

Szymon Sondej Interviewed by Jolanta Sondej
April 14, 2021
Westchester New York

Jolanta Sondej: Hi, my name is Jolanta Sondej and I'm interviewing my dad, Szymon Sondej, in North Salem on April 14th, 2021. Do you give me permission to record and distribute this oral history?

Szymon Sondej: Sure.

JS: So can you tell me some basic information that you're willing to share?

SS: Sure. OK, so my age, I'm thirty-nine. My occupation is I am a UX designer/web developer. You want to know my neighborhood?

JS: Yeah, where do you live currently?

SS: Well right now North Salem. It's in Westchester, Westchester New York. Place of origin, I'm from Poland. First language: Polish. Racial identity: white. Gender identity: male. Sexual orientation: straight.

JS: So can you tell me the long story of how you or your family ended up in New York City?

SS: So the long story, you want to know the long story?

JS: Yeah

SS: So we were living in Poland, my family and everybody, but then Poland in the early 90s went through like a little bit of an actually not a little bit, but like a transformation because there was communism and then communism broke and there was a transition into capitalism and when that happened, a lot of people lost their jobs. So my father, he was working on a, I guess you can say it was like a train kind of unloading kind of station where he dropped those big, I don't know what you call them, those big lifts or whatever and he used to unload coal from the wagons that came in from like trains. Whatever long story short, he lost his job when that period happened,

when the transition happened, and like I said, a lot of people lost their job. I think the unemployment rate was close to like 30 percent, if not more, so with no job, no income, something had to happen right? So my mom, she knew a friend that was living in the United States and she reached out to her and that friend gave her like an invite, you know, like saying hey do you want to come. That's how people kind of migrate. So she's like, yeah, and she came in, she was supposed to stay for six months, but, you know, since that was our only income, her then, you know, she stayed longer, she stayed for three years, and after three years, she applied for this lottery that's immigration lottery type of thing that they were offering back in the 90s. And she won that and what that lottery was, it basically was a program for like immigrants that were separated from their family, which my mom was right because she was the only one here and it gave those immigrants a chance of, like, bringing that whole family over here legally and everything. So she did after three years, she came back and she came back for all of us and we all got our passports, we all got a green card and all that stuff and we came here. And that was you know, that's how we ended up in New York City.

JS: So I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about covid-19 and the whole pandemic that's happening right now. So how are you coping with the pandemic?

SS: I guess I'm coping pretty good, you know, I'm working from home. Before the pandemic, actually, I had a long way to travel to my work, so that actually worked out in my favor that now I don't have to travel as much and I don't have to waste as much time as I did before, so I would say that yeah, you know, I'm coping pretty good.

JS: All right, what was your initial response to covid and how it changed over time?

SS: So my initial response, I guess I was kind of happy and the reason why I was happy is because of the chance that it gave me to work from home, right. I mean, you know, that was, I would say that was in my, like, initial response, you know, and I know it's kind of maybe messed up to say, because, you know, it's like, you know I mean people are dying and people getting sick and all that stuff. But fortunately for me, you know, I wasn't sick. Nobody in my family was sick. So, again, it was just that I guess

it was a little bit selfish. You know, traveling every day to two hours back, two hours from, you know, and then you don't have to I was like yes! So from that point of view, if you look at it from that point of view, that was my initial response, like, oh OK, great, now I can work from home. And how did it change later on? You know, later on when the lockdown's and all that stuff, you know, especially now after like a year, it's like, oh, man, you know, I mean, you miss that. You miss, you know, your co-workers. So now I'm a little bit like, oh, man, you know, I wish maybe all this pandemic would go away and everybody will be back to normal and stuff like that.

JS: So other than like your work environment and all that, how has Coronavirus changed your life?

SS: So again, it's more working from home, you know, I mean, that's, you know. It's funny because and I've been saying this, that, like, you know, the technology existed, you know, all this technology that we use now. I mean zoom, before the pandemic if you ask somebody what Zoom was, I mean, 90 percent of people would say what the hell is Zoom. Now everybody uses it. But Zoom existed before the pandemic and so did you know Google Hangouts or any other one of those technologies they all existed, right. People just didn't use them. So I think that's the biggest change right, it's like that remote. Everything's remote and using that technology that we didn't use before. I think that's the biggest change not even in my life, I think I think in everybody's life.

JS: So how are you coping financially because of the pandemic

SS: So I was very fortunate because I have a pretty good job and it's and it's a union job. So, you know, and not only that but, again I was very fortunate that I can work remotely, I can work anywhere in the world, you know. All I really need is a laptop and an Internet connection. As long as I have that, it doesn't matter where I am. You know, there's people that lost their jobs, you know, because again, you know, because either like restaurants, right, like if you are a waiter, you know, probably lost your job, you know. So financially I've been pretty much the same, actually, not even the same. In ways even more because they actually give us overtime, the first time in five years that I'm at my job is the first time that I was actually able to work overtime just because of the amount of work that was required because of covid-19, you know. So

financially, I actually made more money last year than any other year. So that's probably again, you know. It's like some people lose everything, other people gain.

JS: What was it like to be home so often?

SS: I mean, so again, at first it was great, right, because, you know, again, you're home and like, you can kind of make up your own schedule too you know, it's like. Tif you if you kind of feel like, hey, I don't feel like getting up in the morning, like at the hour that you had to you could push a little bit back and then work later on at night or whatever. So it gives you a little bit more freedom to like, you know to make your schedule more according to your preferences. But at the same time, it's like sometimes I don't even know when I end, it's like I just work all day, you know. So like, when you're in office, you kind of have that 9:00 to 5:00 and 5:00 comes and, you know, OK, well, time to go home. So it's like work ends. But now it's like some days I just feel like it just doesn't that just like it's a you know, I've worked all day all night and then I get up and work all day long and it's like never ending.

JS: How has that affected you socially, mentally and emotionally?

SS: I don't know. I think it's the same because I'm not really like a social person where I go and I talk to everybody all the time. I mean, I like to talk to, but I never like reach out to people every day and on the phone or something like that. And I wasn't like that before and I'm not really like that now. So I think it's pretty much the, you know. The way it's been before the pandemic, it's kind of the same now.

JS: So how did the pandemic impact your family?

SS: I guess we're together more, right? Like I mean, it seems like we're the same as before, right? I mean, I don't see any...

JS: Yeah we're just a little more bored. Are people in your household working?

SS: Yeah. I mean, like so mom, she's a housekeeper, so now she's working. At the beginning a lot of people told her to stay home, so she wasn't. So there

was a period of time when she wasn't working. Again, you, from what I remember, you've worked through those, right? I mean, you just had to probably, like, wear a mask or something

JS: I still do.

SS: Right, exactly. Yeah so, you know, again, mom just had to take a break a little bit at the beginning, but, you know and me you know like I said fortunately, my job I can work from home.

JS: So when I started working at the grocery store through like the whole like the start of the pandemic, was it like scary for you because I was coming in and out of the house, or was it like, fine?

SS: No, it was a little scary. I was talking to mom about it. I was like, you know, like not even that you were going to get us sick, but, you know, you yourself getting sick, you know.

JS: So what's been the hardest part of this pandemic for you?

SS: Probably just missing co-workers I think, you know. Again, I'm not complaining too much because I like working from home but there was this you know, you do miss people, you know, like the interaction with people and, you know, when you were back in office, you know, you always said, what's up to this person or that person you saw, you know, face to face and maybe you went to lunch and you miss that. You know, being with people, I think people are like social creatures, you know, even if you don't consider yourself social you're still a social creature. Missing that interaction, I think that's the biggest thing that I miss.

JS: How do you think the government handled the covid crisis?

SS: Well I think New York State did a pretty good job, especially like, I remember Cuomo, he was holding those whatch'macallit, those hearings or whatever you call them, like every morning he would and just the way he sounded, you know, just it seemed like he had it, not under control, but it sounded like he had a plan.

Sounded like, you know, like reassuring, you know, like, hey, you know, yes, this is going on and he sounded honest, you know, like just, you know, if he didn't know something he said he didn't know, I have no idea. So I remember I enjoyed hearing him on TV every morning, you know, like just giving these answers, you know? And Trump was the other way. It's like, well, another thing is that I'm biased. So that's another thing. You know, even if he was saying the truth, I just never trusted the guy. But he really messed up, actually, because just the way he, again like telling people not to wear masks, I mean, come on man like, you know, it was just stupidity. So, like. You know, like I think I think from like New York State, I think, did a pretty good job in New York City, I don't know I haven't been really been following. Like what on the city level they did. But again, like the federal government, I think, just totally botched it I mean, you know, he was just sending all these weird mixed messages, you know, the way he shut down travel. He's like, he was saying, I remember he was telling people, oh, you know, this is not a big deal, the coronavirus not a big deal- oh, by the way, I'm shutting down travel from China. OK, if it's not a big deal, then why are you shutting down China? Are you racist? Is this fake? I don't know. So he was given these mixed messages like. So that, you know, it depends how you look at it. You know, I think I think some states probably did OK. Nationally we did horribly. As a world we did horribly, you know, like I mean, it just spread all over the world, you know, so. I think that there's probably some good examples here and there of government response, but overall it wasn't good.

JS: So do you think you can be doing anything to prevent covid from spreading?

SS: Of course. I mean one thing we didn't do is like we didn't really isolate, um, you know, it's like we went to my brother's right whatever, and I remember that they were planning a New Year's party, you know? And I was like they asked me, where am I going to go? I'm like, I'm going to stay home. And everybody was like, upset, oh, why are you going to stay home? And we didn't stay home. We went for that New Year's party, you know. So it's like, you know. Like, I feel that we didn't really take this seriously at all. You know, we did take it seriously at the beginning, you know, where we stayed home during that lockdown. You know, we did. But after that, you know, for the two or three months after that, it was just like, OK, let's just you know.

JS: When things started to reopen, was that when you started to, like, feel a little bit less serious about everything?

SS: Yeah, exactly. When things reopen, that's when, you know, and it wasn't even me. It was everybody and the funny thing is, if you did do it like people made you feel like crap, you know. I remember my soccer team, you know, they shut down during the summer, but then they started playing again and I remember in like December that's when the that big spike happened so I was like, well, look, you know, I told the coach I was like, look, I'm gonna sit out until this this thing comes down and two weeks later, he calls me like, oh, stop hiding, come on, you got to come play, you know, so it's like, you know and he called me something like stop hiding, like oh you're a coward, you know, so it's just like people make you feel like if you do the right thing people make you feel like crap, you know, for doing the right thing. Same thing with like that New Year's party, like I said no I'm not going and their like oh come on! Like you're doing something wrong, you know? So it was hard to do the right thing.

JS: How would you grade the job the government did in rolling out the vaccine?

SS: Actually I think they did a really good job, actually. I took the vaccine last week. And you know, it was really quick, actually, you know, like you make an appointment, you show up at the appointment, you know, there was a line. It took maybe 10 minutes, not even, to get in and then there's another line, but it kind of goes quickly and then, you know, there's actually there's a bunch of soldiers, but there is a soldier there and he goes, hey, he points to, there's a bunch of desks and he just points to a desk like OK that one's for you, go there. You know, they just check your I.D. check and make sure everything's cool and then just tell you which arm you want. And, you know, next thing you know, it's like, OK cause I'm all nervous about the needles. Next thing you know, it's like a little prick you're like, oh, are you going to do it and like no it's done already. OK, go. And that's it. So they did a really good job with the vaccine.

JS: They let you choose the arm?

SS: Yeah.

JS: That's kind of cool.

SS: Yeah right or left.

JS: Why did you decide to take the vaccine?

SS: Why did I decide to take the vaccine? A couple of reasons. Well, you know, I feel like so from reading what the virus is, whatever, the virus is not going to go away unless around 70 percent of people get the virus. Well- I mean, get the virus. So get the antibodies, right? And the way you get the antibodies is two ways. You get the vaccine and you get the antibodies or you get the virus. So if you choose not to take the vaccine, then you're going to get covid. So that's up to you, which way you want to get the antibodies. It's far more likely that you'll die from covid than getting the vaccine. So it just makes a lot more sense to take the vaccine. So, you know, that's that's how I looked at it. It's like, well, you know, sooner or later I'm going to get it. And from what I know, it's you know, it's a lot safer to get the vaccination. So I did it that way. Another reason was that I really wanted my mom to get vaccinated because she's 70 and she's got a lot greater chance of dying than I do. So that was a way of like and she's afraid of getting vaccinated. So that was a way of like hey mom, I took the vaccine, you can take it too, you know. So that was another reason I took the vaccine.

JS: So how has your family or peers reacted to the vaccine?

SS: So your mom, she's still afraid, she's still saying that, oh, my God, you know, whatever she's you know. So it doesn't look like she's going to take it. My mom was kind of the same way, but you know, she was like, oh, I never got vaccinated, no, I'm not going to get vaccinated, but, you know, like but her sister took it in Poland. I'm sure that she was like, hey, you know, you got to just take it and they talk, they're very close so I'm sure that she had a good argument. You had a positive reaction. You were like, yes you are probably going to get vaccinated. You know, other than that, I haven't really heard anybody else talking about it. My brother took the vaccine. Victor, you know, it seems like the people on the left spectrum are more willing.

JS: So how are you feeling about the world reopening?

SS: I don't really have a strong feeling about the world reopening. I mean, tell the truth, I wish it really didn't reopen in some ways because one good thing that came out of this pandemic is that CO2 emissions went down. It was the first time that they actually went down and if we reopen the world, that means all that carbon is going to go back so in one way, I wish that people would understand that, like, look, you know, we don't have to do this this way, you know, like we don't have to reopen. You know, like, we could find ways, you know, I mean, I understand that, like, again, like think about restaurants, you know, like. You know, people need a job, they have to have a job, and that that's what's wrong with our society is that you have to have a job, you know, and so when they're talking about the world reopening is like, OK, well, that waiter has to go back, but does he have to go back? You know, I mean, can we find a way for that person to live without having to go back, you know? So in one way, I think that I wish that we weren't really reopening, I wish that we were talking about like hey, this was an opportunity, you know, because, again, this pandemic will go away, it will go away, we'll get through it, but climate change is not going to go away and it's going to hit us and there's going to be millions of people dead. So, you know, that pandemic gave us like a way forward, you know, saying, look. Here, here you go, like you said that this was impossible to do, you know, to put emissions down, that is impossible yet, somehow we did it right. Pandemic hit, you know, we stop flying, right? We stopped taking a vacation. We stop flying. We stop traveling. We stop all that stuff. Right? So it gave us an opportunity to fight global warming and now everybody says, hey, let's go back, let's go back to that stuff. In my opinion, not so fast. We should learn from that.

JS: So what's the first thing you're going to do when you have your freedom from the pandemic?

SS: I'm going to go, I'm going to invite a couple of my friends to have a beer at a brewery.

JS: How do you think the world will be changed when we come out of the pandemic?

SS: Yeah, so, you know, I've talked about this already, but you know that it's definitely the remote work. The remote work, again, all that technology that we didn't use, you know, that was there and it was just like, you know, like even my

company, you know, before the pandemic, you know, we had that discussion where like, oh, you know, uh, you know, because we're all developers, web developers and, you know, so doing that remotely is that commonplace? And we always heard other people doing it. We always heard, oh, well, you know, this part of the government like, oh, he works for FDNY and there, you know, and they get to work from home, you know, and why can't we? And all we heard from our superiors, from our managers was like, well, the policy is that you can work only one day per week from home, you know? So we all were coming to work. We all were working at the office. Meanwhile, the technology was there. Everything was there, you know, but nobody was using it. And I mean, I think that's the biggest, the biggest, biggest thing that the pandemic change is like it made that like. You know, that part. That, like remote learning and remote work is what I think is going to be the biggest change. And like I said previously, like my biggest, like what I wish the biggest change would be you know, people realizing that, like, hey, you know, the environment and the environmental impact of that like it showed us a lot of good that, you know, we can stop traveling, you know? We don't have to take vacations in Mexico or Florida like we're going now or, you know, which all it does is put carbon back in the atmosphere.

JS: I mean but to be fair, you know, people want to have fun.

SS: Of course, people want to have fun. But, you know, you also don't want millions of people dying. Right. And, you know, even now, even if you stop it now, they will die because of it and so, again, it's like. And that's not going to be the biggest impact. The biggest impact, in my opinion, against us just working from home like millions of people working from home, not traveling anymore.

JS: All right, so I think we're done talking about covid. Now we're going to talk about the Black Lives Matter protests. So my first question is, why didn't you attend any of the protests?

SS: You know, to me, like income inequality, housing, health care, you know, I got involved in some health care stuff, you know, I was, you know, like that was to me more important. So, like, you know, like politically or whatever. That's the thing that I chose. That's why I never went to, like Black Lives Matter protest.

JS: Do you remember where you were and what you thought when you first heard about the murder of George Floyd?

SS: I was at home. Everybody was at home, right?

JS: Yeah, that's true.

SS: I think first time I think was probably with Eric with Klaudia's Eric. I think that we were discussing it. I think he came over. That's from what I remember like.

JS: And what did you guys discuss?

SS: Just like the protest and you know, I mean, he was like concerned, oh, you know, they're burning stuff down, you know? And then, you know, I was like, look, you know, I wouldn't want things to burn down, but on the other hand, it's like, you know, I've been to plenty of peaceful protests and sometimes those peaceful protests to tell you the truth, they just feel like nobody's paying attention. So that's why I wasn't really- like his point was like oh man they're burning stuff down. I was like, well, you know, I don't know. You know, it's like all these cops, you know, you're hearing this stuff over and over and over again. It's like, well, you know, somebody's got to pay some attention, you know.

JS: So what are some of the reasons that you think protesting black Americans and their nonblack allies are angry about conditions in the United States?

SS: I mean, it's about racism, right? And as far as I know, it's like, again, you're just hearing all these, you know, over and over again, it's like. You know, a black guy gets shot down somewhere or whatever, and the police officer just, you know, well, and sometimes they don't even fire him, you know, it's like. And it's like and it's the same song and dance over and over again, you know, so I think that's what they're mad about. It's like, well, you know what? Come on. You know, enough is enough. It's like, when are you going to. Like, when are you going to start policing, you know, I mean, like, first of all, I don't even know why- It's a hard job, like being a I don't know who the hell wants to be a police officer, but. I don't know, it just feels like to me, I think it's like police officers kind of feel a little bit of entitlement or something. I don't know. And I

think, like, your job is to. I mean, your job is to keep people safe. That's your job, keep people safe. That doesn't mean that you take a gun and you shoot somebody you know. I mean, that's I mean, who the hell even takes out their gun, really, you know, and it seems like and that's why I think people are so pissed off is because that, like, you just hear this over and over again, like a shot, you know, and you know. And drawing their weapon and a lot of stuff like, hey, calm the hell down, man, you know, like learn how to talk to people without getting angry or whatever, you know. So I think that's what people are pissed about, is that these police officers are just. Being too policy, I don't know, you know.

JS: So do you believe that there are issues with the criminal justice system in the United States that have helped make these protesters more upset?

SS: Yeah, you know, like exactly what I said. I think it's like. I think it's just police officers just aren't trained the right way. They're they're trained. And, you know, and I'm not you know, I don't really know to tell the truth, because I've never been to like a thing, but I just from the way that I've seen police and I interacted with police, I think the way they're trained is just like so un-human, like, you know, like be a human being, you know, I think they're like, OK, you know what? This is a job in some way and you're like just so disconnected. Like you're a police officer. This is a civilian. And there's a certain way that you act or whatever, you know, and it's like. I don't look at a police officer as another like you, you know what I should be you know, in my opinion, I should be looking at a police officer just the way I look at any other civilian, you know, but because the way they act and because they know, because they carry that gun, it's different, you know, and like. And that's the training of, you know, that's the system, that's the justice system that trains them in that way. And, you know, it fuels those protests, I think even more, especially when they see those police officers, you know. In those protests, you know, and they're all in there, their gear, I don't know I just think that they should train police officers to be, you know, don't think that you're this special kind of something. And I hope that they don't and I hope I'm wrong about it because again, that's just my perception of like looking at police officers. And I hope that they don't teach them that stuff like hey you're just special whoever that you want to be.

JS: Why do you think New York City became the epicenter for the protests?

SS: Well, you know, I mean, New York City is a big city and I mean, it's an epicenter for everything, it's not even the protests, you know, I mean, like, well, not everything, but a lot of stuff. You know, it's one of the world capitals. You know, a lot of stuff happens here. It's very diverse, it's a very, very diverse city, and I guess it is just a lot of people, so I think it's like, you know, like that mixture of like just being very diverse. There's a big black community. It gets a lot of world attention. So it's very I think it's easy for things to, you know. It's easy to breed a lot of things, so it's not a it's not a surprise that it became the epicenter, you know, and anywhere that you have a lot of people, you know, with a lot of ideas and a lot of, you know, just becomes an epicenter, you know, so it's the same thing here.

JS: So how have the uprisings across the country shifted how you think about your ethnic identity and your place in US society?

SS: I don't know, I think I think it made me. I think it made me more aware of racism. I think maybe a little bit.

JS: How have the past few months changed how you think about police and racism in the US?

SS: Police officers are just not as, you know like it just made me realize that they're not they're not equal, right? Like you and I. They're different and special, you know, although I always thought they were but I guess what my perception of the way is like I guess it just started questioning that like. Like, why are they like or even should they be that way or should they be more like you and me? You know, yes you are a cop, but when I see you, why do I feel differently? Why? You know. Like, why am I feeling like you're kind of like this special somebody, why can't I feel that that you're more like hey just another person, you know. So it started to look like, I guess I didn't question that before and now, like, you know what? Maybe that's how it should be, you know,

JS: Why do you think there is so much backlash to Black Lives Matter?

SS: It's two things. It's the right wing echo chamber, right. So if you watch the Fox News and you watch that Carson guy, whatever, you know, the way they portray them is very like, oh my God, they're destroying this country. These are thugs. These are whatever, you know, and like so then you hear that, you know, you hear all those supporters, all those right wingers say, oh, my God, he's a terrorist. And then you have the biggest one of them of all, Trump, you know, saying this is enemy of the people. I think that's why it's like just, you know, just the way they're portrayed in the media.

JS: How would you like to see this movement resolved?

SS: So it seems like it's about policing, right, and I don't know, like, yeah, how do you make people not racist? You know, I mean it's a good question. I wish in some way they would make people less racist, but I don't know how that's probably beyond this movie. I don't know if you could do that. But like so I guess one thing is if that policing up would change, you know, because again, it's just over and over that circle of like, OK, well, police, you know, a black man shot and a police officer getting off scot-free, like if at least that circle got broken, maybe that would, you know, maybe that would be some sort of achievement you know, I don't know how far that would go, like eliminate racism, but at least I think it would be nice.

JS: Ok, so now we're going to talk about the events that occurred in the beginning of 2021. So what was going through your mind when you first heard the U.S. Capitol was invaded?

SS: I couldn't believe it. Yeah, I couldn't believe it. I remember. I always talk with Dominic, you know, like we used to, like, you know, during his presidency and even afterward, you know.

JS: Dominic is your Republican friend. You're a Democrat.

SS: Exactly. My Republican Trump supporter. And that day, I check my phone and it's like there's riots in the capitol and I'm like and I was just in disbelief because, like, I know that Trump was saying that everything was that the election was stolen. But in my mind, it was like I was always thinking like, OK, who the hell believes

that stuff? Like, no way people believe that stuff. And then when I heard that, like, you know, because that was the day when they and I didn't even know that there was gonna be I mean I knew that was going to be some protests and I was like, OK, I know they're going to be protesting. You know, I was protesting Trump so I was like, okay, they going to protest Biden. I knew that. But like when they were certifying the election, meaning that the election is certified and they went to stop it, I was like, how could how could people believe that? I couldn't believe that. That was my reaction.

JS: So what do you think led these people to attempt to violently overthrow the government?

SS: Trump! I mean, what else? If you know, I mean, if he. If he wasn't the person that he was and, you know, I mean, if he was a normal democratic, you know, he's anti democratic. He's not a democratic. This is not a person that believes in that or believes he has no clue what even democracy is. And that's why he did what he did, because he has no clue of what democracy is, democracy needs people to believe in and he doesn't believe in it. He doesn't know what it is, you know, and you've lost you have to say, OK, you know what fine, you know what I had my chance at rule. I had four years. I did whatever I did, you know? OK, fine and I lost people, chose the other guy. All right. Thank you very much. You know, and you go you shake the other guy's hand and you say, you know, you let the country go. But if you don't do that, if you don't do that and you say, no, I you know, I'm the guy, whatever, then that's what happens. People and I had no clue that people but people believe, as you can see, people believe you, you know, and they believed him and they went and, you know, he's the major, him and and all those enablers, all those people that said, hey, you know, it's not a big deal. You know, the Mitch McConnell's all those guys, you know, that enabled that stuff instead of you know, he's saying that it's fraudulent. Not one of those guys came up and said, hey, no, no, what the hell are you doing? They're all supporting him. But he- him and all those enablers, they should be all- I don't know how they keep their jobs. I got no idea.

JS: Were you surprised with how the Trump supporters were treated by the police?

SS: No, because, again, you know. They were the pro blue lives matter people, you know, and so, you know, I think the police was like, well, you know, they're not going to do anything, you know, like. So I wasn't surprised.

JS: So what do you think about former President Trump's reaction to the invasion?

SS: Oh, God, man, it's the same reaction that he has with everything, it's like the guy is just. He's just unbelievable, you know, I mean, like. I don't even remember what his reaction was. That wasn't a big deal, right. Oh, it was great, you know. What did he do? He was watching it right? He was watching it, enjoying it. Again. Not a surprise, you know. I mean, this is really what he wanted. But again, it's just like all this stuff that he does as president, it's just shocking, really, you know, and it's even more shocking that, like, people actually stand for this. They take it, you know, like instead of I mean, you know, there should be riots in the streets after that stuff, you know? I mean, like, how is he still how was he not impeached? How is this possible? It's unbelievable.

JS: Have you had any discussions with family members about the invasion of the capital? If so, what were their reactions?

SS: I discussed stuff with your mom. But you know her reaction was, you know, I guess. Actually, I don't know. I guess she wasn't surprised.

JS: So how was the invasion of the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters changed the way you view the Republican Party?

SS: The way it changed, the way I look at the Republican Party is I look at them as communists and not in a communist way that like, you know, if you read about communism or whatever and you know what communism is and that's not what they are. But the way that the Republican Party uses it. So if you talk to a Trump supporter and he calls you communist, that's what they are. Right. Because from a Trump supporter, if he calls you communist to him, you're this guy that believes in this one leader. Right. That's what the word communist means to them. You believe this one leader all powerful and that leader stays in power all the time. And that's communism to

them. Right? So that's what they are. They are those communists. They believe in that one leader and that one leader stays no matter what. And no matter what that leader says is true. You know, that leader could lose an election but if that leader says it's not true, then that's what they believe. So since the invasion, I call Republicans communists because that's what they are. They're communist.

JS: So what do you think about the impeachment trial of former President Trump?

SS: I think it's a shame. I think it's a disgrace. It's a big, huge disgrace that he has not been impeached. It's a disgrace. It's I mean, if you don't get impeached for that, what can you get impeached for? Tell me, what can you get if you cannot impeach a president... You live in a democratic country. This is a democracy. This is supposedly the biggest and greatest democracy in the world, right? If the greatest democracy in the world and a guy says that, OK, I'm not leaving and you're not and you're not going to impeach him for that. What can you impeach a guy for? Ok, so it's a complete and utter sham. He should have been impeached the day that the invasion happened, next day he should have been impeached with no questions asked of anybody. Impeached. I don't care if you are a Republican, whatever. Impeached 100%, no questions asked. So I don't know what happened. I don't know how the greatest, greatest democracy in the world. I don't know they didn't impeach a guy that said I'm not leaving, you know, I lost the election, but I'm not leaving. So you know, keep doing it "greatest democracy in the world".

JS: If Trump was a woman or a non-white person, how would the impeachment trial have been different?

SS: He would have been impeached the next day. One hundred percent. Hundred percent, no questions asked. No nothing the way it's supposed to be. That would have been the difference. If this was Barack Obama that did this. You're kidding me? What kind of question is it?

JS: All right. Well, that's it. That's all the questions. I'm glad we ended up with the strong note. Thank you so much for talking to me about this new world. We

live in about covid, BLM, and the whole crazy capitol thing. Thank you. So thank you so much.

SS: All right. You're welcome.