

FUSE

A *BOMB*
PODCAST

AUTHORS

Mira Jacob & Scott Cheshire

SEASON 1 | EPISODE #3

Mira Jacob is the author of the graphic memoir Good Talk and the novel The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing.

Scott Cheshire is the author of the novel High As the Horses' Bridles, a Best Book of 2014 pick at The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, New York Magazine, and Electric Literature.

Chantal McStay Welcome to FUSE: A *BOMB* Podcast. In each episode, we bring together artists across disciplines to discuss their work and creative practice. We've been taking this approach since 1981, delivering the artist's voice. Here's how it works. We invite a distinguished voice in visual art, literature, film, music, or performance for a conversation with whomever they'd most like to speak with. No host, no moderator, no interruptions, just two artists in conversation. For this episode, we asked Mira Jacob, author of the graphic memoir *Good Talk* and the critically acclaimed novel *The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing* which artist she'd most like to speak with.

Mira Jacob Scott had actually approached me. He said a mutual friend of ours had said that maybe you'd like to be in conversation with me. "I'm nervous, Mira. I don't know that I'm the person to do this." And I said "why?" And he said, "Because I'm white."

And I said, “Maybe that’s the exact reason we should do this, Scott.”

CM Scott Cheshire is the author of the novel *High as the Horses’ Bridals*, named one of the Best Books of 2014 by the *Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Magazine*, and *Electric Literature*. Jacob and Cheshire discuss writing about race in the era of Trump. Jacob’s book *Good Talk* is an unflinching look into contemporary American life, abounding with horror and humor, vengeance and clarity. So before they sat down Mira wanted to clear the air.

MJ So I want to ask you, what did you mean by that, when you said that?

Scott Cheshire Well, my initial gut response was it should be a woman of color doing it, and I’m neither. So it seemed like on many levels, I couldn’t, perhaps, cross a barrier of experience on one level, and also that I might just say the wrong thing and kind of trip myself up or even unexpectedly trip you up. Does that make sense?

MJ Yeah, that definitely makes sense. So being scared of like, what if you say something that shows some level of ignorance or not understanding?

SC Yeah, absolutely.

MJ Yeah. And it was funny, because when you said that to me, I too thought about it. Because I understood that there were levels of the book that you weren’t going to get, right? But then I also felt like you’re a writer. We’ve gone through many kind of things together. And then my third thing that I was thinking is, Yeah, I’m scared too. You know, my husband and I have this recurring...I don’t want to say argument, but yeah no, it’s an argument...

SC Go for it.

MJ ...that we get into where I tell him that the hardest thing for me to navigate right now is dealing with white liberals. And he always

kind of comes back with this like, Yeah, okay, but like...he sort of comes at it from this place of like, Okay, but knowing what's out there, knowing how much worse people can get, why is that the hard thing for you? Because he's right, right? There are people that actually just want me dead. That's not the case with my friends and my family, who, when we fall into these really rife conversations and things don't work, that's not who I'm dealing with. The part that hurts me though, is the idea that somebody I trusted doesn't really see me. And they don't see me beyond their own experience. And they don't want to.

SC Yeah. Though, I think the desire to know someone is, I imagine, is especially hurtful.

MJ Yeah.

SC To fully know someone.

MJ Yeah. Okay, so knowing that then I feel like it was a good idea for us to have the conversation.

SC I think so, yeah.

MJ It doesn't feel to me like you don't want to know me.

SC No, I do. Yeah.

MJ You do?

SC Yes, I do.

MJ You still want to know me? *(laughter)* Okay, then I think we're good.

SC Alright, let's do this.

MJ All right.

MJ We first met at a reading. We were reading together short pieces of fiction, right?

SC Yes... for *Guernica*?

MJ Mhm, for *Guernica*.

SC Okay I remember, yeah.

MJ And I really loved the piece you wrote. That was also the same night that I met Kaitlyn Greenidge, who's also in the book.

SC Oh, is it really?

MJ Mhm.

SC Oh, I love that.

MJ Anyway, you and I met that night. And a month later, I was on tour, and you were on tour. And you were hitting the part of the tour where I knew my soul basically fell out of my body, just like three weeks in, and you go to these bookstores, and people are asking you for directions to the bathroom. And you've got your book, and you realize it's not going to be the best seller. And you're looking at rooms full of either people who don't know why they're there, or who are waiting for you to stop talking so they can get on with getting to the shelf behind you. And I just knew, I was like, I'm just gonna go show up at that guy's reading. This is a bad time. (*laughter*)

SC I have a specific bad memory of a dinner we were at. Is this too personal?

MJ No. Give it to me.

SC I remember someone commending you on your accent.

MJ Oh my God. Yes, yes.

SC He was a writer.

MJ He was a writer. You're right.

SC Is that too much?

MJ No. Did I...did I lose my shit in that moment?

SC No, you were kind of amazing to watch. You really handled it really beautifully.

MJ How did I handle it?

SC Um, I think you just spoke very forthrightly. I was about three seats away. And you kind of just shut it down with authority.

MJ I can guarantee you that I probably returned to my hotel that night and drank a little too much of whatever was in the fridge and probably cried myself to sleep.

SC Wow.

MJ If I was that cool in public, then I can guarantee you the knives came out later.

SC Yeah, I bet. I don't know if it's relevant, but I'll also say that, um, I have lots of good memories with you. You helped me quite a few times in my career. You did my paperback launch with me.

MJ Yeah.

SC We've done readings together.

MJ Yep.

SC We, I think, worked on some materials for your first novel for the paperback.

MJ Yeah, probably.

SC It's been...it's been quite a long road actually, 'cause it's already now about five years.

MJ It has been five years, yeah. Absolutely.

SC So I feel like we should start at the very beginning, with your writing. When did you start writing? But folded into that, your new book, *Good Talk*, is drawn as well. So when did you start drawing?

MJ So I will just say that I'm one of those kids that the minute I knew what a writer was, I wanted to be one. I have many, many, many bad books that I made from the time I was basically five until I was thirty-five. A lot of times what I would do is I would write these books, and then I would illustrate them, when I was a kid. As I got older, I started getting these leather-bound journals. Somebody found me one. They're so gorgeous. They have these thick watercolor pages on them. And I would write and then always leave spaces for myself to draw. The way that worked out in my first novel was when I was writing and I couldn't get a scene to work, when I couldn't get the characters to speak to each other in a way that was convincing, when I couldn't figure out what the heat of the scene was, I would take an object from that scene and draw it so that I could find my way back into that room with those people. You know, the problem with words is that they are very specific. The problem with words. The problem with words is that you say something, and you land on it, and it means something so distinct that there's very little wiggle room. So you know, for example, when you're writing, when it's failing, it's really easy to see. And you know when the story, that is this huge story in your heart, is just a flimsy whisper on the page. Drawing teaches you to forgive that moment, because with drawing, for me anyway, because I'm only medium good at it, the thing...

SC I would fight you on that. (*laughter*)

MJ ...the thing that I start with, the shape that I start with, it changes and it morphs, and I just have to let it become itself. And so that

process of kind of letting a shape become itself is really good preparation for having faith in whatever it is that you're putting down.

SC Mhm. You're reminding me of a conversation we had quite a few years ago when you were just starting to do this, and you mentioned you were interested in maps. Can you talk about that?

MJ Yeah.

SC And how that relates to drawing?

MJ Absolutely. So one of the things a friend of mine had said to me... Right, because I think I called you, and I was like, "Scott, I've got some news for you about creative process!" But one of the things that a friend of mine who's an architect had said to me is that when he is done with one building, what he likes to do is he likes to think of his creative life as a topographic map, and then head to the quadrant that he doesn't even know what's there. He doesn't even know what that landscape looks like. And he said it to me in this really crucial moment, which was after my first book had come out and people, the people that loved that book loved it the way that they love their own families. They wanted to know what happened to all of those characters, many of whom died. They wanted a sequel. They wanted a prequel. They wanted to, you know, they wanted to stay. And I knew that that story was done for me. And I had that real fear of like, what if I can't do this thing again? And so when he said that, for me, it was such a release, because I thought, right, just go to the place where you don't even know the landscape. Like, go there, figure out what it looks like over there, and build out that new world. You don't have to go back to the old one. You don't have to perform the trick that you performed before. You're allowed to go somewhere completely new.

SC I am super curious about all of that. Because I don't know that I have the ability to translate what drawing means to fiction. All the stuff that you're doing when you're writing, how different is it when you're drawing? How different is it when you have to pair the two,

which you're doing here?

MJ Yeah.

SC Is the planning different? Is the end product in your head very different?

MJ Here's what I would say. The reason that I chose this format for this book is because...so my son started having this identity crisis when he was six. He was super super into Michael Jackson.

SC Yeah.

MJ And he became obsessed with this idea that he could also be Michael Jackson. So he had all the moves. He watched it obsessively. And in that same moment that he was figuring out that he was brown, and what does that mean? What did it mean that he was brown? What did it mean that he would also call Michael Jackson brown. It took him a while for me to say, no, people call that kind of person black. They break your head first that way. And then, all of that was happening simultaneously as Ferguson was coming across the television into our living room, and he was realizing that he might be this thing that people don't like. So it's all kind of coalescing, and he was asking me these questions, and they were breaking me. And they were really funny too, because he's a kid, and so trying to explain racism to a six-year-old kid is like trying to explain it to an alien life force. They literally are like, but why? Why is that brown black? And why is this brown brown? And you're like, I don't know, man, I don't know. It has never made sense to me either. Like he's asking all the basic, basic questions. I realized that I was either gonna have to turn that into an essay—and every time I tried to write it as an essay, it came out as this really stilted thing, because I was so aware of how much America had decided just not to believe racial pain anymore, both to ask us to perform it, and then decide the reason that they wanted us to perform it, it felt like in that moment, was so they could find a way to dismiss it. So they could say, I've seen your pain, and I think you're lying. And so instead of writing that essay, I drew us on paper, and I cut us out, and I just put his questions above

his head, and I put us on top of Michael Jackson albums that were all over his room. It was an insane day; I was crying; I was standing on my kitchen table; I was like trying to take pictures of albums that were between my feet and not get a shadow on them. It was super weird. But when it was done, I sent them to my husband. He's like, How's your day? And I was like, This is my day. And he's like, What is this? And I said, I don't know, but it just feels good. And so that's how it started. And so when you ask me, What is the difference? What is the difference? One of them is that with drawing, I no longer felt self-conscious of this idea of having to get someone to believe me. I could just say like, No, fuck that. You don't have to believe me. This is just what happened. This is what my life looks like. I'm not positioning it for your approval or belief anymore. I'm just showing it to you. You can look, or you can look away. I don't care. But I'm putting this here.

SC There's something about the conflation of a drawn figure and photos of the real world, quote unquote the real world, or even family members of yours, and those two mixed together. It feels like art, of course, but it also feels like a document, like something is being documented. Does that make sense to you? Did you think of this as both art and a document of the time itself, like a record?

MJ There are words that scare me in our world. Art is one of them. Memoir is another one. I feel like those are things that very important people do. So I know when I was doing this I wasn't thinking, You're an artist making a memoir. Those things never occurred to me. It was more, it was just more a sense of urgency. And I just wanted to report our time. And I just kept thinking, if you can show what it's like to live in this body, that is enough. Just do that. Just start there.

SC The book seems very interested in epiphany, and it seems to end with a really powerful, beautiful epiphany regarding your family, specifically your son, if I may say that. So I guess what I'm wondering is—I'm not expecting you to start getting in the weeds, you know, with regard to how you built it—but does that ring true for you? Like is epiphany something that you thought of while you were writing it, and purpose while you were writing it?

MJ Okay, go with me for a second.

SC Please. (*laughter*)

MJ Did you watch the Raiders of the Lost Ark movies when you were growing up?

SC Yeah, mhm. Wow.

MJ Okay, so like, horrible, racist, whatever, all of that, true. Also, there's a moment in which he's looking for the holy grail, Indiana Jones, and he comes to this chasm, and it says, take a step, take a step, have the faith, take a step, and this like corny-ass, amazing thing happens which blew my tiny mind when I saw it, which is that he takes a step onto what looks like it's going to be thin air, and he realizes that he's on a plank that has been painted like the bottom of the chasm, right? He takes a step, and his foot lands on a thing that he didn't know was there. Every second of writing this book felt like that. It felt like, I have no idea what I'm doing. I have no idea what end this is toward. I have no idea if I'm gonna have a family at the end of this. I have no idea if I'm gonna be able to look at myself. I have no idea. And I just kept going. Because I was really scared. I was more scared of what it would be not to keep going.

SC How you doing?

MJ I'm okay. I got a little choked up.

SC Me too. So you bring up again the subject of family. Both of your books are about family. And both books seem to me deeply close to your heart. This new one, *Good Talk*, especially, but they both seem deeply close to your heart. Can you talk about family as subject?

MJ Yeah. So I grew up East Indian in New Mexico. And we were one of very few East Indian families there. The other two told us we're the third one that got there in the state. But what that means when you're growing up, like what that actually looks like, is that there's no one else around you who looks like you. You spend 99% of your

life knowing any room you walk into, everyone knows who you guys are, and everyone else looks like each other to some extent. There is a lot of fracturing that happens between first-generation kids over here and their parents. There's a lot of ways in which we missed each other and didn't understand each other. And I think there're some chasms between us that are just unbridgeable. So I think all of those things, though, to me, make up this idea of family. There's a really romantic idea of family in America. It's this idea of like, we hold each other and love each other through all storms, and whenever somebody comes for us, we are all loyal to each other. It's this thing, and it's just actually not...

SC Yeah...

MJ ...the Indian version of family, or if it is the Indian version of family, I wouldn't know, because I didn't grow up in India. My version of family is all of it, is the kind of deep chasms and the flaws and what you return to. In my first book, I ended up writing a character that was my dad, who had died. I didn't start out writing him, but that character turned into my dad as I wrote the book because A) my dad died in the middle of the book, and I just was sort of haunted by him, and his hands came in first. And then the way that we would get in fights started coming in. The reason he came in was not because I missed the idealized, wonderful father, which he could be at times, but I missed the bullshit. I missed how he would walk out of rooms when we started fighting. I missed how he could never look me in the eye when he was trying to make a point, you know. (laughter) Like, I just...and I missed the ways in which he would sometimes be depressed for days and shut himself up in a room, and if he came out, I was the first person he talked to. I missed the fucked-up things about having someone who is uniquely and only my father. And so when you talk about family, to me, that's what family is. It is a unique imprint. It's not glorious, and it's not horrific. It is just unique. It is the specificity that holds you.

SC Can we talk about the difference between writing about a character...

MJ Yeah.

SC ...that is like your dad and actually drawing your dad?

MJ Oh my God, yeah. So I gotta tell you, the first person I tried to draw in this book was my dad. And the first time I really got a drawing to look like a person was my dad. I remember when my dad died. We're going to go to a dark place, Scott, you ready? *(laughter)* So when my dad died, at the funeral, I remember leaning over his face and holding it with both of my hands, and thinking, I have probably held your face more than any other face. I know these cheeks. I know that nose. In every tree ring that makes up me, you are on the smallest and the biggest, and this is the last time I will hold that face. And I loved that face. And I remember just being decimated by that. So drawing him, like getting to draw him, getting to pull those cheeks out of space and find that line in his nose and his crazy man's Super '70s mustache that he never got rid of, because Indians. It was kind of amazing just to see him, and I remember when I did it, and I sent it to my mother, and she called me and she goes, Oh, my God! And I was like, Yeah, right? And she goes, Okay! I mean, it was like...we didn't...there was no other thing to say. There was not this...it was just sort of like, Look...

SC Yeah.

MJ ...I found dad...

SC Yeah.

MJ ...in space. I found him.

SC Wow. When you say you sent it to your mom, and she said okay, does that have to do with a kind of permission that you had to deal with?

MJ Wow, that's a good question.

SC I mean, it's one thing to write about your family, but something

else to use their likeness for the sake of a story. So how did that work?

MJ Yeah, that's a great question. So I will tell you that I don't know that she would have thought of it as her giving permission. I don't think my mother's ever thought that that was hers to give. She's been pretty cool that way. Her version of this, of course, as she says it is a lot, it's very funny. She says, "I always tell my friends that there is Mira's version, and then there is the truth, and I know the truth." So she's hilarious about it. But with likenesses specifically, I think—you know, my parents fell in love. They had an arranged marriage, and they fell in love much later. They fell in love in the last ten years of their marriage, before my dad died. And so I think sometimes when I see my mom, she's still, she's incredibly beautiful, she's very young-seeming, and she told me once that they had, like, traveled from one life to another together. And so I see how she is missing that partner...

SC Oh, wow.

MJ ...that travels with her from one life to another. So I think sometimes when she sees evidence of him, I think she just is like open to it. You know, I think she just holds it with both hands. I think she's like, Okay...

SC Yeah.

MJ ...He was here, you know?

SC I would imagine she would welcome seeing his face on every page. I feel like we should back up a little bit and do some concrete chronology, like...

MJ Yeah, sure.

SC When did you start writing this?

MJ Yeah. Okay, so I started writing this in...okay, the first time I tried

to just do a comic, period, it wasn't a comic. I didn't actually think of these as comics. The first time I made sort of a paper puppet and put words above it was me and my grandmother. We were trapped. We were trapped in her...we were trapped in...she was in a retirement community old-age home in India, super rare. Those are brand new with the kind of diaspora, not a lot of people in them. My grandmother would have never wanted to be in one. And the lights went out one day. The whole time I was there she was listening to television, really loud soap operas, never looked at me. The lights went out, and she turns to me, like out of the blue, as though I have just materialized in the moment that the lights go out. And she says, "What's wrong with your face?" Like... *(laughter)*

SC That's amazing.

MJ I was like, What? What's wrong with my face? And she goes, "Nevermind." And then she looks at me and she goes, "When we were kids, we took to the streets shouting, and the British came, and they imprisoned us, and we kept shouting, and they took my brother. They thought he was some big revolutionary, but he was just a seventeen-year-old boy, and we left school, and still we were shouting," and I said, "Nothing I've ever done matters." And she said, "Well, that's okay." Then the lights went on. And then she was back in the television, and I was just her like Indian-American granddaughter in this awkward space left with this huge weight of a story on my chest. And so I just drew us on paper right then, and then put us on her night table in that home, and then stood above it and took a picture. And I posted it, I think on like Facebook or something, just to make my cousins laugh, just to be like, Hi, this is where we're from. And they thought it was hilarious. But what was also interesting is that a lot of people thought it was hilarious. And, you know, people have all different sorts of reasons for that, but I realized that I had a shortcut. I had a shortcut in which to tell a story in which I didn't have to introduce everybody to every element. And that felt really great. So when Zakir started having those questions, I had been down that path a little bit before. And so I knew that if I could just get to his questions, I knew that there was sort of a way forward visually. And then from there, I came up

with this idea of like, what if I did a book of just conversations? What if that's the thing I did? And they were supposed to be funny, Scott. They were supposed to be such a different book. Listen, it was 2015. We didn't know that it was the last season of America. No, I mean, but we really didn't, right, it was this idea that we were in a really bad patch, but we were going to fight through it, and everyone was going to come out. There was that idea, certainly, from some people, from someone like me who was adjacent enough, I think, to white privilege to believe that there was a way that we would kind of dial back from that. I had some optimism about that moment that was really unfounded. So when the election played out the way it did, and as things got uglier and uglier, and I knew it was going south, as I started admitting to myself that all of these things that I thought were going to save us were fantasies I had essentially had about America, and as I started reconciling with what it meant that I could have held onto those fantasies for so long when so many of my friends couldn't even entertain them for a day of their lives, I realized that the conversations were going to change.

SC Yeah, oh. Yeah.

MJ And then they did. And then I started writing. I started writing down the harder conversations, the ones that don't really leave people feeling happy or easy, but are real.

SC Um, I was about to say how funny the book is. *(laughter)*

MJ Yeah!

SC It's also funny. It's hilarious, but it is all of those things, too. I think it's partly so sobering because in parts it's so funny. And it's partly so kind of bracing. But also it works in the reverse order too: It's funny because it's bracing. I mean, it's often sobering for me as a reader, a white dude reader.

MJ Mhm.

SC But I feel like there were moments that must have been sobering

for you, too, as you were kind of confronting stuff of your own life. And I think that is one of the most effective and important and frightening moments when it comes to writing, at least for me, when I'm facing things that might be sobering for me, is...am I... Does this make sense?

MJ Yeah. So are you asking like, are you asking about the balance of the humor and the horror?

SC Well, that and also writing, again, it's quite revealing, you know?

MJ Yes. Okay. So I think that was actually the hardest part of this, because it's easy to expose yourself, and my rule for myself is always, if you're going to expose anyone, you've got to expose yourself twice as much. So there are scenes in here that I wrote, knowing full well that, especially in this time of kind of rapid growth, and this sort of moment in which we are looking at ourselves and reevaluating how we have undermined ourselves and each other, I understood that there was going to be a moment in which I looked back on something on this and was just horrified that it was on the pages, because someone would say to you, look, you were an asshole back then. And I would have to say, this is true. And I decided to do it anyway. Because I think one of the most disheartening things for me about this moment in America is this idea of wokeness, and that it is a fixed place. And I think, frankly, it's a white need for it to be a fixed place. I think it is very much about a redemption, like a white redemptive narrative, in which now we are better. And now we are on the right side of things. And I would never, ever feel that way about myself ever.

SC Yeah.

MJ I don't think there's ever going to be a moment in which I have redeemed myself for the past ways in which I discounted people's humanity, did not always see them, made assumptions about them. There's not a way that I'm coming back from that. There's only a way in which I'm adding on to it.

SC Yeah.

MJ So part of it was an urgency for me to just say the hard things about myself, but also say the hard things that were happening in my family. So my husband is a filmmaker, and he's super private. And when I realized that he was going to be in this in a kind of integral way, and when I realized that some of our fights as an interracial couple, like I just needed to say them. When I realized that and I started drawing him, and I said, "This is what I'm doing." It was really always interesting for me to watch because he would start off with like, "I don't, I don't know what's happening right now, but okay, all right." And then I would get into it, and sometimes he would read it, and he would say, "Yeah, this is hard, okay." He never told me to change what he said ever, which is fascinating to me—ever. He never even once said, Don't have me say that, ever, no matter what I wrote down. I had some really crazy things in here on the first couple passes, and they weren't actually good indicators of who he was, because I was simultaneously trying to protect him while writing us, and so I made him into this very thin, sort of unloving character. He never objected. And I asked him later, Weren't you furious? And he said, "No, it's your art." So I guess my answer for you about that, about writing the honest thing, I asked myself at every point, Are you looking for vengeance or clarity? And if the answer was vengeance, I took it off the page. And if the answer was clarity, I left it on.

SC That's fantastic advice for writing, and just for living your life.

MJ Yeah, maybe.

SC The world has changed since the world of this book, so I'm wondering what that means to you, if anything. It's changed for the worse. You know, Trump is in charge. But it also brings up, I guess, a process question, too, which I'm endlessly interested with in regard to this book. How did you frame it? Because it's masterfully framed, but it's kind of a maelstrom of time. There's lots of times going on at the same time, but it also feels entirely framed neatly. I don't know how you did that.

MJ I am weirdly, for someone who doesn't consider structure until I'm about three quarters of the way through anything that I'm writing, I'm strangely a structure junkie. Like there's a point at which in anything that I write, I need the structure to hold. And it's usually when I've gotten about three quarters of the way through something. So I just let myself go until then, and I tell myself I'm gonna figure it out later. And I think that's just my nerve-racking process. The way that I decided on this time period...so this basically spans...there's a sort of front line in this, and it spans the moment my son realizes he's brown until shortly after Trump is elected. So I left us in the moment of sickness that we are actually in and are going to be in for a while.

SC Hm. The end of the book, for me, functions as both a letter and an epiphany. But I'll confess it only functioned as a letter to me after hearing someone else say it was. To me, it's this really sort of gorgeous and vulnerable epiphanic revelation that you get to share with somebody, your son, and it seems to be the pinnacle, in some ways, of the book, or the place it was driving to the whole time in some way. But also, I know that maybe that's not how writing works. I don't know. What do you think?

MJ So I'll tell you that that letter...it occurred to me when the structure fell in place that I was going to have to write a letter in the end to Zakir, that I was gonna have to go into a place that our conversations hadn't. So I knew that I would get there, but I will tell you, I wrote that letter like seventy times. I wrote that letter—some of them were so angry. I wrote versions of that letter where I would cry for five days and then write the letter. I wrote the letter in ways that made myself sick. I think the thing that finally occurred to me is that I had to write the letter just to him. Not to the version of him I was most scared for, not as a warning, not as some attempt to bandage up the rupturing world all around him, but to just him. To that person with that complicated heart that's already complicated at age ten. So what was it going to look like to just show up for that person? So if there was an epiphany in that moment, it was the epiphany of learning how to show up for the person who is there.

SC Well that ends it beautifully for me. Um, thank you so much for

talking with me, Mira. I loved, loved, loved *Good Talk*.

MJ It has been really exciting, Scott, to have a conversation with you to add onto our many, many conversations and do it this way. I know, I know it was scary for you, and it was scary for me too. But there's no one else that I would have rather done this with. So thank you.

SC Ah, thank you. I can't wait to talk again.

CM This episode was recorded at Pioneer Works, a nonprofit Cultural Center dedicated to experimentation, education, and production across disciplines. FUSE is produced by Libby Flores, Director of Audience Development and Digital Production at BOMB. It is co-produced and edited by Myra Al-Rahim and Sophie Kazis with production assistance by Ethan Premison. I'm Chantal McStay, Associate Editor at BOMB magazine. Our theme music is Black Origami by Jlin. Additional music by Ray Suen. Be sure to subscribe to FUSE wherever you listen.

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