

Princess Bass-Mason Transcript (Film Crew Interviews)

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Princess: [00:00:11] Ne naniha Princess Bass Mason. Ne nanamenee Tokko Patti tease Klamath Falls naite. Ne nakkam Portland Oregon. Hi, my name is Princess Bass Mason. I am from the Klamath Falls tribe. I live in Portland, Oregon. So, I am Princess Bass Mason, I am Klamath and Western Shoshone. I am enrolled Klamath, but I would say I'm more culturally Western Shoshone just because I was allowed to, or I had the privilege to, attend language immersion classes in Klamath Falls. Um, Western Shoshone, so I have more of that heritage, I would say.

Kunu: [00:00:43] [What is] your relation to Eugene-Springfield area, right? Springfield area.

Princess: [00:00:48] Um, yeah, so I went to the University of Oregon for undergrad, and I recently graduated fall 2023 with a B.A. So that's kind of how I'm related, at relation, in business in the Eugene Springfield area.

Um, my last year of undergrad, I became pretty close with Katherine Wilson. She's a filmmaker and she's my mentor and, uh, she offered me a spot on her filmmaking internship. And I made the Klamath Modoc Yahooskin language documentary, or the KlaMoYa Klamath languages documentary. And that's kind of how I started getting into film stuff.

Currently, I am studying for the LSAT and applying to law school—round two, guys! So hopefully we'll, we'll get in [laughs]. Um, but I'm ultimately really interested in language revitalization, specifically Western Shoshone and the Klamath languages. As I mentioned, I had language immersion classes for Western Shoshone, so, or newe taikwappeh.

Um, so I'm more experienced with that and I have more focus, um, on that, but I'm also coming to learn more about the Klamath language revitalization efforts. I'm really excited to begin Klamath language classes. But, um, that's like my passion project. That's something that I'm going to do for my whole life.

But again, I said, I'm interested in law fields, um, and I like doing film projects and writing on the side. Um, when I was growing up in Portland, um, although we went to community events that, like, NAYA

[Native American Youth and Family Center] held, or stuff like that. My family was experiencing a lot of, uh, instability, I would say. We were really focused inwards at that time.

And so even though, of course, like, we know we're Native and we have these practices, we weren't always, like, super focused on it. And so I think when I got older, into the high school age, I was able to go to language immersion classes in the Nevada area and get in touch with my, um, Western Shoshone side from my mom and through my grandpa. Um, he's, yeah. So that's how I, so I think I'm really starting to be able to embrace my culture from that kind of side and um, that's why I think it's kind of funny, like, oh, I am enrolled in an Oregon tribe, but I know a little bit less [about that] and that's why right now I'm trying to get into the language classes and stuff like that.

So I think, I mean, obviously I'm a community member. I'm someone that's being educated and I intend to, like, bring that back to the communities that I belong to but...Yeah. That's definitely why I'm, like, interested in, um, all tribes being able to reconnect with their culture and their language. I think it's not just like, oh, I only want the Western Shoshone or the Klamaths to, like, start speaking again. It's not like [that]—I want all Oregon tribes, I want every Native person to be able to reconnect with their roots, and it's so important that they do. I think it's, um, really helped and healed parts of me that I didn't even know was like, dang... Um, but yeah, so like, that's also why I was interested in this project, because I think any opportunity to get the Indigenous perspective out there is something that should be happening.

Kunu: [00:04:27] What's the importance of hospitality during interviews and bringing gifts in exchange for knowledge and, um, in the Native community?

Princess: Yeah, I say from the Native perspective, it's a social norm. It's like a tradition. Um, and I wouldn't necessarily say that it's something I followed a thousand percent [in the past]. Um, like I mentioned before, I always knew that I was Native and we were always practicing that, but not necessarily, um, tribally specific.

And I think even like last year or the year before, um, I didn't have either the monetary resources or the knowledge, like, the best practices to give, um, rolling tobacco or, uh, some sort of food. So I think when you have the resources to do it, the best thing is to. It's just showing your appreciation for either a knowledge exchange or for that person's time.

And, um, that's why I think it's very important to do. And it also sets you apart. Because I'm coming to the interview as a Native person, and you're coming to the interview as a Native person. And it always feels good to be able to practice, um, a shared tradition. And sometimes the tradition is like a pan-Indian tradition, like kind of how like pow-wows are a little bit pan-Indian, but they're like an opportunity for all of these different tribal communities to come together.

Um, yeah, but I don't know, for my family, when I was, like, learning more of my culture and stuff, like, the value of giving a gift and, like, having hospitality in certain circumstances is really important. So,

maybe a more traditional gift would be like some tobacco or some traditional food. Um, that's not necessarily what the film crew has gotten for the interviewees that we interviewed.

Um, but you know, we still got them gifts, and they still really appreciated it. And I can tell that they appreciated it. Because their eyes would light up when we would give it to them. And I think they were, I don't know if taken aback would be the correct phrasing. But, um, surprised in a good way. But I think it's a practice where, you know, we're seeing each other.

As a Native film crew, getting gifts and offering hospitality for the people that we interview is really important because not only are they seeing our indigeneity, but we're also seeing their indigeneity. And that's really important and cannot be understated. And additionally, um, I think it's important that I'm adding this portion to the Illumination Project of 2024-2025, because if I'm not advocating for it, if the film crew's not advocating for it, is this something that is just going to be ignored or not acknowledged? You know, the behind the scenes work is just as important as the actual [finished product]. The lack of understanding, um, of the gift giving and hospitality is a teachable moment.

I think of it as like, it's okay that you don't understand in this moment, because before, you didn't have the prior knowledge. But, oh, this is the protocol for when you're conducting interviews. This is a really important protocol to respect when you're conducting interviews or, um, meeting and exchanging knowledge with elders, specifically—and also middle aged Natives and younger Natives—but I think it's most important to respect and practice traditions and social norms with elders. Because that's probably stuff that they grew up with and it's really important that we're continuing to uphold those traditions and social norms and we're teaching it to the younger people.

Currently packaging the gifts for the interviewees for the Illumination project of the 2024-2025 year. And I just also wanted to show that any gifts that you do give do not necessarily have to be expensive.

So this is a candle, and this is a candle. This is some chocolates, and then some teas, um, assorted teas, and then here is some rolling tobacco for prayer. So all together, um, not very expensive.

I would love to thank a few people, one of them would be Savon for allowing me to borrow their camera rig to get these interviews done. They are so kind, and without them, um, this film series wouldn't be possible. I'd also love to thank my friend Pektason for hosting me in Eugene when I had to stay over for a couple days in a row. I'd also like to thank Hannah for hosting me as well, and I would also love to thank my family for supporting my more artistic side, as well as my mentor Kiya for getting me into film.

I would also love to thank everyone that we interviewed. Um, thank you for traveling and thank you for being open and willing to be interviewed for us to even do the exhibit. I would also like to thank the Springfield Museum and their staff for being very supportive and open-minded. I would also like to thank the NASU Many Nations Longhouse at the University of Oregon as well as the NASU Longhouse at Lane Community College for letting us conduct our interviews.

There. We appreciate it so much. Ashinza Mama Interviews Boina. Thank you for watching the interviews. I appreciate it a lot. And I hope that you got to learn some stuff and gain some insight. Um, yeah. Um, nabishai.