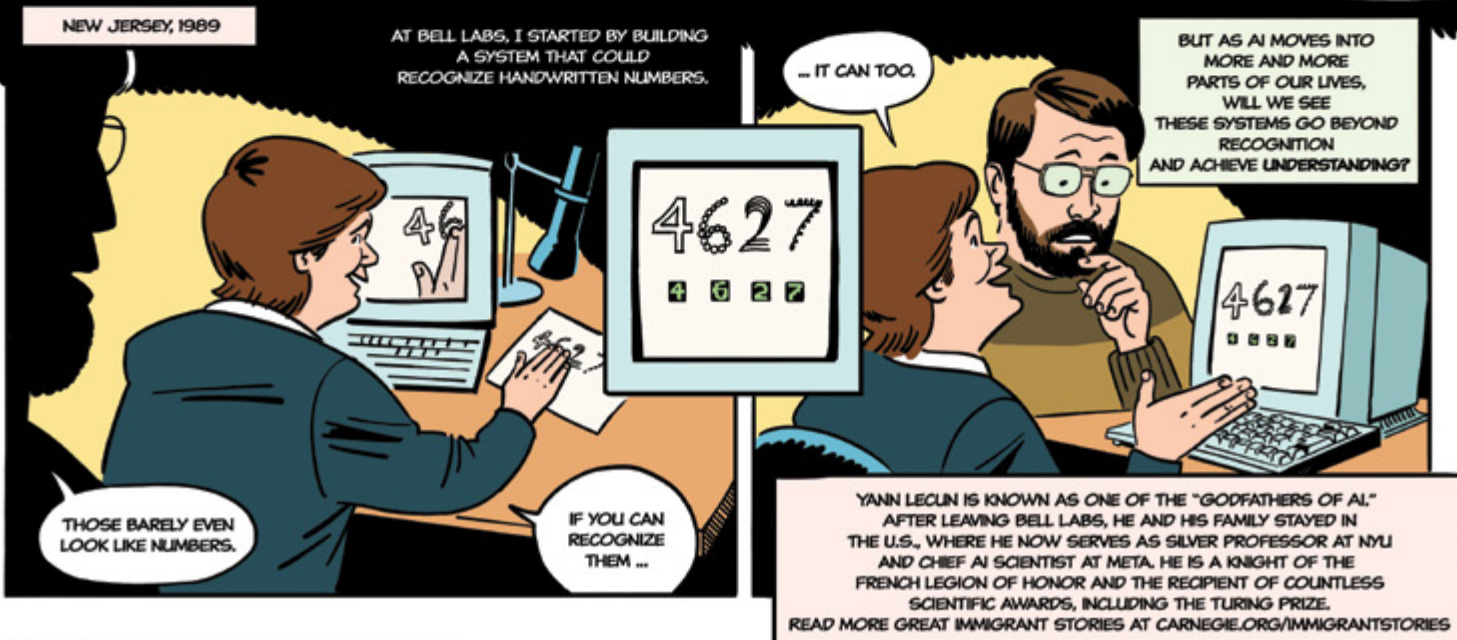


I SCRAPED ENOUGH MONEY TOGETHER TO BUY THIS VERY PRIMITIVE COMPUTER WITH A SINGLE CIRCUIT BOARD, AND I TAUGHT MYSELF TO PROGRAM.

IN MY RESEARCH, I FOUND ACADEMIC PAPERS GOING BACK DECADES DESCRIBING THE IDEAS BEHIND WHAT WE WOULD NOW CALL AI

VERY FEW PEOPLE, AND CERTAINLY NO ONE IN FRANCE, WAS WORKING ON THIS!

BUT I DISCOVERED A SMALL COMMUNITY OF LIKE-MINDED SCIENTISTS, MOSTLY IN NORTH AMERICA, AND WENT TO CANADA.



*23.6% OF U.S. STEM WORKERS ARE IMMIGRANTS.
SOURCE: NEW AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, 2025

PAUL MULDOON

COUNTY ARMAGH,
NORTHERN IRELAND,
1959



IN THE EARLIEST TIMES,
THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO
BUT BE OUTSIDE.

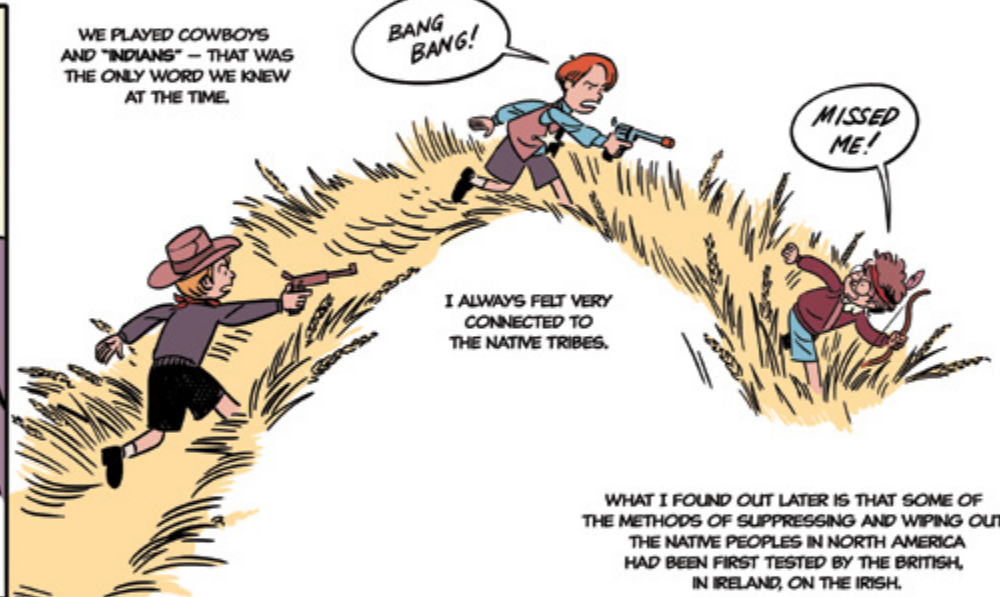
THE IMAGINARY LIFE WAS VERY POWERFUL TO US, AND
THAT INCLUDED OUR IMAGININGS OF NORTH AMERICA.



OW! WATCH YER FIRE,
YA SAVAGE!

WE PLAYED COWBOYS
AND "INDIANS" — THAT WAS
THE ONLY WORD WE KNEW
AT THE TIME.

BANG
BANG!

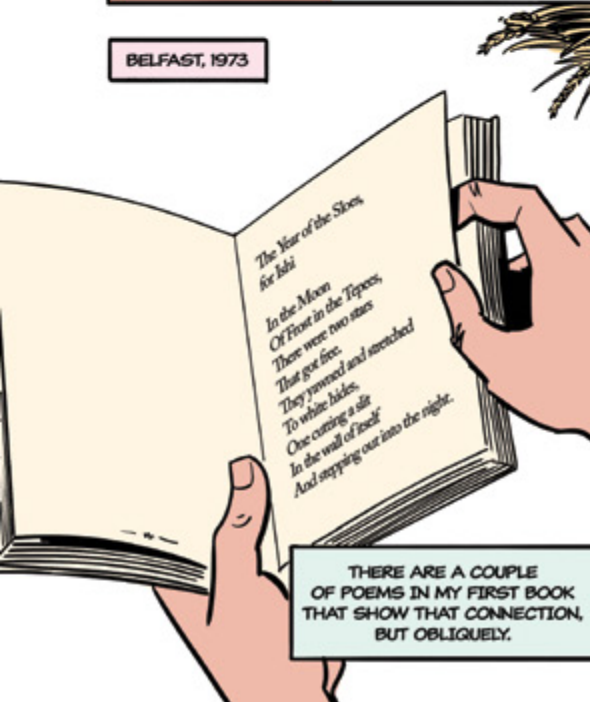


MISSED
ME!

I ALWAYS FELT VERY
CONNECTED TO
THE NATIVE TRIBES.

WHAT I FOUND OUT LATER IS THAT SOME OF
THE METHODS OF SUPPRESSING AND WIPING OUT
THE NATIVE PEOPLES IN NORTH AMERICA
HAD BEEN FIRST TESTED BY THE BRITISH,
IN IRELAND, ON THE IRISH.

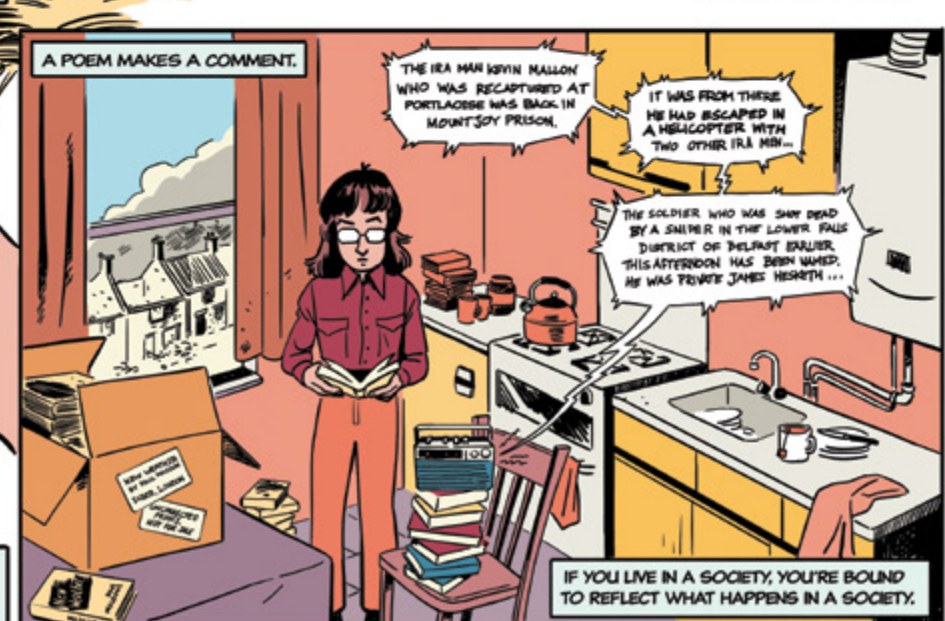
BELFAST, 1973



The Year of the Shins
for him
In the Moon
Of First in the Topes,
There were two stars
That got fire.
They purred and stretched
To white hides.
One cutting a air
In the wall of itself
And stepping out into the night.

THERE ARE A COUPLE
OF POEMS IN MY FIRST BOOK
THAT SHOW THAT CONNECTION,
BUT OBLIQUELY.

A POEM MAKES A COMMENT.

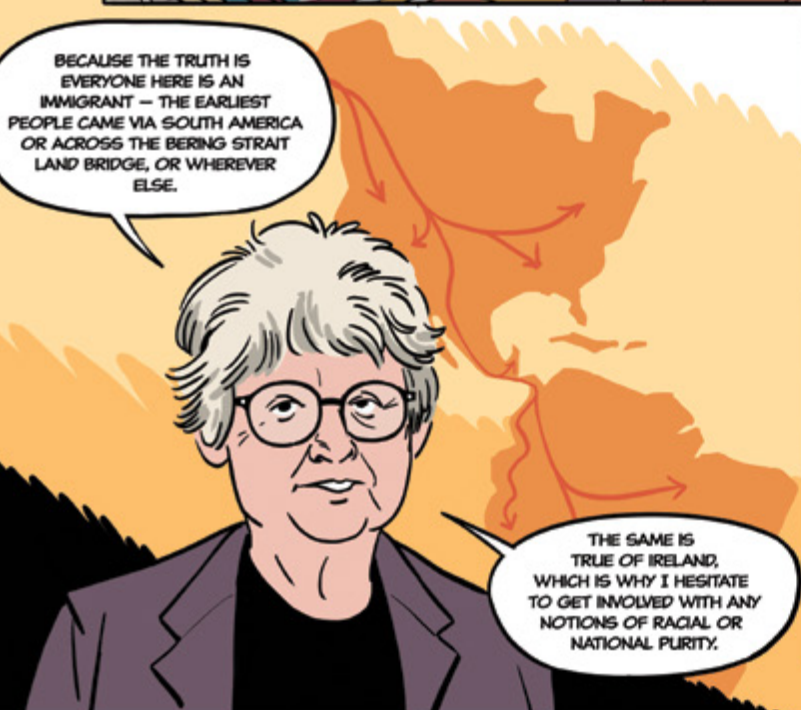
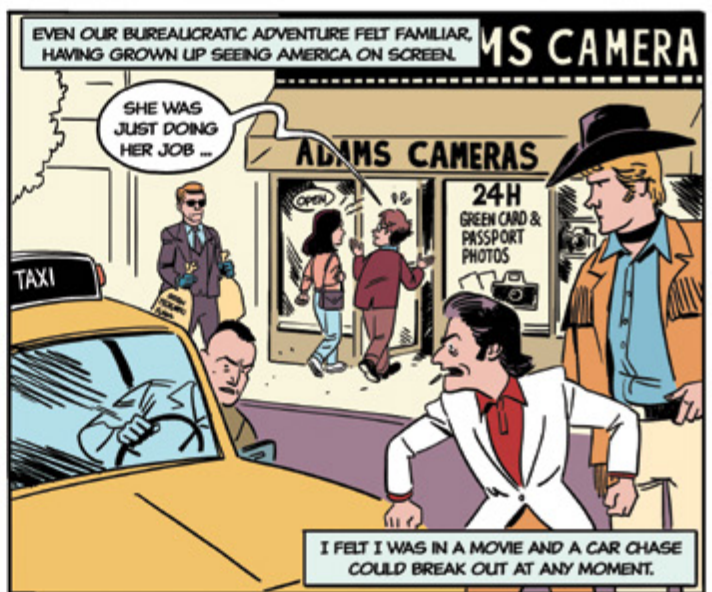
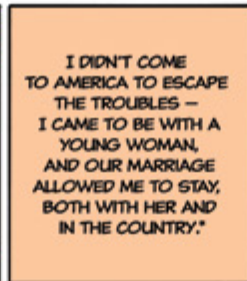


THE IRA MAN KEVIN MALLON
WHO WAS RECAPTURED AT
PORTLAOISHE WAS BACK IN
MOUNTJOY PRISON.

IT WAS FROM THERE
HE HAD ESCAPED IN
A HELICOPTER WITH
TWO OTHER IRA MEN...

THE SOLDIER WHO WAS SHOT DEAD
BY A SNIPER IN THE LOWER FALLS
DISTRICT OF BELFAST EARLIER
THIS AFTERNOON HAS BEEN NAMED.
HE WAS PRIVATE JAMES HENRATH ...

IF YOU LIVE IN A SOCIETY, YOU'RE BOUND
TO REFLECT WHAT HAPPENS IN A SOCIETY.




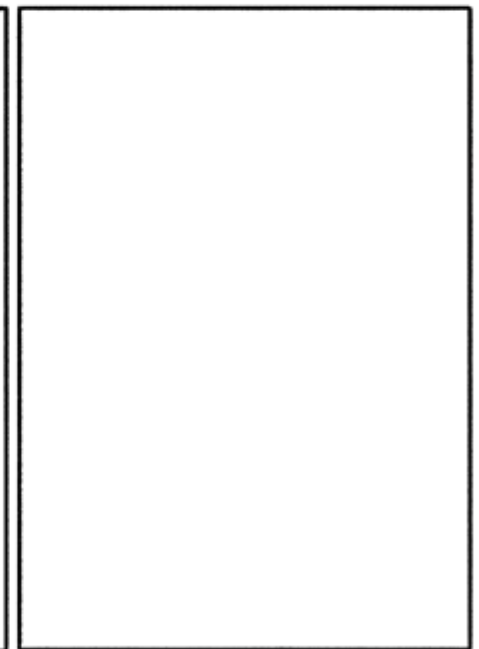
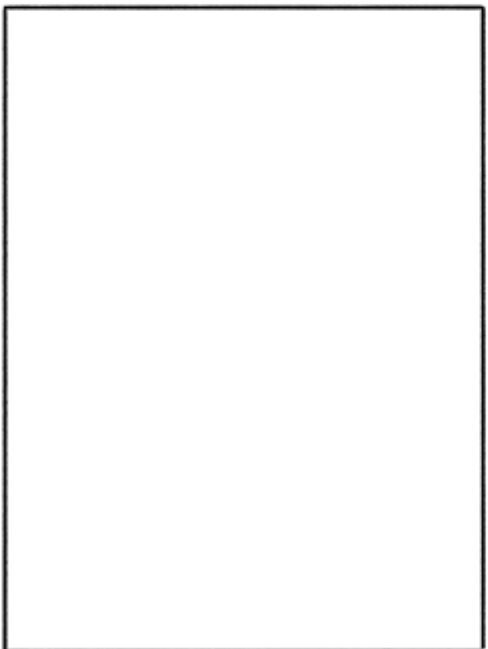
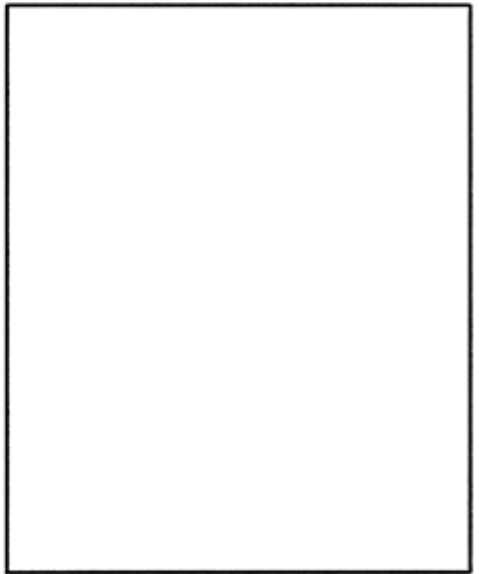
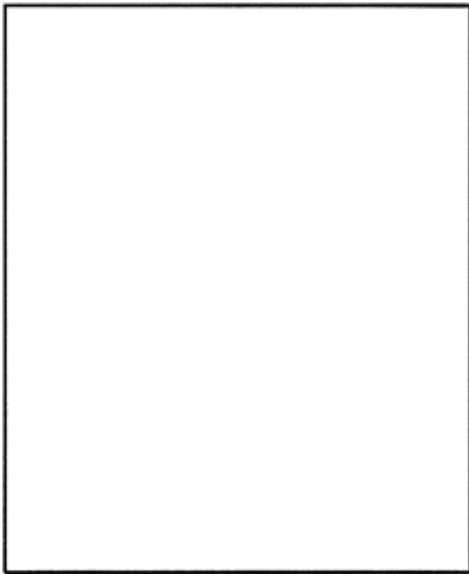
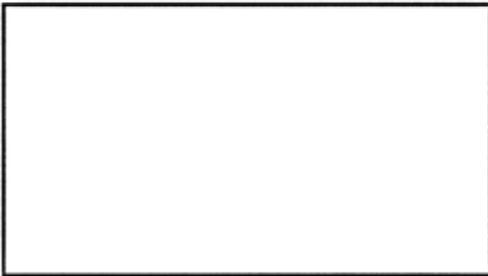
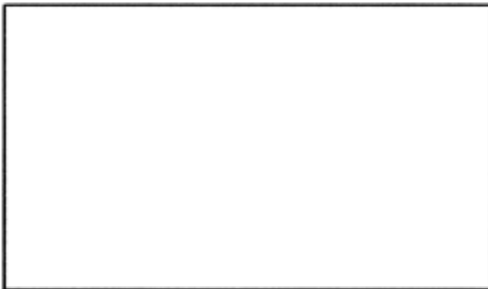
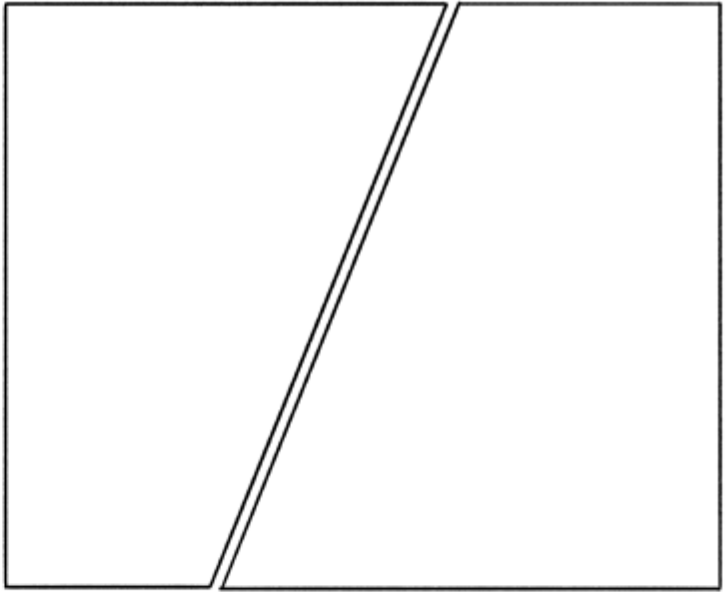
WE ALL COME FROM
SOMEWHERE.





WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

DRAW YOUR
OWN
COMIC

A line drawing of a right hand holding a pencil, positioned as if about to draw on a surface. The background of this section is a solid blue color.

ABOUT THE COMIC BOOK

Every Fourth of July since 2006, Carnegie Corporation of New York has celebrated the contributions of naturalized U.S. citizens through its Great Immigrants, Great Americans tribute. This comic book was published on the 20th anniversary of the public service initiative to recognize the more than 750 naturalized citizens honored as Great Immigrants by the philanthropic foundation.

Special thanks to the Great Immigrants who shared their stories in the comics and to the American Immigration Council for its research. Learn more at carnegie.org/immigrantstories.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Concepts and scripts by **ELINE JONGSMA** and **KEL O'NEILL**. Eline and Kel lead the immersive storytelling studio Jongsma + O'Neill. They are Emmy nominees, Webby honorees, and were

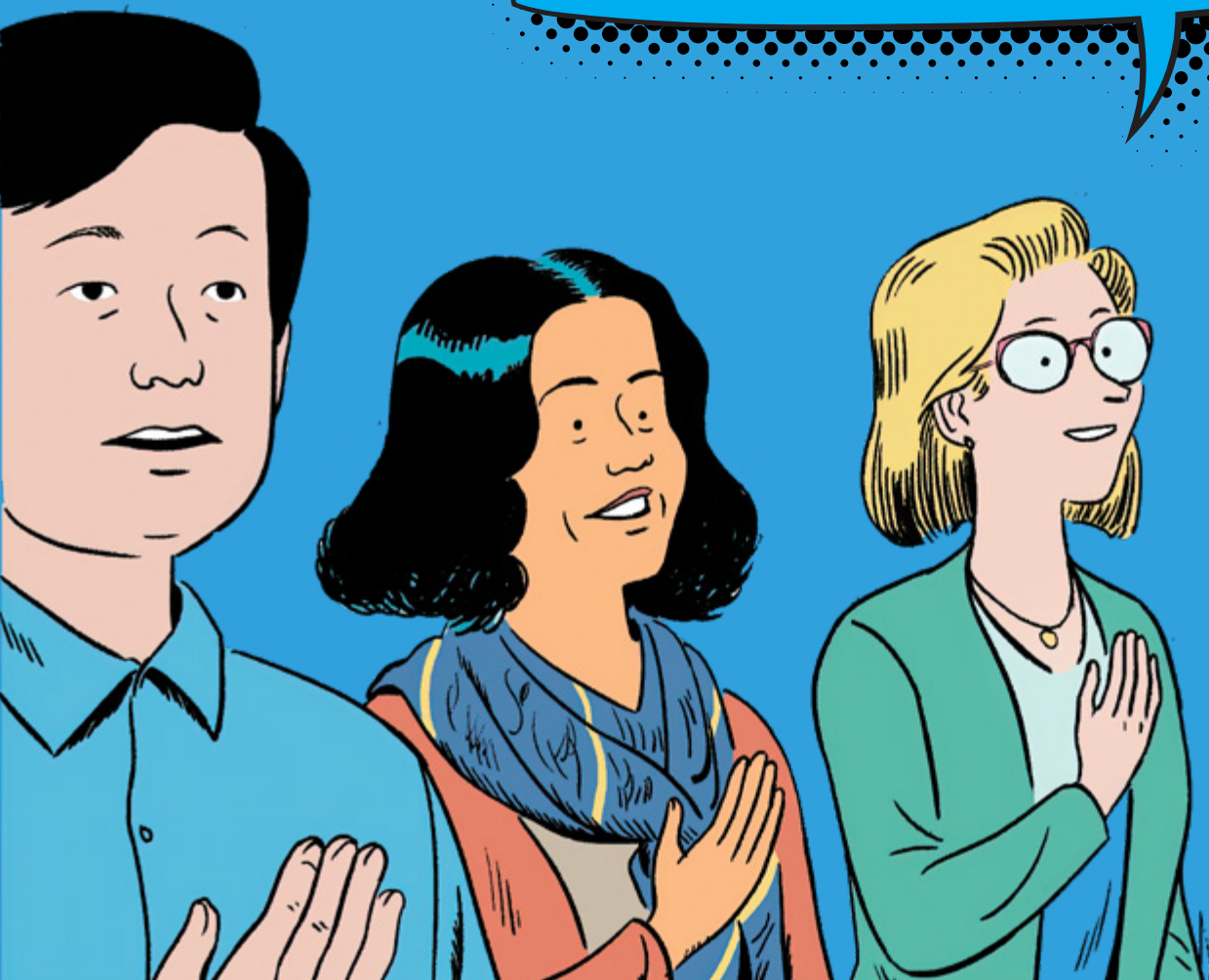
artists-in-residence at the Sundance Institute. Eline was born in the Netherlands and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2021. Kel was born in the United States and is an Eisenhower Fellow.



Illustrations by **CHUAN MING ONG**. Ming is a Dutch illustrator who creates award-winning illustrations for publications like *The New Yorker* and the *Los Angeles Times*. He received an F-1 visa to study art in the United States as a BFA student at Laguna College of Art and Design and has a BA and an MA from Leiden University.

COOL!

**MORE THAN 7 MILLION
IMMIGRANTS ARE ELIGIBLE
TO NATURALIZE AND BECOME
AMERICAN CITIZENS –
AND GREAT IMMIGRANTS!**





GREAT IMMIGRANTS



GREAT AMERICANS

carnegie.org/immigrantstories

#GreatImmigrants



Carnegie
CORPORATION
OF NEW YORK