

Audio 3b – Edmond & Failure of Mental Health System Edited Version

I met Edmond on February 19th, and I know that date because it's my mother's birthday and so I remember meeting him and talking to him a bit at the Christian center and sort of interesting guy but I had no context of history right, cause it's all about here's this guy who is homeless, and you know, he is of Asian descent and he has been pretty marginalized in a variety of ways right? So he's been really, on and off the streets and kind of, so in the work that we did at the Gershwin centre, I sorta quickly say, so here is a guy that has had this pretty profound experience and his is kinda of... and he's had it for so long that it, it kinda of is, it habituates in a certain way right, so it's kinda ok, so we chatted a bit, and so it was interesting to get a sense of who he was but he was hard to really know well right away because even his communication style and how he how he engaged people was both on the one hand, you know, kinda of at times wanting to engage and other times very kinda mistrustful so I mean, I'm sure for very good reasons.

So I met him on the 19th and I worked night shift so I left and I remember going home and sleeping a bit and then getting this phone call at late the next day saying... from the executive director here, Dave, who said "By the way, I just want to let you know that Edmond Yu has been shot." and I was kinda like, holy shit, I had just met him the night before right, and so it was this interesting kinda like shot and I was still kinda like groggy from having been asleep and I was like wow, and it didn't really make sense.

And then.. but then being on the board here, there was this whole sort of cascade of other issues that started to come up about what happened and of course, you know, it's very similar, I mean you had these... you start to get the facts about the police, you know, like, caught on this bus and then engaged him and then shot him as opposed to disengaging him right? It's kinda like, well, and so you are thinking how does that happen, right? And so, it then became... so it was this really fascinating thing where I meet him the night before and then everything else happens, and umm, we started to piece together his whole... in terms of knowing more and more about his history and realizing that, you know, let's go right back to his first interaction, his first episode, his interaction with the system then and how poorly that happened, and here's a smart guy, you know, pre-med student, right? It's like, what a terrible tragedy right, what a terrible thing.

And so it really started to, for a lot of us, it really started us to ask questions about how do we in fact create a different system, like, how do we in fact make sure that police don't shoot people because they are in a

crisis? So all those kind of things have started to be part of the work that we do from an advocacy and development point of view. So PARC, interestingly enough, as much as we do provide services there is kinda of a core part of our work which is about not losing sight of the fact that the system doesn't accommodate well and doesn't deal with difference well. So we have a long way to go to create a system that actually doesn't damage people as engage with it and in fact, can improve the outcomes, like can actually improve. You have an interaction with the health system and it should be that 90% of the time you come out better and so there are still some real gaps in that, so that is sorta of a key piece that I think that drives the work that we do.