

RISE EAST PROJECT: PART 3

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Between 1990 and 2020, Oakland lost nearly half of its Black population due to economic and social forces. East Oakland, once a middle-class community, is now home to mostly Black families living in poverty. The post Rise East Project: Part 3 first appeared on Post News Group.

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By Emil Guillermo

I'm in New York again for a return engagement of Oakland resident Ishmael Reed's "The Conductor," his new play on the current state of race in America.

Reed's twist is that Blacks are running an underground railroad to help South Asian minorities under siege by whites in the Bay Area. Based on the recent San Francisco Board of Education and district attorney recalls, Reed turns real life into a "what if" satire to expose the racism at play. It's funny, provocative, and an example of how white supremacy has suppressed our sense of history. You'll marvel at all the facts in the play you didn't know about.

I play a conservative Fox News-type commentator. I know, a stretch. It's a paid acting gig, but more of an honor to be in the 11th play by Reed. His five decades of literary artistry in drama, novels, poetry, and essays in the name of diversity and inclusion makes him worthy of a Nobel laureate in literature.

The show isn't streaming over the internet, but it's worth it to be in New York to see what could be the final production of "The Conductor," at the Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave, Thursday to Saturday @8pm, Sundays @3pm through Sept.

10. <https://ci.ovationtix.com/35441/production/1149771>



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The Untold Filipino American Story

While here, I'm also doing my own one-man show, "Emil Amok, Lost NPR Host: A Phool's Filipino American History."

In the show, I talk about my relatives' reaction to me being a broadcaster on television, coming out of the same box as their favorite TV stars when I was on NBC local in San Francisco. To them, that's where I worked—inside that box. Seeing an Filipino American on TV in 1980 was akin to witnessing an astronomical event. Sort of like the recent Blue Moon.

When my relatives, all hard-working immigrants from the Philippines who came to the U.S. between 1928 and 1975, saw me, they were all amazed.

"So, Emil, you just get on the camera, and you talk?" my Auntie Pacing would ask me. She worked in service jobs in hotels, restaurants, and hospitals all her life. "And you don't have to clean up or anything? You just talk? That's work?"

It was a foreign notion to her that Filipinos who came to America mostly to work in the fields in the 1920s and 1930s for 10 cents an hour could wear a suit, speak, and afford to pay the rent.

I think on Labor Day about how lucky I am to have done what I've done as a journalist. Something that my relatives a generation away weren't able to pursue.

I call this iteration, "A Phool's History of Filipino America," because "phool" is how they spelled it at the Lampoon when I competed to be a member freshman year at Harvard. I had to explain why it wasn't spelled, "Philippino." And then they made me carry a pineapple around Harvard Yard.

A Latina friend paid me a compliment saying my show was akin to John Leguizamo's "Latin American History for Morons." Flattered by the comparison, you don't have to be a moron to see my show! Check it out for yourself.

Two performances only, Sept. 6 @7pm, and Sept. 14 @9:30pm (all times ET). <https://www.frigid.nyc/event/6897:499/>

This one you can livestream from Hawaii, Europe, Rockridge. Anywhere. It's better in person, where we can exchange our humanness. But get a livestreamed ticket if you can't be in New York's Under St. Marks Theater in the East Village (94 St. Marks Place, NYC)

One Last Labor Worth Considering

So, there's what we do for money and for love. What do we do for democracy?

And so, we must not forget the nitt- gritty work done by election workers everywhere. The unsung heroes. They don't get paid all that much. But they do important work. How do voters get information? Translated materials? How do ballots get distributed, sorted, then counted?

If you ever doubted the value of election workers, just look at Ruby Freeman and her daughter Shaye Moss. You met them during their testimony at the Jan. 6 Committee hearings in Washington last year.

They were stand-ins for average Americans like you and me.

Freeman and Moss were accused by Rudy Giuliani of nefarious deeds aiding in the theft of an election against Trump.

The fals accusations wrecked Freeman's life.

"I've lost my name, and I've lost my reputation," Freeman testified. "I've lost my sense of security. All because a group of people, starting with No. 45, and his ally, Rudy Giuliani, decided to scapegoat me

and my daughter, Shaye."

Giuliani is one of 18 co-conspirators in the organized racketeering case in Georgia accused of attempting to subvert democracy.

In a separate case, Freeman has sued Giuliani for defamation, calling him out for spreading lies about her and her daughter.

Last week, Giuliani conceded the facts of the case, which means the court will only consider the damages at the next hearing.

And right now, Michael Gottlieb, the lawyer for Freeman and Moss, told CNN the damages could be "tens of millions of dollars."

"You heard me correctly," said Gottlieb to a CNN anchor. "It is our expectation that we'll be able to prove tens of millions of dollars in compensatory damages before you get punitive damages in a case that we will present to the jury."

When people like Giuliani defame and lie about election workers in a brazen attempt to steal an election, there must be a stiff price to pay.

When you find yourself ever confused by all the legal proceedings over the Trump indictments, just remember Freeman and Moss and what they endured to protect our democracy.

No one should doubt the heart of patriotism in our community.

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NOTE: I will talk about this column and other matters on "Emil Amok's Takeout," my AAPI micro-talk show. Live @2p Pacific. Livestream on [Facebook](#); my [YouTube](#) channel; and [Twitter](#). Catch the recordings on www.amok.com.

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