

Episode 2: “Sense of Possibility” with Jewelle Gomez

Segment Introduction

Jesper: This is you speak radio. With generous support from the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund, an intergenerational project by one institute and the subwords archive on Tongva land.

[MUSIC]

Guest Introduction

Charlotte: My name is Charlotte. I'm a high school student in Los Angeles, and I have strong interest in journalism and performing arts. Today, I had the privilege and fortune of interviewing Jewelle Gomez, who is an American author and playwright. In this episode, we talk about activism, writing, intersectionality, and finding a stronger connection to not only ourselves, but also those around us and our communities.

[MUSIC]

Jewelle: I'm always trying to deliver that sense of possibility that whatever time you have in this world, you get to do something. It doesn't matter how small it is, as long as you're simultaneously doing something, you're contributing to the way the world can progress forward. Most people think, "What do I have to give?" Well, be free. Somebody else will do it. I think that is totally the wrong way for us to look at social change. Social change, it's like a relay race. Each of us is in charge of our own little section. And if we do the best we can and move that baton to the next person, we're contributed.

Charlotte: I enjoyed writing articles. And the newspaper at my school, I began to take pride in the articles I was writing. And when someone did mention, "Hey, I read that article," it was good to know that I was sharing something with my community, even if it was something small like our field being renovated.

Jewelle: Some writers don't write a lot, but they change other people's lives. That's the story I want to come through. If you do your bit, and you do it sincerely and consciously, you can contribute to changing the world. Even if you're not a vampire, it doesn't really matter. Haha!

[MUSIC]

Interview Begins

Charlotte: My name is Charlotte. I am currently going into my senior year of high school and one of my main interests is journalism, so I'm excited to be here.

Jewelle: I'm Jewelle Gomez. I'm a novelist and a playwright and a poet and also very interested in journalism. So I'm so excited to get to talk to someone who's also interested in journalism. The last ten years I've written and had produced three plays in San Francisco and New York City. Now I'm going back to write a sequel to my vampire novel, "The Slide Stories," which has been in print for, maybe, a little over 20 years.

Charlotte: I'd like to know what was your experience like growing up?

Jewelle: We lived in Boston, and we were quite poor.

Jewelle: I was raised by my great grandmother who was part Native American, and her daughter, my grandmother lived nearby. So, those were my two primary influences growing up. I was very fortunate.