**Fresh Affects Yesterday "Recovering Americans" Interview with Mayer Hawthorne**

**MATT:** Hey guys, welcome back to the Fresh Affects podcast. Today's guest is Mayer Hawthorne. Mayer, thanks for joining us. Tell us, I'm not sure you've had a chance to listen to our podcast, but we've been doing a podcast for a couple years now, and we've been, we've been, we've been,

My ears were burning. I think equivalent stereotypes in other ethnic groups would have been nailed down. Maybe they're more sensitive or they're louder about fighting it.

**BILL MOYERS:** Yes, if that ad had had an African American woman in it and said she as born to serve you there would have been an uproar.

**MAYA LIN:** Oh, there would have been an uproar. I think the next generations are going to be inclined to speak out. It's still kind of engrained in me to be very, very polite. I mean, that's how I was raised. It's just not in my nature. I think as the next generations go on, they might be more vocal. So there's that inherently we don't speak out in protest the way we might have to to change it.

Or two there's also that lumping us all together as Asian American. And you've got such diverse cultural groups within that. So I've always felt it was almost a western conceit, that they were just gonna lump together all the rest that didn't fit in anywhere else. But it also means how do you bound together, how do you form community when you've got societies that culturally are not that similar and yet they are lumped together by western eyes.

It does help with certain things because it puts a voice together. But it also can be problematic in galvanizing that identity and that voice. I am surprised that the stereotypes can be so much a part of images we see.

**BILL MOYERS:** What about your two daughters, will all this be behind them? Will they ever be free, liberated, because of what has happened? To not have to think this way anymore? Tell me about it them.

**MAYA LIN:** They're really cute. And what I find fascinating is that we will get asked when we bring them out, my husband and I.

On several occasions, we've been asked, "Are they half?" Which is kind of a very kind of odd-- are they half. Like are they half-- No, they're full children.

**BILL MOYERS:** Your husband's background is?

**MAYA LIN:** He's American Jewish. My daughters look very Caucasian. He's Caucasian. You can tell in the eldest girl's eyes—but it's not recognizable except by someone else. Usually it's a young girl who asks that question, like a 20 year old woman.

And I know that she's looking at them going, "What are you gonna be?" You can relate because they'll go through what she sort of went through a little bit. If both my husband and I had been Chinese they would get asked that exact same question in the cab, "Where are you from?"

Because no matter how long you've been here you're not going to be quite allowed to be American, which is very intriguing about all the Asian races.

**BILL MOYERS:** So you're still living between boundaries.

**MAYA LIN:** Yeah, between worlds. It's a funny place to be. But it's also who you are. You might try to understand it. And I think at this point I embrace it; it's great. You can share a culture and take from both, but it's a balancing act.

**BILL MOYERS:** While I look at the cover of your book "Boundaries," that's your hand around that beautiful giode, which is one of my favorite stones of the earth. I think, she's got the whole world in her hand.

**MAYA LIN:** Nah. I don't know where that cover came from. But as far as just between the design of it I just love. Wherever I go, I collect rocks, and I just think they're so beautiful. Everyone assumes they're so simple. You look at them and think it's a dumb simple water worn rock.

If you ever tried to analyze its shape, it's one of the most complex forms. Think about it, it's every compound curve. There's nothing symmetrical about it. It's about looking at something again and then appreciating it. I mean, nature, is so complex.

**BILL MOYERS:** Maya Lin, thank you very much.

**MAYA LIN:** You're welcome.

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