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Ramana [00:00:08] Welcome to the ways of knowing podcast where we make sense of the world through conversations with scholars and artists. This is M.V. Ramana, a 2020 Wall Scholar at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of British Columbia. My guest today is Naomi Klein, an award-winning journalist and best-selling author of multiple books, including No Logo, The Shock Doctrine and This Changes Everything. In September 2021, she joined the University of British Columbia as UBC professor of Climate Justice. She will also be helping to build the Centre for Climate Justice that is being set up under the Faculty of Arts. I've invited Naomi today to discuss the subject of climate justice. Welcome, Naomi.

Naomi [00:00:52] Thank you, Ramana, I'm so pleased to be with you.

Ramana [00:00:54] You recently joined UBC as a professor of climate justice. Tell us about how you got here. I'm not asking about your biography per se, but about your intellectual journey. What concerns drove you early on and how did you happen to become interested in climate justice?

Naomi [00:01:10] It is true that I, I guess I took a less than traditional route in the sense that I'm not somebody who primarily associated with the environmental movement, although I've always been passionate about the natural world and connected in lots of ways. But I think I came to it because my earlier work, you mentioned No Logo in your introduction and The Shock Doctrine, these were works of political economy. They were dealing with marketing, human rights and war. You know, The Shock Doctrine, it's a book about large scale shocks and how they are harnessed to push through radical free market policies and it's kind of an alternate history of neo liberalism. I started working on it with the invasion of Iraq, and I was going to be focussed on 9-11, the invasion of Iraq, was going to have a little on economic crises, but then what happened as I was writing the book and this is that, you know, I started working on it in 2003/4 at the end of 2004, this tsunami happened in Asia, the huge tsunami, the Christmas Eve tsunami as it was called, and thousands of people were killed and beaches were swept of all structures, coastlines and the hardest hit were Sri Lanka, Thailand and parts of India. And I started to hear from people because I had been writing in my journalism about the way shocks were being harnessed to push through neoliberal economic policies, I started to hear from representatives of small boat fishing people and small hold farmers that the same thing was happening in the aftermath of the tsunami. I remember I got this email, first came the tsunami, the wave, then came the tsunami of greed and militarism, and it was this huge land grabbing that was going on on the coasts. So that's what I first used the term disaster capitalism, but I still wasn't thinking about it as an environmentalist, I was thinking about it from an economic perspective. And I think my wakeup call was I was deep in the writing of The Shock Doctrine when when Hurricane Katrina happened and I went there to New Orleans to report on it and to research. And it was just this obvious intersection of economic injustice, racial injustice and climate disruption. At that point, we weren't saying, OK, this hurricane is because of climate change, but it was certainly we understood that we were going to see more of these powerful, powerful storms in the future. And New Orleans, it slammed into weak and neglected infrastructure, and overlaying all of it was the politics of white supremacy and I was in New Orleans when there were white vigilantes with guns looking for black people out after curfew. So the idea that you can pry justice apart from climate, it's just kind of fell apart I suppose for me in that in that moment. And that's when I kind of realised, OK, you can't delegate the climate issue to the

environmentalists anymore, like this totally entwined with all of the issues that I'm already engaged with.

Ramana [00:04:24] And that's, I think, a great segue into the other element that you have talked about in *This Changes Everything*, in your book you point out that we are confronting the climate problem at a very bad juncture in history, just as neoliberal ideology was taking over. Now that it is nearly a decade since that book came out, how do you see the conflict between our capitalist system of organising economies around the world and climate change? Have trends reinforced your view or given you any sign that there is systemic change, perhaps as a result of social movements what you termed Blockadia in the book?

Naomi [00:05:02] Yeah, I think Blockadia is part of it, but it's not the only social movements. Blockadia referring to those front-line struggles against pieces of fossil fuel infrastructure of one kind or another. It's interesting as you ask the question I really do think that my view of this was so shaped by Katrina, because people often forget that though Katrina was a category five hurricane at its peak, by the time it reached New Orleans, where it did the most damage, it had been downgraded to a tropical storm. So it wasn't actually the force of the storm that caused the damage. It was the intersection of the storm which should absolutely have been survivable with 30, 40 years of neglect of the public sphere. Right. And that was what was truly lethal. That's what there had been warning after warning repair the levees, right, and the hospitals that had just been left to rot in the public hospitals in New Orleans Charity Hospital. So underfunded and the worst images, if you remember them from from Katrina I know it was a long time ago, but these images of poor, sick, disabled people on the rooftop of the hospital holding signs that said help and nobody came, you know. And so it was the legacy of neoliberalism, which is intensely racialized. And so that, I think, is what attuned me and then of course, after the fact, instead of learning the lesson of this and what's interesting is at the time, there were right wing commentators, one in particular who wrote a piece saying the collapse of New Orleans levees should be for the free market what the fall of the Berlin Wall was to communism. Right. This should be an ideological crisis because where's the government when you need it right now? And it wasn't just that the physical infrastructure failed it's that the government, the U.S. government, couldn't seem to find New Orleans for five days. People were abandoned and everyone was going, where's the government? Where's the government? And all of these are free market true believers were suddenly losing their religion and they're going, can we please have a government? You know what's happening? And then within weeks, they just doubled down. And instead of learning that lesson, they privatized the school system, yeah, they deregulated environmental laws to allow for more oil and gas activity. Like, if anything's going to make you wake up, it should be this the drowning of an American city, and instead they doubled down. So where are we now after all this? I think where we are from a movement perspective is very different. You know, when I think back where were the social movements that happened, the environmental movement, I remember there was a protest where people went and held hands on a beach and asked for climate action. I mean, was there no connections between the economics and the racial injustice and the need for climate action. Of course, there were front lines environmental justice campaigners in Louisiana is one of the birthplaces for environmental justice in the US and around the world. But people had been, you know, we were spread out all over the country they had been pushed out of their homes it was so hard to organise, right? But in the mainstream environmental movement, there was really a sense of we don't want to be seen as opportunistic by talking about a different system and so on. So now it's completely different. If you look at COVID and what the Eco Socialists left was doing, it was we need a Green New Deal for all as a response

to COVID as a pandemic recovery plan. And so this new generation of activists, they're intersectional they understand that economic justice is at the centre, that that racial capitalism is driving all the crises, that they're interconnected, they're not afraid of getting out of their silos. I think that's the biggest difference because frankly, when I published *This Changes Everything* in 2014, I got a lot of pushback from mainstream environmentalists who were just like, Do you have to talk about capitalism? Can we just talk about climate? It's hard enough and you're making it harder, I would get that, you're making it harder by making about all these other things. And now I think there really is a generational shift of young people who understand that it actually makes it easier when you talk about the issues that are most pressing in people's lives, which is not climate change is the need for jobs for health care, it's need for better schools. That's actually how you build power. And we need it because we're up against some very powerful people. You know, it's not just a big misunderstanding that we haven't acted, we're up against power and money. And so that's the big shift. Now, if we look at it at the policy level, this movement work starting with the grassroots environmental justice, which eventually turns into climate justice, which eventually gets translated into the Green New Deal and the Sunrise movement has really changed the way the Biden administration talks about climate. They talk about it as a whole government project, they've appointed people whose job it is to make sure all the different agencies and departments talk to each other, which is very different than under the Obama years. And so that's the biggest change, I think, is we're not just talking about how do we get cap and trade passed or a narrow carbon based policy passed, which I think we need. We need carbon pricing, but it's how do we transform our economy? How do we create jobs? How do we do it in a way that centres racial justice? That's a sea change, but we're not doing it.

Ramana [00:10:30] Lots of questions that come to my mind but let me just focus on two strands here. One is you talked about racialized capitalism and neoliberal capitalism. And is this sort of inherent to capitalism or a particular brand of capitalism?

Naomi [00:10:46] So when talk about racial capitalism is not is not an attempt to set apart racial capitalism from some other kind of capitalism. It's an attempt to assert that there is no capitalism without racial hierarchy.

Ramana [00:11:01] Yeah, I meant more neoliberal part.

Naomi [00:11:02] But yeah, the neoliberal part, I think, is a really good question. And I think I would say when I started this research, I thought that it was just about neoliberalism, that I thought it was about that ideology of privatization and deregulation the contemporary free trade deals and it was this iteration of capitalism post Reagan post Thatcher that, you know, kind of holds that the government can't do anything that the role of the government is just to get out of the way that there was this fundamental mismatch between that laissez faire approach, which is not really laissez faire because it's very interventionist when it comes to protecting capital. But in, you know, Stiglitz calls it market fundamentalism, I sometimes just refer to it as capitalism without competition. Right? I mean, it's post Soviet collapse capitalism. If I'm not talking to a respectable academic like you, I say it's "it's capitalism lying on the couch in its underpants, saying, What are you going to do? Leave me" you know? Right? Yes. Telling us we have no negotiating power and so on. So I thought it was that, and I think I was probably pretty romantic about the Keynesian era of of capitalism that was able to to do things right, like the new deal, like the like the Second World War mobilisations. But as I went deeper into the research and listened to people like Kevin Anderson then at the Tyndall Centre, I came to understand that it was a deeper conflict between the logic of economic growth and indeed that

neoliberalism isn't just about the lack of competition, it's about resolving a crisis within capitalism for the need for growth. So I'm learning on the job.

Ramana [00:12:44] And you know, you we talked about how the movement has changed. You know, when I talk to my students, I say exactly this very simple thing that capitalism is a system based on growth and as a physicist, I can tell you that on a finite planet, you cannot have infinite growth. Right. And so it's something which I think a lot of younger people resonate with very clearly that I don't think we need to even sort of distinguish between neo liberal capitalism and capitalism to explain why climate change is very difficult to resolve under capitalism. That said, you know, we all know that capitalism can be quite malleable in multiple ways.

Naomi [00:13:18] Yeah, but I think where people get tripped up is they see, well, capitalism can sell you solar panels and capitalism can do green things. And there can be a niche within capitalism that'll all be about the circular economy and all of these great things. But in this, at the same time, that voracious need for expansion is going to keep devouring the natural world.

Ramana [00:13:37] Right and that's the sort of second question that I had, which is about the Green New Deal and that way of trying to deal with the crisis. Do you think that such proposals would be adequate to the scale of the emergency? Or do we need to adopt ideas from what some have termed degrowth a reduction in material throughput?

Naomi [00:13:58] I think yes and yes. So I think that I think that this kind of infrastructure based framework and justice based framework and I have to say that Biden's build back better plan, though it has some fantastic things in it, is not The Green Deal. He's taken parts of it, but the vision that's been put forward by the squad Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar, now Cori Bush, Jamaal Bowman. These have been the legislators who have introduced various pieces of this vision for a Green New Deal, so it started off with a very broad base sort of big picture, I think, was 12 pages resolution that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez put forward. But now there's a Green New Deal for public housing. There's a Green New Deal for schools, piece of legislation that Jamaal Bowman put forward. Corey Bush put forward the Green New Deal for cities and towns and tribes. And what's interesting about these pieces of legislation that are not law but they're much more detailed is that they are really focused on the public sphere. They're focused on the need for non-market housing, the need for public schools that provide an education for everybody and begin in the communities that have gotten the worst public education. And as we know, the U.S. public system is incredibly segregated and there are huge discrepancies. So it's significant that Jamaal Bowman, who represents one of those most neglected communities suffering from what Ruth Wilson Gilmore calls organised abandonment. And he's a principal Jamaal Bowman, Cori Bush is a nurse, I mean, this is significant because these are people who are coming out of the frontline public sector work or partially privatised public sector and saying this isn't working our communities need resources and we're in a climate crisis, so let's do both at once. So these are not market solutions. So I think this is a good place to start. Yes, we need to confront consumption, but I think part of how we get there is by expanding what we sometimes call the care economy, right? And the key thing in all of this, because there is no one agreement about what a Green New Deal is, is that whatever we do, we build in carbon budgeting and auditing. And as we do that, we are going to confront the reality I think you and I both know that you can have a great green plan and create lots of jobs and have better infrastructure, and your emissions can go up at the same time because people will be getting paid better as they should, and they'll be spending the money at Wal-Mart and they will be turning it

into carbon. All I can say is I think it makes sense politically and strategically to start with these big public sector investments in sectors that are not extractive, because I think it is going to be easier to confront those tougher questions about what we contract, what we have less of if we are in an atmosphere where people have the basics, you know, it's so hard to have these conversations in a context of the sort of social scarcity that people are living with.

Ramana [00:17:01] I want to now move to Canada since we are here and you've just been through an election here in Canada, where most parties did talk about the climate emergency. What do the results of the recent election tell you about our chances of dealing with this emergency in a manner that is consistent with the idea of climate justice?

Naomi [00:17:22] Just for some background, I've spent the past three years working in the states. People were joking when I moved there because it was the Trump years that I was running towards a burning building. Little did I know how bad it was, but I thought that if I was going to spend three years in the states and I was there as this Chair at Rutgers, which was just for a fixed period of time. So we knew we weren't leaving Canada for good, but we thought if there's any three years to throw down, let it be the three years where there's a primary in it and an election to get rid of Trump.

Ramana [00:17:52] I'm a Trump refugee to Canada I moved here in 2017

Naomi [00:17:56] I went there in 2018 and got to be there when the squad was elected and they introduced the Green New Deal legislation and really got the bug for what it can look like when you have a few insurgent politicians who are not there to toe the party line, who are actually very much there to challenge the status quo, working in concert with movements and just seeing what AOC could do with this 12 page resolution and the Sunrise movement, occupy Nancy Pelosi's office peacefully and suddenly the debate is about the Green New Deal. That's really something. And then Bernie Sanders ran for president and asked me to be a surrogate for his campaign and to do a lot of outreach around his vision for a Green New Deal, which was even more ambitious. Where it differed from other candidates who were running on Green New Deal, the sharpest difference for me was Elizabeth Warren's Green New Deal was using all of this nationalist language. It was calling economic patriotism. And the first thing she talked about was greening the military, which I was like, what? like solar power that solar panels on tanks? What are we talking about here, right? And whereas Bernie was talking about spending \$200 billion on an international climate justice fund and financing it by slashing trillions from the military that are currently being used to protect pipelines and the like. So that seemed to me really politically significant. Obviously, it didn't end well, but I really still carry with me the energy of what felt possible in that campaign because it was such a big tent. It wasn't perfect, but being at these rallies, if thousands of people and hearing from nurses and teachers and frontline migrant rights activists and just the sense of this is what it looks like when we're not all in our silos, when we when we really come together. And so, yeah, Canada. So then we and then we had and then we had this election where one way of thinking about it is we jumped up and down or our politicians jumped up and down for a little bit more than a month and ended up pretty much in exactly the same place with \$600 billion less that they could have spent in many better ways. But I don't think that it was a ratification for the status quo. I mean, what's interesting is if you add up the votes for the Liberals, the Greens and the NDP, it's more than 50 percent and all of those parties were running on various kinds of promises of bold climate action. And in fact, so was the Bloc. So was the Bloc Quebecois, which doesn't usually get included in these calculations, but their pledge was for 60 percent emission reductions by 2030, which is the same as the Greens. So you

add up all of that, that's over 60 percent of the Canadian electorate. So then that 30 percent or 30, I forget what it is, 32 that the Conservatives got, is it shows that that is very much the minority of Canadians and that a clear majority of Canadians cast their ballot for one of these four parties that said that they were going to act based on the science of the climate emergency. I personally, my fear in this election was that the Liberals would get a majority and that they'd scare people into a majority. And I think what we're seeing in B.C. with the Horgan government is that governments are much less responsive when they are in a majority because we don't have proportional representation, and so they get their majority and then they're like, see you in four years I don't I don't care. And so I was very worried in the entire election was a gambit by the Liberals to get a majority, and it didn't work, and I'm grateful for that.

Ramana [00:21:41] So one one follow up on that, which is how do you see the language of climate change emergency in Canada being linked to justice or not being linked to justice?

Naomi [00:21:52] I still feel that there isn't anybody really out there who's telling a story about how all of these issues are interconnected and can be even more interconnected, that the drivers are the same or very similar in this quest for short term profit, whether it's the way the elderly are treated and for profit care, or whether it's our attitude towards the natural world, and that the solutions can be in line, that we can invest in the infrastructure of care and divest from the infrastructure of extraction, and yeah, I just I just think we don't have politicians that are very good storytellers in that way. I mean, the best we have is Justin Trudeau saying we build a pipeline to pay for renewables, I guess that's a story, it's a really bad and dangerous one.

Ramana [00:22:40] Plus, there is also the story of, you know, we just put a carbon tax and everything is going to be fine, right?

Naomi [00:22:46] I mean, this is it is that I still think that the political class talks about climate in a way that isn't connected to indigenous rights and not that isn't connected to the need for big investments in infrastructure. You need to tell a story. You need to tell a story about how we're going to transform our schools and our health care system, and we're going to invest in people and we're going to do it in a way that's going to improve services and lower emissions and create good jobs. And somehow, that's not the kind of politics that we have. My concern is that we are as a population in Canada, not very organised and mobilised, and that COVID has not helped in that regard. Everybody being isolated, just getting too used to being alone because I think if we were more organised and mobilised as an electorate, we would be able to say we just elected 60 percent of our votes just went to all of your various climate plans, we want a climate emergency or a climate justice emergency government. And in the same way that the Greens and the NDP in B.C. came to an agreement, they didn't form a coalition, they agreed on a few planks and I think that if a more mobilised population would be able to demand of the political class that they come up with four or five key planks and agree to hold their government together because we don't want more unnecessary elections. We need to get on with this. This is part of the reason why I'm excited about coming to UBC is that and building this Climate Justice Centre with you, listeners should know that Ramana is on this steering committee and lots of other wonderful scholars.

Ramana [00:24:30] Interim Executive Committee

Naomi [00:24:32] Interim Executive Committee. OK? My mother's always saying this to me. How come there are so many groups that seem to be doing the same thing that are all

asking me for money? And it is true that we have a lot of small, great groups, small ish and the kind of infrastructure of the non-profit sector doesn't encourage cooperation because everybody's competing for the same lists and donors and so on. And that can discourage cooperation, right? Because you want to be the group that can say, we did this, we did this on our own now give us money. So, you know, I don't blame activists for this. I think we're all just working within very flawed structures, including in academia. But one of the reasons why I thought this was an exciting idea is that I think that the academy, if it is engaged in the community, can serve as a convener to bring a lot of folks who are doing fantastic work in conversation with each other to try to just coordinate a little bit more and be be more effective.

Ramana [00:25:37] You talk about climate emergency and climate justice emergency, and there is a kind of slip of the tongue, but I think that's a nice way to think about it. There is a climate emergency framing and there is a framing that's more centred on justice. In your earlier book, *The Shock Doctrine*, you talked about how various political forces use emergencies of different kinds as openings to institute new policies, especially ones that don't have popular or democratic purchase. And more recently, in *The Battle for Paradise*, you've documented how such efforts are playing out in Puerto Rico. So now that we are hearing that we are in a climate emergency? What kind of measures might the one percent institute under the guise of dealing with the climate crisis? How might they detract from the idea of climate justice?

Naomi [00:26:22] I think there's there's a lot of different ways. I think the one percent and the 0.1 percent are responding in various ways, including just sort of speculating on a future of scarcity and profiting from it as they build their bunkers in New Zealand and outer space colonies. So I mean, they definitely believe the collapse is coming and they're very transparent about that, right? I mean, Jeff Bezos went to outer space and came back and said, I've seen the future and it's garbage dumps in space. Basically, I mean, he his ideas to move dirty industry into outer space, which is just incredible. I mean, that's very profitable. And there's huge profits to be made in collapse in food speculation in water in housing. And then there's also just kind of very opportunistic disaster capitalism, which I think we see in B.C. in the aftermath of fires, logging companies come in and say that they just want to do some salvage and actually they take advantage of it to get at old growth. So but I think we also get these techno fixes, right? Which are these big subsidies to the same people who created this crisis to solve the crisis with, you know, CCFs or what you know and I'm not saying that there's no role for it, but the centrality of the role and the size of the subsidy that they're getting in comparison to the investments that we need and things like, you know, electrified public transit and retrofitting of rental properties so that people don't cook during the next heat dome, which is pretty pressing. There's no money for that, but there's so much money for whatever the latest scheme is. And of course, your area, which is nuclear energy, I think is another one. And what do you think? What else? What am I missing from this list of craven things we should be looking at for?

Ramana [00:28:15] geo-engineering.

Naomi [00:28:17] It's so hard to keep track. Yeah, no. I have a chapter in *This Changes Everything* about geo-engineering, and I've spent some time with the would be geo-engineers, sometimes called the geo clique. There's very few of them and some of them are Canadian like David Keith, who used to be in Calgary and now is at Harvard and is probably going to be the first to actually do a, you know, quote unquote field experiment, right where they actually take it out of the lab and put some amount of particulate matter into the stratosphere to see what happens. He has his own carbon air capture business

and I always think it's significant that one of his first investors was one of the biggest players in the Alberta tar sands because I just wish that we could be looking at this without the economic incentives that are budding it right because we are going to need to be doing air capture but if the point of the air capture is keeping oil companies able to continue digging new mines in Alberta then we're doomed, right? We've allowed things to get so bad that even with the most radical emission reductions, we do need to drawdown, we do need to draw carbon down. And some of that can happen with trees and other forms of vegetation. But yeah, we have to look at direct air capture, but in and of itself, like just because of how much carbon is in there now, not because, you know, Suncor is putting even more up there. It's all mixed up in our energy policy. And this is where I think the public gets very confused and discouraged and net zero and you know, as becomes, as Greta said, a lot of blah blah blah.

Ramana [00:30:01] Yeah, she's so great in the way she captures so many of these things. So tell us a little bit about your writing process. How do you how do you think of the work? How do you actually find the time to write it?

Naomi [00:30:11] Well, thanks for that question. It's a little bit of a complicated one because I would say that there's the pre-mother version of that. You know I have a nine year old, and I'll be perfectly honest with you that my three biggest books were written before I became a mom, although This Changes Everything my son was two when the book came out but the field research for that I did before. The short answer is I've had this amazing privilege that with my first book with No Logo, I got so lucky. What it meant was that I had time to write my next book and I could do it without having another job. I've been freelance for each book that I write I create my little research team, which is sometimes not that little it could be six people for This Changes Everything I think I probably had 10 researchers at various points, and my researchers are a combination of generalists and specialists who are doing graduate work in the field, and precisely because a book like that has chapters on very specialised information and so I was really lucky to be able to work with some great graduate students. The Shock Doctrine took five years and same thing, you know the work of the Latin American researchers I had two fantastic Latin American graduate students who were based in Argentina who were working with me. I usually give myself three years for the research, in two years to write it, and I like the research better than the writing. But I get really brutal about saying no. Like, really brutal, and you really do have to do that. And you know what? I'm speaking to you from the Sunshine Coast, which this is where I write. It's a pretty much an hour to get to the ferry and then it's 40 minutes on the ferry and then it's another 45 minutes to get into the city and that kind of friction actually is kind of helpful in that if I'm going to say yes to something, it's like a big deal. When I'm living in a city, it's like, oh, yeah, sure yeah, I say yes to everything, you know what I mean when it's such an effort to tell you where we are, I mean, I don't want to overstate it. It makes me choose better so it's like, OK, that's really important. And so that's helped.

Ramana [00:32:20] Yeah, it's not something which everybody can do, but nevertheless, I think that's important to sort of reinforce...

Naomi [00:32:25] Entirely unhelpful.

Ramana [00:32:26] No, no I think the point about forcing yourself to make choices are what what you say yes to is useful. You talked a little bit about how you involve a team of researchers and graduate students. And I want to tie this back to how you see the Centre for Climate Justice and how do you envision the centre sort of going forward? What role do

you hope to play in it? How might other members of the community, in particular students, but also faculty members get involved in this?

Naomi [00:32:58] Well, I think we are going to start having more engagement sessions where people can just bring ideas. We don't exist yet. That's that's a little complicated. Maybe by the time this podcast comes out we'll exist, but it's going to be a slow launch. So I guess the first thing I would say is please be patient with us because it is a process of the system moves slowly and I think we'll really be up and cooking by the end of this academic year I'm hoping, including being able to put on some events that we hope will start framing this. There are so many projects that are going on at the university, I'm just mapping them myself under the climate emergency banner, including some potential interdisciplinary PhDs that potentially could have relationships with the Climate Justice Centre. We are putting in grants in this period for various projects that if we get them, we will be able to hire graduate students to do some really, really interesting research, so just stay tuned for postings related to that. We are finding our mission, one of the themes that's starting to emerge is one around homes and land. We'll be doing some research relating to the intersection of extreme weather and housing injustice because that's such an important issue in our backyard. And I think during the heat dome, we saw those forces collide and we've also found that we don't have research, we don't have good data. And so we want to identify areas where we don't want to take five years to turn around the research, this is research that we need to do more quickly and we need to be more nimble. I think we need to be of service to the most impacted communities and figure out how do we gather the data, how do we do the research and how do we let that inform what a justice based transition off fossil fuels really looks like? And so one of the things that I hope we can do is put together a really interdisciplinary teams of graduate students and faculty who might be able to go to communities or even just like one housing project or one professional association and say, What does a just transition mean to you? What would it mean to you to get your emissions down in line with what our politicians are all saying they want to do, but do it in a way that solves multiple problems at once? What would it mean in your school? What would it mean in this small remote community? And I think there's lots of interest in doing that, that kind of work. It's going to require a lot of humility and a lot of listening. You know, Ramana, I've been remembering this one of the weirdest experiences I've ever had in my life. I was in Sri Lanka after the tsunami, I was there with my partner, Avi he was filming and we were there because people had told us about these land grabs going on and I was researching The Shock Doctrine, we made a little film. So we went to the hardest hit part of the island and what the government was trying to do was use the tsunami to push tourism because the Civil War had actually been very bad for tourism, obviously and they saw this as their chance to rebrand Sri Lanka. And there were no tourists, though, because it was still a disaster zone. And so we we went to this little roadside restaurant, very hot, very tired and the whole time we'd been there and we'd been there for a few weeks now I hadn't seen any tourists and I really wanted to talk to tourists about this idea that this disaster zone was actually a tourist destination because it seemed to be a sort of a strange idea. I saw a couple of kids with backpacks at the same restaurant, I thought, finally, a couple of tourists that I can talk to, I mean, this was six months after the tsunami. And so I went over and I asked if I could talk to them and this one young woman said, We're not tourists, we're with the Kennedy School, and we're here to help. And I said, OK, well, what are you guys doing? And then they explained that they had brought business plans for this small fishing community. And this woman had brought plans for them to transition to hairdressing and for a certain eco tourism destination around this geyser that was there. And I said, So what do people think? Do they like this idea? And they said, well, we haven't asked them yet. And so all I can say is that the Climate

Justice Centre is it's not that, it's definitely not that we're not coming into communities with business plans telling them what their future is.

Ramana [00:37:47] That is so fascinating as has this whole conversation it's been fascinating talking to you Naomi, and I'm so happy you're here and you're sort of starting all of this very exciting work. And I also greatly appreciate your time, since you told us that you are brutal about saying no, so I'm glad you said yes to this conversation. And I also want to end by thanking everybody for joining us. You can find links to the materials discussed, as well as more information about this podcast and the Peter Wall Institute on our website. If you enjoyed this podcast, please help us spread the word. Tell someone else about it, share it on social media or rate it on iTunes or wherever you get your podcasts. We welcome your suggestions for future guests and themes. This episode was produced by the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies and hosted by Ramana, one of the 2020 cohort of Wall Scholars. Until next time.