

# Kim and Yen Broomfield Out Lou...rtual (2024-02-22 14\_34 GMT-7)

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:02

David:

Well, Kim and Yen, thank you very much for meeting with me today. I'd love for you to just start by introducing yourselves and maybe just sharing a little bit more about yourselves.

00:12

Kim:

Okay, I'm Kim Touysinhthphonexay. Originally Kimbo Cook Nettleton, born in Connecticut. My family is very New England, and I ended up going to college at Yale and meeting Yen there. And then we did graduate school work in Pennsylvania, and from, in geology, and I got a PhD in geology and a Masters in Stats. And from there I got hired by an oil company in Texas, and worked for them for 13 years, mostly in statistical tools for geologists for oil exploration, and then ended up with virtual reality experience, which when BP bought Arco in the year 2000, that was outsourced to CU Boulder. And so that's what brought me up to Colorado in 2000, and I was aiming, I was working in Boulder and aiming to live in Boulder, but I found you don't move from Texas to Boulder in one hop. The houses were about three times more expensive. And so I kept looking farther and farther out. And finally Broomfield, we ended up finding a beautiful house on a beautiful piece of land next to a park that was only twice as expensive. So yeah, so that, and at the time our two girls were in second and fifth grade. So just about to go into third and sixth, and we ended up coming to Broomfield and they went to Aspen Creek the year that Aspen Creek opened.

David:

Oh yeah.

Kim:

A little (inaudible) construction extended into the school year. And so, you know we ended up actually chipping in and then helping get the school ready for the kiddos. And that was sort of how we, we started in Broomfield. It, you know, it wasn't perhaps our first choice when we came, but we've now been here for 23 and a half years and we've made pretty deep connections with the community and with people in the community. So, so that's me. Now Yen.

02:34

Yen.

Hi, my name is Yen Touysinhthphonexay. I'm a native of Laos. I came to the US in 1973, supposedly for just one year, and ended up staying beyond that. So I came in '73, spent a year in Connecticut, went to a small private school there. And in the process all my classmates were applying to college that, that Fall, and they encouraged me to do the same thing, you know, apply to college along with them and went on college visit trips with their parents. That was really great because I was staying with a host family. And as it turned out, I ended up getting accepted at Yale University with full scholarship for four years. So I never ended up going back to Laos. So at Yale I majored in geology, and that's where I met Kim, who became my wife. So after graduation from Yale, I ended up going to grad school at Penn State, where I got a Masters in Geochemistry Mineralogy, and did some further, you know, post Masters work, but didn't end up finishing a PhD. We basically ended up, Kim and I ended up moving to Texas when she got a job with the oil company. And so, you know, pretty much then the story became sort of parallel. So we came up to Colorado. Kim, Kim had the job at CU and I said, well, you know, you're gonna be doing a lot of traveling, so I'll just stay home with the girls. So actually was a stay-at-home dad for about four years. And then Kim's job at the university ended. And at that point, I said well, you know, I guess it's time for me to get back on the job market. So I ended up getting a position up in Boulder with a small research company there. And that, that's where, you know, we came and ended up living in Broomfield and all that.

04:46

Kim:

Mmm-hmm. And then, the story that I shared with you, Dave, 2006 was pretty momentous because I, in January 2006, I landed my dream job as a data analyst for marketing after three years of sort of hit or miss searching for jobs, of pursuing all different options, and finally landing one that worked for me. And so at that time both of us were working - Yen in Boulder and me downtown Denver. And yeah, the snowstorm hit and we, we had an adventure getting back to Broomfield. Yay, yay for little Target. It was, you can't go wrong with a place where you can get lunch, and a sled, and rope, and a gallon of milk, and start walking home through three feet of snow.

David:

Wow. Wow.

Kim:

So that was probably our, our biggest adventure in Broomfield.

David:

Love that.

Kim:

We've had some since. And then, yeah, pretty much, we raised our two girls here. They went through Aspen Creek, and then Broomfield High School, and then both ended up at Colorado College.

Yen:  
Colorado Springs.

Kim:  
In Colorado Springs. And, and yeah, our, we kept on working for various companies, Yen's still in Boulder with a startup in clean chemistry in Boulder, doing water clarification and, and purification research. And I still was doing the statistical analysis, now for a company based in Arkansas, so I eventually became home based, very home based, and decided to retire just before the pandemic hit, and was president of the Broomfield Art Guild for about three years. And you know, fully explored, you know, what if I'm not a data analyst anymore, what if I'm an artist and get to lead a group. That was a lot of fun. But then I finally decided, okay, enough fun, time to find my replacement. So I did. So I'm still a member of the group and still doing art and doing stuff like that, but I'm also, you know, getting out on the bike with Yen and exploring the Broomfield out, open space trails, and we're traveling. We now have grand, a grandchild, and another on the way in Washington. So I've been spending a lot of time helping my, my older daughter's family out when her husband travels for work. So that's . . .

07:41

David:  
So does your younger daughter live in the area, or is . . .

07:46

Kim:  
No, she for years has lived in New York, which is sort of funny, because I spent my whole life avoiding cities and she just took to it. So she and her long term boyfriend, whose parents live in Denver, ended up in Brooklyn, working in Manhattan for various companies. And at the time of the pandemic, just as the pandemic hit, you know, New York was sort of the epicenter when it first started.

David:  
I remember that.

Kim:  
And Laura's boyfriend, Max, happened to be on a business trip in Denver when the pandemic hit. So he stayed put. So that left Laura by herself in Brooklyn.

David:  
Oh wow.

Kim:  
And I remember her calling me in the very early days of the pandemic, like mid March, Mom, can

08:36

I come home?

Yen:

They were about to shut down New York.

Kim:

Yeah, they were

08:39

were about to shut down York, I said yes, but if you're gonna do it, do it fast. You know, do it before they shut the doors. So she did, she, she closed down her apartment. And it was sort of interesting, because she, she got herself a lockbox for her little apartment. And she got onto a plane and she came here and she lived here for about nine months in our, in our house, you know, taking over her bedroom and my other daughter's bedroom as her home office. And meanwhile, the lockbox back in New York enabled some of her New York based friends who needed to isolate, or get away completely . . .

David:

Oh, yeah.

Kim:

. . . to have a little extra space. So she had a steady stream of friends, basically making use of her space in New York while she wasn't there. And then in, in the Fall of 2020, she and Max decided they were going to pursue an opportunity for her to run a branch of her company, which is a New York based PR firm, from Los Angeles.

David:

Oh, wow.

Kim:

So they moved to LA. So they've been in LA for the past three, three and a half years. And in fact last night they finally closed on an, a tiny little LA house.

David:

Oh my.

Kim:

You know, 800 square feet for a million dollars. That's what you do.

David:

Oh my goodness.

Kim:

And they just closed last night.

Yen

Yeah.

David:  
Wos.

Kim:  
So she's in LA. So I have one in Washington and one in LA.

10:19

Dave:

Congratulation to her. Yeah. And so you, were with your, with your, I remember one time we were chatting about some of the things that you like to do with your grandchild in Washington, and having like a little kind of a diary where you illustrate pieces, that sort of thing.

Kim:  
Yeah.

David:

And it was just really beautiful. And also just, it seemed like a wonderful kind of educational tool, that sort of thing. I wonder if you could just describe that a little bit more.

10:46

Kim:

Sure. I was inspired by a book called *Draw your Life*. And it was written by an artist whp decided to create a little snapshot, you know, highlights of the day type journal, and she lived in the city, in Brooklyn, in fact. And you would just draw little things that inspired her. And so while I was spending a lot of time helping my daughter with my grandson, who at the time was about a year and a half, going, so a year and a half to two and a half, that timeframe, I realized I didn't have time for major art projects. But I could take lots of pictures, take notes in my journal, and carve out about an hour a day to illustrate some of the little moments that I captured. And it was, it was perfect for that time, that age frame. You know, he was just interested in everything and exploring everything and full of wonder and just, you know, things like going out in the rain and finding worms, and playing with blocks and building little towers and pretending they were being attacked by dragons. And, you know, just all these cute and charming things and some of the expressions and the words he used. And so what was fun was I had these little illustrations, but then I had a lot of, a lot of writing to illustrate the illustrations as well. And so page by page, I've built up this journal until I got about 25 pages drawn. And I still have notes for more, but I'm way behind now, so, in keeping it up. And I've realized it was, it was a precious moment in time, from about a year and a half to two and a half where that was just perfect. Now that he's almost three, his world moves much too fast to capture. You know, too many words, too many actions, and he's changing activities every five minutes. So it's really hard to do that. But for a very precious span of time. it was a perfect way to capture the little moments. And even now when I sit down with him with a book, he enjoys looking at all the stuff, I don't think he directly remembers . . .

David:  
Yeah.

Kim:

. . . but he enjoys looking at the little vignettes and the little stories.

13:22

David:

Yeah, yeah, that's really neat. I, I think that's so fascinating. Yen, I had a question for you, which is, what were maybe your im, kind of first impressions coming to Broomfield, having been, you know, in Connecticut and then Texas and you know, Laos before that. What was, what was your kind of impression of Broomfield coming here?

13:44

Yen:

Well, obviously it was a very interesting change of scenery, you know, coming from having landed in Connecticut, was there for five years, and moved to Pennsylvania, and then Texas and then coming up here. You know, I actually had come to Colorado on a business trip. One year when there was a huge Spring storm, snowstorm, in fact, I flew into Stapleton, that's how old that was.

David:

Oh, yeah.

Yen:

So you know, I went from Stapleton straight to Golden because the meeting was at School of Mines, and all I could remember was, there's so much snow and the car rental guy says, you gotta be the last guy out of here, drive as fast as you can because they're shutting down I-70.

Dave: Oh, my goodness.

Yen:

So I got to Golden, and you know, the snow was about two feet deep. I had actually walked from my hotel to the nearest restaurant that was open. So you know, it was really cool because, you know, when you're in Texas where we were, outside of Dallas, it's all flat.

David:

Right.

Yen:

So coming to Colorado it was, wow, you know this is really cool, the mountain ranges and this and that, and you know, when, when we had the opportunity to come, move up here, come live here, that was, that was awesome, that was as good an ask as I could get.

David:

That's wonderful.

15:16

Kim:

And we dove right in. You know, when we were in Texas Yen ran a karate school, and I did figure skating, and we figured we would continue that. And we totally changed. It made much more sense to be outside. And so we signed the kids up for ski lessons . . .

Yen:

Eldora.

Kim:

. . . at Eldora (inaudible) most weekends, and after skiing, we picked up snowboarding, and, and then we, we took the kids hiking as much as we could. And they accused us of child abuse when we were hiking around Chautauqua through the Ponderosa forests. And I said, okay, this is not child abuse, plus I have chocolate. And their favorite parts actually were when the trail got really hard. And I thought ooh, maybe we did take on too much. But their favorite part was, oh what's the deal where's the what's the cave?

16:18

Yen: Mallory, Mallory Cave.

16:21

Kim:

Mallory Cave. It's pretty shut down now, but there is a delightful rock scramble at the end. And so having the, the middle schoolers just charge up and really challenging themselves to scramble up the rocks, and in and out of the, you know, the Flatirons, that was their favorite part. So that was sort of our early days, you know, really making an effort to get out there and take lots of pictures and enjoy the outside. And, you know, we dreamed of taking them to all the state parks and national parks. And we did pretty well with the national parks; not so well with the state Parks. And so it's almost like now Yen and I have that still on our bucket list.

17:06

Yen:

Yeah, well you know, the one thing I really appreciated was all the outdoor activities I could do here in Colorado.

David:

Right.

Yen:

The places I've lived before, I was too busy with school or whatever.

Kim:

Or it was just too hot.

Yen: Yeah, you couldn't do a whole lot in Texas. So, you know, coming up here, the opportunity to be outside was just fabulous. So this, really we did everything we could to avoid being indoors, like you'll go into a skating rink or, you know, be inside doing karate or something. So yeah, we picked up a lot more outdoor stuff.

17:39

Kim:

And we really got into biking . . .

Yen:

Cycling.

Kim:

Trail biking.

Kim:

And Yen commuted to Boulder quite a bit using a bike.

Yen:

Yep.

17:53

Yeah, so the offshoot of you know, commuting by bike when the weather permits to my job in Boulder, has led to now riding more, more of an off road mountain bike on the trails around here. And yeah, the, I often, you can often find me in the Carolyn Holmberg Preserve Space, because that . . .

David:

Oh yes.

Yen:

(inaudible). I do a lot of that. Yeah.

18:18

Dave:

Nice. Nice. And I guess I'm curious too, maybe just what are some changes you've seen in Broomfield over time, since you know, the early 2000's up 'til, up 'til now, and maybe what are some positive things or some things maybe you wish were a little different, that sort of, that sort of thing?

18:43

Yen:

Well, when we got here, the mall off 36, it was brand new.

David:

Yes.



Yen:

You know, and so it's sort of a shame to see how it's sort of gone downhill. But yeah, at least some of the changes there, by putting apartments and such and turning this parking lot to living space, you know, makes a lot of sense. So that's a real plus.

19:10

Kim:

And of course Avista didn't really exist back then.

Yen:

Yeah.

Kim:

So that, that's been positive. We're still waiting for the Broomfield Town Center to happen.

David:

Oh yes.

Kim:

We're really hopeful. I'm very excited. I love watersports, like paddleboarding and kayaking, and I'm, would be really excited to have a pond / lake in the center of Broomfield that would allow people to do that right there. That would be awesome. So I'm still, still waiting and hoping for that. Other than that, we probably haven't seen or noticed as much change in Broomfield as some people just because we came in 2000, which is when the big change had just happened, you know, Brooomfield had just become a city and county, and a lot of people had come in. And so we were part of that influx. And so other than just, you know, seeing Broomfield continue to expand to the north, which we don't get up that way all that often, we probably haven't seen as much change as some of the people who were here in the 80's and 90's . . .

Dave:

Mmm-hmm.

Kim:

. . . have been through.

David:

Right, right. Interesting.

Kim:

The trees have gotten bigger.

David:

Yes.

Kim:

You know, our backyard was basically shrubs, shrubs and grass. And now we definitely have trees. And it's almost time to redo stuff and we're, we're beginning to pay serious attention to some of the garden in a box and the Xeriscape classes that are being offered, and perhaps bring somebody in to rethink, you know, our landscaping and turn it more into a Colorado meadow forest fringe vibe instead of the usual grass that you have to mow and flowers that you plant, and sometimes they work and sometimes they don't.

21:17

Dave:

Yeah. Absolutely. No, that makes sense. Kim, I wonder if you could share maybe just a little bit more about the, maybe importance or the value of a group like the Broomfield Art Guild and kind of how that group functions in the community. Maybe just, just a little, just share a little bit more about that. I think it'd be interesting to hear.

21:39

Kim:

Mmm-hmm. Right. Well the Broomfield Art Guild is a group that gets together once a month and, and then some other times as, as well, you know, for plein air or just getting together to have fun. They also provide a mechanism for people not only to get together and meet and mingle with other artists, but also to show their work. We, we show work pretty regularly, like every other month at the Broomfield Community Center, and at monthly at I Pie, and monthly at the City and County office building. I'm trying to think where else. Oh, and the library sometimes.

David:

Yeah.

Kim:

And we have an annual member art show. I think so, so that for a lot of people is, is very important, you know, just to show the community - yes, we have artists here in Broomfield. One of my missions and values is not so much to focus on the professional aspects of the art, but more on the joy of doing it and the joy of doing it with other people.

David:

Mmm-hmm.

Kim:

You know, just getting together and having an art play day, for example. And so when I was head of the Broomfield Art Guild, of course we were hampered a little bit by, it was full COVID, and so we were shut down.

David:

Right.

Kim:

But I got the, I, I realized that some of our members were no longer doing any art, and they were quite depressed. And so we, we had to have all our meetings on Zoom. And so I thought, okay, let's have a monthly challenge. And you didn't have to do your homework. But if you didn't do your homework, you had to have a creative excuse. And so . . .

David:

That's funny.

Kim:

. . . (inaudible) of art sharing, where everybody got to have a minute to show something that they were excited about. And we started off by having a monthly theme. Since then we've dropped the monthly theme, and it's just, you know, bring in something that you are excited about. And everybody goes, yay. And it's huge, because everybody, whether you're a beginner or you've been doing it a long time, everybody gets to stand up, say who they are, say what they like to do, show something, explain why they're excited about it, and it really helps everybody feel valued and part of the group. And so that's one of my successes, we're still doing that even though I'm no longer president of the group. In terms of the art play days, it's been a little bit more of a challenge to get other people to say yes, this is a priority for me. There are some people who are much more focused on, well I do art and therefore I want to sell it and how am I going to do that? And, or I want to enter a show and win a prize. And the problem is, if you just focus on selling and winning prizes, then it becomes somewhat competitive. And I don't feel that that is inclusive enough. And so I would still like to swing us more towards the getting together for the fun of it, the doing things as a team for the fun of it, and also doing something for the community. And that's why, since 2005, I've continued to be active as a specialty painter for Just After Midnight, otherwise known as JAM, and that is Broomfield High School's after prom party. It's designed to keep the kids from prom until 4am in a safe space. So we basically have a secret theme every year, and redecorate the high school with murals and all sorts of painted objects. And we plan and paint and create, basically nine months of the year. And then to a day and a half before Jam, we get hundreds of parent volunteers and community volunteers to come in and put all this stuff up. And then we have an open house and show the public what we did, while the kids are at prom, and then the kids come in from prom, and they have this huge party. So it's this decorated space, places to see and explore, and then we have free food, free drinks, non alcoholic, prizes, games, and so it's been a huge success. And I forget when it started, maybe in the 80s, I'm not sure. But it's been, it's been 30 plus years.

David:

That's amazing.

Kim:

And I've been doing it for 15. And it's just, it's so much fun to be part of a team where, you know, somebody says I'll take this big space, like a gym, and I have this vision, and we're going to turn it into Candyland. And now we come up with all the murals and props that are appropriate for Candyland. And, you know, start creating. And so every year there's, there's some sort of theme. And then every room has a different interpretation of that theme. We all pull it together, we keep it all secret from the

kids until the night of. And that's an example of, that's creative and artistic. And there are people you know, working on the prizes, working on the food, working on the fundraising, all that kind of stuff, plus the artistry. But a lot of people come in, Oh, I've never painted before. And so somebody like me will not only paint but it will also coach and say, Okay, well you're gonna do this mural, I suggest that you do this part first, and then that part and then add in this and, oh, why don't you use a scruffy brush or this sponge or, you know, wax paper. Wax paper, we've used a lot this year. It's something I learned in one of my watercolor classes. And it's amazing what you can do with crumpled wax paper, dipped in acrylic paint or house paint and scraped across a mural. You can make it look like water, you can look, make it look like tree branches, you can do all sorts of things. And, and that has brought me a lot of joy. You know, just being part of a creative team and working for something that we feel is so important for the kids of Broomfield.

28:29

Dave: Absolutely What a cool project. I really, well, yeah, it's just amazing pulling all those people together, and I love how you described too, it's not just about the end product, it's about the coaching and people learning new skills, and that . . .

28:43

Kim:

Exactly. I can't even remember what brought me into it in 2005, I just sort of heard about it and wandered in off the street. And they said, Can you paint? I said, Sure. Had I ever painted before? I've drawn stuff, I've painted houses. But then they said, Can you do people? Can you do shading? Sure, why not? You just have to be bold enough to jump in and try.

29:11

Dave:

Sometimes just the will to say yes. And then to dive in.

Kim:

Yes, I'll figure it out.

29:17

Yen:

So one of the things Kim has gotten out of this, she's now the specialist for . . .

29:25

Kim:

Furry animals.

Yen:

Yeah, and faces, and expressions.

Kim:

And faces. And reptiles. I've done a lot of reptiles. And rocks, rocks and leaves.

29:38

Yen:Kim: All the shading stuff. The subtle shading to make it look dimensional.

29:42

David:

Right.

Kim:

Well I'm really good at looking at a tiny photograph and figuring out how to stretch it out to a big mural.

29:48

Dave:

Yeah, that, I mean, that's a skill for sure, figuring out those pieces and making it look dimensional and . . . that's amazing. So I had a question, Yen. Have you, do you visit your family in Laos at all? Or do you have opportunity just to go there?

30:05

Yen:

No, unfortunately not. I left in '73 and they, they basically also left because of the Communist takeover. There was a huge exodus all over Southeast Asia. And they ended up in France in 1977- 78. So they actually had to essentially reestablish themselves in France. So the visits I've made is to France.

David:

Okay.

Yen:

To, go see them. But as far as, you know, classmates and other people that I have, many, many of them ended up overseas. A whole bunch ended up in France, of course, because we're all French educated. And there's a large group also in Australia.

30:54

Kim:

And then some in the US.

30:56

Yen:

Yeah: Only a few in the US, scattered around.

31:01

Dave:

Yeah, interesting. That's kind of a bit of a, I guess you call it like a diaspora, like spreading out of people . . .

Yen:  
Mmm-hmm.

David:  
. . . that happened in the wake of the Communist takeover. Yeah. All right. So can you tell me just a little bit more like, if you could envision like the best Broomfield of the future, what does, what does Broomfield in the future look like to you?

31:30

Yen:  
Well, let's see. I think the biggest thing is, we need something in the center of town, you know, this, this idea of a downtown is, is really good, because we have to have a center to pull everybody in. Because right now, what I'm finding is a lot of people go, you know, to the next town over for whatever, you know, restaurants or entertainment and such. And having, you know, a central, central spot would be really nice. I don't know what else we can build. I mean, it seems like since we've been here, things are getting built out pretty well. I mean, I remember moving here and Aspen Creek, you know, K to 8 was the only thing in the fields. And everything else was empty. I can look from 136 to the school, and there's not a house. Now, you've got that big development right there. You can't see all of that. And then yeah, so yeah, that's . . .

32:29

Kim:  
So the other thing that I would like to see is building Broomfield's diversity and welcoming. You know, basically I hate to, I hate to put labels on people, and I really like to really connect to everybody regardless of their circumstances. And so I think Broomfield has always prided itself on being a welcoming community, but we're still so homogeneous. And I think, you know, finding ways to diversify and be welcoming and bring everybody together on, on group projects is a great thing to do. Also cross generational, you know, we're, we're very segregated by, by generation. And, you know, our neighborhood for example, when we moved in, there were a bunch of kids, our kids were the youngest in the group. But everybody has now gone and now there are no kids on our, on our circle. And, and then you have places like Anthem, which is a lovely community, but, man, it's so homogeneous and monocultural. It's, I enjoyed visiting my friends there, but I couldn't imagine living there. And, you know, in, in contrast, where my daughter in Washington lives, she's got this magical neighborhood that has such a mix of little kids and older kids and older adults. And you know, Halloween is just amazing, where everybody - it's only two blocks, a figure 8 of two blocks. But everybody gets out for Halloween and goes trick-or-treating, and you've got all these people who have built a little horror, Halloween House of Horror in their garage. It's amazing to see a three year-old deciding whether he wants to go in that space or not.

34:47

Dave:  
To me, I don't know if I would do that. Yeah.

34:51

Kim:

Right. But it just, no, I do think that there are, you know there are things that especially you guys, you know, the Broomfield Arts and Culture are really working hard on, you know, some of the the concerts that attract a lot of people who sit outside in the summer and have these amazing concerts and get together with people. So

35:13

there's a lot of good stuff happening.

Yen:

And the diverse groups you guys bring, that's, that's really amazing.

Kim:

Right.

35:19

And, but I think we just have to keep on doing that and just know you've got to connect with people and make them feel welcome and make them feel included and make them feel useful. You know, just having opportunities for people to get together and do stuff that's useful, I think is huge in building a community.

David:

Absolutely.

Kim:

And yeah, so I hope we can do more of that.

35:46

Dave:

Thank you so much. That's, that's wonderful. Before we finish up, was there anything that we didn't touch on or didn't mention before we, before we close?

36:02

Kim: I think we've covered a lot.

36:03

Dave:

I agree. It was a wonderful conversation. I really appreciate your time, too. And your vision for the future of Broomfield is also beautiful, and I thank you for that. So I really appreciate your time today. I'm gonna go ahead and stop the recording and then we can finish up here.

Kim:

Okay.

End of interview.