



**COLLEGE  
COMMONS**

## MARQUES HOLLIE: AT THE CROSSROADS

(Begin audio)

**HOLO:** Welcome to the College Commons Bully Pulpit Podcast, Torah with a Point of View. Produced by the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion, America's first Jewish institution of higher learning. My name is Joshua Holo, your host, and Dean of the Jack H. Skirball campus in Los Angeles. It is my great pleasure to welcome Marques Hollie to the Bully Pulpit Podcast. Marques is Founder of Go Down Moshe, a Passover cabaret that explores the Passover story through slave narrative and Negro spirituals. Marques is also a professional Jewish musician and JewV'nation Fellow, and proud member of Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn, New York. Marques, it's a real pleasure to have you. Thank you for spending the time with us.

**HOLLIE:** It's a pleasure to be here.

**HOLO:** The first thing I want to know is what are you speaking about here at Biennial.

**HOLLIE:** I'm speaking on two panels. I actually just came from one. The first one I'm speaking on is for the JewV'nation Fellowship that the URJ created this year, and about my project in particular called Go Down Moshe, which is this retelling of the Passover story as a one-man show using Negro spirituals and slave narratives. So that was the first thing I spoke on this morning. And tomorrow I'm speaking on a panel about Jewish seekers, and how congregations and communities can be welcoming and inclusive to Jewish seekers in their congregations.

**HOLO:** So tell me your location in the country and your congregation.

**HOLLIE:** Yeah, so I'm in New York, in Washington Heights, Manhattan. But I go to a synagogue in Brooklyn, actually, congregation Beth Elohim in Park Slope.

**HOLO:** Which is Rachel Timoner.

**HOLLIE:** Yes, Rachel Timoner.

**HOLO:** She is the best, man.

**HOLLIE:** Oh she's incredible.

**HOLO:** She's amazing. I take credit for her man. She is my – she is a student on the L.A. Campus. I had the pleasure and honor of teaching her. She is the real deal and the whole package.

HOLLIE: It's always interesting when I talk to people like at the oneg afterwards or to friends of mine who are like, "Where do you go to shul," 'cause it comes up sometimes.

HOLO: Right.

HOLLIE: They're like, "Wait. You live in like northern Manhattan and you come down here." They're like, "You know there are Jews in Manhattan, right?" I was like, "I do. But there is not a Congregation Beth Elohim in Manhattan." And this place – it's really something special.

HOLO: Good. So let's go back to the first thing we talked about, spirituals and the Passover story. What goes on? Is this like a theatrical thing?

HOLLIE: It's going to be. I'm still writing it. It's still in development. And it started – the original idea was like maybe it will be like a – like a concert performance, right. And then there's a lecture element to it. And so I was working on that. And I was like, no I don't like this. This feels like really like static. And then about halfway through the year I was like, what if it's a one-man show? So that's the new direction. I think of it as a Passover cabaret. Often I think that's the easiest way to talk about it.

So I've got this character, this archetypal character who is telling the Passover story in present or recently past tense. And it's archetypal so sometimes the perspective is Moses. Sometimes the perspective is of a slave sort of going through it. But it's always from a first-person perspective. And the idea behind that is like we tell this story every year of how we were delivered from Egypt. This happened. We won. Let's eat. Great. But, you know, what if we connected to it in a way that was more visceral as in, no this has actually happened to me, to us. And that is the idea behind the first person perspective of the show.

HOLO: Let's talk about spirituals and Passover. You know that many, many American Jewish families at the Passover Seder choose the spiritual "Go Down Moses." It's very common.

HOLLIE: It's a good one.

HOLO: Now, our listeners can't tell, unless they know otherwise, that you are African-American. So let's get in the weeds here. And I want to ask you something I think a lot of Jews think about, and maybe you encounter yourself on both sides of your identity, or multiple sides of your identity as a Jew and an African-American. The story of the Passover is deeply and uniquely Jewish, and universal, and deeply and uniquely Black American.

And so it's natural enough that the resonances that you appear to be picking up on in your one-man show should inspire you, all of us. I get that. But there are two resonances that I see as potentially troubling or problematic, maybe, depending on where someone sits. And here's – there are two of them. And they fold back on each other.

The first one is the following, how is it that African-Americans who have an entirely unique and specific slave narrative of their own, how is it that they draw as a community on the Passover

narrative. And the answer is Christianity. It is because the majority of American Blacks are Christian.

Christianity has shaped African-American culture in innumerable ways. So they have access to the story, as do all Christians. And you combine that with the slave narrative which is much more recent of African-American, and you can see a potent thing going on, culturally. But it's an appropriation. It's a cultural appropriation. Christianity itself is a cultural appropriation of our story, the Jewish story. So there's an appropriation going on. And usually cultural appropriation feels tense. It feels not so mutual. That's one half of the story.

The other half of the story is the way Jews of a certain generation have appropriated from African-American the Civil Rights story. And they have done it in, I think, good feeling ways. Ways of warmth and identity and solidarity. But, nevertheless, there's appropriation going on.

When Selma came out, there was a little bit of a minor Jewish uproar about the fact that Abraham Joshua Heschel, or in general, the Jewish participation in Civil Rights was absent. There were some Jews who were a little bit hurt or indignant about that. But they are only hurt and indignant because they thought that they were all that. And so that's an appropriation of sorts, I think. I think it needs to be – it's not that Jews weren't a part of Civil Rights. But that there's a, I think, a desire to own part of it that might be problematic in some ways.

So I see two streams. One going from Jews into Christianity, which includes most of Black America. And then coming back from Black America to Judaism. And I see it all bundled up at the Seder table when a bunch of Jews sing "Go Down Moses." And now you're telling me, you're like "I'm taking – I'm running with that." So I want you to react to my diatribe.

HOLLIE: I run in a very, like, progressive, liberal, Jewish circle, multiple circles really in New York. We all seem to find each other. And I've never really thought of it, I would say, directly as appropriation. And I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that that word to me means very specific things. And even though it's very specific, I still have a hard time defining, for me, like what is appropriation versus what isn't.

HOLO: But you can feel it when it happens to you.

HOLLIE: Yes. Exactly. And so it's like how do you then define the thing that you can only feel? How do you put words to what that feeling is? And I haven't gotten there in my own sort of language of it yet. And it's an interesting point that you bring up about sort of the Jewish involvement in the Civil Rights Movement because when I first envisioned this project it was in fact, okay, well, I'll sign some spirituals and then the lecture might be like this is – this is what the Jews did in the Civil Rights Movement. This is how, you know, we are all together here, really sort of doing this work together.

HOLO: Solidarity.

HOLLIE: And I quickly realized that like that is an important – that's important and people should know because I think even for me it wasn't until I start really digging into the Civil

Rights Movement that I had any idea that there was a Jewish presence involved because we don't teach that.

HOLO: Right.

HOLLIE: So I realized that addressing that sort of in a meaningful way was sort of beyond the scope of what I was trying to do initially, which was just to reimagine who we tell this particular story using sort of these words, and these texts, and this music. That being said...

HOLO: And that emotive power.

HOLLIE: And that emotive power with in them. Absolutely. And so within that I've thought about like what are other things that Go Down Moshe can address? Because it does inherently address this cultural ideal, this part of American history that people are not always great about really dealing with and wrestling with. So I've been thinking about, you know, like text studies. Like okay, is there an opportunity to touch on, you know, the significance of water or certain spiritual elements of both of these traditions? So that's where I've sort of kept my focus.

And I had an interesting experience earlier this year. One of the other fellows does a project she calls FED, which she says is like TED but you get fed, right. So it's – and it's really great. They're really fantastic dinners that she puts together. And they're really intentional dinners. And then each speaker, there will be speakers or performers who do like 10 to 15 minute presentations. And we collaborated on one for Passover. So I put together like a little series of spirituals and she wrote this freedom Seder.

HOLO: Now did this happen before you were even conceiving of Go Down Moshe? Or is this part of the process?

HOLLIE: This is part of the process. She wrote the Seder, and we sort of figured out where to put them in, sort of in the actual sort of order of things in the evening. But even the Seder that she wrote was focused on racial justice, systemic oppression, things like that.

So I think what's really happening is that Jews in general I think are finding ways that are meaningful and accessible to approach some of these hard topics. And in fact, the inspiration for Go Down Moshe came from a Passover Seder. It was 2013 maybe. Some friends who are now in rabbi school were having a Seder on the Lower East Side. And I went. And they were using a haggadah that focused on human trafficking, right. And so I was really struck by that. Like this centuries old story that we tell every year at the same time can address this and make us think about this in new and interesting ways to a very contemporary problem. So I was like there's got to be – there's got to be some way to bring this country's history of slavery and bondage into the story that we tell every year. And that's how Go Down Moshe – that's how that seed got planted.

HOLO: Got it. Well, it sounds like it's going to be a lot of fun and very interesting. So good luck. (*Hebrew*).

HOLLIE: Thank you.

HOLO: I'm sure we'll hear more about it. The second thing that you're talking about, do you classify yourself as a Jewish seeker?

HOLLIE: Not – well – that's an interesting question. So I went to music school, right. And so as part of music school you have like theater training. And in improv (inaudible) and theater training we always answer with, "Yes, and..." So it's never just like a hard like yes or no. It's always yes and...

HOLO: Makes for a good interview.

HOLLIE: It does. It helps, right. So I try to think about it that way because even though like I – like I am a convert to Judaism, a Jew by choice, however you want to phrase that, and even though I've been practicing for about the last 10 years I find that there are still new ways that I approach my Judaism. There are things that I learn that I've never thought about for like the first time. So like earlier this year I had my first experience with Talmud study. I went and spent a week in Northern California with a bunch of queer Jews and we studied Talmud. And I was like, okay, this is now a whole new like layer on what I think of.

HOLO: Was this SVARA?

HOLLIE: It was SVARA, yeah. Which was an incredible experience.

HOLO: You had a great experience, yeah.

HOLLIE: Yeah, and I was like, okay. So in that sense I am always seeking. You know, (inaudible) go deeper. But in the sense of when I think about that session I think it's really more of a people who are trying to like – are maybe interested in Judaism or trying to find their way. Like, oh like maybe I want to convert. What is this Judaism thing all about? So in that way I don't think I'm a seeker. But in a deeper sort of continuing to develop sense, absolutely.

(Break)

HOLO: You probably get the question all the time, but let's get to know each other. Tell me how you stumbled upon Judaism. Well, first of all, where did you grow up?

HOLLIE: So I grew up kind of all over. My father was in the Air Force. I was born in Florida. We lived in the UK for several years. And then after the UK we came to Nebraska. Which is where both of my parents still live, but I was like this place is – I have to go. Like, this is not my speed. This is not where I want to be. And they're both from Chicago so it makes – it's easier for them to get to family when they get to. So that's sort of where I lived for a long time was Nebraska. As far as how that translated into becoming a Jew who lives in New York, that's a slightly longer story which I actually have the time to tell. My family did not have a religious household for reasons. And so...

HOLO: There's always reasons.

HOLLIE: There's always reasons, right.

HOLO: There's always reasons.

HOLLIE: But when I came out to my parents at a young age as, you know, identifying as queer or gay at the time. I didn't have the language for queer yet.

HOLO: How old were you, if I may ask?

HOLLIE: Thirteen.

HOLO: So that's pretty young.

HOLLIE: Yeah.

HOLO: Although it's getting more and more common these days. I have teenage kids so I see it in their social circles. And it's an amazing change man. It's unbelievable how young kids feel safe coming out. It's very, very encouraging. Really something beautiful to see. I don't know if you have connections to high school age kids for any professional or reason, but it's remarkable. A really promising sign of progress. So anyway, I promised you I'd interrupt and I did.

HOLLIE: Yeah, no. But I think on that point it's really great that while there's still a lot of work to be done, it's really encouraging to me to think and see that there are spaces for that in...

HOLO: Jewish spaces by the way. Both of my kids go to Jewish schools and...

HOLLIE: Oh yeah, absolutely. And like far flung places too. They're not just on the coast. There are these sorts of – these communities are popping up that sort of support an engender and rallying around that, which is really great for me to see. I didn't so much have that in Nebraska. So when I came out, my parents were like, "Oh. Okay, well, now we have to go to church." That was sort of the catalyst. And we went to a local mega church, nondenominational. That's in air quotes because it was really a Pentecostal church, which if that doesn't resonate with you that means people speaking in tongues and rolling around on the ground and jumping up and down. Very ecstatic worship expressions.

I got in with that sort of tribe of people. I drank that Kool-Aid for about six years of my life. And I was, I think, 19 or 20 when I was sitting in a youth service, people were jumping up and down doing what they do. And I was like, "You know what? This doesn't resonate with me." It's like the blinders had just come off of my eyes. I was like I don't believe in any of this. Why would I practice a religion that doesn't want to accept me for the wholeness of my identities? I'm out. So I left.

HOLO: It was really that fulminating? That quick?

HOLLIE: Yeah, it was like – it was a split second. Something just changed. And I was like,

okay.

HOLO: I think they call that an epiphany.

HOLLIE: I think so. And then I had this minor spiritual crisis because I was like, okay if I don't believe in any of this, what I've just spent the last number of years of my life preaching and believing in, what do I believe in? Around this time, Madonna was getting a lot of press for her practice or study of Kabbalah. And I was like what is – what is this about. So I picked up a book called *God is a Verb* by a rabbi named David Cooper. And a lot of that book just really – it's like oh I feel this very deeply, these meditations, these concepts, these ideas. Okay. Okay, it comes from Judaism. I'll learn about what that is. So I went and got *Judaism for Dummies*, which is a book I still have. Read through it. Had a thousand more questions. Later that year I was really fortunate to meet a gay Jew at Omaha Pride. And I was like, "I have questions for you."

HOLO: You cornered him.

HOLLIE: He's like, "Yeah, let's talk all about it." So we talked and he was like, "Do you want to come to temple with me sometime?" And I was like, "Oh, I guess I'll go to temple." And so I'd gone to temple. And the thing that made me, I think, really decide that being a Jew was what I was meant to be, and what I was supposed to be doing was when I walked in, even though the liturgy was very foreign, I didn't really understand what was going on or when it was going on, I felt at home. You know, there was like this deep seeded spirit feeling like this is where you're supposed to be. I was like, okay. So I'm doing this. I'm going to be a Jew.

HOLO: You seem like a guy who listens to himself. This is pretty...

HOLLIE: I try.

HOLO: Yeah, I've been trying not to for most of my life. Right, okay. So something in you settled into this synagogue very quickly.

HOLLIE: Yeah, absolutely.

HOLO: And you can't pinpoint it.

HOLLIE: I think it's just another epiphany moment. You know, I talked to the rabbi afterwards. He's like, "It's great to have you here." Like there was no pretense about the color of my skin, which does happen sometimes.

HOLO: I'm sorry, what does that mean?

HOLLIE: In a number of my experiences folks notice when I show up at a synagogue for two reasons. One because I am a person of color. And many synagogues are pretty white. And the other, the flip side of that is I'm also an opera singer. Like I'm classically trained. So when I'm singing along to...

HOLO: They know.

HOLLIE: They notice. And there have been a lot of well-meaning conversations that people want to have with you when they see like, oh like, “Tell me like your life story.” Or there will be things like, “Oh your Hebrew is so good. Like where did you learn it?” And it’s a lot of stuff that isn’t meant to be insulting but it can come off that way because it’s like this is my life. This is how I’m living it. I know this Hebrew because I’ve studied this Hebrew. Or like I’m a Jew just like you. I look different. I was maybe not borne into this faith but this is still the faith that I profess. These are the people that I profess to belong to. And that is actually part of what the session is tomorrow about how can congregations and congregants be more mindful of how they engage with seekers.

HOLO: Yeah, that’s a tough one. It’s tough because it’s well meaning.

HOLLIE: Yeah.

HOLO: That’s why it’s hard. If they were just jerks and, you know, then it would be like you’re just being a jerk.

HOLLIE: Exactly.

HOLO: But – but yeah, it gets much more complicated when you can tell they’re clearly well-meaning people.

HOLLIE: Yeah, it’s like you’re trying to foster a relationship with me and like one side of my brain appreciates that but the other side of my brain is like, “Can you maybe ask other questions?”

HOLO: I want to get to the nub of what is offensive or troubling ‘cause I take it seriously. And I could easily be one of those people. Who knows? So let’s talk about how to understand what’s troubling about it so that everyone who listens and, hereby, be educated. I have a hypothesis and you take it and kill it or affirm it.

HOLLIE: Okay.

HOLO: If I were to be asked to interpret Marques’ last statement about it being offensive or troubling or whatever adjective we use to have someone come up to you and ask these questions, I would say that here’s what I heard. And I fear I may be wrong so that’s why I want to spend the time to get it right.

HOLLIE: Okay.

HOLO: I heard, through my filters, that it bothers you that a well-meaning person might ask coded questions and dance around what appears obvious to everyone in the room, but they’re uncomfortable naming. In this case, for example, you’re African-American. And you would rather someone say, “Wow! I’ve never met a black Jew before.” Is – or – or am I all wrong and



I'm getting it backwards actually. And you're looking at me, for the record, I've got it backwards.

HOLLIE: Yeah, so it's – I would say it's less about coding the questions or asking them directly. When you're trying to build relationship with people, especially – specifically like strangers, I think you have to address them as people not as archetypes or identities that it is very clear that they represent. And I find for me personally, like I don't mind answering questions like, "What's your story? How are you Jewish?" Oh, like, "You could read that Aramaic Talmud. Like why?" You know, I don't mind answering questions like that but I – there's time and place, you know. And...

HOLO: Oh, it's the context.

HOLLIE: Context is everything in – for those kinds of conversations.

HOLO: So just for the record, since this is an interview, the context was entirely appropriate. But in synagogue... I got it. Okay, so there's something like we're here for something else together. We're here to eat, really dubious food, and get to know God and each other. And something else needs to happen.

HOLLIE: Exactly. You know, when you're having those kinds of conversations with other congregants, for me personally, I have to feel like there is sort of like a baseline relationship established before I think it's really appropriate to start asking those kinds of things. Just because, you know, there are people who have their own like real traumas about how they came to find their faith. Whether they have come from really like terrible backgrounds with other – and experiences with other religions that these are – these are deeply personal stories and questions that you're really asking even if it doesn't seem like – like it's going to be. So time and place, context is everything when you're going to have those kinds of conversations.

HOLO: You must be very familiar with that dance, that coded dance that people of invisible identities do. If you have an invisible identity, queer, Jewish in which you can "pass" as something other than that identity, nothing prevents you from passing, right.

HOLLIE: Right.

HOLO: You know the conversations I'm talking about where there's a potentially coded word, or idea, or movement, or attitude professed or spoken, or intimated. And then all of a sudden the conversation shifts and both interlocutors dance without naming the thing. So if you name gay synagogue as the synagogue you go to, or a synagogue that has identified as a gay synagogue or a queer synagogue, whatever, everybody knows that there's lots of people who go to those synagogues who aren't queer.

HOLLIE: Yeah.

HOLO: So but then you're going to dance. Then you're going to say, "Oh interesting. So, are you married?"

HOLLIE: Right.

HOLO: And the same thing happens with being Jewish. And I can only imagine that in the simple realities of social interactions that if you're African-American Jewish that that coded dance starts sending some really, really haywire signals because they are wires that don't usually cross. People, I'm sure, must stumble all the time.

HOLLIE: I would say that I think the amount, or with the frequency in which folks stumble on that is really indicative of the kinds of communities that they find themselves in and surrounded by. So when we were talking earlier about CBE and how awesome it is, one of the things that I sort of felt very good about very quickly was that whatever was going on in like my visual or ethnic identity it didn't matter to anyone. You know, they didn't – we didn't have that dance. We just had conversations about Judaism and life, and like, "Oh, you sing opera. Are you going to become a cantor?" Stuff like that.

And I think that is really indicative of just the kind of community specifically that CBE is. So I feel like it has a lot to do with who are your peers? What are you surrounded by? And how does who you're surrounded by teach you how to navigate uncomfortable, maybe atypical, social situations?

HOLO: Yeah, yeah. I don't think uncomfortable is actually the apt adjective here. I think atypical is the adjective. Because I think certainly in the broader circle that you and I share of Reform Judaism and Judaism, I don't think it's really – I mean maybe I'm sure it is sometimes, but by and large I think it's about the atypical quality rather than to any discomfort. I would certainly hope so. But I also think so. I don't know. I mean you – your experience is yours. You may have a completely different read on it.

HOLLIE: Yeah, I would agree. And that's why – that's why I'm glad I landed on atypical after I said uncomfortable. I was like I don't think that's really the right – not quite the right word.

HOLO: Because that's part of the goodwill too. So let's talk about opera. Are you a tenor or a baritone?

HOLLIE: Tenor.

HOLO: That's the right answer. Great. So tell me your favorite aria.

HOLLIE: Oh gosh.

HOLO: From golden age Italian opera. I mean not...

HOLLIE: From the golden age Italian operas.

HOLO: Yeah. Yeah.

HOLLIE: That I would sing or that just exists in the world?

HOLO: No, you love to listen to either if you're singing or not, whoever. Like you go to it on Pandora or whatever.

HOLLIE: Okay. Gosh, this is such a tough question. If I had to just pick one, in *la Boheme* Act III Mimi sings this little aria called *Donde Lieta*. One of the reasons why I love that aria as much as I do is because of what it leads into. So she sings that aria to Rodolfo and, you know, she's like, "I have to go away." And he's like, "No, like I love you. Stay with me." And then there is this beautiful quartet between Rodolfo and Mimi and Musetta and Marcello. I was like what's the other guy's name? What's the baritone's name? And it's just some of the most beautiful music in all of opera. And this is coming from somebody who sings a lot of contemporary stuff and then also a lot of like the (inaudible). But that is just such a beautiful eight minutes of opera.

HOLO: Wow! Is an aria by definition a solo?

HOLLIE: Yes. It is an accompanied solo.

HOLO: By definition?

HOLLIE: Uh-huh.

HOLO: So you did not answer my question.

HOLLIE: I did.

HOLO: You said the quartet.

HOLLIE: What I said was that it is *Donde Lieta* because that is great and then it leads into something even better.

HOLO: Alright. Well (inaudible) is good. I was going to sing for you but I didn't want to embarrass you with my incredible talent. So – so what are you going to sing for us now?

HOLLIE: Oh geez.

HOLO: Do something from *Go Down Moshe* if you like.

HOLLIE: Something – okay. Let me think for a moment. I must also apologize to the listeners out there. I am recovering from my own sort of cold. So I don't really know what's going to come out. But we will find out together.

HOLO: Awesome.

(Singing)

HOLO: Wow! Thank you. That was beautiful. I got goosebumps.

HOLLIE: Thank you. And so for – for everyone out there listening that is a spiritual called “There is a Man Going Around Taking Names.” There’s more than one verse. It cycles through a mother, a father, and a sister.

HOLO: It’s about the slave master taking names?

HOLLIE: It doesn’t say explicitly that. It just says death is the man taking names. So one can infer that it is the conditions of that...

HOLO: And taking your identity and – it’s kind of an inversion in the Moses story to taking the kids, taking your name.

HOLLIE: And that’s actually one of the reasons why it sort of came to me as something that should be included in the show. There is that piece of the story where we’re taking the kids and the names and the identities. Oh, this is an interesting sort of parallel. The thing that I love about spirituals especially as they relate to this project is that what I think a lot of people don’t necessarily understand is that even though they are songs, yes they are a musical tradition, they are also coded. So each spiritual like mean something very specific in its own context, you know. Waded in the water is about escaping via water route. There’s some trouble brewing near the water so that there’s all kinds of stuff that’s coded in those songs.

HOLO: Is that an oral tradition? Is that oral tradition alive in the church?

HOLLIE: Yes and no. I would say that there are probably – so in the black church, right, there are like hymns and gospel tunes that are taken from that oral tradition and either sort of kept in their original form or just reimagined. But there is still a lot of that sort of like visceral, like this is in my bones type music.

HOLO: That’s a beautiful, beautiful piece you sang for us. Thank you very much.

HOLLIE: Thank you.

HOLO: Very moving. Okay, so now is your chance to tell me something that you want to talk about that I didn’t ask.

HOLLIE: I went to Israel for the very first time a month ago with my partner. We spent a few days in Jerusalem, a few days in Tel Aviv, and a few days in the Golan Heights and other parts of the north. Over the last few weeks I have been really thinking a lot about the entity of Israel and like what that means. Because it comes up a lot in the circles that I run in. I know a lot of folks who are very anti-settlement, and that’s a whole other conversation. And, you know, I’ve never felt comfortable being in them because I was like I don’t really know anything really about what is there and sort of why it’s there and how these things have come to pass.

And so when we went I feel like I’m still sort of decompressing from that in a lot of ways. Just

sort of grappling with that reality. And then in the news this week with the announcement of the President saying that we would recognize Jerusalem as the capital and sort of all the very real and potential conflict that that's going to cause, I find myself just thinking a lot about Israel. Not in ways that I would say that I have a bunch of like real opinions or facts about but it is the thing that I find that I am really sort of focused on right now.

HOLO: It's on a lot of people's minds, no doubt. So just tell me, did you have – was it a great trip? Was it a good trip? Was it a disappointing trip? Was it a beyond your wildest dreams trip? What was it?

HOLLIE: It was a really incredible trip. And I use incredible really intentionally because there were things that I was just like this is amazing and everything is so good and wonderful. And I love being here. But there are also things that are really complex and really challenging that it's like, "Oh, this is also part of this reality." And how do I – how do I sort of deal with that? How do I deal with those things? How do I think about them or talk about them? So I would say incredible as just a really great sort of blanket adjective for it.

HOLO: Well I mean I hope you have the opportunity to go back many times and develop that sense. It's one of the great pleasures of life.

HOLLIE: Yes, absolutely.

HOLO: If I might say so myself. Great. Thank you.

HOLLIE: Thank you.

HOLO: It's been a real pleasure to spend some time with you.

HOLLIE: Likewise.

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