

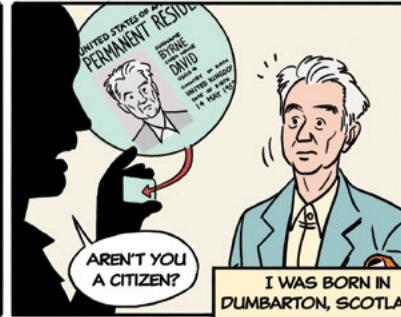
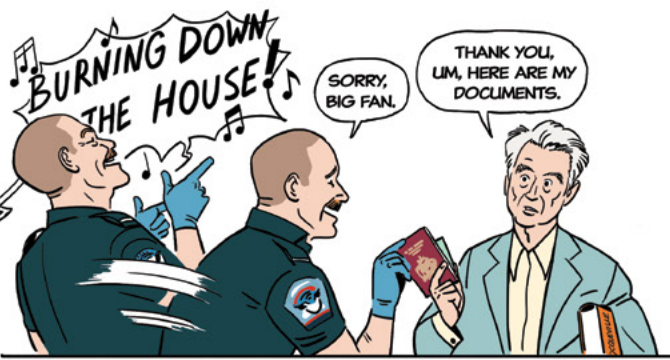
# GREAT IMMIGRANTS GREAT AMERICANS

JFK AIRPORT, 2011

THREE HUNDRED SIXTY FIVE DEGREES

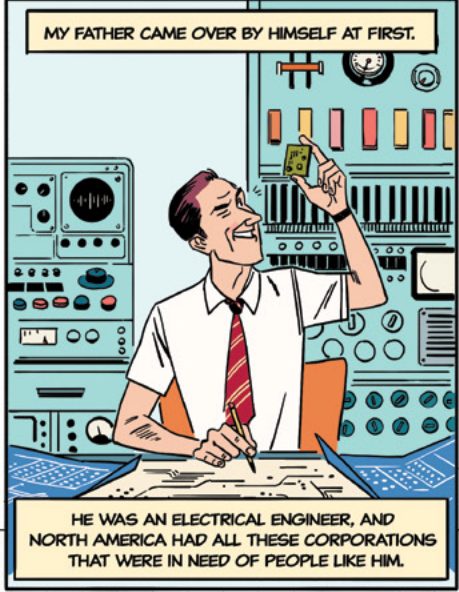


CONCEPT AND SCRIPT BY JONGSMA + O'NEILL  
ILLUSTRATED BY CHUAN MING ONG



MY PARENTS HAD A MIXED MARRIAGE: DAD'S FAMILY WAS CATHOLIC AND MOM'S WAS PRESBYTERIAN ...

... WHICH MIGHT HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHY THEY LEFT.



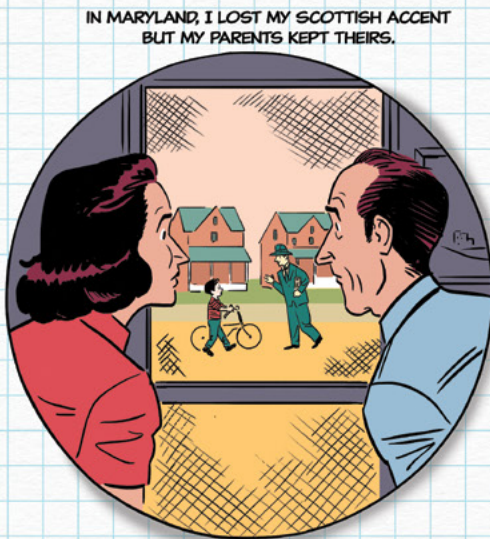
MY FATHER CAME OVER BY HIMSELF AT FIRST.

HE WAS AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEER, AND NORTH AMERICA HAD ALL THESE CORPORATIONS THAT WERE IN NEED OF PEOPLE LIKE HIM.



MY MOTHER AND I CROSSED TO JOIN HIM ON ONE OF THOSE BIG BRITISH PASSENGER BOATS.

AIR TRAVEL WAS A LUXURY IN THOSE DAYS.



IN MARYLAND, I LOST MY SCOTTISH ACCENT BUT MY PARENTS KEPT THEIRS.

IT'S NATURAL THAT KIDS WANT TO ASSIMILATE, BUT YOU CAN'T ALWAYS ASSUME THAT THE NEW WAYS ARE THE BEST WAYS.

- 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.



AMERICAN

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



EUROPEAN

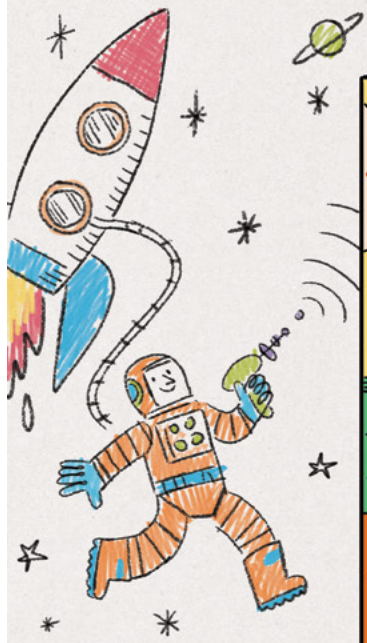
## WAYS OF EATING WITH DAVID BYRNE

LIKE I REMEMBER IN THE U.S. THEY HAD THIS ODD WAY OF EATING, WHERE THEY WERE CONSTANTLY SWITCHING THE SILVERWARE FROM HAND TO HAND.

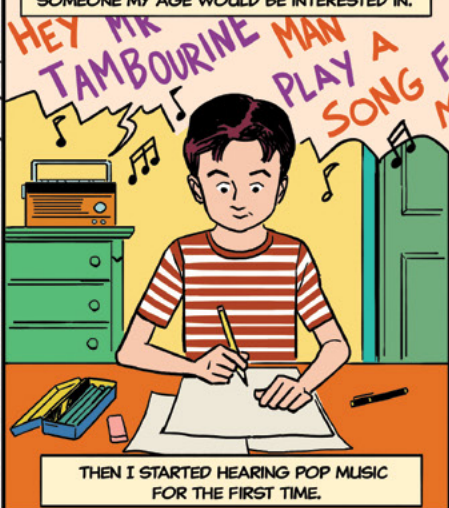
BUT MY PARENTS NEVER SWITCHED. THEY HELD ONTO THEIR UTENSILS, ONE IN EACH HAND, AND CUT AND ATE.

AND I THOUGHT, "THIS IS SIGNIFICANT—THE WAY MY PARENTS EAT MAKES MORE SENSE THAN THE WAY MY AMERICAN FRIENDS AND THEIR PARENTS EAT."

\*74 MILLION IMMIGRANTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR NATURALIZATION. SOURCE: NEW AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, 2025



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



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?



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



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.



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

Local election voters, NY (≈ 23%)

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



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](http://CARNEGIE.ORG/IMMIGRANTSTORIES)