

Unknown Speaker 1:20

Welcome to Locatora radio. This is Diosa femme, and this is Mala Munoz, aka las mamsis of myth and bullshit. Locatora radio is where we celebrate the legacies, geniuses and brilliance of women and femmes of color. This is a special edition of Brown Girl hour created for the sounding out sound studies blog. This series is Chicana soundscape, and we want to thank the sounding out blog so much for having us and for allowing us to contribute a piece of our Radiophonic novella for the study of sound absolutely in this guest, capitulo, what we're doing is we are examining the sonic landscapes of unwelcome that are created by way of street harassment. And in particular, we're looking at street harassment that's directed at women of color. But before we do dive into this content, we do need to give a trigger warning for some graphic and detailed accounts of violence against women. And if at any point, if any of our locomotives, if any of our listeners need to pause and take a break, please do so and take care of yourself. Absolutely. Always practice self care. By the end of this capitulo, we seek to answer this question that we pose to ourselves we pose to our Locamores. What sort of psychological and emotional effect does constant and repeated exposure to abusive noise have on the minds and bodies of women of color? It's a really important question, and we're thinking of street harassment for its actual Sonic qualities, and we're considering street harassment as verbal abuse, right? And for a lot of women of color are just existing in public space means that we're always navigating just like a we're always bombarded with harassing noise, violent and sexually abusive language that could be unwanted, sounds like men that we don't know, blowing kisses at us, whistling, honking at us, right, making sounds that you use to call animals like especially Latino men will hear, right? That'll be directed towards us as women or kisses, right? Cussing, and for the most part, when we're on the street, if I hear a car honk or multiple cars honking, I know that it's not because of the traffic. No, the honk has a special significance. It's directed at me, right? Yeah, the sound, even though that sound is meant for animals, I know that it's being directed towards me, right? That animal call is for me, right? And otherwise sounds that are otherwise wholesome, like blowing a kiss on the street, they are perverted and weaponized, right? To make us feel watched, targeted and unsafe, yeah. And I think when we experience so much of this growing up and then becoming a woman you know, out on the street, having to, of course, live our lives. We develop these type of ways to keep ourselves safe. Yes, and it varies for each person, but I think a type of harm reduction that we do use is wearing headphones, whether you actually have it on, or you actually do have music playing, so you can block out the noise. We use it for these specific reasons, to cancel out the hostile sonic landscape into which we are walking through, right, right? So we're considering that our built environment and public spaces are almost like it's there's a sonic abuse that we enter into, and we have to combat it and drown it out with the sounds of our choosing, right, right, hearing these things, hearing these sounds, these abusive sounds, for many, many years, right? Yeah, even before we're adults, even before we hit puberty, right? We you have to think about when you experience this first for at such a long, a long length of towers, at a length of time, right? Such a long length of time, what sort of psychological and emotional effects does constant and repeated exposure have on our minds and bodies, especially as women of color, right? So I think in this special capitulo, this special recording, we seek to explore the power of choosing our own sonic landscape in order to protect us from abuse. Absolutely, we always want to center our autonomy as mujeres, right,

as fems. We always want to consider, in the midst of abuse and oppression, how do we use our free will and our minds and our bodies and our choice to keep ourselves safe? And we also want, we're using this term right sonic landscape of unwelcome, which is something that we've conceived for the purposes of this episode. And so what makes, what creates, what is a space? What makes a space a sonic landscape of unwelcome Well, we have very real, very close, very personal examples, right? I know, you know, as we are, both from Los Angeles, we're living in different parts of La we record here in Boyle Heights, and we both have experiences in our own communities, right? I'm wondering if Mala you can share something of living where you live, absolutely. So, for example, I live basically my neighborhood is the border of Pico Union and mid city, and it's a heavily Latino community. It's heavily Central American, Oaxacan and Latinos. You know, it's known as the Byzantine Latino quarter, which is like one of it the original names for the area. And I consider my neighborhood to be, well, I consider most all of LA, most all public spaces in LA, to be Sonic landscapes of unwelcome but my own neighborhood where I live, and I've shared this before, if I'm doing anything at all outside, if I'm walking down the street, if I'm walking my dog, I can expect for a man to follow me in his car. The sound of a car close behind you, following you, right is a very disturbing sound, and you know what it signals? Right? We almost are conditioned to pick up on these noises, on masculine voices, on footsteps, on the sounds of cars, on the sounds of honking horns, that the all of that stuff is aggressive, and it's it puts me in a position where I feel very unwelcome in my own home, in my own neighborhood, vulnerable in a place that you should feel the safest, yeah. And you've also had experiences where you live, yeah, you know. I think at this point I, you know, I live in southeast LA, and at this point I spend little to no time walking around, right? Absolutely no time walking around. So I actually have a memory of when I was 15. And, of course, I wasn't driving, so I was walking to the library and a truck, a business truck, meaning from like, let's say like an AC like, I'm gonna fix your air conditioned type of place, okay? Like an actual business. They're working. They're working. A man pulled over, pulled out his phone, and said, Can we talk? And I was 15, and this man was a grown man, right? And I just shook my head, and I kept walking, yeah. And eventually he he drove off right, and he probably honked as he was driving away from me. But I remember that because I was young and it was, it was one of my, one of the, the scariest things I remember, because I was a, I was a child, right? And now I think because of that, I tried to even walking my dog. I do that with my mom. Yeah, I don't walk my dog by myself, you know. So these things kind of shape the way you have to live your day to day life. Absolutely, absolutely and even, you know, as a podcast, we center survivor narratives as locator radio as a Radiophonic novella. We center women and femmes of color. And even in just the production of our podcast, in getting here to the studio to sit down and record our content, we are navigating street harassment. You know, we record shout out to Espacio 1839 here on First Street and Boyle Heights, we record at Radio espacio, which is an incredible community space, which is like accessible to the community gallery books, you know, the radio station, but we also are in a public place, right, just getting from our cars, Walking through Mariachi Plaza, walking down first street and walking through these doors, I am guaranteed. We are both guaranteed to be harassed verbally by Latino men right here in the community. Mariachi is here in Mariachi Plaza, even on the way walking over together today to record this capitulo about street harassment, all the whistles that we heard, yes, all the comments that we heard. So even though we're not from this community, we are visitors to this community, and this is where we create our show.

This where we create our show. And what's interesting is that if we're talking about, you know, a very local, very concrete, sonic landscape of unwelcome and yesterday, I we could literally talk about any part of LA and we've had experiences. Yesterday, on Sunset, a man followed me and cussed me out because I ignored him right here at Mariachi Plaza. I think it's very interesting that, you know, we think about mariachis. And like Diosa, like you were saying that mariachis, they sing love songs, they sing ballads, yeah, and I think a genuine expression of love in Latino. And this isn't for all Latino folks, but I know that cuando alguien temanda una Serenata, they send you a serenade, right? It's usually romantic. And who does it? A trio, a mariachi. And here you have groups of mariachis, right? You know, here at the Plaza, and the same people who with their instruments and with their vocal cords who bring so much joy and romance like into our festivities, into our events, those same community members are using their vocal cords to harass and harm us interesting, right, right? So it's that dichotomy that we're living with. We're in community, but we're also ostracized from community. We're othered in community, outside of the community as women, yeah, as Mujeres and so you know, again, to answer the question about, How is it that the repeated exposure to really street harassment, and we consider it to be verbally abusive, right? And what does that constant exposure to that verbal abuse due to us? So to answer this question, we put out an open call, and we asked for narratives from our local Morris, from our listeners. We also spoke with Brenda Ingram, who is a Doctor of Education and a licensed clinical social worker. She works as the Director of Clinical Services at peace over violence, which is a local Los Angeles rape crisis center and domestic violence agency. And you know, I'm very fortunate to work with Brenda, and she was very generous in talking to us, and so she helped us to figure out, again, answering the question, what sort of psychological and emotional effect does constant and repeated exposure to abusive noise have on the minds and bodies of women of color. Yeah, and you know, again, once again. Thank you to Brenda Ingram for you know, really providing us with this, this concrete analysis, right, what it does to women of color. So I just want to go ahead and read her words, because they're so important. Since the disproportionate amount of sexual harassment happens to women of color, it brings to mind the impact of historical trauma, white colonialists and slave traders would treat women of color as chattel that robbed them of their subjectivity. Women of color were seen as less than and therefore sexualizing them was the norm. It often led to sexual assault and rape. Historically, this objectification of women of color has led to the issue of sex trafficking. We see today. Sex trafficking victims are predominantly African American and other women of color, especially Indigenous women. This leads to lower self esteem, depression, poor social boundaries, higher in incidences of sexual assault and trauma reactions. The verbal abuse of street harassment will create feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, depression, fear and impacts how a woman sees her body. A study in the Journal of Social Justice Research found that street harassment was related to self objectification. Self self objectification is a process by which girls learn to think about their own bodies as objects of other people's desires, instead of appreciating the body for its abilities, its strength, its strengths or its pleasures, a person sees it as something for another person's enjoyment. Multiple studies link self objectification with an

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increase in rates of depression, anxiety and eating disorders, as well as lower academic achievement. Street harassment has been shown to increase a woman's fear of sexual assault

and an increased perceived risk of rape. Women who are constantly harassed on the street can develop symptoms of PTSD post traumatic stress disorder. The APA Task Force on the sexualization of girls studied published research on the content and effects of virtually every form of media, including television, music videos, music lyrics, magazines, movies, video games and the internet. They also examined recent advertising campaigns and merchandising of products aimed towards girls and continuing Brenda. Brenda Ingram shares with us that research evidence does show that the sexualization of girls negatively affects girls and young women across a variety of health domains, which can include cognitive and emotional consequences. For example, sexualization and objectification undermine a person's confidence and comfort with her own body, leading to emotional and self image problems such as shame and anxiety. Mental and physical health outcomes. Research links sexualization with three of the most common mental health mental health problems diagnosed in girls and women, those being eating disorders, low self esteem and depression, or depressed mood. And finally, sexual development. Research suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences on girls ability to develop a healthy sexual self image. So there's a whole lot, there's a lot that the what we're exposed to has very real consequences on us, on our health, on multiple levels, right? And it really does affect your psyche. And I like the way Brenda Ingram's research really links it back to historical trauma, right, right. So I think you know, when we put out this call, we saw all these different examples of harassment, of violence against women, violence against girls. And I think this, this this analysis, this research done by Brenda Ingram really solidifies how it affects our development and our sexual development, right? So I want to read a story from one of our listeners. This. Her name is Tina, and she shares one of her one of an instance when she was street harassed when she was 12, and almost all of the locomotives who contributed, they all identify as as fems of color, as women of color, many also identifying as queer women of color? Yes, so I want to go ahead and read, you know what she wrote, one of the scariest instances of street harassment I've ever encountered was actually my first instance. I was 12 with my girlfriend, and we were walking around our neighborhood. This man began following us in his truck, staring at us, whistling at us, etc. As we picked up our pace, his harassment got more intense, and he started masturbating in his car while driving and staring at us. He parked on the street we were on. On the street we had to stay on to get home, knowing we'd have to walk past him. We ran all the way home, never looking back, fucking terrified as a kid who experienced a lot of trauma, I'd leave my home with my girlfriend to feel safe. But after that incident, nowhere felt safe. Ever since then, every time I leave my house, even as an adult, I'm on high alert. Especially as an adult, my fears are not unfounded. And thank you, Tina, so much for sharing. And I think that the a lot of studies have shown that Latinas, black girls, indigenous girls experience some of the highest rates of street harassment, right? And at the youngest ages, I remember being very young and having like, weird adult men making noises when I was 14, once a man followed me in his car and wanted to get me in his car, right, right? I think that the vast majority of girls have had some experience even before you hit puberty or you're fully developed, that men are already aggressively seeking you out, right? Absolutely. And I guess it, it leads to to this question, what safe space do we have? Is anywhere safe, right? And what we found also with, you know, the our locomotives, the stories that they contributed, as we saw over and over again, the reality is that women, we really have no safe spaces, right? Because if we're street harassed and we're being followed, we don't want them to know where we live,

right? So another listener, Joanna, shared this story of not having safe spaces to run away from street harassment, right? One of the scariest times was about a year ago. I was walking home from work, a 15 minute walk from my home, when a car stopped a few feet in front of me. I prepared myself mentally to run if I had to. I had passed by, and they stayed there, then they drove up and turn the street. As I crossed the street, I noticed that they had parked in front of a building. After I crossed the street, they immediately made a U turn and turned back in the direction I was walking. They turned on my block and kept going. I was afraid to go straight home, for fear that they would then know where I lived. So I kept walking straight. I saw neighbors out and felt safer. I proceeded to go into the alleyway to head to my house and enter through the back when I got to the back door, I began to hear the motor of the same car. I began to panic and fidget to get in the door I was attempting to open was the back porch, not even the actual house door. I saw the lights and could hear the car slowly creeping up. When finally I got into the porch and immediately ducked down. I made sure to stay down till I heard the car a few feet away, then I peeked and saw it had turned on the street that it had started following me on. I opened the door to the house and ran in with a panic. I began to cry silently and ran to find my dad in his room. I told him what had happened, and he urged me to call the cops, after which he got a golf club and told me to go show him where I was followed. But the black Mustang with tinted windows and a roaring motor had long gone Damn. Thank you, Joanna, for sharing that really terrifying story with us. Absolutely. I think we can all resonate with an instant incident like this, right? Yeah. And so I want to share another, another story from a mujer. Her name is Maria. She identifies as a colombiana from New York City, and she shares this story where she had moved to New York City and was trying to find an apartment. So she has a strong community of people there. So someone connected her with a realtor, and so she was trying to find an apartment, and the realtor started harassing her, so I'm just gonna read this for the next few months. He was outside of his office waiting to talk to me every afternoon. The first few weeks, I continued to turn him down, but his persistence began to scare me. I started walking on the other side of the street, but he would cross the street and follow me to my apartment, and to be honest, I never had the courage to tell this man to get away from me. The fear of knowing that his boss had access to my apartment made me too afraid to piss him off. I dealt with it for a few months, and I guess he eventually got the point and disappeared. So even in the possibility of finding housing was difficult, was scary, yeah, and it what it tells us is that no matter what type of activity we're engaging in, if there are men involved, there's always the possibility that the men involved are going to pose some type of a danger to us. There's a threat. There's a reality. Whether you're doing something as simple as seeking a place to live, moving, moving your human rights, move working. We know that sexual harassment not only takes place on the street, it takes place in the workplace. So one could take public transportation, drive your car, walk on your way to work, get harassed on the way, and once you're there, also being harassed at work. Right? I want to share another story from a mujer by the name of Marianna, and she's writing to us from Montreal. So she tells us that when she was 15, she was on her way to watch a movie, and she was taking public transportation for the first five minutes while she was on the train, everything was normal, but the man sitting next to her started rubbing his leg against hers and breathing heavily. She tells us I was too shocked and too scared to do anything, I tried to make myself smaller, to get my body away from his, but on this crowded bus, there was nowhere for me to go. As I sat next to this man for 20 minutes, as He

rubbed his leg against mine until my stop came up, I got off the bus feeling distrusting and angry. I was angry at this gross ass man, but I was angry at myself more because I wasn't brave enough to say or do anything. To this day, I still remember that I was wearing shorts and rationalizing at 15 that it was my fault that he did that to me because of what I was wearing. And thank you, Marianna, for sharing that story, and I think that she touched on something that we've also all experienced that victim blaming, and that internalized victim blaming of what were you wearing, what were you wearing, right? You know, and I think something that we can see with when we're being harassed, when we're being abused, is that we have this, this notion that we have the right to defend ourselves, right? Or we're told that we should defend ourselves, we should call the police, but in reality, we're not allowed self defense. No, there's many, many cases where we are actually not allowed to defend ourselves as women. We're not allowed to defend ourselves from men. So I want to share this, this, this story from Natalie writing to us from Los Angeles, and it's very detailed story, and it's a little lengthy, but it's really important that we read this from a narrative perspective. I was harassed and then attacked on the street. I had just left a bar with my friends. We were celebrating their engagement. We were standing outside on the street discussing our next move and planning on calling a lift. When a very intense, intoxicated man approached my girlfriend gotten very he had gotten very close to her face and made her extremely uncomfortable. I remember he had a glass of alcohol in his hand and that he had snuck it out of the bar with him after she politely declined his advances. He was becoming more aggressive and persistent. That's when I stepped in and told him to fuck off. I told him he was making my friend uncomfortable and he needed to leave her alone. He called me a bitch and began to yell in my face when I had it. What I hadn't noticed yet was his friend, who was also very intoxicated, had walked up behind him and was standing to the right of him, watching this argument unfold out of nowhere without any previous interaction. His friend sucker punches me right in the mouth. This man, a 200 pound, stout man busted my upper lip open, and blood began to gush all over my face, body and Lord, more than the pain, I remember the shock no man had ever laid his hands on me in my life before. I was stunned that this man who I did not know and who I had not instructed with, had punched me in my mouth to quite literally quiet me for protecting my friend. What followed was a bit of a blur to me, the fear of what my face looked like overcame me with my tongue. I could feel the flesh of my lip exposed, exposed. As the blood poured down my face, I began to worry what damage had been done. My boyfriend happened to be a few feet away. When this happened, he wrestled the man down to the ground into a chokehold, while his other friend kicked my boyfriend repeatedly in the ribs and back when the police arrived, they immediately apprehended the two men. They told me that the men that the man who hid me, had a warrant out for his arrest, so he would be arrested that evening, his friend would also be arrested for public intoxication. After I told them what happened, they told me that if I wanted to press charges for assault, I would also have to be arrested. Not once did I cry when I was hit. Not once did I

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cry when I bled. Not once did I cry until the police this then I cried. I sobbed. I was so infinitely disappointed by the legal system. As a child, you grow up thinking the police can protect you, that the legal system is here to protect the innocent. At that moment, I realized that that was a lie. When the ambulance arrived, they told me they didn't have the tools to give me the stitches

and I would have to go to the hospital to get them. The police asked me if I wanted to press charges. I was forced to say no, because, believe it or not, after everything that happened to me, the last thing I wanted to do was to be arrested for being a victim of an attack. It's been almost a year now. My lip has a large scar, which formed into a lump on it. Every time I look at it, I think of that night. That night changed my life. I carry pepper spray with me everywhere I go. Now, for a long time, I feared speaking up for myself. I feared interacting with strangers. I feared being in the presence of drunk men. Overcoming the trauma of that night took me a long time, and I'm still dealing with it, but I know that protecting my friend was the right thing to do. And I know that I cannot live in fear, and I know that I will, will always stand up for a woman that needs it. Tengo Corazon, valiant for last kilos. Hombres felt an escucha. Respetar, wow, yeah. And Natalie is a friend, a friend of ours, and we let we love Natalie. And thank you so much for sharing and Natalie, you know, just to exhibit that this is not theoretical, this is not this is not fiction. This is real. This has flesh and bone consequences for us and for the people that we love. And something to point out in Natalie's story is that the men that got arrested that night, they got arrested for public intoxication, they got arrested for a pre existing warrant. They did not get arrested for physically assaulting her, for busting her lip open and causing her to bleed on the street, right? They got in trouble for everything except the violence against that woman, right, right? And that's law enforcement allowing for that and enforcing that right. So when women are told that these are the thing, these are the resource that they have available to them. In reality, this is what happens, what could happen, and this is a majority of what happens. And keeping in mind, I've been street harassed. I have been harassed by police, by law enforcement, by sheriffs, also they perpetrate violence against women, including sexual assault on the job. High rates of domestic violence. Who do we go to for help? Yeah, nobody. Right? And that leads us to the next point that we really gleaned from a lot of these narratives is that, you know, even the men in our lives, men that were related to family members, community members, if they're not perpetrating street harassment, right, they blame us for it. They don't support us, or they don't intervene, right? So Elizabeth shared a story of being victim blamed by her father, actually, when she was 14. So I'm gonna go ahead and read Elizabeth's story. When I was 14, yrbel day, I would regularly take walks by myself around the suburban town I lived in at the time without asking permiso for me, Papa. One such time, I was walking on the sidewalk in my hometown's downtown area, and an old man pulled up next to me. He was motioning for me to come inside the car with him, and I yelled at him No. At this point in time, I wasn't too panicked. However, as I walked away from him in the opposite direction, he was following me in his car, asking me to get in again. I yelled, no, go the fuck away. But he kept on following me. At this point, I was panicked and in shock. My fight or flight response kicked in, and my response was flight. I was scared of what would happen to me if I didn't escape immediately, so I ran into the nearest public space I could think of, which happened to be a hardware store. I yelled inside the store as I ran inside and said, There's a man outside trying to abduct me. Someone call 911, unfortunately, I did not get the response from the people in the store that I would have liked. The people in line at the cash register just stared at me as I was screaming for help. Since they didn't do anything after I pleaded for help, I was like, fuck that, and called the cop. Before I went outside of the store, the cops came and asked me for information about myself, the man, the car, make and model. I was panicked. My initial response was not to look at the man's car and identify those things. I was scared, but I was even more scared of my parents finding out that

this happened, which they did. The cops ended up calling my dad, and he was furious at me instead of asking me if I was okay because of what happened, he claimed that it was my fault for going out in the street without asking him. He said I betrayed his trust, and that he couldn't trust me to what to be where I said I was going to be after this incident, not only did my school find out about it and announced to the whole school that a man tried to abduct one of their students, but people in the school found out that it was me, and it was really uncomfortable for me to have people approach me about it. My dad didn't let me go out of the house by myself for a while after this incident, and it not only affected my relationship with him, but it affected the way that I act while I am alone outside, I cope and protect myself by having a resting bitch face or my Fauci face so that men know not to approach me. However, it doesn't always work. I haven't unpacked all of my trauma from this event, but I do know that it gave me a reality check about the dangers I face every day as a mujer de color in a society where CIS het men are raised to be trash, and I get harassed daily when I leave my house. I know what happened to me was not my fault, but my father. My father blamed me for the actions of a grown ass child predator. That's rape culture, and it needs to be called out for women and femmes of color to call out harassment means risking sexual assault and or death. Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing that story.

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and let's just, let me just say that each of us, like I sat down yesterday and read through with the emails and the OSA read through the emails today, and we got emotional. Yeah, it's scary, and it's it's heartbreaking what we're subjected to at such a young age, and that it's not an anomaly, it really is all of us. And it's sad. It's so sad, right? And I think that's why it's really infuriating when there we have these men, not only in our communities, but just across the board, say, well, not all men, right? Not all men are like this. Well, fine, if you're not like that, most likely you are, though, yeah, if you're not, are you doing anything about the men that are no no. Because, as we know, right, and as we've talked about, even when, like, if the thesis not all men had any validity, right? We wouldn't see instances where, where groups of men are engaging in targeted harassment. In a group an entire construction site, all the men at Mariachi Plaza, just the dudes hanging out on the block in front of your house, right? You wouldn't at the bar, the men at the clubs, you would expect one of those men, yeah, to intervene, to speak up and say something. But we see the opposite. We don't see men advocating on behalf of women. We don't see men checking their homies. Instead, we rely on each other. We rely on on the other women in our lives and the women that are around us, yeah, women that you don't know will come to your defense. Right? When you're at a club, you're at a bar, you're somewhere in public space before a man to make sure that you're okay, because they recognize what's happening. Yes, and I think this is a good transition, a good segue into this other narrative by the by Tina as well, and she shares an experience when she was at a gas station and wasn't helped. This past year, I experienced another terrifying incident of street harassment. I was the sole woman in a gas station, and a man repeatedly rubbed himself against me in the store, pretending he was looking at something over my shoulder. He did this several times and several times in front of the male store clerk and male customers. I loudly told him to back the fuck up. But none of the men in the store stood up for me. Despite seeing this man assault me, I rushed out of the store, and the man followed me home and only left me alone because there were cops in the parking

lot of my building. I was shaking so badly I couldn't put the key in my door. Ever since then, I carry a knife whenever I leave the house. I make no apologies for that. I've seen white men run to the defense of white women who are experiencing street harassment. That has never happened to me. I've seen white men outside of bars be kindly and politely to white women walking by or leave them alone entirely, while asking me how much all within plain view of other people who don't say shit. I feel like people either don't care or they think femmes of color should handle shit on their own so no one watches out for us. On top of the fear and anxiety and trauma that constant street harassment has produced for me, there's also that horrible feeling that my body is not mine, it's public property, and because I'm a femme of color, nobody gives a shit enough to come out to my aid when I'm experienced violence in broad daylight. That's a word right there, right? Thank you, Tina, so much for sharing so much of what you experienced. And I think it's really important to touch on that idea that the woman of color's body is public property and accessible to everybody, but public property is not accessible to us. Correct? We pay taxes. Public property is protected. It's protected, but we are not. We are not. We are unprotected public property for consumption of others, but we don't have the right to safely access public spaces, like sidewalks, bus stops, public transportation. We just don't right, so it wants to be consumed and to be excluded, right? Which I think is what Tina's story really illustrates. Right?

Unknown Speaker 4:43

We also have a similar story that another listener named Delia shared, and this is her story. I think the saddest part of street harassment and harassment in general, is that I have normalized it in my own mind. It is such a regular thing that I don't even consciously think about it most of the time, yet I make decisions based on what clothing I might wear or what route I take to work. In order to avoid it, I am a lot of lighter skin, Latinx femme. So many people harass me in Spanish, assuming that I don't speak Spanish and will understand them. It makes me extra disappointed when hombres from my community that disrespect me like that. One time, a couple of guys followed me off the bus and were pointing and shouting about my ass in Spanish, I was wearing leggings, so they seemed to think it was okay to comment. It was really embarrassing and scary, because they were following me so closely, and I was worried they might grab me, even though tons of people were around me and watching the situation, no one stopped to ask if I was okay. Luckily, they didn't follow me, and I got home safely, but I was shaking for the rest of the day. Since coming out as queer, I have felt more anxiety around harassment. Before, if I was with a man, I was usually left alone, which is annoying as hell, that having a man around changes how other men treat me. But now, if I'm with my partner in public, I feel that we are more vulnerable. I'm afraid that if I turn down men and they find out that I am a queer woman, they will retaliate. I am sometimes afraid to show affection or to kiss my partner in public, because I am worried how men will react. I wish I didn't have to consider the feelings of men so frequently, but because men's feelings lead them to hurting and killing people, I have to do this. Yeah, thank you for sharing that with us, you know. And I think that these are very these all I mean, these are all examples of how sound affects our lives, right? But if you think about the sound of silence, absolutely, what does that say when there is silence, so when we're out in the street, what does silent street harassment look like? Right? What is it? What is the feeling when you can feel someone staring at you, when they're just they're gazing

at you, yeah, you don't know what they're thinking. No, what could happen next, but you know that you feel unsafe, yeah, because we know that the stares from men. They are aggressive, they are threatening. And I think what's interesting is that men do not tolerate stares from other men. Men do not stare at other men. And we're talking about people who predominantly perpetrate street harassment, who are cisgender heterosexual men. That is really who we're talking about here, right? One man staring at another man is seen as a threat or a challenge, right? And it's okay if, if you you fight back or you defend yourself in that context, right? When men stare at us, it is also a threat and it is also aggressive, but like we've already talked about, when do we have the right and the space to actually defend ourselves. We do not. Survivors are quite often arrested and prosecuted for harming their perpetrators in self defense. Right? Silence can also be predatory. Silence can be predatory, and we know as little girls, when grown men stare at us, we know that that's not positive, that it's not healthy, and that it's done with intention, a negative intention towards us, right? And something else that I thought was really interesting is the concept one of our listeners, Lizbeth, who is, you know, pursuing her MSW in social work, and who has done specific research and study on street harassment, especially street harassment that trans Latinas experience that women of color, that female students experience. She's done surveyed research, right? She brings up the point that street harassment, in a lot of ways, is prohibiting us from exercising a very basic and universal human right, the ability to safely walk down the street, right to walk down a sidewalk, which, again, is supposedly a public space, we even drive, to even drive, right? We get harassed in our cars, right? So we wanted to share another story from a mujer by the name of Janine, who talks whose story kind of exhibits how street harassment is a human rights violation, right? Janine writes, I am. I am a woman of size, plus size, fat, what have you. I have always been fat or plus ever since childhood. I began dieting and restricted eating since childhood in order to change my physique and to bend to my cultures and family's expectations, as well as society's fat phobia is real in Latinx household and culture, especially when it comes to women, I engaged in disordered eating and obsessive exercise through my turn eight, teenage and early college years. Ever since I was 10 years old, yo yo dieting has been a sustained part of my life. My weight has fluctuated tremendously over the years. I mentioned all this to provide important context. Ever since I was about 11 years old, I noticed men would ogle me or flirt or cat call. I did develop breasts and got my period at an early age, but I believe that men begin their disrespect, control and harassment towards girl very early, regardless if they look like a woman. Don't even get me started on that subject, though, men in patriarchy hyper sexualized young girls and women at early ages and have an obsession with and place a creepy allure on youth. But I digress, street harassment has colored my self worth and self esteem and how I move about in the world. Oftentimes, street harassment is talked about through the perspective of men liking what they see or hitting on conventionally attractive or slightly thick women. We all know this isn't true though. It isn't about attraction or appreciation. It is about control and image, intimidation and power. However, I have fluctuated between thin and conventionally attractive as well as fat and unconventionally attractive in my life, street harassment has persist, persisted throughout all of the sizes I've inhabited, I think that often these narratives do not factor in the particular kind of harassment that fat women of color experience. We are either extremely fetishized during the cat calls or violent, violently attacked as men and their friends tried to degrade me, mock me and emphasize how disgusting I am in my fat body, I hear the most

hurtful and hateful comments regarding my Unruly body because I am fat, men believe they should comment on how disgusting or subpar and sub human I am. These attitudes are always expressed as disgust or an anger or an overblown jest. We must remember that extreme hate towards fat women of color or vulgar cat calling is all harassment and different sides of the same coin. Both are men and patriarchy asserting control and ownership and policing women's and femme bodies. Whether it is bullying of fat women of color or cat calls of thin women, it is all harassment wherein men demand attention and control over us. As the latest attack on quantasia Sharpton claim that usher gave her herpes and had sex with her without disclosing and without her consent, proves we as fat women, are always attacked because of our fatness. We are not believed because of our fatness. Our abuse is denied because of our fatness. A lot of abusers target fat women because they know we are devalued and that no one will believe us because fat phobia is real, our claims and gripes are delegitimized because onlookers cannot believe that someone would touch us or find us attractive. This is why a lot of harassers choose fat women and fat girls as their targets. They know that we are marginalized and that we are hyper vulnerable because we are the butt of the joke. I have had a complicated relationship with street harassment at the hands of men. It is often goaded and complimented my body dysmorphia, anti fatness and disordered eating, obsessive exercise as a young woman, it still does. It fan the flames of my insecure body shame and self hate, I often placed my value in whether or not others found me attractive and whether I had gotten thin enough for men to give me a second glance when I was going through puberty and building my self worth and value systems. I was taught by dominant culture that men's thoughts and desires dictated my worth, so I had a caustic co dependent relationship with street harassment. In that way, it is complicated, because street harassment both validated and invalidated me, depending on my size. It was formative in that. It instilled fear and insecurity in me. It instilled in me the idea that others validate my body and worth it reinforced the idea that I was at fault when men harassed me, especially since I was a victim of childhood sexual assault, enduring harassment from a young age, fooled me into thinking that I was inherently bad or inappropriate and that I should control myself through modesty if I wanted respect, but that Respect never came.

Unknown Speaker 13:41

There is like, Oh my God. I just, I just, I don't even know what, at some point you lose words and you have nothing else to say. You know, one of those moments. Thank you so much, Janine, for sharing so much with us. Thank you, Janine, analysis is amazing. Yeah, I think, I mean, this is also a good example of how street harassment is taught taught behavior. It's taught behavior. All these men learned it from somewhere, right? All these men that were harassing her and have harassed us have learned it from somewhere, right, right? And, and I think this is a, it's a it's good to know that when we are harassed by men, a lot of the times, the silent harassment, the stare, is when they're in the company of their partner. Yep, the mother of their children and their children are next to them. Their child is next to them. Yeah, I tweeted out once that Latinx dad culture was sexually harassing women on the street while they have their children with them, yeah, while they have their young daughters with them. The other day, I was at a nail salon getting my nails done, practicing my self care for the day, right? And a man that was there with his wife and his baby next to him was staring at me the entire time I was getting my nails done, right? Why? For what? Exactly for what. And so when we can talk about learned behavior,

right? But we also want to put the emphasis and the onus on men who are fathers, who are uncles, who are grandfathers. We get street harassed by old ass men. We get street harassed by young men, by middle aged men, by straight up elderly men. It is across all generations. And I know that these men have sons, I know that they have nephews, that they have grandsons, and I know that these men as being shameless, because street harassment is without shame, right? It is shameless, right? There's nobody is shaming them. Nobody is telling them that it's wrong. Nobody shames them. Nobody polices them, right? We are being policed, right? So the shameful behavior is normative and it's given the green light, right? Not only are boys, you know, engaging in this learned behavior, we want to point out that this behavior has been intentionally taught right and demonstrated to boys and young men, right and women, right? Men teach their sons to harass, but women will also condition their daughters, right? That street harassment is normal. It's normal. Women will normalize street harassment. And I think that, you know, we do that in some ways as a coping mechanism. Yeah, right. And we have a story that that Lisette, I think, contributed, yes. So she shares one of the first times she was street harassed, and she was about 12 or 13, and she was at the mall with her aunt, and she was walking into a store, and her aunt turned and said, Oh my God, this guy was staring at you in a gushing type of way. Yeah, gushing over it. I just remember feeling so disgusted and embarrassed, she said my first thoughts were, what the fuck? How old was that man? Also? Why is he checking out someone so young and anxiety came over me, thinking it was going to be my life now. I felt so powerless in my own body. It also made me so aware of myself as a sexual being to predators, and contributed so much to how I carried myself. I also experienced so much street harassment with my mom. I was like, damn. Like, these men really couldn't give a shit that she's with her children. And my mom would be like, stand up straight so your boobs won't look so saggy or like, show them off. But to me as a young girl, I was like, Hell, no, right? And that's this is, this is part of teaching your children to listen to their intuition. Yes, kids know when, when they're uncomfortable and they they don't like the attention that they're getting, or they're uncomfortable with a person, an adult, around them, right? And here, you know, her 12/13, year old self knew that that interaction, that that man's behavior, was not right, right, that it was not safe for her, no, um, and you know, like Brenda mentioned that the constant exposure to harassment and basically sexually abusive language has a lot of different effects on women of color, on our mental and emotional health, but even on our physical health, right because of the stress, because of the trauma, stress has a way of affecting your physical well being. You're more likely to develop eating disorders or restrictive eating right, to have a negative relationship with your physical body. And not only that, but if we think about it, street harassment actually prevents us from exercising, yes, and from taking care of our physical health, yes, and we can talk about Sonic landscapes at the gym. Yes, it's such a thing. Women have to have headphones on, or you're not going to get through a workout. You have to give off the appearance of not being aware, of not being able to hear, but being hyper aware all at the same time. Yes, it is such a performance that we have to engage in, right? So we play our own music. We put on our headphones to drown out the unwelcome noise, but also so that it looks like we don't know what's going on, but actually we're hyper aware of what's going on, right, absolutely. And so that's the gym Jacqueline shared about, you know, she's a runner, and how street harassment has affected her ability to run, right, which should be a basic human right, to run outdoors, to be outdoors. Jacqueline shares, I have been a runner since I was 11 years old. I was a high

school and college athlete. I always ran with a team, until my fourth year in college, where I studied in a student exchange program at Florida International University. I ran in Miami all by myself, but I never experienced harassment. People were more amazed that I was running in the streets of Miami, because no one walks in the streets with the intense humidity. When I got back to LA from graduating college, I would still continue my running. I would experience men stopping their cars honking at me while running. One time, I had a man on a balcony drop their cigarette butt on my leg when I ran by for him to get my attention, I was so angry and upset. Sometimes I get followed by men in cars and I run into a store or a safe haven, I always pretend I don't hear them, because of a story I read on the news about a young lady waiting for the bus on the corner of Pico and Union and getting hit on men getting hit on by men in their community. She declined their advances, and she called her mom to come pick her up. The men drove away. They came back in their car. They came back with a gun, and they shot at the young girl and her mother. And I actually remember this story. It happened maybe about a year ago, and it was not too far away from where I live, and that's a street corner that I'm freaking all the time on my way to work, on my way home, on my way downtown, whatever. And important to note that saying no, that that's the result that you could get, ignoring a man or saying no to him. Those men left. That girl drove away, drove back and shot her. Right, right? It's dangerous. It's dangerous. And it's just like, well, what can you do then, yeah, how limited are you as a woman of color, extremely all of these living in the sonic landscape of unwelcome, right? Because the Sonic, the sonic abuse is like, almost like it's predicting physical abuse. The verbal comes first. It's a precursor. It's a precursor, and we can almost guarantee that some other type of abuse will come after it escalates, right? That's why it can be so frightening, or so frightening. So, you know, I want to share from a listener, a story from a listener. Her name is Elia, and she shares that she would ride her bike to and from work every day, living her life, going to work, being eco friendly on a bike, right? And she says, I used to ride my bike to and from work every day. One day, a guy on a bike followed me halfway home. I panicked, got off my bike and pretended to make a call. Another time, riding my bike, a man in a car followed me home, and I took a one way alley that he couldn't take, and I lost him, right? So going to and from work, we can't walk, we can't walk, can't walk, can't run, can't ride bikes, can't run, can't do anything. Can't go to the gym. Where do we go? Exactly, where do we go? So we're prevented really, from, like, really safely and comfortably, like exercising and taking care of our physical health, which is so necessary for taking care of our emotional health, right? So as we come towards now the end of this, you know, episode we do want, we've shared some really heavy stuff. We've shared some very detailed and some very hard to hear stories about, you know, violence against women. And it's stuff that it's like, it sounds like we're at war. You know, absolutely this is just everyday life, which is why Brenda Ingram says that there it feels like we have PTSD, or we do have PTSD from street harassment, from constant, constant exposure when we leave here today, we will be street harassed when we walk out of this building and walk to our cars. Yesterday, I was street harassed all day. Yeah, I was cussed out. I was followed, and it was just a regular Saturday afternoon. Nothing special, right? You know. So we want to leave everybody with some takeaways to give us, you know, something to work with, a way to really contextualize all of this trauma and all the information and give us a way to move forward with it, right, learn from it. And how do we take this info and change it and change our lived experiences? How do we make life better for us? Right, which I think we have the right to do, is say, how can we make life

better and safer for us? So one takeaway Lizbeth, who is working towards her MSW at UCLA, has conducted a lot of research with women of color and trans Latinas, focused on their experiences with street harassment, and she has identified that she believes that there are strength based interventions that could be used to combat street harassment. She talks about how she shared a paper with us that she wrote for her program at UCLA, and she writes that she believes that developing a strength based intervention could seek to work with young men and families, since men are the most common perpetrators of street harassment, she writes, a change in discourse is necessary to challenge hyper masculinity and patriarchy starting at an early age. This can begin by engaging families, communities and stakeholders in a conversation that empowers them to teach boys, early on, to treat women with respect in Word, thought and action, it would address issues of gender inequality, which is a very timely and relevant issue given the prevalence of gender based attacks in the recent presidential campaign and the salience of rape culture on college campuses. So it goes back to family and educating our sons, starting at home. Yes, absolutely, you know. And to finish, we wanted to leave you with something. But first, thank you so much for tuning into this installment of Brown Girl hour. Thank you radio phonic novella to tune in regularly to locator radio. You can find us on SoundCloud and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, we are at locator radio, yeah, at locatura underscore radio, yes. So we want to leave you with these words from our loca more Delia. She shared her story with us earlier, and she says it gets tiring as fuck to put up with this bullshit, but women and femmes of color are resilient as hell. We hold up our communities in so many ways despite all the shit that is thrown our way, we are so beautifully multifaceted. And bless anyone who is gracious enough to receive our love. I am so proud to be femme. Thank you Delia. Thank you everybody for tuning in. Thank you to sounding out blog leaving you with another installment of Brown Girl hour as always. This is Mala Munoz. And this is Diosa Femme, We Are Locatora radio.

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