

## TRANSCRIPT

# "CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE WITH PATRICK GASPARD AND THE 2018 OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE COMMUNITY FELLOWS"

*Speakers: Maria Broom, Ava Lias-Booker, Catherine Pugh, Veronica Cool, James Degraffenreidt, Jr., Nupur Flynn, Robin Wood, Kurt Schmoke, Alicia Wilson, Lois Feinblatt, Diana Morris, and Patrick Gaspard*

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\* \* \*TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: ALL NAMES/TERMS SPELLED PHONETICALLY.\* \* \*

### **ANNOUNCER:**

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### **MARIA BROOM:**

This is the story of why the sky is so far away. (MIC NOISE) (LAUGHTER) A long time ago, in the land of Sessa Marimbe, the people there were so happy. They were happy every single day of their lives. Do you know why? Because the sky was right above their heads. I mean, the sky was so close to their heads, everybody could just reach up their hands and everybody could touch the sky. But not only was the sky right above their heads, the sky was also food, chakula. Can you say chakula?

### **VOICES:**

Chakula.

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## MARIA BROOM:

Yes, and it was so delicious. That meant that if the children were hungry, instead of having to run home to their parents to eat anything, all they had to do was reach up their little fingers, grab a piece of that sky, pop into their mouths and they were happy. Or the women. Maybe the women were in the village marketplace. Maybe they were stringing their bead necklaces or painting on their calabashes.

If the women were hungry, all they had to do was reach up their long, lovely hands, grab a piece of that sky, pop it into their mouths and they were happy. Or the men. Maybe the men were in the back of the village. (LAUGHTER) Maybe they were carving out their drums or repairing their huts. If the men were hungry, all they had to do was reach up their long, strong arms, grab a piece of that sky, pop it into their mouths and they were happy.

But now you know-- you know (just like I know) that people can be wasteful. Many times, the children would be playing and talking and singing, thinking they were still hungry. They grabbed some sky. They take one little bite and they'd throw the rest of it on the ground. Or the women. The women would be in the village marketplace, just talkin', talkin'; talking like they usually do.

And thinking they were hungry, they'd grab some sky, take a little bite and throw the rest of it on the ground. Or the men. The men would be in the back of the village, just drumming, dancing, drinking palm wine. Thinking they were still hungry, they'd grab some sky, take a bite and toss the rest of it on the ground. Now, before you knew it, the land of Sessa Marimbe was covered. It was covered with little, tiny pieces of sky, wasted all over the ground.

Well, this made the great sky god very angry. So one day, he came out. He took away the sun and it was dark. And then he said, "People of Sessa Marimbe, I warn you. If I should see so much as one little piece of sky on this ground again, your lives will be changed forever." Well, now the people knew exactly what they had to do. They began to pick up all the little pieces of sky that they had wasted. When they finished eating those, whenever they were hungry, they would take a little piece of sky and eat it.

If they were still hungry, they could take another little piece of sky and eat it. But never, ever, more than they needed. They learned not to be wasteful. Now, this became a habit. It lasted for weeks, it lasted for months, it lasted for years, until the 27th year. In the 27th year, there was a great big celebration. The daughter of King Obatala and Mama Nacagua was getting married. So they invited all the people to come.

They said, "Come, come, bring your children. Bring your drums. Bring your calabashes. And let's party." And so, they partied. They partied not for one day, not for two, three, four, five or six. Six days is how long they partied. This was Africa. But now you know, in every group of people, there's always one person-- one person who is-- greedy. And guess who the greedy person was in the land of Sessa Marimbe? It was the queen, Mama Nacagua.

That queen was so greedy, she had to have the most fabric in her dalay, the most fabric in her lapa, the most bells on her ankles, the most drums, the most calabashes. Plus, Mama Nacagua talked the most and Mama Nacagua (MIC NOISE) ate the most. So here we were in the sixth day of the party. Mama Nacagua was over with her friends, just talking, talking, talking like she usually does, and thinking she was still hungry.

She reached up, she grabbed a piece of sky. She went to put the sky in her mouth. And then she said, "Oh no. I cannot eat this piece of sky. My belly is too full." But she remembered. She was not supposed to waste it. So she went to the children and she said, "Please, please, my dear little children, I have taken this piece of sky. I cannot eat it. Will you children please eat the sky for me?" And the children said, "Oh no, Mama Nacagua. Our bellies, they are full. We could not possibly eat another bite."

So then she went to the women and she said, "Please, please, my dear sisters, I have taken this piece of sky. I cannot eat it. Will you women please eat the sky for me?" And the women said, "Oh, Mama Nacagua, we have been eating every hour on the hour. We could not possibly eat another bite." So then she went to the men and she said, "Please, please, my dear brothers, I have taken this piece of sky. I cannot eat it. Will you men please eat the sky for me?"

And the men said, "Oh, Mama Nacagua, we are so full. If we were to take another bite, our bellies would burst open. There would be little pieces of sky all over the ground again." Here she was, stuck. Stuck with this one little piece of sky. What was she going to do with it? She tried to eat it but her belly was too full. She even tried to throw it back up but it wouldn't stick.

So she thought, this is such a tiny, little piece of sky, I don't think anyone would miss it. I don't think anyone would notice where I hide it. So while the rest of the village was still singing and dancing and partying, Mama Nacagua went to the back of the village. She hid the little piece of sky on the ground behind the bush. Well, as soon as that piece of sky touched the ground, the great sky god came back out. He took away the sun again and it was dark.

And then he said, "People of Sessa Marimbe, I have warned you that if I saw so much as one little piece of sky on this ground again, your lives would be changed forever." Well, now the people were scared. They stood where they were. They looked up at the sky. They watched and they waited for a long time. They stood there a long time, looking, watching, waiting for something terrible to happen. But nothing happened.

So King Obatala and Mama Nacagua said, "People of Sessa Marimbe, come, get your children, get your drums and go home. (CLAPS) This party is over." So they took the children by the hands and they walked home. And as they walked home, they stood, looking, watching, waiting for something terrible to happen. They stood outside for a long time just watching the sky, waiting for something horrible to happen to them. But nothing happened. So they went inside and they went to bed.

But when they woke up in the morning, (YAWNS) oh boy, as soon as they opened their eyes, ooh, they saw that the sun-- the sun was shining so bright. That sun was so bright and it was so hot, it was almost burning their eyeballs. Why was the sun so bright, bright this morning? They rubbed their eyes. They got up. They went outside. (GASPS) Oh no. They could not believe their eyes. The sky. The sky was so far away. They stood on their tiptoes. They tried to touch it; nobody could touch it anymore.

The children climbed on top of the huts; they reached up. The women climbed in the trees; they reached up. The men stood on top of each other's shoulders; they reached up. Nobody could touch the sky anymore. And so then they said, "Well, what are we going to do now? What are we going to use for food? Our chakula is gone and we cannot reach it. We are going to be hungry. We may even starve to death."

And do you know, that was the day. That was the day that the people had to learn how to farm. They had to learn how to work for their food now. They had to dig holes in the ground. They had to collect seeds. They had to plant the seeds. They had to shoo the birds away (shoo, shoo) so the birds wouldn't eat the seeds. They had to pray for the rain to come. Then they had to wait for the rain to come. And while they were waiting for the rain to come and the food to grow, they had to learn how to forage.

Do you know how to forage, how to find fruit, how to collect nuts, how to pick seeds? Oh, so much work. So much trouble. So many problems. All because one person was-- (BACKGROUND VOICE) greedy. So I'm telling all of you, it's too late now to do anything about the sky. We can never get it back. It's gone for good. But if you've got something good that you like to eat, or you have something special that you like to keep for yourself, you make sure that you share it.

Share it with the people that you know and share it with the people that you don't know. But especially you make sure never, ever, take more than you need. Not to be wasteful, not to be greedy. And just in case-- just in case any one of you gets that urge (you know that urge) to take one more little piece of something that you know you don't need, (CLAPS) stop and think. Think about why the sky is so far away.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **AVA LIAS-BOOKER:**

Wow. (LAUGH) Good evening, everyone, and welcome to our celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Open Society Institute - Baltimore. I am Ava Lias-Booker, and like some of you here, the mother of a child who took dance from Maria Broom. (LAUGHTER) So another--. And this past year, I also took on two new and important roles. First, at my law firm, I am a lawyer. And in addition to an active litigation-- practice, I also now serve as chair of the firm's National Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

And to my particular delight tonight, I am one of the newest members of the Open Society Advisory Board. So, welcome again. (APPLAUSE) Taking on the challenge of improving

diversity and inclusion at one of the nation's top 100 law firms is what attracted me to the Open Society Foundations in the first place. The mission of this organization, among many-- but the one that is particularly compelling tonight is to build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people.

A simple, yet compelling, statement, especially now at this pivotal point in time in which we live. I joined the advisory board at O.S.I. - Baltimore because I believe that systemic change is the only way to truly change and improve the lives of the people in Baltimore, the people throughout this region, throughout the nation, and in the organizations in which we work and serve. And as I talked to the people that I know and respect and admire about the organizations that are leading the charge in partnering with communities that create that type of lasting, positive change, one name continually emerged.

And that was O.S.I. - Baltimore. And so, I was particularly pleased to learn that for the past 20 years, O.S.I. - Baltimore has made permanent and positive, systemic change for Baltimore in this region. Beginning 14 years ago, O.S.I. worked with Baltimore city schools to revise the discipline code, dramatically reducing student suspensions from 26,000 in 2004 to 6,800 last year.

No surprise, this led to better attendance, higher graduation rates, and now, all Maryland schools are required to take similar steps. And this work continues at O.S.I. where O.S.I. now works with the school district to implement restorative practices as an alternative to suspension in all city schools over the next five years. Since 2005, O.S.I. has worked successfully with the state to reduce Maryland's prison population by a projected 23% without jeopardizing public safety.

And they've done it through the development of risk assessment tools and parole commissioner training. This reduction represents one of the largest drops in the country. And this work continues. It continues through bail reform and increases in access to pretrial services statewide to avoid unnecessary jail time. And in recent years, O.S.I. has worked with the police, the health department and the state's attorney's office to implement the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program. This is a program which diverts drug offenders to treatment programs in lieu of criminal prosecution. And the Baltimore City program, which is one of a handful of pilot cities, has been among the most successful in the country. And finally, as you will hear about later tonight, O.S.I. also celebrates its incredibly successful Community Fellows Network, which will grow to 200 fellows this year.

And they collectively are the, quote, unquote, "On the ground engine," that keeps our city moving forward, and we could not be more proud of their work. And this, ladies and gentlemen, is just a sample. You will find in your programs, 20 accomplishments in 20 years. There's a page devoted to that. And that's just a short list.

And while tonight's program will focus on the past accomplishments over the last 20 years, we will also look forward to the future of O.S.I. And Open Society will continue to work with our many partners to realize a vision of Baltimore as a vibrant city where public and private sector will come together to find a common purpose to create opportunities and

resources so that all residents of Baltimore and the city can thrive. And it is against that backdrop that I get the other privilege tonight of introducing Mayor Catherine Pugh.

Soon after-- Mayor Pugh was elected in 2016, she joined O.S.I.'s Solutions Summit and laid out a detailed, pragmatic policy agenda to address some of Baltimore's most pressing needs. Now, I wasn't there that night, but I'm told that she had a 40-minute address that sort of upended the agenda for that evening. But more importantly, it demonstrated her commitment to serious, detailed solutions to move Baltimore forward.

Since then, we have been proud to partner with the mayor in-- on the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program I spoke of, the implementation of the Consent Decree, the Safe City Baltimore Immigrant Defense Fund, and many other product-- projects. We are proud to call her a partner and a friend; Madam Mayor.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **CATHERINE PUGH:**

Good evening, everyone. Before I share my few words, I wanted to present this mayoral salute-- to the Open Society Institute for their 20 years of commitment to our city.

## **AVA LIAS-BOOKER:**

Thank you.

## **CATHERINE PUGH:**

Thank you. Let me just say it was really rewarding to stand back here and listen to the accomplishments of O.S.I. because I feel like I've been a part of them for almost a decade or so. When I think about, first of all, the issue of focusing in on our young people, when in-- I think it was 2013 or '14, when Barack Obama was president, one of the things that he said that America could do, in terms of how we deal with the future of our young people, was to increase the age of dropping out of school to 18.

He said because the question for all of us should be: Where do you think our children are going when they leave our schools? Only to the streets of our corner. We should take the responsibility to educate our young people. I just returned from Detroit-- participating in the Bloomberg City Lab. And we talked about what we should be doing for our young people as our cities move forward. Because oftentimes, we think that the job market is not goin' to be available to them.

But the issue for all of us is how do we begin to educate and prepare our young people for the future. Because it's not about a lack of jobs; it's about what jobs will look like in the future. So how do we begin retooling those citizens, especially our returning citizens, or our under-- invested citizens? How do we begin to retool them so they can earn decent wages?

And then at the same time, when do we begin to train our students, our young people, in the field of technology?

And I can tell you that the consensus of the conversation is that we ought to begin in elementary school if we wanna prepare our children to meet the needs of the future. And one of the reasons that I made Baltimore City Community College free is because I realized that there are young people in our communities that don't reach. They don't reach because they believe that their parents can't afford to send them to higher education.

And while every job in the future will not require that, the issue is that every child should feel that they have that opportunity. Parents don't push them in that direction because they don't believe that they can afford. And just let me tell you what happened as a result of that. When we made Baltimore City Community College free, Coppin State University said if you finish your two years free there, you can come to Coppin State University for free.

And then Johns-- (APPLAUSE) thank you. And then Johns Hopkins University says if you maintain a 4.0, you have an opportunity to come there for free. Morgan State University has a \$5 million endowment so that our young people can also ascertain a four-year degree there as well. And I say this to you because I know that Open Society has been s-- the Open Society Institute has been so committed to making sure that we move our city forward.

And so, I'm so grateful to be a partner with them, when we talk about bein' inclusive and bein' diverse, and more importantly, how do we make sure that we're investing in the least of us. And so, among the things that we've been able to do is to commit to a \$20 million, affordable housing trust fund. Because we believe that to solve some of the problems that our city is facing, whether it is drug addiction or mental illness or whatever reason allows people to end up on the streets, that we ought to be able to provide them with affordable housing.

And the other issue for us is investing in neighborhoods and communities that have been underinvested in for decades. When I think about coming into city hall and realizing that there was a deal on my desk to sell our garages, and the answer was no, because I always raise the question, when somebody wants to buy something from you, you oughta ask what is it worth. And so, instead of selling garages, what we did was we shared those garages with the state, leased them and then created a \$52 million investment fund, and another \$7 million to be invested in neighborhoods and communities that have been underinvested in.

Having partners like the Open Society Institute allows those kind of interests to rise to the top. Because we realize in order to continue to move our city forward, that we must invest in every neighborhood, in every community, and in every child. And it is that investment that changes the trajectory of our city. So I just stopped by to say congratulations, Open Society Institute, on your 20th anniversary.

But more importantly, we look forward to 20 more. Because the work that you have done has made a difference in Baltimore, but we know that the work that you will do in the future will continue to move us forward. Thank you so much for this (APPLAUSE) opportunity.

## **VERONICA COOL:**

So I think I should get the bigger mic. What do you all think?

## **JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

I don't think that's a mic--

## **VERONICA COOL:**

It's not gonna work. It's not gonna work. All right. Buenas noches (PH), everyone. I am Veronica Cool and I am thrilled to be here with my partner in crime, James DeGraffenreidt, to introduce probably the coolest part of the evening. So I'm a little biased, right. To the 21st cohort of the Open Society Institute - Baltimore Community Fellows. (CHEERING) I think that's why they all came.

So James and I are both on the advisory board for Open Society and we were honored-- we did wrestle-- but we were very honored to be part of the selection committee. I think we s-- I speak for you in this regard, that it was so inspiring. When we met the 20 finalists in this year's cohort, hearing their innovative ideas, seeing their passion, it made us feel very, very inspired about the future of our city.

## **JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

For 20 years, O.S.I.'s community fellows have advanced some of the most innovative ways to serve Baltimore's communities in fields ranging from criminal justice and reentry to food security, education and the arts. They have created and strengthened some of Baltimore's most well-known organizations, including The Book Thing of Baltimore, Wide Angle Youth Media, Community Law in Action, Thread, Safe Streets and Bike More, to name just a few.

In addition, the fellowship's programs has spawned some of the regions most engaged civic leaders, such as Morgan State University Professor Lawrence Brown, who was honored at a previous 20th anniversary event, and Terry Hickey, Director of the Mayor's Office of Human Services.

## **VERONICA COOL:**

The ten individuals we're about to introduce are some of Baltimore's best home-grown talent. And we cannot wait to see what they're gonna do in the next 18 months. Here they are. Graham Coreil-Allen (CHEERING) will launch-- he will launch a Druid Hill Park complete street project to advocate for the transportation and green space equity through public art and creative planning. The project aims to increase access for pedestrians, bicyclists and people with mobility devices to correct for the history of civic planning in an



area that prioritized commuter traffic, despite the fact that about half of the local residents didn't own cars. So.

(APPLAUSE)

Ciera Daniel (APPLAUSE) will establish the Young Kings Leadership Academy, an after-school, leadership development program targeting African American middle school boys at East Baltimore City Springs Elementary Middle School. The project hopes to counteract negative stereotypes about black men in popular culture and help students realize their potential to serve their school and their community.

(APPLAUSE)

## **JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

Eric Fishel. (APPLAUSE) Eric Fishel's Baltimore Food Parks will convert vacant lots into mixed-use parks, using native, edible plants for the benefit of both the nearby human and bird communities. Through educational events, Eric will also introduce community members to related employment opportunities. The project will conserve the city's green space, improve local ecosystems and rehabilitate blighted areas.

(APPLAUSE)

Jennay Ghowrwal. (APPLAUSE) Jennay Ghowrwal will improve the experience and representation of criminal defendants facing mental health challenges with her program, Remind, which will train defense attorneys to understand and communicate better with such defendants. This population made up 40% of Maryland public defender clients in 2017. The goal is to improve outcomes, increase access to services and reduce recidivism.

(APPLAUSE)

## **VERONICA COOL:**

Pretty impressive, right? Shelley Halstead. (APPLAUSE) Shelley, did you bring your entire fan club? She brought her own fan club, it seems. (LAUGH) Shelley Halstead's organization, Black Women Build--

## **AUDIENCE MEMBER:**

Yeah.

## **VERONICA COOL:**

--will teach black women carpentry skills as they rehabilitate houses in the Upton community, helping them to build careers as well as wealth through home ownership. (APPLAUSE) Ava Pipitone. (APPLAUSE) Ava will establish HostHome, a community-owned housing platform designed to address housing stability in the transgender

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community. It will allow hosts to provide temporary housing for people in distress. In the future, the platform could become a national model.  
(APPLAUSE)

## **JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

Aarti Sidhu. (APPLAUSE) Aarti Sidhu's Represent Youth: Baltimore School Justice Initiative will provide legal representation to Baltimore school children in suspension and expulsion proceedings. The initiative will empower youth and families by educating them about their rights in schools and advocating for policy reform to decrease and ultimately end exclusionary discipline.  
(APPLAUSE)

Emily Thompson. (APPLAUSE) Emily Thompson will establish Pivot as a comprehensive reentry program for women returning to Baltimore City from the criminal justice system. This initiative seeks to address the gap in gender-specific programming for ex-prisoners.  
(APPLAUSE)

## **VERONICA COOL:**

Introducing Fred Watkins. (CHEERING) Oh, we know he brought his own fan club up in here. (LAUGHTER) So Fred Watkins will build Lil' Laughs as a vehicle to increase the self-esteem of students using entertainment and programming that he incorporates de-escalation and confidence-building techniques. So, big shout out.  
(APPLAUSE)

And Ms. Brittany Young. (CHEERING) That's awesome. I feel like the audience should do a wave for them. (CHEERING) I mean, you guys-- okay, look, yeah, we got it. We got it. We got it. Brittany Young's B-360 will utilize the dirt bike culture to equip disconnected youth and young adults with the skills to secure educational and career opportunities in the S.T.E.M. field. The initiative also seeks to change the negative perception of dirt bikes.  
(APPLAUSE)

## **JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

Please give a round of applause to the 2018 (APPLAUSE) cohort of Open Society Institute - Baltimore Community Fellows.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

With this cohort, there are now 200 fellows in the Community Fellowships network. Most alumni not only continue their work long after the 18-month fellowship is over, and

collaborate with each other to increase their impact; many of those fellows are in the audience tonight. I'd like to ask each of them to stand and be acknowledged.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

**JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

We thank you all for your-- continued work in making Baltimore better and we congratulate our 2018 cohort group.

**VERONICA COOL:**

That's fantastic.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

**VERONICA COOL:**

You guys did great. Congratulations--

**JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

Congratulations--

**VERONICA COOL:**

You guys are fantastic. (APPLAUSE) So proud of you guys. So proud of you guys.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

**VERONICA COOL:**

I got them to do the wave for you. I mean, I know, you guys are extra special, right.

**JAMES DEGRAFFENREIDT, JR.:**

Congratulations. Thank (INAUDIBLE).  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

**LEANA WEN (RECORDED):**

There is a narrative of our city that's dangerous and pervasive, which is that somehow all these interventions have been tried and are not working. And there's violence and poverty and-- and health problems. And in some ways, it's true, because we do have terrible

statistics. But at the same time, I see the things that are working. I see the individuals in our city who are making a huge difference every single day.  
(MUSIC NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **KURT SCHMOKE (RECORDED):**

I met George Soros-- in the 1990s-- when I was involved in a conversation around the country about the need to change drug control policy. Well, I was pleased-- when I first heard the-- decision of-- to create or establish an O.S.I. - Baltimore, because I thought it was going to help a great deal in changing the conversation at the state level-- concerning the war on drugs.

## **ANDRE DAVIS (RECORDED):**

I thought O.S.I. would be a real change agent for the city and it's turned out to be exactly that. I wasn't here at precisely the very beginning, but I was a very early member of the board. And I saw the organization evolve and grow and the impact that it had on the city and the surrounding area.

## **SUSAN GOERING (RECORDED):**

So when O.S.I. - Baltimore came to town, the A.C.L.U. had just finished a lawsuit in the courts to make sure that there was more money for the city schools in Baltimore. And serendipitously, Diana was very strategic. Not only did she decide to fund us herself-- by O.S.I., but she also got about ten foundations together in a room one day, where-- we (the A.C.L.U. folks) could talk about what we were doing. And money started rolling in, and it was a gl-- it was a game-changer.

## **VINCENT SCHIRALDI (RECORDED):**

When O.S.I. opened up in Maryland, it opened up a whole new world of opportunities for sorta outgunned and underfunded advocates.  
(MUSIC NOT TRANSCRIBED)

## **LEANA WEN (RECORDED):**

O.S.I. has been a key partner in helping us to launch many important innovations; for example, getting Naloxone (the opioid antidote) into the hands of everyone who may be at risk. O.S.I. has been a partner in launching L.E.A.D., Law Enforcement Assisted Diversions, so that individuals who have the disease of addiction are offered treatment instead of incarceration.

## **NICOLE HANSON MUNDELL (RECORDED):**

The partnership with O.S.I. works like, you know, y-- y-- you-- you're able to talk with your program officer or-- and talk about the needs of your organization, and what-- the community needs and wants, right. And it's not this, oh, we think Out for Justice should be doing one thing. It's-- it's a level of respect and listening to what Out for Justice needs and what the constituents that they serve need, and then supporting us in that way.

## **BRIAN FROSH (RECORDED):**

We've been successful in working with O.S.I. to achieve ref-- reform of our pretrial-- system to keep poor people out of jail on the front end, and also-- to help people who have been in jail reenter society and become productive members of society.

## **GUSTAVO TORRES (RECORDED):**

We've partnered in different ways, with the consent decree as one example, with the police reform is another one, with the la-- day labors many years ago. Also when we need to hold-- policy-makers accountable in town meetings, Open Society always is with us because they believe truly in empower our communities.

## **CARYN YORK (RECORDED):**

My relationship with O.S.I. began as a grantee-- via Job Opportunities Task Force. O.S.I. was an original investor of the Job Opportunities Task Force. And thus far, they've been one of our strongest supporters in eliminating employment barriers for low-wage workers that have interacted with the criminal justice system. It's now turned into a personal relationship of support, as not just a funder, but also an advocate, understanding how important this work is.

## **ANDRE DAVIS (RECORDED):**

O.S.I. has given voice to young people. The Community Fellows Program has enriched the community in any number of ways. Over the 20 years that it's-- awarded fellowships-- a number of fellows have founded organizations, have engaged with young people, have spread the joy of art throughout the city, and have otherwise enriched the community in untold number of ways. It is one of O.S.I.'s greatest successes.

## **CATALINA RODRIGUEZ LIMA (RECORDED):**

O.S.I. in partnership with my office, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, we launch the Safe City Baltimore Fund-- which was a fundraising campaign to raise dollars to provide legal services to immigrants facing deportation, and for immigrants who have not been

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detained but could not afford an attorney. The initiative really seeks to provide access to due process and increase the level of legal service providers in the city to protect families and to keep families together.

### **VINCENT SCHIRALDI (RECORDED):**

O.S.I.'s impact on prison populations in Maryland has been especially impressive. The-- Maryland is one of the leading declines in the country in terms of its prison population. And I think that comes from the combined work that O.S.I.'s been able to do on-- both with the department itself (Department of Corrections) and the advocacy community, which is an interesting and unique position for a foundation to be in.

(MUSIC NOT TRANSCRIBED)

### **KEVIN LINDAMOOD (RECORDED):**

Over 20 years, the Open Society Institute has very much become institutionalized, not in the sense of a staid, remote institution-- but as an engine (or a network of engines) that are constantly driving social change toward justice.

### **LEANA WEN (RECORDED):**

I see the hope in our city. We need far more investment. We need investment from the state. We need investment from the federal government. We need for siloes to be broken down. But it's with the driving force of O.S.I. - Baltimore, helping to catalyze change, supporting innovative evidence-based efforts, and ultimately, helping us to call out these pervasive inequities that have led us to where we are. But we are in a position where we are already making a huge difference. And together, we can do so much more.

(MUSIC NOT TRANSCRIBED)

### **NUPUR PAREKH FLYNN:**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's wonderful to see all of you here tonight. Thank you. My name is Nupur Parekh Flynn and I am a proud new member of O.S.I. - Baltimore. Yay. (APPLAUSE) I am also thrilled that we are celebrating our 20-year anniversary here at the 104-year-old Baltimore Museum of Art, where I'm also privileged to be a board member. (APPLAUSE) Oh, thank you.

I see some of my fellow trustees here from the B.M.A. Thank you. O.S.I. - Baltimore and the B.M.A. have a lot in common. Thanks to the vision of B.M.A. director Christopher Bedford and that of my fellow trustees, the B.M.A. is a leader in the art world, combining cont-- contemporary art with activism and civic engagement. You can see it in our exhibitions, in our acquisitions and in our public programming.

Thanks to the vision and leadership of director Diana Morris, and my fellow trustees at O.S.I. - Baltimore, our focus has been policy to pavement for 20 years. And you can see, firsthand, that the organization's impact is tangible. It is truly an honor to be part of both the B.M.A. and O.S.I. - Baltimore. They are champions of diversity, equity and inclusion, and they represent the best interests of the communities in which we live.

My sweetheart/husband, Guy Flynn, and I do everything together, short of working in the same office, though we did that for a number of years and that's how we first met. So when either of us commits to an organization, you get both of us; our time, our ideas, our treasure and our hearts. We truly believe in the city of Baltimore. It is our home. I grew up here. Sweetheart grew up in Howard County, but has worked in Baltimore his entire life.

We live downtown. And while we're often saddened by the headlines, we are truly grateful for, and inspired by, the powerful work that O.S.I. - Baltimore does at the grass roots level every day to effect change. I was in total awe during my board orientation and my first board meeting, both of which took place last month. I thought that I knew a bit about O.S.I. - Baltimore because of its stellar reputation, and through anecdotes over the years.

Needless to say, my cursory understanding barely-- my cursory understanding barely scratched the surface. I was completely naïve about the incredible work that O.S.I. - Baltimore does, day in and day out, often under the radar. As I read the new trustee orientation materials, I found the following two statements about O.S.I. - Baltimore incredibly profound. First, our vision for Baltimore. Baltimore will be a shining example of a city based on democratic principles where the public and private sectors find common purpose in creating opportunities, resources and protection from unfair or unnecessarily punitive approaches so that residents and the city can thrive.

Second, our mission as an organization. O.S.I. - Baltimore is a thought leader, a catalyst, funder and watchdog for creating a city free of discrimination, bias and governmental action that limit economic and social mobility, civic engagement and happiness. This is who O.S.I. - Baltimore is. This is what O.S.I. - Baltimore does. How lucky are we to have an organization created on these principles, advocating for us?

O.S.I. - Baltimore's focused on empowering its citizens through equity and justice. Our goal is to make positive, lasting changes in Baltimore by focusing on the root causes of three intertwined problems in our city and state. These are drug addiction, an overreliance on incarceration, and obstacles that impede youth in succeeding inside and outside of the classroom.

O.S.I. - Baltimore's fighting for our future. We work every day to bring the right people together: those with bold and bright ideas, who are ambitious enough to make great change. You heard some of these incredible ideas from our fellows tonight. O.S.I. - Baltimore's fighting for this future every time we partner with community leaders and elected officials alike in an effort to bring transformational ideas into reality.

We are fighting for this future every time we invite all members of the community to come together, to have dif-- difficult conversations (like our *Talking About Race* series now in its tenth year. You can be part of this fight. You can help us do all of these things. Everything we do at O.S.I. - Baltimore we do with partners: partners in neighborhoods, partners in the activist community, partners in the government and partners in giving. And that is a role that you can play right now.

Each year, we invest approximately \$8 million in Baltimore. While \$4.6 million of that comes from our own funds, the rest is raised locally from people like me and you. Local support is essential to what we do. In fact, it is essential that the people who love Baltimore and are able are actively investing to make this future a reality.

So right now, you can go online, you can pull out your phones, and make a donation, please. And you can go to [www.osibaltimore.org/donate](http://www.osibaltimore.org/donate). Again, [www.osibaltimore.org/donate](http://www.osibaltimore.org/donate). Your support will help us fight for this future together. As a new in-- inductee into O.S.I. - Baltimore, I can tell you that the more you learn about it, the more you want to be involved. O.S.I. - Baltimore is leading by example, addressing challenging issues by implementing programs that work.

As I said before, O.S.I. - Baltimore is policy-to-pavement focused. It isn't an esoteric organization. It is an organization that is mission critical to our city and to all of us who call it home. I'm getting emotional. Thank you. (LAUGHTER) So thank you and happy anniversary, O.S.I. - Baltimore, thank you, B.M.A., and thank you, all.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **ROBIN WOOD:**

Good evening, and thank you guys, all, for being here in supportive of-- the Open Society Institute - Baltimore. Tonight-- open-- my name is Robin Wood. I've been a board member-- here at-- (APPLAUSE) at O.S.I. - Baltimore for over a decade. So I'm really happy to see all these new members, our new cohort of fellows, and all of you in the audience comin' out to support-- both our fellows and our-- and our organization.

Open Society Institute - Baltimore is very proud other present to former mayor, c-- Kurt Schmoke-- the Open Society Institute's Justice for All Award, for his decades (and I do mean decades) of tireless service to the city of Baltimore and its residents. Kurt Schmoke grew up in Baltimore City. He actually played little league with my husband. Little league football and baseball. He graduated from Baltimore City College High School.  
(APPLAUSE) I know they're-- I knew there'd be some of you out in the audience.

He went on to Yale for undergraduate school, to Oxford, as-- a Rhodes scholar, and to Harvard Law School, before returning to serve the people of Baltimore City. After serving as Assistant U.S. Attorney and Baltimore City State's Attorney-- Kurt Schmoke became Baltimore's first elected-- African American mayor. That was in 19-- 87. He served-- three terms-- unheard of before, and quickly earned national attention for supporting the



decriminalization of drugs, and treating harmful drug use as a public health rather than a criminal justice-- issue.

It was an idea that was well outside the mainstream at the time. And I guess would be well outside the mainstream again now-- (LAUGH) of-- of American politics. But at any rate-- beyond drug-- dug-- drug policy, Mayor Schmoke initiated a number of other innovative programs, both in housing, education, economic development, public health, many of which-- gained national attention and have had long-lasting impacts-- in our city and-- in the region and beyond.

At the same time, Open Society Foundation, having recently launched a program in the United States, was looking to open a field office in order to address problems-- confronting urban centers. All of Kurt's very important work attracted the attention of George Soros, who met with-- with Kurt Schmoke. And-- having admired his willingness to take risks, and particular-- particularly, to assert an innovative alternative to the harsh drug policies that were resulting in (as we know) unprecedented levels of incarceration-- and at the same time, not addressing the underlying problem, Mayor Schmoke's leadership was a significant factor in O.S.F.-- or George Soros' decision at the time to establish Open Society Institute - Baltimore, 20 years ago.

After-- Mayor Schmoke's 12-year tenure as mayor, he served as Dean of the Howard University School of Law from 2003 to 2012. Subsequently, as the university's general counsel and interim provost, he was appointed President of the University of Baltimore in 2014, where he has attracted talented deans and professors and established a four-year undergraduate program to increase baltimoreans' access to higher education.

Kurt Schmoke has also been a reliable partner-- to the Open Society Institute - Baltimore, most recently as co-chair of our 2016 Summit Solution that was mentioned earlier, which brought together more than 1,000 Baltimore City residents to come out and identify priorities for moving our city forward-- in the wake of the uprising and upon the election of a new administration, to sort of present, you know, citywide-- ideas about how-- what's important, what's most important, how we can move forward, how we can work together. I think it was really a very important-- moment for Baltimore. And so, for these reasons and many, many more, we are very thrilled to present Kurt Schmoke with our Justice for All Award as a token of our very deep appreciation.  
(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **ROBIN WOOD:**

Thank you.

## **KURT SCHMOKE (RECORDED):**

Well, I want to-- thank you all very much. I'm certainly-- sorry that I can't-- be there-- tonight. You know, 20 years goes by-- pretty fast. I'm amazed that-- we continue-- to

address some of the tough problems that-- we had in Baltimore 20 years ago. But I'm so thankful that O.S.I. - Baltimore has been in a leadership role in helping us to resolve some of these tough problems.

I particularly was pleased to join you in the Solutions conference. You know, a lot of people talk about problems. But I was so pleased to see that O.S.I. brought us together to focus in on solutions. That was a great-- event and-- wonderful days of people coming together, feeling empowered to resolve some of the tough problems in Baltimore. You know, one of the things that's happened since I've become president of the University of Baltimore is that we've been inspired by some of the O.S.I. programs to actually conduct some programs of our own.

We have now a degree-granting program in the j-- Jessup Correctional Institution that-- has 32 young men-- in a degree-granting program. As soon as they are released, they will continue their education at the University of Baltimore. They will come back as returning citizens in a very positive manner in our community.

It was ideas such as th-- that, sponsored by-- Open Society Institute, that have led us to-- create those kinds of programs. In any event-- I don't wanna go on too long. I just wanna say thank you all very much. I-- I feel honored. I certainly have been pleased to work with O.S.I. over the last 20 years, and I thank you very much for honoring me and honoring the work of the citizens of Baltimore tonight.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **ALICIA WILSON:**

I know it is not just my pleasure, but it's Open Society Institute - Baltimore's pleasure to present Lois Feinblatt with Open Society Institute's Justice for All Award for a lifelong dedication to supporting young people, marginalized communities, and advocates who share her passion for change. (CHEERING) So as many of you know, Lois was born into the philanthropic Hoffberger family.

But she is generous but not content with just giving, providing only financial support. After graduating from Goucher College and starting a family, she became directly involved in changing-- the conditions here in Baltimore. For nine years, she worked for the Baltimore City Department of Welfare, screening prospective adoptive parents.

In the 1960s, Lois was selected to participate in a rather unique Johns Hopkins University program that trains housewives to become mental health counselors. And as a therapist with a specialty in human sexuality, she joined the newly formed staff of the Hopkins Sexual Behaviors Consultation Unit, where she worked for more than 30 years, painting on the side. Along the way, Lois played a key role in establishing a series of organizations focused on improving the lives of Baltimoreans, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

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She co-founded Adoption Connection Exchange, which is devoted to supporting adoptive families. She launched the Court Appointed Special Advocates of Baltimore, which seeks to protect youth in the foster care system. She launched the Teacher Mentoring Project in the Baltimore City schools, and personally mentored and supported many young people in Baltimore, including me.

I actually met Lois when I was 18 years old. (APPLAUSE) She-- I was introduced-- I was introduced to Lois by Walter Steinheim, who was a friend and mentor. And I think Walter knew that we would be lifelong friends. In fact, he said as much. And I think what he knew was that-- that although we're a couple years apart in age, (LAUGHTER) our hearts are old friends. She is a confidante. She is someone who shows that the joy you receive from giving more than you ever will receive, and she's just someone who has taught me that being authentically me is the best gift I can give to this world. (APPLAUSE)

Lois is a consummate giver. She continues to give of her time and serves on the board of the Free State Legal Proj-- Free-- Free L-- Free State Legal Services, which offers free and reduced legal services to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, and has been a vocal supporter. On top of all of that, Lois has been a longtime friend of Open Society Institute - Baltimore, providing encouragement, making introductions to her numerous friends, and supporting our Community Fellowship Program. For these reasons, and as all of us know, for so many-- more, we are thrilled to present Lois with our Justice for All Award as a token of our appreciation. (APPLAUSE) (OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **LOIS FEINBLATT:**

I think you should put this on the floor.

## **ALICIA WILSON:**

I won't drop it. I promise.

## **LOIS FEINBLATT:**

Okay. (LAUGHTER) Now, you all have to tell me whether you can hear me.

## **VOICES:**

Yes.

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## LOIS FEINBLATT:

Can you? (CLEARS THROAT) So I got a call (CLEARS THROAT) one day from Diana Morris, saying-- that they were having this evening-- and-- that I was going to get an award. And she-- gave me the choice of whether I wanted to speak or not. I thought a few minutes. (CLEARS THROAT) And I decided I'm 97 and a half years old. (CHEERING) I-- I couldn't depend on being asked to speak again. (LAUGHTER) So-- so I-- I told her that, yes, I would try it.

You all have heard-- wonderful speakers this evening. I'm just going to tell you a story. And that is sort of the story of meeting Diana and becoming friends. We met-- on a Sunday. I had a friend who many of you know, named Clinton B-- Clinton Bamberger. And-- he-- he was an old friend of mine. And he and his wife asked my husband and myself to come over-- for brunch on a Sunday. He said he was gonna have a few other people.

And we got there (CLEARS THROAT) and that's where I met Diana and her husband, Peter. And then there was one other-- just one other person there from the Ford Foundation. And-- we had a lovely brunch. And then we went into the living room and my husband was sitting on a little love seat next to me. And-- we just began to talk and-- I said to Diana-- "I know that you came to Baltimore because you thought it was Peter's turn to-- do the work that he wanted." And he had just gotten this wonderful offer from Catholic Charities.

And-- (CLEARS THROAT) and-- she didn't have a job in Baltimore at that point. But-- I knew that she had been in-- in-- she had worked in Africa for-- and she had been with the Ford Foundation. And-- so I said to her, "Oh, the Ford Foundation. I have a daughter who's a human rights lawyer. And-- she had a grant there. I wonder if you knew her." And-- my husband sorta kicked me gently (LAUGHTER) on the leg and he said-- he-- oh, we had both been married before and we each had our children-- from our first marriages.

And-- and he thought I talked about my kids too much. He-- (LAUGHTER) he called them the M.K.'s, for my kids. (LAUGHTER) So he said, "Don't be silly. Do you know how big the Ford Foundation is? They don't know your daughter." (LAUGHTER) At which point, Diana said, "What's her name?" And I said, "Her name's Patty Blum." And Diana said, "Oh, Patty Blum." She said, "For six years, I was her supervisor." (LAUGHTER) So-- that was-- that was good for me. (LAUGHTER) At any rate, the-- the-- friendship developed from-- from that day.

And-- I-- as we talked a little bit more-- Diana said she didn't have a job yet in Baltimore. And I had just heard-- my dear friends, the Blaustein family, was-- beginning to look for a new exec. They were gonna spread out a little and not have just a family member-- being the exec. And so, I told-- I told Diana about the job and how she could get in touch with the Blausteins. And-- she did and she got that job.

And from that job, she-- I think she was there maybe six years or so. And she then-- heard about-- Soros wanting to start the Open Society Institute in Baltimore. And so, she-- she

hopped, skipped and jumped from the-- (LAUGHTER) from the-- Blaustein Foundation to Open Society. So it-- it was a wonderful way of-- of making a wonderful lifelong friend and-- I'm-- I'm always very pleased that I-- had that opportunity so early in Diana's life. She had this little baby and I made the baby a blanket and-- (LAUGH) and we've just always been very-- very good friends. So that's my story.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## DIANA MORRIS:

Good evening, everyone. (APPLAUSE) I'm Diana Morris and I have definitely never had a better introduction about my (LAUGHTER) first days in Baltimore than you just heard from Lois. So first of all, I wanna say it's so wonderful to see all of you and be with all of you tonight. And of course, I wanna give my congratulations and great appreciation both to Kurt Schmoke and to Lois.

As you heard, Kurt's principles and policies of encouragement were really critical-- to Open Society deciding to come to Baltimore. And of course, I think it was one of the organization's best decisions. We're very thankful for the role he played then, but also all the ongoing support that he's given us over the years. And, Lois-- Lois, as you heard, was one of the very first people to welcome me to Baltimore. And she became one of my most special, special friends.

But I know that many of you would say the very same thing about how you feel about Lois, too. I think it's perfect, actually, that Lois is here tonight getting the Justice for All Award, when we are also announcing our newest class of Community Fellows. She, more than anyone I know, embodies the spirit of the fellows-- their determination, their creativity, their curiosity, and their unorthodox thinking. So, Lois' support of the fellows and of Open Society more generally is a true example of the power that a community leader can have when they do share their time and their talents and their treasure.

So, Lois, thank you for all that you've given to Open Society and to me, over these many years. (APPLAUSE) It's been my honor also to work with many of you, our grantees and fellows, our community and government partners, our donors, the Open Society Advisory Board and staff. Together, we are moving closer to achieving our vision, as you've heard, of a Baltimore as a thriving equitable city of opportunity that can serve as a model actually to other cities in the country.

The video that Joe Rubino made for us, which we are grateful for, and the list of the 20 accomplishments that you have in the program, give you an idea of the impact that, together, we have had in Baltimore, in the region, and in the state. It's particularly comforting to be with friends and allies, the Open Society family, tonight in these unsettling times. We support each other, our values are clear, and we're determined to keep up the fight for protecting both our humanity and our democracy.

We cannot stand by. We must speak up. This past weekend, I went to see one of my O.S.I. colleagues, Jeff Burch, who has a beautiful voice-- play Herr Schmidt in *Cabaret*, the musical that chronicles the decline of the Weimar Republic. I saw the play the same day as the anti-Semitic attack in Pittsburgh. While the Vagabond Players had another strong performance, the experience watching the play, depicting Germans' failure to see the impact of hateful, divisive speech and rhetoric and the inevitable-- inevitable violence that follows, was-- was painful.

We really cannot stand by. We must speak up. And unlike the characters in *Cabaret*, we cannot overlook threats to democracy and individual freedoms. (APPLAUSE) Instead, we have to think of those threats-- as calls to action. At O.S.I. - Baltimore, we respond by working to dismantle the policies and practices of systemic racism that keep so many of our neighbors in concentrated poverty.

And we stand in solidarity with all of you who rise up against hate and fight for justice. Tonight, we had security screenings, as you saw, as part of our precautionary efforts, after George Soros, the founder of Open Society Foundations, received one of the pipe bombs targeted to individuals who speak out against exclusion and speak out against the narrowing of democratic principles and practices.

As our keynote speaker, Patrick Gaspard, pointed out at MSNBC, days after the bomb was found, this attack did not happen in a vacuum. Language can be weaponized, he said. While Patrick put enhanced security protocols in place in our three U.S. offices, Baltimore, New York and Washington, he didn't stop there. Talking to staff, he said that we would-- while we would take every precaution possible, we would not be-- deterred from our work to defend democratic practices and human rights.

There's no back down in any of us, he said. We are going to stand against this. It's this kind of leadership that makes me very happy that Patrick Gaspard became the President of Open Society Foundations last year. Patrick back-- Patrick's background makes him actually the ideal Open Society leader in these difficult times.

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo to Haitian parents, he moved to New York when he was three. Early in his career, he worked on Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign and David Dinkins' successful, 1989 mayoral bid. He went on to work for the Dinkins administration and the New York City Council, and S.E.I. 1199, the largest local union in the country. These experiences gave him a solid grounding on the people, the institutions and the levers that make local change possible.

Patrick then went on to the national stage as political director for Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, and then as Director of the White House Office of Political Affairs and Director of the n-- Democratic National Committees, overseeing President Obama's 2012 reelection campaign. In 2013, President Obama appointed Patrick to be the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, broadening his purview.

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In that role, Patrick worked to strengthen civil society and partnered closely with the South Africa government to build up the infrastructure for health care and to support innovations in local governance. This varied experience lends itself perfectly to the work of Open Society where connecting the local to the global is critical.

At this moment, the work of advancing human rights and protecting democratic practices around the world has never been more difficult or more essential. Across the globe, from the Brexit vote to the election of leaders in Hungary, Brazil and, yes, in the United States, we have seen the rise of nationalist tendencies, autocratic regimes and scapegoating.

Our challenge is to resist these trends. Our challenge is to stand up, even in the face of vicious smears and threats of violence, and fight for civil and open societies where governments are both responsive and accountable. So we could not ask for a better person to lead us in stepping up to these challenges. Please welcome Open Society Foundation's President Patrick Gaspard.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

## **PATRICK GASPARD:**

Thank you so much, Diana, for that overwhelmingly generous and warm introduction. Diana, we are in the Baltimore Museum of Art which is renowned for having the largest publicly held Matisse collection. And Matisse once famously said that there are flowers all around the world for those who chose to see them. Diana, you choose to see the flowers. You nurture them. You lift them up, like our Community Fellows and like Lois, and for that, we applaud you and (APPLAUSE) thank you endlessly. Good evening, friends.

## **VOICES:**

Good evening.

## **PATRICK GASPARD:**

I am so incredibly honored to be able to join you here tonight in this august cultural institution in a city that I have a deep affinity for, in order to mark a momentous anniversary for our foundation that I'm privileged to be able to lead, and for your town. I do have a profound fondness for Baltimore, which is a really difficult thing for a lifelong New Yorker to be able to say (LAUGHTER) out loud.

But as a New York chauvinist, I'm gonna just hasten to add, since I have control of the microphone right now, that you know, I'm old enough to remember when Baltimore was considered a serious baseball town. (LAUGHTER) And-- I guess, you know-- I guess you can't win them all but I'm sure that you'd like to win one every now and then, after about 30 long years. Couldn't help it.

Friends, (LAUGHTER) friends, seriously though, Baltimore really does sp-- (LAUGHTER) couldn't help it. But Baltimore really does speak to my spirit and not just when I'm craving those delicious crabs that are covered with that Old Bay. Baltimore calls me when I'm trying to locate myself and my people in the slipstream of the great American story. This nation, with all of its dimension and outrageous contradictions, comes together as an ideal right here in Baltimore, in the early 19th century.

Don't look to Philadelphia with its 18th century founding conventions and ironic documents. Look instead here (here) where the greatest American citizen came of age by challenging a system of tyranny and oppression and by doing so, helping to make America great.

Frederick Douglass of course learned to read and write here in defiance of the slave codes. In 1838, when Maryland was a slave state, just a few miles from here at Fells Point, a bit south of where John Hopkins is today, Douglass escaped bondage and set a path that would make him the leading orator of his time. Sorry, Abraham Lincoln. And also made him a bold, daring, courageous abolitionist. This is where my American story takes hold, when the excluded weave their own way into the quilt, not through the beneficence of the state, but rather through their own agency; the moment-- (APPLAUSE) (CLEARS THROAT) the moment when the victim of state violence becomes the guardian of the democracy.

This may seem an odd entry into a discussion themed the challenges to open society in the world. But I actually can't think of a better place from which to start. As we are learning with each crippling news flash, the great challenge to open society in the United States and around the globe centers around the narrative of belonging and the toxic political tool of othering, which defines community as an exclusive enclave.

It's a politics of grievance and misplaced nostalgia. It's a grand projection of some sense of something that has been lost, that leads to a rationing of empathy, which turn-- which in turn makes true solidarity scarce and nearly impossible. It's a politics of fear that hollows both the majority and the minority stakeholders in our democracies.

It creates the right atmosphere to create a populism that the historian, Richard Hofstadter, termed, the paranoid style of politics. And it is leading to the elevation on every continent, elected authoritarians who approach governance as a zero sum game. I wanna put a little point of emphasis if I could on the word, elected. We need to appreciate that in this moment, where from one hemisphere to-- to the next, in the global north and in the global south, we're seeing this rise of the-- these authoritarians.

These are folks who were selected through democratic machinery by our fellow citizens. We have to step back and appreciate what that says. And we have to interrogate the moment that we're in, and the assumptions that we have made for decades in this post-Cold War world. And we have to turn those assumptions upside down. This is the world that we're meeting in. This is the great challenge to open societies.

Here in Baltimore, with its faded factories and cathedrals to bygone industry, it's hard not to hear the echoes of another industrial town that is suffering the aftermath of a hatred that is



encouraged by the most powerful in the world. Pittsburgh and its devastated Jewish community are in our hearts as we try to remain in some kind of proximity to their pain.

We want to declare never again. But we lack the confidence in our institutions of justice in an era when the President of the United States can question sanctions following the brutal execution of a green card-carrying journalist, simply because he wants to conclude an arms deal. We've arrived here in this disorientation as people sought out easy answers following a global great recession that locked in glaring inequalities.

We are here following waves of displaced migrants and refugees of different color and creed that made it easy to slip into a hyper-sovereignty at our borders and a hyper-sovereignty in our hearts. We are here at the beck and beep of social media platforms that amplify our anxieties and validate our cocoons. We are here because truth crushed to earth will rise again through Wi-Fi, but as a twisted Frankenstein that consumes us.

Now, tonight is an opportunity to kinda dress up a little bit and to raise a glass to those who are exemplars of our values. We've done some of that already by lifting up the Community Fellows and great leaders by Lois and we'll continue to do that throughout the evening. But after Pittsburgh and a week that saw the shooting of an elderly African American couple by a white supremacist and the delivery of pipe bombs inspired by the vile rhetoric of those who lead us, it seems that it's also time to step back, to take stock of our journey, and to set a new horizon line that better addresses the-- the-- the unique challenges that we are encountering in this quandary of an open society that is being closed.

George Soros, as Diana said, the founder and chair of the Open Society Foundations was of course one of the recipients of those pipe bombs. George has been the target of many who opposed precisely what we're celebrating this evening in this museum; a pluralism that respects the views of the least powerful, institutions that protect the most marginalized, organizations that strive for equal access to justice and a more broadly shared prosperity.

It all comes together here in this room. That's why George Soros is being attacked. That's why the Open Society Foundations is being attacked. And that's why everything that you hold dear is imperiled now. But it's also why George placed a big bet on Baltimore, two decades ago. It was an audacious move, encouraged by the great Kurt Schmoke, whom we honored earlier in the program. Mayor Schmoke-- as noted, was of course instrumental and central to O.S.F.-- O.S.F.'s decision to make Baltimore the site of its field office in the U.S.

Twenty years hence, Baltimore is still the epicenter of many crises that are confronting our country: Unconstitutional policing practices and the resulting lack of trust in the community; drug addiction that is destroying families and whole neighborhoods; and young people trying to find their way on streets plagued by violence, struggling to reach their potential, fearing that sometimes there is no way.

At the same time, there is greater public awareness (because of your work) of the institutional discrimination and disinvestment that have brought us to this point. There is a

g-- a greater resolve that the way to address addiction is through treatment and through harm reduction, practices-- harm reduction practices and not to incarceration.

And thanks to the Affordable Care Act, which I was really blessed to be able to work on, we have much better access to treatment. There is hope. I have to say that-- Diana noted that-- I-- had the privilege to serve as the U.S. Ambassador-- to South Africa. I came of age in this-- country as a young activist at a time when many of us were tryin' to put our shoulders against the gears of the machine to stop the investments that our country was making in apartheid South Africa.

But it was really striking to me when I became ambassador and I was serving-- in that remarkable-- republic. It was striking to have the epiphany and to realize that my country right now, today, imprisons more black people than South Africa did at the height (the pinnacle) of apartheid. Consider that. (APPLAUSE) The-- the promise and progress of Baltimore resonates deep within me.

I grew up in the stew of the crack and AIDS epidemics in a struggling community. And I saw the best minds of my generation hobbled by addiction, carted off to jails w-- with swelling black bodies and sweating for a minimum wage in an age of reason. I know your struggle, Baltimore, and I know what it means to still walk through the darkness towards some kind of North Star.

I know your struggle and I'm convinced that, after 20 years of partnerships, 20 years of innovations, 20 years of sometimes painful failures, and 20 years of trium-- of-- of triumph, you have in this room, in this city, the solutions to our gravest Open Society challenges around the globe. I didn't come here tonight just to pay tribute and to honor you. I came here to learn, to listen to what our Community Fellows are doing, 'cause I think that there are things here that we can take up in many other places where-- there's still-- too much silence. And someone's gotta shout into that silence.

You already know how desperate these challenges are. You instinctively comprehend that the dangers that we observe abroad find their reflections in the U.S., and right here on your local street corners. You have the wisdom to see that the task of-- of-- taking on and tackling these challenges means tackling what's most difficult: defending those who do not have a voice, making unusual and lasting alliances across minorities and majorities, and making investments for the long run.

We can take on and face down these challenges, Baltimore, everywhere else in the world, because we have stared them down right here. You've decided right here that states have a duty to give people opportunity, a sense of value, a sense of belonging, and safety in their own community. This expectation in many parts of our world is increasingly and dangerously lost or co-opted in favor of extremist, populist policies that undermine basic democratic principles.

Think about this. Over the last s-- several years-- in country after country, going on about 85 countries now in the last four years have passed some kind of legislation-- democratically

passed in their parliaments, legislation that re-- restricts access to public space and makes it impossible for N.G.O.'s (like the ones that are in this room) to receive funding for their important work.

This is happening in democratic republics. The examples are numerous. But let me focus on a few that crystallize both the dire global state, while lifting up Baltimore's homegrown solutions. I would ask you to turn your gaze, if you would, towards the Philippines, as we watch in horror the actions of President Duterte. His response to drug users is not one steeped in compassion, nor interest in reducing the range of harms that they and their communities face, but rather to authorize and to sanction the terrorizing murder of thousands-- thousands of his own citizens.

The situation there is extreme and we must redouble our efforts to prevent others from following Duterte's example. It was-- you know-- I still haven't-- I-- I'm amazed at my ability to continue to be shocked by the current occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. I-- I-- I found it extraordinary that an American president could, on record, pick up the phone and call the President of the Philippines to say that his decision to eradicate those who are suffering the affliction of addiction-- was one that he applauded, was proud of, and one that he hoped that we could replicate as well. What an astounding thing to hear from an American president.

This is an area where the U.S. has an opportunity to demonstrate global leadership. The U.S. can tackle addiction with real action, to support the many communities in crisis, and not to fall back on amplifying, punitive measures. Baltimore faces the balancing act, too. Just taking a casual look across the pages, the headlines, of the *Baltimore Sun* tells me that you are grappling to strike the right balance between security and health-- and sometimes-- sometimes we don't get it right.

As I think about the important work ahead to support our communities struggling with addiction, I am so incredibly proud to recall the work O.S.I. - Baltimore has led to support efforts to combat addiction and shift attitudes away from punishment and towards health. This foundation introduced (CLEARS THROAT) me-- medicines into Baltimore as a new way to treat opiate addiction and to make it wildly accessible.

Similarly, I'm proud that (has already been noted) O.S.I. - Baltimore established one of the country's most successful L.E.A.D. diversion programs, which pushes low-level drug users into treatment in lieu of booking them for a crime. These are things that, here in Baltimore, you're probably beginning to take for granted. But you need to understand that in the 49 states out-- outside and beyond Maryland, this is not common practice. You are leading the way. You are at the point of the spear. And we just need to find some way to replicate this and give it a real echo chamber in the rest of this country.

In South America, we are daily shocked by the behavior and words of General Bolsonaro of Brazil, who was just elected to the presidency of that critical democracy. As a former military officer, he extols a frighteningly oppressive vision of the state response to crime

that is entirely devoid of recognition of the social causes and structural inequalities that determine people's interaction with crime.

Brazilians certainly have reasons to be concerned about their day-to-day lives. The national murder rate reached an all-time high of about 30 homicides per 100,000 citizens in 2017. But how a society chooses to treat those struggling as victims, and perpetrators of crime, offer-- often a blurred and interchangeable identity. You all know exactly what I mean. This is a distinguishing marker between democratic and autocratic states.

This balance matters in the U.S. where criminalization and incarceration of men of color is a chilling blight on our society. And it-- and it is a balance that Baltimore grapples with, too. Recent reports puts Baltimore's homicide rate at the top of U.S. big cities, posing a real challenge in a city still seeking (as I said) that inflection point for a police force that's operating under a consent decree.

O.S.I. - Baltimore has done a great deal to change the conversation about crime and criminality, and to include and engage the community in this conversation, from the bottom up. The foundation supported and encouraged community-based organizations to gather input from Baltimore residents for the Department of Justice investigation of the police department, which resulted in a consent decree that requires more community engagement and input than any others in the country.

I have seen-- in writing and on the ground, consent decrees in other major cities across this country. None of them are as inclusive, none of them are as informed, none of them are as animated by the spirit of community as the one that you've developed with and through O.S.I. - Baltimore. Here, you created programs to provide ex-prisoners with vital services, including transitional housing, addiction treatment, mental health care and job training, which dramatically reduce recidivism and improved public safety. You can do both at the same time.

Let's look across the Atlantic to Europe where I just landed. I-- I-- took a flight-- back-- from a series of-- meetings that I was in, in Paris-- yesterday and-- this morning. And I have to tell you that-- our friends in Europe are asking incredibly tough questions about themselves, their direction-- and their future that I think-- you would recognize because we're asking-- similar questions about the heart and soul-- of our-- still relatively young nation.

We watch-- in places-- like Germany where O.S.F. just worked to establish a beachhead to build a new office for approximately 200 of our colleagues who were forced out of the country of Hungary, which has passed one regressive measure after another, closing off civil society space. But we-- but we've arrived in a Berlin where we have to watch with concern as outbreaks of far right, extremist violence gripped parts of Germany, where the migration crisis has polarized that society.

The German government walks a delicate tightrope, permitting highly regulated and curtailed speech from this group and a hail of criticism from a pup-- from-- from a public

and a Europe struggling with xenophobia in all of its corners, from Poland to Italy to Hungary. We struggle with the very same balancing act right here in the U.S.

The white supremacist violence in Charlottesville is but one virulent example of a political climate-- in which rhetoric is literally weaponized, and tragically encouraged by our leadership in D.C. Baltimore has seen its own version of these struggles, with news outlets reporting K.K.K. flyers (recruitment flyers)-- appearing in Baltimore neighborhoods.

You have only to look at the work of partners in this very room for examples of work that brings communities together and that fight xenophobia. O.S.I. - Baltimore f-- founded the Safe City Baltimore Immigrant Defense and Education fund in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Immigration and Multicultural affairs, to protect the due process rights of detained residents and provide legal defense and education services, and respond to aggressive immigration enforcement at the federal level.

There are some points here where-- I fear-- I've leaned-- slightly into-- what might be regarded as-- partisan-- language and partisan battleground. I've-- I've been careful-- (LAUGHTER) I've been careful to-- to attempt not to do that. But even as I criticize-- (APPLAUSE) even-- even-- you know, even as I criticize the-- the occupant of-- of-- of the White House, there are some names I try not to say.

It's like-- it's like Voldemort; there are some things I just won't say. (LAUGHTER) But even as I criticize the current occupant of the White House, I wanna applaud Republicans like Senator Rand Paul and Senator Jeff Flake who-- immediately-- when some of the-- worst outrages occurred in places like Charlottesville, and right after George Soros received the pipe bomb, stepped up and said-- that-- they needed to look at their own practices, that they needed to reflect on-- their-- political instincts and political behavior-- and that they themselves could do better because the nation deserves better.

So I just wanna be clear-- that-- there are those who are attempting at least-- even those that I-- have profound disagreement with on many issues, who are stepping up and saying there's a different way here; there's a different way towards the light. Alongside my director of the program on independent journalism, I watch with utter terror at how media is silenced and the freedom of the press absolutely battered with a startling number of journalists killed globally in 2018.

From Mexico to Bulgaria to Turkey, th-- these are extreme examples of governments failing to find appropriate room for dissent, constructive engagement, criticism and change. This resistance and uniformity of message and of information is a danger to all democracies. The U.S. may not be facing the kind of state-sponsored violence that claimed the life of-- Jamal Khasho-- Khashoggi, but we still face critical questions about the freedom and access to our information as technology and media conglomerates expand their reach and social media platforms are used to spread hate speech and false reports.

Increasingly, the Facebooks and Googles of the world dominate what we see and where we see it. Baltimore is at the epicenter of this because you're in the backyard of the Sinclair

Group, was h-- which is-- a particular kind of consolidation of media messaging in this country. At a time when the true-- when-- when the truly local production of news is precarious, it's with pride that I recall that O.S.I. - Baltimore launched the local news department of WYPR, Maryland's national public radio affiliate, which projects a strong sense of place, introduces new voices, and adds critical analysis and depth to local, broadcast news coverage. Critically important.

These are some of the most challenging times for the basic tenets of democracy and decency in many parts of the world. Doubling down on the core beliefs and practices of the Open Society Foundations is more important than ever, even if at times, the task seems like Sisyphus rolling that rock-- up the hill. The Open Society Institute tackles some of Baltimore's most entrenched and serious problems.

And as O.S.I. - Baltimore knows too well, the story is so very far from over. Sometimes it feels like one step forward and two steps back, and that the work is never done. But that is in fact the fundamental story of defending open societies. Two things I've been promoting at O.S.F. since I started my role as president-- at the beginning of the year.

The first is the importance of collaboration-- with partners like yourselves. And the second is the value of building alliances and networks across community. These are two values that O.S.I. - Baltimore embraces so uniquely-- in a way that's embedded in the life of the community-- in supporting as it does the achievement of others. We saw that kind of collaboration exemplified by Lois-- and by the outstanding Community Fellows-- who took the stage-- earlier today.

What-- what's-- what-- what's really interesting and unique-- and really expressed powerfully here-- in-- Baltimore-- is the notion, the sense, that we don't have all of the answers-- and all that we can hope to do is invest-- in individuals, in institutions and in ideas that sometimes-- sometimes may even work-- at a little bit of-- a sense of-- competition with one another.

The sister in the video from Out-- for Justice said it best when she said that here at O.S.I. - Baltimore, Diana and her incredible-- staff never impose their will-- on grantees, but fund grantees in a way that allows those grantees to pose their own will on history. I wanted-- I wanna end-- this evening-- by of course acknowledging Diana again-- and Baltimore's incredibly-- just-- powerful-- and brilliant advisory board.

Diana, of course, as the founding di-- work-- director, has been tilling this soil for two decades now. And she's done it with-- in a way that's indefatigable-- with-- a vigor that many of us are-- in awe of, and-- also envious of as well. And judging by-- the heartfelt applause-- that she received here, it's clear that there's an intimate bond that she has developed with each and every one of you.

And that's extraordinary-- in-- this remote time that we find ourselves in. So it's important to just acknowledge that again. And I hope you'll applaud for Diana-- and for that team and the advisory board once more. (APPLAUSE) So (CLEARS THROAT) you know, the-- the--

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the work that we do in O.S.I. - Baltimore, the work that George Soros has compelled us to do through the Open Society Foundations-- is philanthropy that's not for the faint of heart.

It's daring. It's bold. It comes at times with-- its controversies. But I'm confident that it is the right medicine, the elixir, for all that is ailing our democracy now. We understand that there can really be no opportunity, no sense of equality, no true access to justice, without some bold agitation. Our instinct is like the instinct of-- Frederick Douglass, who taught us that those who favor freedom, those who profess to favor freedom and yet, depreciate agitation, are men who are hoping to have crops without plowing the field. It has been a great honor to plow the field with all of you-- who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for f-- true freedom and ultimate justice here in Baltimore. Keep the fight alive.

(APPLAUSE)

## **DIANA MORRIS:**

Thank you, everybody. I wanna thank Patrick so much for making this a priority, to come directly from Paris to Baltimore-- and to share his thoughts and-- and-- and really his high hopes and expectations for us. I'm really clear that we're strong because of our staff, our advisory board, but also all of you, our partners. We have a lot to be proud of.

But we are pretty somber at this moment about all that's ahead of us. And I think, I hope, that together, we can rise to the challenge that Patrick has made to us, to really take stock.

We appreciate the confidence that he has in all of us here-- the position that he sees that Baltimore is and can be. But we do have to take stock and really set our horizons high, our expectations high, and work together to get there. So with that, I want to thank you all for being here, but also invite you to join us in the lobby downstairs for a toast. A toast to all that we can do together. So thank you very much.

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

\* \* \*END OF TRANSCRIPT\* \* \*