

# PROJETO QUERINO

projeto Querino is supported by the Ibirapitanga Institute.

The podcast is produced by Rádio Novelo.

## **Bonus Episode: Water and Fire**

**Tiago Rogero:** Hey, how's it going?

I'm Tiago Rogero, and this is a bonus episode of the projeto Querino podcast.

This is a bonus, so I'd recommend that you only go ahead if you've already listened to the other eight episodes of the podcast.

But hey, just between us, if you want to start here, that's okay, too.

In part because, as you'll see, this episode is quite different from the rest.

This episode is about giving thanks.

Thanks to everyone who helped bring projeto Querino into the world,

to everyone who inspired us to make projeto Querino,

and to all of you who listened to all the episodes and shared them with all your friends, family, even folks you didn't know.

First, I want to just quickly tell the origin story behind projeto Querino.

I've told it on my social media, and in interviews, so if you've already read or heard this, just hang on for a second, 'cause I'll be quick and it'll all make sense.

In 2018, one Saturday night, I went to downtown Rio to see Conceição Evaristo on a panel in a literary festival.

Conceição Evaristo, the legendary writer, you know.

The conversation was moderated by Flávia Oliveira, the legendary journalist, who's always been a guiding star for me and for so many other journalists across Brazil.

And then Conceição Evaristo said this: "They teach the Ragamuffin War in schools, but they don't teach the Malê Revolt."

And that hit me hard.

Because it was true. I'd heard a ton about the Ragamuffin War, I'd even watched a miniseries on Globo. But I knew practically nothing about the Malê Revolt.

And it was because of what Conceição said that I decided to do something, as a journalist, that would help tell the history I never learned in school, that I never saw on TV...

And by the way, I should say that it's not like that content, telling a fuller version of our history, didn't exist. Manuel Querino, who we paid tribute to in the project's name, was already doing that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The thing is that, for a number of reasons, and because of the racist country we live in, the content that's been produced for decades by Black intellectuals, unfortunately, doesn't reach as many people as it should.

And that's what I wanted to do as a journalist: help that information circulate.

The first step was the podcast *Negra Voz*, which I made when I was still working at the newspaper *O Globo*.

It took months of research, production, and interviews, and when I was just about to release it,

this came out:

<<<< *tape player cues up* >>>>

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** *They say our people were born on the water.*

**Tiago Rogero:** This is from the beginning of the first episode of the 1619 Project podcast, from the New York Times.

You're hearing the journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, who created the project.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** *From The New York Times Magazine, I'm Nikole Hannah-Jones. This is "1619."*

**Tiago Rogero:** I was blown away.

If you haven't heard it, I'm not going to get into detail about 1619 right away. Just hang on a little longer.

1619 was launched in August 2019.

Negra Voz was ready to go, but we only published it in September. There were five episodes.

I kept on listening to 1619, and it kept on making me think. I read the articles that were published in the New York Times Magazine... This was a monumental creation.

In October of that year, I went to the United States on a journalism fellowship. I spent about two months there, mainly learning about podcast production.

When I came back, I met the team at Rádio Novelo

and the folks at the Ibirapitanga Institute.

And then came an epiphany:

what if

we made a Brazilian version of the 1619 Project?

Not too long after that, we reached out to the historian Ynaê Lopes dos Santos and pitched the idea to her. And she agreed to be our history consultant on the project.

And then we got the ball rolling in early 2020.

Months and months of research, production, recording, and editing; and then in early 2022 the folks at piauí Magazine got on board...

Two years and eight months of work led up to the launch of projeto Querino, in August 2022.

The work of more than 40 professionals.

A majority-Black, majority-female team.

Like I said earlier: this episode is about giving thanks.

To each and every one of those people,

and to you who listened to us, and are listening to us now.

And thanks to those who inspired us.

**Tiago Rogero:** Thanks so much, Nikole. So now this is just a formality, but I would like you to introduce yourself, please, starting with your name and then whatever words you usually use to describe yourself.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Ok. My name is Nikole Hannah-Jones. I'm a journalist at the New York Times, and I'm the creator of the 1619 Project.

**Tiago Rogero:** I said this episode was going to be different, didn't I?

Ever since we put out the 8 episodes of the podcast, we'd always said, amongst ourselves, that there was only one way we'd do a bonus episode.

Only one way.

If we got an interview with Nikole Hannah-Jones, the New York Times journalist who created the 1619 Project, the inspiration for projeto Querino.

And that's what you're going to hear now, in full.

If you're hearing the version with the original audio, you'll be able to tell that I make a few mistakes while speaking English, here or there. But hey, don't sweat the small stuff, right?

I hope you like it.

**Tiago Rogero:** So, Nikole, first of all, I would like to thank you for sitting down with me and for your generosity with projeto Querino from the very start. Just to explain to our listeners, I wrote Nikole an e-mail telling her about the project two months before the launch. And from this moment, from the get-go, she was extremely warm and receptive. And now we have been able to find a time to sit down and record this conversation. So all that to say, first and foremost, first and foremost, thank you, Nikole, for sitting down with me and having this conversation.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Absolutely. I was, I was, as you know, so excited when you reached out to me and said that you all were going to do this project there in Brazil. I've always, you know, from the moment the 1619 project came out said I hope to see something similar in Brazil. So I was happy to be an encouragement, but also just so excited about the work you all did and what you produced.

**Tiago Rogero:** Great. So, Nikole, many people here in Brazil have read the 1619 project articles in The New York Times Magazine and have heard the podcast. And I have spoken to people here in Brazil who have already read the book, also. But for someone who hasn't had contact with any of that, how would you explain what is the 1619 project?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Sure. So the 1619 project is a work of journalism that first published in the year 2019. That is, that was the 400th anniversary of the first Angolans being sold into the British colony of Virginia. So the first 20 to 30 Angolans were sold into Virginia on August of 1619. And so what the project seeks to do is, through a series of essays as well as a podcast, really argue that so much of modern American life has been shaped by the legacy of slavery. And in the United States, much like in Brazil, we really have tried to marginalize that History, to treat slavery as kind of an asterisk, when we know that slavery was foundational both to the economies of our countries, but also to the political systems, social, culturally, legal systems. So this project is not really about the past. It's about the way the past has shaped modern America.

**Tiago Rogero:** And what led you to make the 1619 project? Can you describe how you made that decision?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Sure. So I've been kind of obsessed with the year 1619 since I was 15 years old as a high school student. My high school offered a one semester African-American studies elective course, and I took that class. And in one of the books I read for that class, I came across the date 1619 and the story of the White Lion, which is that first ship. And even then, as a Black girl who hadn't been taught very much about slavery, hadn't been taught very much about Black Americans and Black contributions. I understood how powerful that date was because that date meant slavery and Africans were some of the first people ever non-Indigenous people to ever be in the original colonies that would become the United States, but also that people had chosen not to teach us these things. And so it both stood in for a lineage, a 400-year lineage, but also a 400-year effort to hide the crime. So I've been thinking about that day for a very long time. And as the 400th anniversary of American slavery was approaching, I really wanted to create a project that would force a reckoning with the fact that slavery is one of the oldest institutions in America, that slavery predates the founding of the United States by 150 years, and that so many of our most prominent founders, of course, got their wealth from slavery and the slave trade. And so I wanted to use that moment to really create this project. And I knew the project had to be big because how do you tell a 400-year story? It couldn't just be one essay. It really needs to be an expansive project that brought in many different descendants of American slavery to tell this story. So I conceived of it as an entire issue of the New York Times Magazine, with each essay tackling a different part of modern American life that would be connected to slavery in surprising ways. So, of course, the first essay, which has been translated into Portuguese is democracy. The second essay is on capitalism. And then there were a series of essays, and then we also did a podcast, but the idea was in some ways something I had been working towards most of my life, and I've spent most of my career as a journalist trying to show how the history of racism and slavery and anti-Blackness leads to the inequality that we see in American life, right? Just as in Brazil and just as in all across the Atlantic world, Black people who descend from slavery are at the bottom of every indicator of well-being in our society. Highest poverty rates, lowest educational rates, highest incarceration rates, lower life expectancy, high infant and maternal mortality rates, literally everything that you can measure. And yet somehow we're taught that the fact that Black people, no matter where they are in the Americas, suffer at the bottom, that that has nothing to do with slavery and nothing to do with the legacy of slavery. And so I really wanted to force a reckoning with how slavery shaped America.

**Tiago Rogero:** And also the the version in Portuguese of that the first essay, for Revista Serrote, is also on Querino's website, we posted the link, so everyone who is

listening can find this this translation on our website. Nikole, considering everything that has happened since the project's release in August of 2019, was the United States ready for a project like that?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** You know, it's funny. I would have to argue, yes, the United States was ready for this project because you would not see the type of pushback that the project has faced if millions of Americans didn't want to read the project, were not reading the project, were not sharing the project. Had the project published and no one cared, legislators wouldn't care about it either. So I think what... I think a few things made America ready for this project. One, you know, we had had eight years of a Black president, the first Black president in the History of our nation. And so a lot of people, particularly white Americans, believe that that was a signal that we had finally left behind our racist past, that we were a post-racial society. And then, of course, we elect Donald Trump, who is an open white-nationalist. And so I think a lot of Americans were wanting to understand how does the country that could twice elect a Black man as president follow his election by an openly white-nationalist president? And the 1619 Project comes in that moment and really, I think, helps explain our country to itself. So we were ready. But there are clearly certain elements of our society, the people who have been the gatekeepers of kind of our national memory, the people who have gotten to who... who very much want to cling to our racial hierarchy, who want to be the only ones who get to tell the story of, you know, American exceptionalism, and our founding as this divide moment... Who think that this project is very dangerous, and that that to me is why the project is successful. If those in power who have justified the way they will, their power by lying about our History, think this project is dangerous, then that's that's a good thing to me.

**Tiago Rogero:** And the next question is also about that, because seeing from a distance from what I've read about the project and also interviews that I have heard and also read. I think it's maybe possible to divide the reactions to the 1619 Project into two buckets. First you have the people mostly Black people, but not only Black people, who were deeply affected by the information they learned through the project. And then you also have another group of people who attacked the project, such as the former president, Donald Trump. With these two buckets in mind, how would you say the reaction has been and continues to be from the launch to this day?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** So this project has become so much bigger than I ever could have imagined when I first pitched the project. And yes, it has been widely

embraced by Black Americans, but it's also been widely embraced by white Americans. I, for three years have lived on the road, traveling from city to city to talk about the project. And frankly, if only Black people were embracing the project, these conservative white politicians in the United States would not care about the project. The project is being taught in about 5.000 schools in America, many college instructors are teaching the project, we are turning the project into a six part documentary series that is going to run on on Hulu, in one of our major network television. So the most common response that I get from people who actually read the project; so let's be clear, many other people who despairs the project have not read the project. They've... The project has become part of a massive propaganda campaign in the United States that's called critical race theory or anti-critical race theory. It's been used as a political wedge because much like the election that is occurring right now in Brazil, we have an extremely polarized society and a political party that is using race as, as a divide... And so the project has gotten caught up in that. But you certainly would not see that type of response if people were not reading the project. And people who read the project really come away saying: 'I just didn't know. I had no idea that these things had happened. I had no idea that our country had this History'. You know, we were more advanced in how we talk about slavery and racism in the United States than Brazil, but we're not advanced. Right? We still... We have to talk about slavery because we have to talk about the Civil War in the United States, but we're not talking about, you know, the fact that most of our founders engaged in slavery. We don't talk about the role that slavery played in the American Revolution. We don't talk about the fact that American capitalism was built on slavery, that it wasn't just, you know, the few white men in the South who enslaved people, but the shipbuilders, the bankers, the insurance companies, right?, the factory workers, the textile workers, all of these industries early in America, we just don't learn that History. And we also don't learn really the violence and brutality that continued to be deployed against Black people even after slavery ended. So the most common response is people feel like their eyes have been opened to their country for the first time and it's deeply uncomfortable. I think it's shocking to realize that you've spent your entire life learning a History that is of a country that never actually existed. This, maybe more so than Brazil, is our identity and in the United States is so intertwined with this belief in exceptionalism that, you know, 'we are the freest country the world has ever created. We are the oldest, you know, continuing democracy in the world, that we were founded on these ideals of liberty, of God given rights'... And and that is so inherent in the identity of America, that grappling with the fact that we were founded on ideals of freedom and the practice of slavery is very, very challenging for most Americans. So people respond in different ways to that knowledge. But those who have an



open mind are grateful because, you know, we had an insurrection on our Capitol on January 6, the year before last and... or, excuse me, last year, and and the History we're taught doesn't explain why these white conservatives don't want democracy if democracy is being determined by people of color. The story of 1776 doesn't explain that, but the story of 1619 does... And I hope, I hope we get to talk about your project in this interview, too, because I have questions for you.

**Tiago Rogero:** Oh, yeah, definitely. We are going to.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Ok.

**Tiago Rogero:** So another question about 1619: you wrote in the book and you have also told in this conversation that we are having, that you learn in school in another book... that your first came with the year 1619. Even so, you said that in general the History that you have learned in school as a kid was a narrative that effectively erased the contributions of African-American and ignored the production of knowledge in the African societies. And I was 'hearding' an interview that you gave to NPR's Throughline, I think, in which you said that you were surprised to learn that Egypt was a part of Africa when you were in school. And this is such mind-boggling, because here in Brazil, we have that same experience. Like, for me, it was the same thing. The moment I was 'hearding' this interview of you, like, I got goosebumps. Right now I'm having also, because this is so crazy, we are from two different countries and we have the same background. So my question is: what do we lose when that story isn't told and what do we gain when it is told?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Oh, that's such a great question. And really, I think, gets to the heart of both of our projects. History, of course, is what happened on what day and who did it. You know, all of these things happened, whether we learn about them or not. But the way that we... when we talk about History, commonly, we're really talking about memory. Right? We're really talking about what are we taught about what happened and who do we focus on and what stories are important. And all of that is shaping our understanding of our society, our understanding of our world and our understanding of ourselves. And so the fact that, you know, we both grow in societies that have rampant anti-Blackness, that have really tried to minimize the contributions of Black people, not just in our own countries, but across the globe, is how we get to the point of, you know, you can't say that we are people without a History or we are people who didn't have a knowledge of science and of art and an intellect... and then teach us that Egypt is in Africa. Now, I also don't

remember anyone ever saying Egypt wasn't in Africa because of course no one taught us that. And I think what that speaks to is how we learn things just from the silences. Right? Like what is our image of Egypt? How are we taught to think about these things? And that is so important. You actually do come to believe that only Europeans contributed knowledge to the world, and art to the world, and science to the world, because it's what's called the known world. Right? That absence means it doesn't exist to you. If you're if you're not taught about these things, they don't exist. And as Black people, we are internalizing that as well. Right. We know that we're human, but we were enslaved, so maybe we were inferior because how could they enslave us and why didn't we produce any knowledge? You know, even when you think about... There's a book I love it's called 'Black Marxism', and it's written by Cedric Robinson, and he talks about as the chattel slave trade really develops, europeans have to create the Negro. And the Negro is someone who has no History and no past. We are a blank slate here. So all of the knowledge that we had in a place like Timbuktu, right?, when we think about the Mali empire, the Ghanaian empire, all of that gets erased. And we have people who come here who apparently don't know agriculture, don't know iron working, right?, don't have literature, and none of that is true. So that erasure is really intentional and it's really devastating not just for us, but in a multiracial society when we're trying to share power and we're trying to kind of build a collective good, if one race thinks that they are the only ones who have ever contributed anything and other races they really haven't contributed much... So they're the million stories like that. You know, your whole project is based on those silences and those erasures, and these silences are not benign. They're very harmful. I remember when I was a kid, it must have been maybe in middle school when I was watching the Olympics with my father and there was a Brazilian swimmer in the Olympics and the person was Black. And my dad, who was kind of casually watching looks and sees the Black swimmer because, of course, there were very few black swimmers. And he said: 'Where is that, where's that soul brother from?' And I said: 'He's from Brazil'. And my dad goes: 'There's no Black people in Brazil, he's not from Brazil'. And I'm like: 'It said, he was from Brazil!'. And I, I always remember that moment because of course I would later come to learn that majority of Brazilians have African ancestry and that, you know, Brazil has the largest population of African descended people outside of Nigeria, but as a child, both my grown father and myself, the image of Brazilians were white and we didn't even learn that Brazil had slavery. Right? And so you're just like, how do we get knowledge shaped in this way? And how dangerous is that then to our understanding of the world? And I think that's why projects like ours have to exist, but that's also why projects like ours get contested.

**Tiago Rogero:** Yeah, definitely. So another question that I have about that same interview and that, which I thought... this is really lovely. It was your explanation about how you use not only a photo of your father in the book, but also featured images of other non-famous Black people in the U.S. throughout the book. So: would you mind telling us how and why you made that choice?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Absolutely. So we know that the way that human beings justify our a barbaric institution like chattel slavery is through the process of dehumanization that you clearly know it is not moral to whip people, to abuse people, to force them to labor, to rape women, to force, sell children. Right? We know that all of this is wrong. So dehumanization is saying: 'These people don't feel like we feel, they don't love their children like they love their children, Black women just love having sex all the time, so you can rape them', we are like animals... That becomes a necessity to maintain an institution like chattel slavery, particularly in an advanced society. And so when we were creating this book, we realized, you know, so much of this book is just devastating. It is hard. It is about the violence, it is about the terrorism. It's about the brutality that Black people have faced. And we never want it for a moment the reader to be able to escape the humanity that... of the people that all of this terror was being visited upon. And also, we wanted it to be clear that despite everything that Black people have suffered, our lives were not merely defined by suffering. That we loved, we laughed, we had hope, we had ambition. And so what each of the images and... the images are... they're archival images of Black Americans through time. Some of them go all the way back to, you know, the first photographs, the invention of photography. And some of them are only two years old. We wanted to force a pause before each essay, where you would have to look in the face of a Black American, either someone born into slavery or someone descended from slavery, and see that humanity and see just Black people being human beings before every essay. And as I said in that interview: you shouldn't have to do that, but we know because of how rampant anti-Blackness is, that we sometimes have to remind people that Black people are just humans like everyone else. And I think those images are a powerful reminder of that.

**Tiago Rogero:** So this is the last question only about the 1619 Project and on the next one we are going to talk about Querino.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Ok.

**Tiago Rogero:** You're... This this question is about your Twitter account, actually, because your name on Twitter is either Ida Bae Wells, which is an homage to the intellectual, journalist and civil rights activist Ida B. Wells, who was born in 1862. How would you say that learning from the struggles of the past can lend us the strength and the tools to fight today's struggles?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Oh, that's, that's such a great question because I take great strength from studying my ancestors and seeing the resilience and the determination of people who had none of the rights that I'm able to enjoy. So, you know, when things seem like they're hard, I just remind myself like: I don't know struggle, right? Even my own direct ancestor, you know, my grandmother was born on a cotton plantation, into a system of coerced labor called sharecropping, in deep poverty in apartheid Mississippi at a time, 1926, when Black people had no political rights in that state. So to me, when we think about our ancestors and all that they bore, it is a testament to our strength as a people. It is a testament to the fact that we have to be able to dream of a world that we know we may never live to see, but that hopefully one day we will become good ancestors to those who who come after us. So when I think about myself as a journalist, I constantly remind myself of Ida B Wells, hoping that I would have, you know, an ounce of the courage that she had and also the determination, and to have a similar impact in moving the rights for humanity of Black people forward.

**Tiago Rogero:** So talking about Querino now: are you aware of any other 1619-inspired project that have been released elsewhere in the world?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** No, I think Brazil is the first actual entire project outside of the United States that I've seen. And it's fitting. I mean, literally, you know, when I came to Brazil right before the pandemic to talk about 1619, I said: 'I have to bring this project to Brazil because Brazil needs one for many reasons'. So to me, it's fitting that this would be the first one.

**Tiago Rogero:** Yeah, that's amazing. And I told you on our first e-mail that I was going to go to one of your lectures here in Brazil. The one in Rio.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Yes.

**Tiago Rogero:** But then the pandemic came right in the middle of it. But I got to see the the one that was transmitted online, it was with a great friend of mine, Flavia Oliveira...

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Yes.

**Tiago Rogero:** She's wonderful. And also it was a great inspiration for Querino, and also helped me a lot during the process. So the next question: I sent you there translated transcript of the first episode, and we, all of us here in the in the team of projeto Querino, we are excited... We are longing for knowing what have you think of it, what have you thought of it?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** I... So, so one: I was sad when the transcript ended when I got to the bottom because I was so enthralled in the storytelling. I love that the project is named after, you know, the father of, we could say, Black Brazilian History, but Black Brazilian History is Brazilian History, so in some ways is the father of Brazilian History, that is more truthful. It was just, it was so fascinating to me. And as I was saying, when we first logged in, I just wasn't aware of how many parallels there are between the founding of Brazil and the tensions over whether Brazil would be a slave or free society, and how those... that is so similar, of course, of the founding of the United States. And of course, we both know, you know, the way that you move back and forth from the present to the past, that what we are seeing in our societies, what Black people in our societies experience, is all a legacy of that. So I just thought it was tremendous. I really wish I understood Português because I would love to actually be able to hear the interviews as opposed to reading them. But I hope you all are very proud. I would love to know: what has the reception been in Brazil?

**Tiago Rogero:** It has surprised us, like, really. Because this is the... projeto Querino is the third podcast I've made on History and on this Afro-centered History. And it's the... it's by far the the most successful one, in audience-speaking, because... In terms of the audience is a success, we have been on the top of the polls of podcast listeners, and also people are talking, and people from different backgrounds and different sorts of fields of knowledge. It's it's been amazing and it's very surprising because in Brazil we have this majority Afro-descendant population, we are more than half of population, but Brazil is a very racist country. And for a serious of reasons our Black community it's not quite a community such as in the U.S., because we have this big lie in Brazil, the biggest of all, that it's called racial

democracy. Democracia racial. That it's a concept, and like, it's... under everyone's skin. Like, even Black people in Brazil, they believe that we are not a racist country, that we are a kind country, and then... Lies like that. So it's very difficult to unify and so to bring unity to our Black community, but the project is doing very well. And, also surprisingly, even though we are having these reach, we are not suffering, yet, any attacks of the conservatives. They are... I think they are so involved with the election that they just forgot about us, which I think is very good, because I've been learning with everything that had happened since 1619 project was launched. So I took some safety measures, like my social media doesn't have any more, anyone of my family: my wife, my mother, anything like that... And also other things. I was prepared for this backlash, but it still hasn't happened, which is good, I think. But I think... it's... it's like the... resuming... 'Resumindo', I forgot the word in Portuguese... in English for that. But at the end of it, I think it's very surprising for a good reason. I didn't expect that it was going to be as huge of a success, even though we have worked a lot, it was almost three years of research and all of that... But I'm surprised, I'm surprised by the Brazilian audience. I'm very surprised.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Why do you... I get this question all the time, so I'm going to ask you: Why, why do you think people have responded in that way? What do you think it is? You think that the culture in some ways is just ready? I mean, outside of, you know, the quality of the project, I know... Because we know, as journalists: you can do amazing journalism and people don't respond to it. So, given that, but what, what do you think it is that at this moment it has been received in this way?

**Tiago Rogero:** I think it's something that you've said, that this History is not known for people, like... Project, projeto Querino doesn't have a scoop, like, this amazing new documents being released. All of that was... Historians and researchers and anthropologists, sociologists... They were producing this knowledge for such a long time. But we... The only thing that we have was, like, summarize everything and presented in a narrative form. But this is so crazy, but people, people... Like the... The response that I get from... Every day, like, every day, a lot of messages that I receive is that: 'I had no idea of that'. Every day. Every day. And I think another thing that it's very important, another aspect of it, is that: this historical moment. People are so tired of four years of Jair Bolsonaro as our president. And also we are so much influenced by the U.S., and people were tired of the elections in the U.S. and Donald Trump and the supremacists, people are tired. And I think, like, the the momentum was right, because people are feeling the need to gain tools to face these struggles of now and and I think this was the main thing that we achieve, like, giving those

tools to people, to everyone that believes in a better world, a more just world and things like that. I think this was like the two big reasons.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** I mean, what I love about... And this is one of the reasons I think the project has had the impact that it's had is that you say, you know, 'We are going to do this project without concern about how the elites feel in our society'. Right? That 'we're not going to hold back to make people more comfortable'. And that was our same determination with the 1619 Project, was... I always said from the beginning, if we're going to do this, it has to be unflinching. We can't be worried about the New York, you know, we know who the typical New York Times audience is. They are not someone like me or you. But that we have to tell the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it made a white majority in our country or white people in your country or powerful people. And I think that is also why your project has had that impact. Is that that force of truth. Right? That being determined to tell the truth, even if it's painful, which sometimes we don't do in... When we're trying to do like a mass journalism project, I think that was so critical.

**Tiago Rogero:** Yeah. And also I have to tell you that, like: 1619 was our big inspiration for projeto Querino, and we, we also... I always like to say that, because it is our big inspiration. And also when we were writing the scripts, like, for the... The last project that I've made, which is called Vidas Negras, it's more about biographies of Black people of History and present days. And I was more, I was more light to it. Like, I did some jokes, because I'm a... On my, with my friends and everyone at work, I'm a very funny guy and I make a lot of jokes... But at projeto Querino we were very serious about it. And Flora Thomson-DeVeaux that helped me to write the scripts, she she did a consultancy to the scripts with Paula Scarpin and also Mariana Jaspe; but Flora, she always pointed out something like: 'This need to be more Nikole Hannah-Jones. Like, you have to be more incisive about it, more direct'. And this was, like, this was always on our mind when we were writing this.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Wow, I can't think of anything that honors me more than to hear that because that's not easy, right? And... Yeah, I appreciate that. I want to ask you, when did you come to love or be pulled in to Black Brazilian or Afro-Brazilian History? When, when... what's your story?

**Tiago Rogero:** So I'm a light-skinned Black man. So in Brazil, because of this racial democracy, people like me, we are educated to think that we are white. So I didn't, I didn't have any connection with this part, my ancestry, my African descendancy,

when I was growing up. Even though I have the traces of an African descendant: my nose, my mouth, and also, like...

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Yeah, in America, we would clearly claim you on our team.

**Tiago Rogero:** Yeah, yeah. I would get, I would get "the nod"... walking on the street.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** You would definitely get "the nod"!

**Tiago Rogero:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So. But in... Here in Brazil, we have this very confuse relationship. And then it was only growing up and already leaving... because I'm from another side, I'm from Belo Horizonte, which is in another state. And then I, I came to Rio that used to be Brazilian capital and all of that. And here on Rio there are different movements, there are different Black movements that do a lot of things on the street. So I get into contact with, I was already adult, and living alone here... So I got to know all those things. But the final moment, the limiar moment was a few years ago, I was on a lecture, on a book event, like a festival. A book festival. And one of our greatest writers in Brazil is Conceição Evaristo, and she was in a... in this table, this the session with Flavia Oliveira, which I have already known and admire. And then Conceição Evaristo told Flavia Oliveira: 'They teach the Farroupilha Revolution on schools', which was a revolution that was held on Rio Grande do Sul... it was by white people. And they they teach that own schools, but...

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** When was that revolution?

**Tiago Rogero:** 1830s. It was a very troubled moment here in Brazil, because the 'emperor' has fled away and he left his son, which was only five years old, to run the country, only five years. 'But they don't teach', Conceição said, 'they don't teach the Malê Revolution', which was a revolution in Salvador led by enslaved and former enslaved people. And I thought I have never learned about the Malê Revolution. And then I thought, I want to do something like that. And ever since that, it's only books about History or... From Black writers or from white writers who studies well these matters, and this because, ah, from my early ages to that to that moment, I have only read mostly white authors. So I thought, no, I have to, I have to balance this. And it has been amazing.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** Yes. I mean, it's so... It's fascinating to to hear that, because, I mean, I began down that path a lot earlier than you, but it was very similar where...



Once I take this one class and I see there's... Wait, there's all this History I could learn and people aren't teaching it to me, if you come to my house, people know, like, for two decades now, that's all I read. And having studied it for two decades, I'm still overwhelmed by how much I don't know. But there was just this sense of your history being kept from you, of having something stolen from you that was very critical to your development and our kind of collective identity. So it is... I mean, that's why I love being in conversation with people in other parts of the world about these things, because you realize we have all, despite different languages, I mean: I was just in the Netherlands giving a talk on 1619, because, of course, the the first ship, the White Lion was flying under the Dutch flag. And the Dutch, while they didn't have huge slave colonies, they were responsible for transporting a lot of West Africans, the Central Africans into slavery. And it was just amazing that, you know, I'm talking people from Suriname, the Dutch colony, and their experience is the same as ours and it's a Black country as well, right? And you just, you see... When all of our experiences are so similar, you understand that it's not accidental, that this was intentional.

**Tiago Rogero:** Yeah. Yeah. And also the good stuff, because we are all sons and daughters are of the diaspora and I really love to think that, it's really. So the last thing that I wanted to tell you is that: I don't know if you noticed, but 1619, the first chapter, the first essay, and also the first episode of the podcast, you start in the water. They say our people was born in the water. And then on Querino we start with fire. And this was intentional because we wanted to do this, this conversation, this conversation with 1619. And also in Brazil, we have a big history involving fire. It's different from the concept of the water because most of our difficulty to having access to our history as an African descent has to with a decision that was made by a member of our government, right after the end of bondage here, that he decided to burn all the documents of slavery. So this has a big importance for the fact that we don't know where are we from. Like, I don't know where my family's from originally and things like that, because of that decision. So we thought of making this poetic, I don't know, I don't know if we can call poetic, but this conversation with the 1619 right from the beginning of the first episode... It's just like a fun fact.

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** I love that! I didn't know that that's why that decision was made. I love that. It's powerful. It is powerful. That's amazing.

**Tiago Rogero:** Ah, just let me add something here.

The projeto Querino podcast had script consultation by Mariana Jaspe, Flora Thomson-DeVeaux, and Paula Scarpin, and additional editing by Natália Silva.

In my very first draft, the first episode of projeto Querino started with me walking through Quinta da Boa Vista, heading up to the Palace of São Cristóvão.

Then Mariana suggested that we start with something a little more gripping, taking listeners back to the moment when the palace caught fire, in 2018.

And Flora not only agreed with Mariana. She said that if we made that change, Querino would be dialoguing directly with 1619, straight from the get-go.

They began with water. We began with fire.

**Tiago Rogero:** Amazing. So, Nikole, I just want to thank you again. Thank you, first of all, for being such an inspiration for me, as a journalist and for all of us in projeto Querino because of your work. And thank you for your time, and this conversation for such a warm response to all of my contacts since the first one. And I would like, also, besides thanking you, ask you if is there anything you would like to add?

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** I guess the only thing I would like to add is: I hope that there will be a season two of your podcast. And I hope that people in your country and mine will continue to embrace learning more of these stories. And it is my dream that we will one day have these conversations together, I would love if you could come to the United States and we could discuss these projects, and I didn't get to come to Rio, which is something I've wanted to do for a very long time, so I hope there's a way that we can bring these two discussions together and that collectively those of us from the African Diaspora can work to create the future that we deserve.

**Tiago Rogero:** *Yeah, definitely. We will make that happen.*

**Nikole Hannah-Jones:** *Yes. Yes.*

**Tiago Rogero:** Like I said at the end of the eighth episode of the podcast, Querino was designed as a multiplatform project to reflect on Brazil's history, how it explains Brazil today, but also its future, too:

what country do we want to be, and what country do we deserve?

And this podcast was the first step in everything else the project is going to become.

So stay tuned to [projetoquerino.com.br](http://projetoquerino.com.br) and my social media, @TiagoRogero, to keep following us along the way.

projeto Querino is supported by the Ibirapitanga Institute.

The podcast was produced by Rádio Novelo.

On our website, [projetoquerino.com.br](http://projetoquerino.com.br), you can find all the information about the project, as well as additional content. Website design by Àiyé.

And I'd like to invite you to read the full suite of material for the Querino Project that's being published in *piauí* Magazine, on newsstands and on the magazine's website.

Bia Ribeiro lent us her voice for the Portuguese-language dubbed version of this bonus episode. The interview with Nikole was translated by Branca Vianna.

Research by Gilberto Porcidonio, Rafael Domingos Oliveira, and Angélica Paulo, who also ran production for the series.

The other episodes were edited by Lucca Mendes, with sound design by Júlia Matos, and mixed by Pipoca Sound, with original music by Victor Rodrigues Dias.

Promotion, distribution, and digital content strategy: Bia Ribeiro.

The visual identity is by Draco Imagem.

Mateus Coutinho designed our social media material.

Script consultation by Mariana Jaspe, Paula Scarpin, and Flora Thomson-DeVeaux, with additional editing by Natália Silva.

History consultant: Ynaê Lopes dos Santos.

Executive producer: Guilherme Alpendre.

The financial coordination of the project is by ISPIS, the Instituto Sincronicidade para a Interação Social.

The project was created, reported, written, hosted, and coordinated by me, Tiago Rogero.

Our thanks to Nikole Hannah-Jones and DaVonne Darby.

And to you, for listening to us all the way through,  
once again,  
thank you very much.