

RACE IN AMERICA: BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE

AMY GOODMAN TALKS WITH WINONA LADUKE AND ANGELA OH [TRANSCRIPT]

Amy Goodman:

Today we're talking about the issue of race in America, and we're talking beyond black and white. We're joined on the telephone by Angela Oh, who is an attorney, she formerly served on President Clinton's Race Commission and we're joined by Winona LaDuke, who is an Ojibwe activist and a Native American speaker and she is speaking to us from the White Earth Reservation. She also ran for Vice President on the Green Party ticket with Ralph Nader. Why do you think you're not Vice President today, Winona?

Winona LaDuke:

Well, I think we have a lot of challenges in terms of a democracy in this country, in fact, I'm not actually sure that we have a democracy – so I would say that that is foundational to it. The issue of how decisions are made in Washington, and the questions of, if only white men who are over the age of fifty should be in governance – which is obviously the predominance in terms of politics. Those kinds of questions have to do very intimately with race and history in this country.

Amy Goodman:

Talking about white men over fifty, it sounds like a description of the Senate of this country. Angela Oh, there are one hundred Senators – ninety-nine of them white, they are all not black. There's one Native American, Ben Knighthorse Campbell. Why do you think we have that kind of lack of diversity today?

Angela Oh:

I just want to say that I think you have a couple of Asian, I think you have at least Senator Inouye in that group, but I don't think that he's white...

Winona LaDuke:

That's right, yeah...

Angela Oh:

From Hawaii, but what we are dealing with, in this point in history, is a reaction to the progress that has been made in previous decades, right? And at this moment, we are in a situation where the country's decisions, the decisions on behalf of the people, are being made by people who are corporate leaders and military leaders. So, the interests that are going to be addressed are going to be interests that deal with those sectors, I think. Why? In part, I think, it's because that's what they know. Why are other people not at the table? Because they have been able to successfully convince the public that it is not worth it to participate in the political process, you see? So though we have increasing numbers of people of color, and though you have people beginning to have interest in participation, it is a situation where, frankly, if you are black or white in this country, you have

generations of experience in dealing with this particular political process. If you are not, you are just entering this arena by raising your eyes towards this place that we call the United States Congress.

Amy Goodman:

Now you served on the so-called Race Commission of President Clinton. It was much heralded when it was announced in 1997. When you came out with your final report we could hardly find a person from the Commission to speak on it, to say the least, it ended not with much fanfare and we didn't see many results. What happened?

Angela Oh:

Well, I have a vivid memory of the day that we were releasing our final report. There was another press event that was happening across the lawn and that had to do with announcing whether or not impeachment proceedings were to be going forward. The media, at that point, was really not interested in a report that was coming out on the issue of race and racial reconciliation, possibilities and the obstacles, where progress had been made – those issues were just not of interest to the public at that point in history, okay? So the context shifted pretty dramatically during the fifteen months during which the initiative on race was actually live and active. The White House always maintained that they were not going to lose their focus on that, but certainly we all witnessed an overwhelming interest, on the part of many people, in other things that were going on. So, we lost the attention, I think, and over time I think people who were initially hopeful or uncertain about what the President's initiative was going to do, became somewhat bitter. It's the product of many people wanting input, needing to have input, and a mechanism not being in place that could gather that. So it was really quite extraordinary, from my side of the picture, to see what happened because I thought that the staff that was there, and the support that had come from other federal agencies was pretty talented and pretty dedicated and quite extraordinary in their willingness to step in front of an issue that everybody from the outset knew was something that wasn't going to raise any political capital for anyone – it's a tough issue. I had long conversations with the White House about whether or not I would step in, because I knew that once we step in and open this up, it is the kind of subject that everyone has an opinion on – but that opinion is not very well informed. So indeed, one of the things that we were trying to do was to shine a light on the work that had been done by many, many people in looking at where are the schisms, where are the deepest challenges, what are the hardest questions, and what do we know at the end of the 20th Century? And that wasn't enough for the American people. Everybody has an opinion, but it's an opinion often based on bad information, misguided agendas, for there was going to be no resolution. The first day that the initiative was announced the press asked, "So what are you going to do?" Totally missing the point of why the initiative was even opened up.

Amy Goodman:

When Al Gore ran for president he said his first act would be an executive order that would end racial profiling, but he had been in office for over eight years with President Clinton and they hadn't outlawed it. The Race Commission didn't even recommend that – why not?

Angela Oh:

The Race Commission actually did address the issue of racial profiling, we had a whole panel on it, and we specifically talked about the problems that are even tied to sentencing and we addressed sentencing disparities as well, so we did. But, you know, there were so many things that the advisory board and the White House did address...

Amy Goodman:

But let me clarify, you addressed it but you didn't recommend the outlawing of it, is that right?

Angela Oh:

No, no, there was actually in our report we talk about racial profiling as a problem and that the U.S. Attorney's office should really begin to look at whether or not this mechanism is a legitimate mechanism. We have testimony from people that talk about the devastating effect of using this tool. I mean, at a certain point there was a loss of interest in what the conversations were – for many different reasons – and so that information didn't get picked up. But we did address it, and we did have a recommendation around it.

Amy Goodman:

I wanted to ask you, Winona LaDuke, about a very concrete issue that Native Americans have been deeply concerned about for a very long time, and that is the issue of land claims. In the latest news, more than 300,000 American Indians gave a federal judge a detailed court filing based on private historical records asserting that the government had cheated them out of as much as \$137 billion dollars in the last 115 years. The court action marks a significant turn in the largest class action suit ever filed by Native Americans against the federal government. Can you talk about land claims, Native Americans, and racial politics today?

Winona LaDuke:

Yeah, the Cobell suit is what you're talking about. Cobell vs. Norton, it was Cobell vs. Babbett before that, two subsequent administrations have been the defendants in this suit. You know, what we were talking about, native people, our landed people, should not be the poorest people in the country but the richest people in the country – theoretically. Those lands, and assets to those lands, are held in trust by the Department of the Interior and because of a series of bad policies, essentially the Allotment Policy, dividing the lands into individual parcels of land. The assets have been broken into a zillion pieces, and those assets are managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and they pretty much have no idea of the accounting. They haven't accounted for them for a hundred years. So, literally what we have is \$137 billion dollars worth of – and that's not damages – and that's just a conservative assessment by Price-Waterhouse of what is at stake here in terms of money that the BIA and the federal government cannot account for, that are the assets of the poorest community in the country. So if you had someone who was managing your estate and couldn't account for it and you were, like, dying or you were waiting months for your dentures, in just a total difficult situation, but you were actually quite wealthy – you'd be pretty irritated. The money is equivalent to the combined Gross

National Products of Bolivia, Ecuador, Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, and Romania – combined. Fourteen times greater than the annual profits from Wal-Mart's 4400 stores, that is how much money we are talking about that the federal government is keeping from our community and cannot even account for. It's a huge scandal and it absolutely has to do with the issues of colonialism, somebody saying that you are incompetent to manage your estate and therefore we will, and then that person mismanaging your estate grossly. Each subsequent administration, you know, in September the judge held that Secretary Norton along with everyone else had engaged in litigation misconduct, had committed fraud by failing to disclose, fraud by filing false and misleading quarterly status reports. The reality of it is that the federal government treats Indian people like, the issues of race are clearly underlying it, absolute racism in dealing with Indian people and absolute lack of recognition of us - deeming us to be of no value and having no political clout in Washington. That is why the mistreatment is so great. In terms of an entire community of people, I mean, I am one of the unnamed plaintiffs. I am someone whose assets they cannot find.

Amy Goodman:

You recently spoke at a remembrance of Nelak Butler, she's not a name that most people know in this country, though we have heard of the shoot-out at the Pine Ridge Reservation on June 26, 1975. We've heard of Leonard Peltier, who's been in prison more than a quarter of a century and did not get granted clemency by President Clinton. Can you talk about her in the context of American politics and Native American political activism?

Winona LaDuke:

Yeah, my friend and sister, Nelak, passed on on the 26th. She was a huge beacon of light in terms of political activism in the Native American community, but as you said, not well known because, basically, native peoples do not see the light of day in most media, period, except for maybe in the police logs, that is where you will find us or in Time magazine's three-part series on trashy Indian casinos. No substance in terms of breadth of analysis there. Nelak's struggles came to be because she is someone who happened to be in the American Indian movement and happened to be at Oglala on Pine Ridge that fateful day when the FBI decided to descend during the CoIntel-Pro era and get into a firefight and result in the death of two FBI agents and one Indian man named Joe Spence. To have an occurrence like that thirty years ago, it marks the rest of her life. She spent her entire life working on prisoners' cases and trying to keep Indians off of death row, trying to look at issues of racism in border towns whether it's places like White Clay, Nebraska with \$40 million dollars in liquor sales and only 35 people in the town or some incredible figures like that...I think that native people are faced with the circumstance of not only being a race and a political identity of people that the mainstream wishes would go away or did not exist, but in addition to that we are also stuck with other things. We are stuck with the idea of a historic image..

Amy Goodman:

Can you say we were all – you have call waiting so it was clicking out some of your words...?

Winona LaDuke:

Oh, I'm sorry - I can just gab on and on. I don't know how to get rid of those people when they start calling. We are also stuck with the idea that people have a romanticized or a stuck-in-a-museum image of what a native person is supposed to be, so if you do not show up fully-suited in your regalia quite often you are not deemed to be "ethnic enough." Or if you want to shoot something with a gun as opposed to a bow and arrow everybody will be on your case for not really being "Indian enough." We're also in rural areas, where you do not get press, because it's inconvenient for the major media to take a trip four hours out of a metropolitan area to find out why it is that these Indian people are in the situation that they're in. The Cobell case is a perfect example where the vast majority of the plaintiffs are in the most geographically remote parts of the country. Now that case has not seen, you know it's been on ABC, Nightline, and 60 Minutes, but really has not received – being the largest class action law suit of Indian people. Another similar case is the Keepseagle lawsuit which is just like the black farmer's case, denial of Indian farmers of USDA loans; these cases very rarely see the light of day in the media or in policy decisions.

Amy Goodman:

You mentioned how often Native Americans are not talked about unless they show up on police logs and that brings us to a story, speaking of police, as we record this conversation, a former New York City police officer has testified that he wore "black face" on a Labor Day parade float in Queens because he wanted to entertain people, make them laugh and win a trophy. The float that he was on, along with two firefighters and others was called "Black to the Future." At one point in the parade, firefighters and police and others in the parade threw out watermelon to people who were watching the parade and carried fried chicken. One of these three men acted like he was James Byrd and hung off the back of the float, which brings us to a new film that's called "Two Towns of Jasper." But first I wanted to get Angela Oh's comment on this. The reason that this is in the news is that the police officer and firefighters are trying to be reinstated. They were fired after the video of their performance in the Labor Day parade surfaced a few years ago, and now they're saying that there's no reason that they're not suitable to be police and firefighters.

Angela Oh:

Well, in a place like New York, and at this particular point and time, to have that kind of behavior – it really is the strongest proof of their unsuitability to serve in a place like New York. I don't know the particulars there, but just from what you've said, hard to believe that a panel would find pretty strong evidence of their unsuitability for the job. I mean, if we know anything from the various urban implosions that have occurred in these last several decades, in that one of the main reasons things happen is because there's no confidence, low confidence in what's called law enforcement. So, the public trust isn't there. What happens is that gets translated into police brutality and the price paid on the ground level are unnecessary deaths and maiming of people and community and there's really no feeling that there's anything to lose by, basically, destroying the symbols of power, right, at that point combined with a lot of other things. As far as the film, I just

had a chance to see it yesterday - pretty devastating. I thought that it was something that was not particularly remarkable. I mean I see that as, yeah, affirmation of stuff that many people already know is going on way too much in many communities around this country. I mean if you thought that was horrible, you think about the living conditions in Los Angeles County, and some of the projects - there is no affordable housing left anymore. In these projects families cannot, they cannot go outside the doors because law enforcement won't show up. That's what we're told to do, right, if there are problems, call 911? Law enforcement will not show up in most of these places. Why? Because they are afraid. Or the security detail that was there ends up being gone at eight o'clock at night with nobody there to respond at all. I looked at Jasper, and I listened to the voices of the people that were interviewed, and I found the family of Mr. Byrd to be extraordinary. I mean to have to sit through a trial, which apparently they did and be witness to the evidence that was presented to show the extent of the maliciousness and the inhumanity in the behavior and then to walk out and be asked by a bunch of press people "Gee, what did you think?" And for them to respond the way they did, you know, the sister, the wife, the daughter, was quite extraordinary. It was an extraordinary illustration of grace, I thought, as a people. Not that there wasn't sadness and anger and rage, but had they had any other kind of message there would not have been peace in that town.

Amy Goodman:

On the issue of the death penalty, which is often raised by anti-death penalty activists as a real focus of racial disparity... The fact that most people that are on death row and finally executed are people of color and poorer people in this country. How did you feel in the James Byrd case and the death penalty? We heard how the family members felt, in fact, Ross Byrd, James Byrd's son stood in front of Huntsville prison recently protesting the death penalty, even though the death penalty was hailed by many in his father's case as a form of final justice. What are your thoughts on this?

Angela Oh:

I am not a proponent of the death penalty for all the reasons that you have probably covered in other stories about that subject in particular. I am never happy to hear that a man-made system is in a position to make decisions about ending another human being's life. So, for myself, that does not make things better and that does not make things right, in my view – not for us to take a life.

Amy Goodman:

Winona LaDuke, when you followed the James Byrd case and the death penalty issue, what were your thoughts? Did you find yourself conflicted inside, when on one hand you hear that one the murderers is sentenced to death and then on the other hand you hear how the death penalty is used in other cases?

Winona LaDuke:

Well now, I'm not a proponent of the death penalty either. I think that it is wrong for humans to take a life; I think that's the job of the creator. How it is carried out is unjust in this society. Now I do have a lot of issues with that, the heinousness of the crime, that's

where it starts to get more difficult for me, but in the end I come back to the same set of issues.

Amy Goodman:

In this conversation, where we go beyond black and white, how do you see yourselves? Angela Oh, you're a Korean American, Winona LaDuke, you're a Native American. So often the discussion of race in America is framed as black and white, where do you each fit in? Angela Oh, let's begin with you...

Angela Oh:

Well, I see the conditions that we're struggling with today, in this society as a culture that's called, you know, an American culture, frankly, to be the product of predominantly black/white relations. For the good and the bad, there is an understanding because this country grew up together, blacks and whites together, in their mutual struggle and exploitation of the institution of slavery in this country. They have a very clear understanding, such that they don't even need to use the words. In other words, they understand by circumstances, they can look at circumstances and conclusions can be drawn, okay? So, I look at other – often what are called "emerging populations" or "marginal populations" and the way I see us coming into this consciousness in this country about race and what it means to be packaged in a particular way physically... It is coming round to a point where black and white people understand that it is intractable the way that their dualistic vision of life and the world is – it's very Western this dualistic vision – and understanding that the answer might be neither or both and there's no framework politically or socially even on individual levels, for people to understand beyond a dualistic point of view. So you're the other – you're good, you're bad, you're worthy, you're black, you're white, therefore certain things are going to happen when you set up your vision of life that way there's only one possible way for it to end. We experience it about once every twenty years - it's violence. That's the only possible end if that's the only way that you can think. The situation has become so dire, I think, around the world, I'm not just thinking about the U.S., the conditions of the world are such that even in America, what is called America, people are saying "Gee, there might be other ways of seeing life and humanity." See there was a small window of opportunity, and that may close very quickly, even now in the situation we are facing today, and so that openness was there for a moment, and very quickly a few small voices were able to enter the conversation and say maybe it's not just this dualistic paradox – maybe there's something else. And by the way, let's take a look at our behavior. One of the classes I teach is called "Race and American Law" and it looks at the Supreme Court of the United States of America and it looks at how it has answered questions of racial justice, time and time again, from the very beginning of this country, and what Winona LaDuke was saying earlier, so can find those notes in the decisions of the state's Supreme Court. Our best and our brightest, supposedly, to that level of leadership in our society and they say in their decisions "Mr. Elks, even though you meet all the requirements of our county, even though you have gone so far as to say that you will surrender loyalty to your tribe, and you will submit to the authority of the United States government – your submitting is not enough – we have to then accept your surrender." Isn't that remarkable? Or Dred Scott and Sanford, when he says that people who are black are not really human beings,

beings of an "inferior order" is how he put it. So when we really begin to look at where the racism comes from, and you shine a light on these kinds of things and people say "Well how can that be?" That opens up opportunity for a lot more conversation, because of course, the conditions today are very different from when those cases were heard, right? Because the world is getting smaller and smaller in very real terms, so it's not going to be enough to have the force and the ability to impose force at will, it's going to be much deeper, and you know there are ancient cultures that know what those tools are. The United States of America hasn't even begun to touch those.

Amy Goodman:

Part of racial politics is people of different ethnic groups and races pitted against each other. It's been a decade since the Los Angeles uprisings or riots and the two main groups there were African Americans and Korean Americans. What are your thoughts since then?

Angela Oh:

Oh, we live in parallel universes. We occupy the same space, but we don't have the same reality at all – not at all. The daily paper that gets read by the vast majority of ethnic Koreans, who are not born and raised in this country, as I have been, is in-language Korean press, which pretty much focuses on what is happening on the Korean peninsula. The paper that gets read by African Americans is the Sentinel or some other community paper, it's the L.A. Times or something like that, which believe me, the Metro section does not cover the issues that get covered in the Korean Times. So you have people occupying the same space, conducting their lives in seemingly complementary and harmonious ways living in the same community, but they are in different realities. That's why '92 was such a shock for a lot of the small business owners. They knew about this trial, but they didn't really have any clue, many of the immigrant families, about what their piece of that action was – until April 29 – and even then it took a few days for them to understand what happened here. So this is what's happening more and more in places where you got very diverse populations in large urban centers. You have parallel universes operating – really important then for different kinds of tools to be developed and different consciousness to be shaped...

Amy Goodman:

Which also is reflected in the "Two Towns of Jasper" with the white filmmaker for the year and the white community of Jasper and the black filmmaker and the black community of Jasper for that year and then coming together and making this film...

Angela Oh:

You look at the new California media here, you know, and it's this network of hundreds of in-language ethnic press and media and they're doing extraordinary things with the role of media in society because what they have are people that are bilingual and bicultural on staff, so they are reading the news that's coming both ways but they're writing their own stories – their analysis, which is altogether different because it goes much broader than either of the two sources that they're looking at and also beginning to realize that this is a powerful communication channel that nobody's really tapped into yet. And it's been,

what, eight or ten years in the making and it's just starting to be understood as a network within the media world that maybe hasn't been reckoned with yet in a place like California. So, new things are going to start to emerge in places where shifts have already been felt, shifts that, everyone projects for the next forty or fifty years. See I won't be alive when the world that I talk about, when I go out and talk about demographics shifts in this country, I'm not going to be around – I'm forty-seven years old – and I'll be dead when this stuff starts to happen in a big way where it's very evident to everyone, but in places like Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Houston, Georgia, you know, any city, you start seeing the shifts now and it's always the same pattern because we are human beings. We are so predictable. So people want to change? They have to have the courage to do that then.

Amy Goodman:

Well let's talk about change and hope. One of the things that came out of "Two Towns of Jasper," the film about the two communities dealing with the James Byrd lynching or murder, is that people started to communicate and started to talk. Winona LaDuke, what about Native American organizing, what about Native American voices being heard in the mainstream? I don't know if you've had a similar situation, god forbid, a situation like James Byrd, but maybe that's been repeated over and over in U.S. history, but in terms of a whole community focusing on Native Americans and learning about it and learning about the pain of it?

Winona LaDuke:

Well, let me back up a second, because I was really interested in what Angela was saying. I think that the law itself is flawed. Its foundation, you can talk about the Dred Scott decision or pretty much every decision made by the court, you know I don't want to say every decision but the problem is - is that the American legal system is based on the English Common Law system with some modifications, but the foundational issues in that were in the perception that Christian nations had legal rights which superceded non-Christian nations. So, that would mean that issues of colonialism were fermented in the legal institution, that is why Indian land rights are not considered as private property because English Common Law view the private property of Christians, you know, that is essentially why in the constitution itself or the founding fathers themselves were white men who owned property. These are foundational issues that institutionalized racism and flawed the legal institutions of this country... So one of the challenges we face in this millennium is in a just and multicultural society. You must somehow unravel something which is so unjust foundationally from the Christian Eurocentric legal system which justified colonial practices and justified the issues that were raised in Dred Scott, the issues that are avoided in the Cobell vs. Norton case and the fact that one of the big cases that I'm working up here has to do with a sacred site outside the town of Duluth, in northern Minnesota, and the fact that everyone can support native free exercise of religion and a site that is sacred to us, that would be the equivalent of Mt. Sinai to the Ojibwe people, which is our most significant mountain. But some developer wants to put a golf course on it... Now would they put a golf course on Mt. Sinai, I would have to check I don't think so though! We wouldn't put, you know we have worse going on around us... you know the unequal recognition and validity of people who are of

different races, who are of different religious practices, who are not from the culture which has crafted the laws and who has crafted the institutions of this society – so that is a challenge. Now how we get from where we are now to there, that is a long stretch. These issues of the dialogue that is in "Two Towns of Jasper," of this horrific, this horrific incident that occurred which is kind of the epitome of what is the worst of race relations, and the hatred and the whipping frenzy of that hatred that exists, but that so much exists at different levels and below the surface. I see a Native community working on that all the time, trying to find the address with border towns that have built their entire economies off selling Indians liquor, stealing from the land treaties resources, taking Indian money and treating Indians like second-class citizens. That would be a good portion of rural America, that joins Indian communities, that hates Indians and used to spit on them and now goes to their casinos and hates Indians even worse. I'm doing racism work in those communities, trying to figure out how in this generation, hopefully more exposed, for all that I hate American media, perhaps more exposed because of cases like that in Jasper, because of cases like the cops in New York, the sexually abusive priests, the issues are more in the open. Right now, Amy, I'm teaching a class in creative writing to a bunch of high school students in pretty much a redneck border town who do not even know what kinds of Indians we are. They don't know where Ojibwe is and some of them live on the reservation. It's bad, but you start someplace and you know that they're like that because their parents are worse – so you have to somehow get the poison out of the system.

Amy Goodman:

And how do you do it as a teacher?

Winona LaDuke:

Well, I'm in there and I'm actually enjoying myself. I mean I'm talking about fiction writing, so that's sort of a segue into it, but I mean describing Trent Lott, and this picture of him on Time magazine and this really interesting discussion. Some of them were like, "Well you know, it looks like he was truthful." Trying to get these students to talk about the picture and then talk about the politics around it. So we do that, and then what we do is we organize by example, that's what we do in our community. I kinda say sometimes that talk is cheap - you gotta have the talk, you gotta have the process - but example is even better. We bring people into our community and we work to wrangle invitations into other people's communities to show on some of these issues and to have people see that we are battling on protecting our wild rights from being patented and genetically modified and that is an issue that most Minnesotans can support, opposing big energy companies by putting up wind turbines. We are fighting globalization by restoring our food stocks and supporting local agriculture including that of small farmers in our area. So, that is what I would say is the approach I take.

Amy Goodman:

Angela Oh - Trent Lott. Winona LaDuke raised him and he remains a leader of the Senate today, head of the Senate Rules Committee, even if he was removed as Senate majority leader saying perhaps the country would have been better off if in 1948 a segregationist president had been elected. How did you feel about that?

Angela Oh:

I wrote a piece for the L.A. Times and the Washington Post and Asianavenue.com, I just found that to be pretty extraordinary that at the time that I wrote I thought that he is not going to lose his job. Then I saw that he was saying that he was going to quit if he didn't have his position as Majority Leader, which I thought was rather extraordinary that he would come back with that. Then I thought, no, there's no way he would ever quit. Then the next thing I know, this Bill Frist is sitting in for Trent Lott, and of course Trent Lott isn't going to quit because if he were to do that then the Senate Majority would shift and a Democrat would probably get that seat. You play all this stuff out and you see that "Oh my god, I'm being pulled right into that dynamic," right? I'm watching this news, and I'm sort of playing this chess game that gets played there all the time, and I have to resist and I have to stop myself. It was, not a surprise again, I mean anybody that has been working in this area is not going to be surprised that a Trent Lott is going to stay in a powerful position – with this particular constellation of circumstances at this moment in time. This year is all about the reelection of George W. Bush, and we're not going to have engagements until later in this year or in 2004 where you'd be sure that the American people are not going to want to switch leadership in the middle of actual engagement, but we're using the preparation for that just as we did in World War II to start dismantling all kinds of steps that have been taken in, yes, what would be called a less than perfect system to be nice about it. Civil rights, civil liberties, the U.S. Patriot Act passes in record time and nobody knows about it and there's literally no debate about it, there's one dissenting vote. I had my students last quarter focus their final issue memorandum on that act – pick any part of the 324 pages that bugs you and write about it. What about that bothers you? The first conversation we had after the assignment was given out was, "Oh my god, when did this law pass?" And these are people in universities! So the person on the street that maybe or maybe doesn't pick up the newspaper and maybe or maybe doesn't watch the news at night – may or may not focus in the fact that law enforcement can come in and search your house when we don't have to give you a search warrant for ninety days if they deem it a possible compromise of national security and then even after the ninety days they don't have to give you a search warrant because maybe it would compromise national security for them to give it to you ninety days later. By the way, all your student information, if you're an international student is now accessible. All your library activity is accessible; your activity on the Internet is accessible – wholesale. We are setting up an access system, total information access. The federal government is doing this. Do we hear about this? Is anyone saying anything about this? The "leadership" ... I have to apologize. I have a class waiting for me and I need to leave.

Amy Goodman:

Well, I thank you both very much for joining us for this conversation about going beyond race, going beyond black and white. Angela Oh, joining us from University of California at Irvine and Winona LaDuke, Ojibwe environmental activist and Native American leader joining us from the White Earth reservation in Minnesota. Thank you so much.