RAHUL PRASAD: Thank you, Whitnee.

You've just heard from our first two speakers of the day and you can engage with them right now on our live Q+A on Instagram. Find us at @TEDxUofW and send us your questions, comments, and reactions. This is your opportunity to engage with the speakers today.

All of this has been set up by the work of the TEDxUofW team, who have been working together tirelessly, although they've been geographically apart, throughout a global pandemic. They've produced a couple short clips here to show you what they've been doing in the meanwhile.

'WHAT DOES "MEANWHILE" MEAN TO YOU?' – TEDXUOFW TEAM

SUHANI DALAL: Meanwhile is a lot of things. For me, it was this shared humanity in the time sense. So, I thought of different people around the world and around the country, choosing to use the same amount of time we are given differently. And I thought this conference, kind of, symbolized that difference, especially with our different speakers. Each speaker is talking about something that they are passionate about, and something that they have allocated their time toward. And meanwhile, while they're doing this, someone else is doing something else. So, that's kind of what it was.

YOUJEAN CHO: To me, Meanwhile means the time I take to get from event to event, that is often unknown to others, and throughout the little moments of creativity and inspiration that belong only to myself.

SAMANTHA FREEMAN: Meanwhile represents the parts of life that keep happening amongst the chaos. It represents the ingenuity and resiliency of the human spirit.

ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ: Reading my favorite books and just being thankful for the opportunity.

AIKO BEAUCHAMP: Meanwhile, to me, means being in the moment. Not only in regards to time, but also in consideration of the people and the things you surround yourself with.

MARY BONILLA: To me, Meanwhile means finding ways to feel happy and connected in the type of world that is in transition to becoming a better place.

JAKE JUNG: To me, Meanwhile means that even though coronavirus and all of the other crazy events of this past year, have kept us apart. I think, in that meantime, we've still found ways to connect with each other and go on with our daily lives.

JACQUELINE HUNTER: To me, Meanwhile means taking a pause from my own busy life and looking through the lens of someone else, which allows us to develop a better sense of empathy and a deeper understanding of others' perspectives and human interactions in general.

DAISY SCHREIBER: I think about Meanwhile in the context of a story. And so, you think you're just killing time but actually, this is the time when something that you need so you can get to the end and anything happens.

ISHMEET SINGH: I think trying to find Meanwhile is a very open-ended question. Personally, what I feel like in Meanwhile, is what all is happening, not just within you, but also around you, and you being aware of it and then reflecting back on it. Like while everything was happening, what were your thoughts and what your actions were, and, you know, just everything that is happening in the now as well.

ANDREW TANG: To me, Meanwhile means the things that are in between the lines. Usually the stories that don't often get enough attention, because either the media or just general attention is focused elsewhere. And therefore these unique and intimate stories just don't get enough spotlight. And I think, as a team, this year our focus has been on finding these stories and giving them the spotlight they deserve.

RAHUL PRASAD: One more thank you to the TEDx team for all of their work.

> Our third speaker today is a licensed mental health therapist, author, and the President and Founder of the WA Therapy Fund Foundation. She was named one of LinkedIn's Top 20 wellness profiles in 2020 and is the recipient of the

Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Diversity award. She is also one of a few therapists in the United States to specialize in racial trauma. Here is Ashley McGirt.

'UNDERSTANDING AND HEALING FROM RACIAL TRAUMA' – ASHLEY MCGIRT

ASHLEY MCGIRT: Have you ever felt a pain so deep it felt like the world ended? I have many times, and I remember each time vividly. The first time this ever happened I was 9 years old, and I just knew at that moment the world as I knew it was over. I practically saw the globe shatter before me. With it went every moment I planned to share with my grandmother. Every conversation we never had. Every memory we shared and most importantly all the memories like this one that she would never be present for in the flesh. I watched my world crumble in slow motion. But what I didn't know was that the world would eventually repair itself. I would repair myself. I also didn't know that what I was feeling was actually normal.

I was three years old when Rodney King was brutally attacked by the Los Angeles Police Department, following a high-speed chase that he was involved in while intoxicated. George Holliday observed and recorded the incident from his nearby balcony. It was just feet away, where he watched blow after blow come down on an unarmed Black man. Rodney King would make national headlines after George sent in footage from the attack.

I remember seeing and hearing about this attack, every year, for years to come as news outlets remembered this day, as comedians joked and laughed about it to prevent from crying. I remembered this day, as my family talked about it, and warned of what could happen to you as a Black person in America, any person of color here in America, for that matter and even across the globe.

I would later hear the story of Abner Louima who was physically attacked and sexually assaulted by the police. I felt pain and grief for the loss of freedom and equity. I had never really heard the word grief or anger used in the way I was experiencing it. But I grieved all of these incidences in a way I could not articulate. I would later learn another word for all of this. Racial trauma. A word my 9-year-old self did not know. Eventually I would find myself in my school counseling office isolated from my classmates due to my grief.

No one ever explained why I was in there, but I was left with a resonating feeling that there was something wrong with me. That I was different. I knew I was different prior to being dragged to the school counselor to talk about the death of my grandmother. Not to mention I had siblings who looked nothing like me,

from my younger fair skin, curly head baby brother, whose father is white, to my older sister, who was lighter than my brother, despite having two African American parents.

People would always question our shared relationship because of the way we looked. We all came from my mother and I would often find myself explaining this time and time again, to anyone who would question the shared relationship of my siblings, & myself because of our skin tones. More so, as I broke down colorism at 9 years old to a culturally incompetent White school counselor who did not understand the role of grandmother in Black families. This continued to perpetuate the feeling that I didn't belong. That I was an "other" in the very space meant to cultivate healing. It is due in part to these experiences that I set my attorney aspirations to the side to study psychology. At 9 years old I knew there had to be other Black children feeling what I was feeling. I couldn't possibly be the only one. I wanted at that moment to create a space where people like me could be cared for without having to educate their counselor on their culture, because they would not only understand but also be a part of their culture. There are currently less than 5% of Black psychologists and just a few more in social work. The numbers are even smaller for Hispanics, Native Americans, trans counselors & more. Representation matters!

I have experienced many losses in my lifetime, and I have observed the losses of so many others. When I look at the culmination of those losses, and the reasons why many like my grandmother, died early, it can often be linked to systemic issues attributed by racism which led to poor health outcomes for communities of color. When my grandmother passed away my world collapsed, for a moment I knew what the family members of Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Charleena Lyles, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless others felt when they lost a loved one. I know why Erica Garner, the daughter of Eric Garner, died from heart failure, chronic stress. Because of the racial trauma she was exposed to both direct and indirectly.

Each incident of racism, whether explicit or implicit, has a visceral impact not only on the physical body, but on the psyche as well. This holds true for every Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color all around the world! What we experience — when we view images of slain Black bodies, Black people being persecuted, Black bodies being beaten, and Black people being tormented with violations of their civil rights, mostly by white people who make police calls for mundane reasons, like Black people having a BBQ, swimming, going home, being home, selling waters, and even bird watching —all of this is racial trauma.

Racial trauma is a Black doctor being handcuffed outside of his home while offering COVID-19 tests to unhoused people. Racial trauma is watching or hearing about Ahmaud Arbery being gunned down and killed while jogging. Racial trauma is daily microaggressions in the workplace, such as an organization asking the minorities to head the diversity department when they work in IT. These microaggressions are subtle yet pervasive acts of racism.

Racial trauma is like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It causes a physical and emotional reaction to race-based stress. Unlike PTSD, racial trauma is unique in that it involves ongoing individual and collective injuries due to exposure and preexposure to race-based stress.

When an individual becomes exposed to constant, reoccurring race-based stress, they may experience fear, hyper-vigilance, shame, or guilt following an experience of racism. Many individuals also experience confusion, self-blame, headaches, nose bleeds, difficulty sleeping, and neck pain.

Numerous studies have documented the long-lasting negative impacts of racism on mental health.

We are sometimes conditioned to pathologized everything, but It is important to note that RT is not a mental illness or something we diagnose. RT is a normal response to racism just like grief is a normal response to loss. We do not diagnose individuals with grief nor do we dx individuals with RT. The symptoms for both can and do sometimes turn into something like anxiety or depression.

The most common visualization of depression causes society to think of images portraying someone who is typically white. We are more accustomed to seeing a student struggling in school or the struggles of a newly divorced mom. We do not think of the physically disruptive Black boy growing up in the inner city, who just watched his best friend get shot over the weekend. We don't think about the Asian American plagued by the stressors of being a model minority, forced to pursue sciences, when they just want to draw and make beautiful art.

When we think trauma, we think of veterans.

We don't think about the only African American woman in a management position who faces microaggressions everyday she works. I met her, I know her, I am her. I remember the day they took the word "Director" off my door and "forgot" to print my title, that I had worked so hard for on my business cards. I remember each time an individual would walk into my office and assume my

white counterpart in the smaller office next to mine was the director. I remember every time someone asked to see my degree for proof that I held a master's degree from the University of Washington. I remember each time they asked how I got into my position, as a director. But what I remember most is the depression, the anxiety, and the racial trauma that I experienced on a day-to-day basis in the workplace.

Racial trauma is a 9-year-old girl explaining the role of grandmother in Black families and being met with uncomfortable looks, and questions about the diverse makeup of her family. "Wait so who is your father?" While then having their siblings labeled as "½ brother and ½ sister" a term that was a foreign concept in their household and culture. Racial trauma is not always being able to find help in the very profession meant to help you. The dominant portion of society is more likely to receive therapy and other folks get left out, because the profession of psychology and social work has been centered in Eurocentric Whiteness.

Consciously or not our society often perceives "white to be right, so is Heterosexual. Cis Gendered. Able bodied and Slender.

I entered this work out of my own depression, racial trauma, and yearning to heal those who looked like me, because at 9 years old I knew there had to be other Black children feeling what I was feeling. I felt sick. But what I did not know then was that I wasn't sick. The system is sick.

In my experience, the effects of colonization are deeply embedded into the psyches & behaviors of everyone.

As much as I would love for it to happen, racism probably won't end today. For those who are exposed to racial trauma, it is important to limit the amount of information you consume. Take social media breaks and remember to breathe. George Floyd and Eric Garner couldn't breathe because their breath was stolen from them. It's important to take deep belly breaths throughout the day to focus on your own body's needs and help calm your mind.

Going on walks, moving, and eating a balanced diet will also help alleviate the impact of stressors. The body is in a constant state of stress when exposed to racism and racial instances, either directly or indirectly. One way to release that stress is through movement. We must heal our bodies from racial trauma. For those of you who have unconsciously been a part of the problem continue to check your biases, privileges, and work toward healing the world, and creating an anti-racist society.