

Revealed Transcript: Team Wrap-up

Rick Stone: Welcome to Flames of Freedom Revealed, brought to you by Lance Tolan Entertainment. I'm Richard Stone, your host and co-creator of the historical drama Flames of Freedom. Today, as we wrap up the first season of our show, we thought it would be informative and exciting for you, our listeners, to peek behind the scenes of Flames of Freedom and hear from our creative team exploring their approach to this critical chapter of American and Jewish history. We'll also Hear from some of the actors from our ensemble casts. It turns out they, too have an interesting backstory in relationship to the characters and plot lines of Flames of Freedom. Today we have Lance Töland, our executive producer, who first stumbled upon the story of Samuel and Rebecca Nunes, and was inspired to bring this corner of hidden history to.

Also joining me is Mark Simon, the producer and director of the show, along with Dave Wilson, whose original sound design truly brings this story to life. And in a few minutes, we'll also turn our attention to bringing our actors into the conversation. So Lance, let's start the conversation with you. And I know that some years ago, you were walking down Oglethorpe Avenue in Savannah, and you came to the intersection of Bull, And you came upon a monument, and that experience profoundly informed this project. Share with us what your experience was and what happened that day.

Lance Töland: Rick I'm no stranger to Savannah. I had flown in and out of Savannah as a young guy when I was in school flying freight. So I felt that I was very In tune with Savannah, if you will, the sights and the sounds and what have you.

Lance Töland: And one day, I was in the city of Savannah, in the mid to late 80s, and Something pushed me over towards Oglethorpe and Bull. I don't know what it was or what have you. I had no particular agenda or destination. But I looked across the intersection and I saw this monument I had never seen. And it said James Edward Oglethorpe. And then it had a menorah on it. And I thought, what have I missed? James Edward Oglethorpe is not Jewish. And as I approached the monument, I noticed that stones were on the monument. And then I immediately knew that this had more significance than just James Edward Oglethorpe in 1733. I knew it was not his gravestone. He was not buried in Georgia. But as I walked around this monument, I saw the names on bronze plaques of 17 people. And then I realized that this was a Jewish cemetery. And that the visitors to this particular monument, who either sought it out or happened upon it like myself, Laid a rock there, or stone, on top of the monument.

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And I became very perplexed. Why here? And who were these people? And this is the busiest intersection in Savannah, Oglethorpe and Bull. And that's where it began. There was a nudge, something directed me there. Call it a prod from above, what have you, but It it was that feeling you get very few times in your life and it set me on a quest.

Rick Stone: So what was the next step? You've had this experience you have questions. Where did you go with the questions? And I know you had some fits and starts as you began exploring the story. Tell us about those early days and your first steps of trying to figure out what to do with this idea of a story about these early Jews who came there.

Lance Töland: It really wasn't a story in the making, so to speak. I was just interested. I didn't understand it. And then the more I read about it when I could, you've got to understand I'm raising two kids. I've got kids in school. This was in 1985, maybe. And, as I would have time to read about Oglethorpe and Georgia history, I reflected back on the Georgia history that I was taught, and it didn't make sense. Nothing that we were taught really aligned itself with what I had seen with my own eyes. And I believe that was the one thing, the one linchpin, if you will, that there was this misalignment of conventional public education narrative that was embedded in my mind. And reality of 17 Jewish souls interned in a Jewish cemetery in Savannah, Georgia, presumably sometimes in the 1730s. This just didn't make any sense to me.

Rick Stone: And that's 40 years ago when you first confronted this monument, really.

Lance Töland: It was. And over the years, it would come and go and come and go. I've engaged in several productions. I am not in the. Movie-making industry or the podcast industry, but I do see untold stories out there. And I had engaged in a brilliant story about the people of coastal Georgia. The Golden Isles at War is a documentary that I did in my living room with people who had seen what had happened along the coast as children. But this was going way back. This is in the 1700s, and again, You're left with whatever education you get out of the public schools, which in my case was excellent. But again, it wasn't the true and correct history as I later found out as I read more and gleaned more out of what was going on in Savannah in those early days of the colony.

Rick Stone: I know a little bit about your history, but somewhere in, along this time, you suddenly rediscovered your Jewish roots. How did that intersect with this story for you?

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Lance Töland: That's interesting in that I had lost my parents at a very early age in the first grade and was orphaned, if you will, and I was orphaned. And I had an uncle who took me in, and my mother's maiden name is Feldman. And I got a call one night, and it was from a distant relative that saw my name in a transaction on some properties that I had bought in Griffin, Georgia. And it was Jack Feldman. And we talked. I didn't know him. He knew a lot about me. And he said, when you find out more about yourself, you'll know you're going to be okay. I really didn't pay much attention to him, if you want to know the truth about it. But along that time I had grown up with the Goldstein family in in Griffin. And that's when I started thinking, where did I come from? As you ask those questions, especially as an orphan who was displaced from your own sister, absolutely nothing about yourself. And then, as you get older, and you put two and two together, and sometimes it makes four. In my case, I think it made three and a half, but I began to observe the holidays I try to keep as kosher as I can. Started realigning my life with Judaism.

Rick Stone: Fascinating, your journey with this. Now, I know that before the pandemic you decided that you were going to embark on doing a documentary on these early Jews, and you got pretty far down the road. You did a lot of recording. You actually went over to England to speak with the rabbi, the chief rabbi of Beavis Mark Synagogue, which plays a central role in the story. At some point was it COVID that sort of derailed the process for you? Yeah.

Lance Töland: I was going down a path of doing a documentary something similar to what I was familiar with. I thought, I will compress this story. And as I looked at again, pre COVID, I went to Beavis Marks Synagogue, which you'll learn about in the in the production, in the podcast. And I had a film crew there. We did filming. We did filming at McPhis Roll in Savannah. And All of these things started racing around in my head of this story in itself is too large for a short documentary. There's too much to this. And, lo and behold had dinner with Lord and Lady Levine. And, we were sharing stories about this and had a great time. And I caught COVID on the way home. And so as I laid in bed for the next month, sick as a dog, not knowing what was wrong with me, I had a lot of thoughts about this. It's about perseverance. It's about religion. It's about not being a slave to a master. It's everything that we are as Americans. And the perseverance of Samuel Nunez, as I looked into him, really intrigued me. And then I came across the most important part of the whole puzzle. COVID put me on a track not to pursue anything in film. It was too costly and it would probably never get done. And that scared me because I refuse to endeavor anything that is not completed and is not the best I can do. And I saw that in Dr. Nunez, he was doing the best that he could do for himself and his family first, and then his religion. A light went off at some point, if you're not going to get it done, figure

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out some way to get something done beyond a screenplay. And that's when I met up with Rick Stone, Mark Simon, and we discussed this story and here we are.

Rick Stone: And we're still here.

Lance Töland: Absolutely.

Rick Stone: Thanks for being with me tonight.

Lance Töland: Absolutely, Rick. It's been quite a journey and an awesome pleasure to to work with you. Yeah. You and Mark.

Rick Stone: Also with us is Mark Simon, who's our producer and director and Mark, I know you've spent your whole career, most of your career behind the camera in the film business, but now you're in the, both the producer and directorial chairs. A couple of years ago, you were approached by Lance with the idea of developing this idea into, I think at the time, it was either a documentary or a film or a TV series. What was it about the storyline that most attracted you when you first heard about this story?

Mark Simon: It's actually on multiple levels that it was of interest. It was Re exploring my own personal roots. Digging into history, which I've always been fascinated with. With the opportunity to create a different perspective. And not only perspective from the point of view, but perspective from historical accuracy. And, as far as the history, I didn't grow up in Georgia, so I didn't go through the school system here to learn the history of the state. But my wife did, and we talked about it, and it was a fascinating subject matter to me. But what was even more important for me in the project, I loved the process, the learning Part of investigating the story behind the story, the history being able to take a fact and corroborate it, from multiple sources. And the real connection for me in the process was, looking at an archive from 1700 or 1702 that identified the characters in our story by name. I went into the Library of Congress and there's a history of Georgia dated like in the 1800s. And a lot of things that got convoluted with this particular family was the naming system. Because they were converso Jews, they had Christian names. And later on, they established Hebrew names. So they had, dual names. The Sephardic families, unlike the Ashkenazi families I personally am an Ashkenazi Jew. My, my ancestors came from, Eastern Europe from Lithuania and Belarus. And in, in the Ashkenazi culture, name children after the deceased relatives to honor them. In the Sephardic tradition, they name them after the parents living relatives, and from a historical perspective, when you're looking for a certain name. That, that name

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can appear in the family four or five different generations. So you have to sort out which Diogo Núñez, we're talking about here, Núñez Ribeiro.

Rick Stone: There was one conundrum I, that we had to deal with. was the Sheftall diary, which had the log of all the people who were on the boat. And it said in the diary that one of those people was the mother of Samuel Nunes. And that became a whole interesting, you began to unravel that one.

Mark Simon: Exactly. And there are a few things that didn't make a whole lot of sense that there were definitely conflicting historical records. And the thing about history, if someone gets the history wrong, it tends to be perpetuated. It gets replicated by a future historian. Yeah. If somebody else tells the story and uses, a reference, and that reference is wrong, it just gets, carried throughout and to the point where It gets so convoluted that you don't know what's true and what's not. It's like our daily newspaper.

Rick Stone: Yeah. Were there any big revelations for you as you dug into some of the research as we began that process? Anything?

Mark Simon: It was interviewing some of the world experts that we did and part of the revealed program, the prior revealed programs. The first one that was a little earth shattering for me about, about Judaism and the Sephardic [00:14:00] culture came from Dr.

Mark Simon: Eliezer Papo. Who is probably one of the foremost world experts on the subject. What the first one was that I never in, in my Jewish education knew that Spain was, as he expressed it, “the heart and mind of Judaism” during that age of enlightenment, during that period of time. It was a bit of a shock to me because I had no idea. And also the fact that the conversos really had little to no knowledge of Hebrew. That the language of the Jewish religion was Spanish.

Rick Stone: Let's talk for a moment about just the actual production. So we made a strategic decision at some point to go down the path of creating a podcast. We scoured the world for the best talent, and that presented some interesting challenges because we had people from Los Angeles, Mexico City, Budapest,

Mark Simon: London,

Rick Stone: South Carolina, Israel. And we found a couple folks here in the Atlanta area who were outstanding. Explain to people the process of how we recorded this show.

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Mark Simon: From my background standpoint, it was just an extension of my movie experience of, being on a movie set and how you break down the scene coverage and the individual actor's coverage. In a movie, you start with the biggest scene, with the most people, and then you cull it down. And a lot of times actors are not actually talking to another actor. Sometimes they're standing there off camera. A lot of times, they're just keeping eye contact. In this case, where there is no visual. And we have voice actors performing a script where they're talking to someone, or it's a very emotional moment, or a high point or a low point, and there's no one that they're really talking to other than getting into the character and imagining the scene. The amazing thing, we even had, some of the character actors that did multiple roles, by the time we cut it together, they'd have a whole dialogue with themselves, from one character to the other, which is humorous.

Rick Stone: Let's wrap up and let me ask you one last question. What are you most proud of about this whole project?

Mark Simon: I'm proud of certainly the end product. I think it's come together in a very magical way. A very professional, fine-tuned program that, It entertains, it educates, it has a purpose, it has value, and I think one of its big strengths is the creative position that we took in developing the story as a drama based on historical facts. But the other thing that makes me very proud is that people that have listened to the program, I have a brother in law who is a Sephardic, who knows pretty much absolutely nothing about those roots. And the program has made him think about that a little bit and learn a little bit about his own culture and his own roots to the point where, he's fascinated enough to want to know more. As a young man, I pushed my Jewish religion away because it was forced on me and I resisted. And I understand more about. Why it was important to my grandparents and my family to embrace the culture more than I did, I, I see what my immigrant grandparents gave up, leaving, with nothing except the clothes on their backs when they left their countries and starting over in a foreign place and having language barriers. And, if. If people looked at their own roots, because, in America, unless you're a Native American, your family came here sometime, some way, whether it was on the Mayflower or, a pirate ship or with the Navy.

Rick Stone: Yeah. I think that's the universal, real connection of the story is that it, it's a universal story that we all as Americans can connect with. Yeah. Thank you, Mark. That's been terrific. We're turning the tables and Mark Simon will be talking with me about the process of writing the show.

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Mark Simon: I'm here with inimitable Rick Stone, our writer and co-creator on *Flames of Freedom* and *Flames of Freedom Revealed*. There was a point a couple years ago, Rick, when I approached you with the idea of a collaboration and developing a project. The story that I brought to you from Lance Toland. What about the subject matter resonated with you and attracted you to the story?

Rick Stone: It was intriguing to me. It was a story like you, I knew nothing about, really. I had very little knowledge of the whole Sephardic history, what happened in Spain and then in Portugal and all the nuances and distinctions of all that. It was both intriguing to me and that first, I remember the first dinner we had with Lance, and as he laid out the story as he understood it, and obviously we learned a lot more as we began doing the research, which was exciting as we began digging into the history, and as we began to piece it together, it was just a gigantic puzzle. Yes. Just, we had to come up with a process, we, I think our spreadsheet, it was gigantic as we were beginning to identify different story lines that we could pursue. And

Mark Simon: I guess I was going to ask you about some of the revelations you had about the story that resonated with you. And they were all revelations.

Rick Stone: Everything was a big revelation, I think there were a couple of things that really stood out for me was the experience of the conversos. That just really got to me, this notion that people have been in hiding for generations. I knew some of that history, and I know that even in this country, there's, people who are in the American Southwest, and they go, Why does Grandma always light candles on Friday night? And they're Catholics. And they had no idea, but, there were these remnants of Jewish practice that had been somehow survived and people didn't even know the significance of them necessarily. For me, I think the gigantic revelation was that somehow these people clung to something that they didn't even fully understand for generations. So our lead characters, when we pick them up around 1700, they were like, Eight generations away from their family being converted forcibly in 1497 in Lisbon. We've got seven or eight generations of people who have been secretly, practicing what little they knew about Judaism. And somehow there was something about. Judaism that had enough life to it that made them willing to even risk their lives. Yes. That they were willing to risk their lives with the possibility of being arrested and tortured. As an Ashkenazi Jew, as someone who's on my father's side came out of probably Ukraine and Russia at the time. And then on my mother's side, probably Austria, Poland. And, for me, it was always the Holocaust, but this was the, this was an original Holocaust. And as we learned from Eliezer, the real Holocaust was when the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. This was comparable to the Babylonian destruction of the temples.

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Rick Stone: And so those were, big revelations for me in the process of doing the writing and the research. If you would

Mark Simon: share with our audience a little bit about the process as a writer and developing the characters.

Rick Stone: There's a certain science to this. We had to be very organized. Laying out scenes and ensuring that there was always this kind of arc of conflict and looking at, what gets included. But for me, the process of writing is like channeling the characters is becoming the characters. And as I'm writing them I'm actually often speaking out loud the dialogue. And at times as I wrote in some of the scenes I would be crying. Because there were these just awful events that happened. When the child dies at sea as they're making the transit across the Atlantic, and they have to bury the child at sea, and I remember being in tears. The writing process for me was one of becoming the characters and feeling their emotions.

Mark Simon: And ultimately make the audience feel their emotions. Have those same that, that's always our...

Rick Stone: ...hope as creators, isn't it? That the audience will listen and also have an emotional experience, that they will be moved. And and that's always our hope as writers and creators.

Mark Simon: I'm trying to think of I guess there's a question here that I was gonna ask you about your highlights for the 12 episodes. It's I know it's a complicated question 'cause there's so much to it.

Rick Stone: There are some big things here in the show. There were a couple of things that happened in the writing that were interesting. First of all, I had this deep intuition that Gracia Nunes, who became Rebecca when they came to England, that her relationship with Judaism was strained. And when her baby, she gets pregnant, and the baby dies. And she discovers that the baby has been buried without her presence there and that there will be no marker for it because the baby died in childbirth, which is a Jewish tradition. And that broke something in her profoundly. And when we interviewed Eliezer Papo, he substantiated that this was actually a very universal thing that happened, is that many Jews had idealized, or conversos had idealized what it would be like to become a Jew, that we leave behind all of the Catholic dogma, and they discovered suddenly there was a Jewish dogma. And it was often very difficult for them in terms of embracing that, and some reverted back to Catholicism. So that was one big piece for me.

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Mark Simon: All right. Excellent. Thank you very much for all that you have brought to this project, amazing writing and dialogue and digging in on the research. And I think we've created something that we can all be very proud of.

Rick Stone: It's been a rewarding experience and especially working with you, Mark. Okay. Sitting to my right is Dave Wilson. Our sound engineer has built out the soundscapes that truly amplify the power of all of our actors performances. And Dave you like Mark have spent your career mostly in the film business.

Dave Wilson: Yes, indeed. And actually on many projects and many commercials and various projects alongside with Mark as being his sound mixer. That's right. And,

Rick Stone: When Mark first approached you about. design and original music for the show. What about the storyline itself attracted you? What about this whole story of these wayward Jews who are fleeing the Inquisition got your attention?

Dave Wilson: Mark said, we have this idea of a project that we'd like to discuss. Okay. I expected, a five minute phone call and it's okay, yeah, sounds good. And then he started elaborating and letting me know the amount of detailed research that had went into this. And it was so intriguing that, okay, we'll be telling a true story. He gave me just a bit of an idea about the structure that he envisioned, but I felt that this would be an opportunity for me to offer to create music for it. And put my own stamp on it, even though I didn't know what that was going to be. I was game, it's like I'm in and I want, a role of being sound design, music guy, editor, like anything you need audio wise.

Rick Stone: Yeah, it feels like there's a couple of big major Chunks of things that were huge challenges. One is the recording of all the actors individually and then actually like a tapestry having to weave. All these little individual lines back together so that they sound like a natural dialogue. Do you want to say a little bit about just what's involved in that process? I don't know if an audience can even appreciate what you've been able to accomplish.

Dave Wilson: I would be happy to. And really what I've accomplished only follows what you and our phenomenal actors have laid for me. Once we had our cast settled, That was a big first step. We started recording. It became obvious to me that your skill at taking the historical facts into reenactments and keeping it very accurate but bringing in a dramatic emotional aspect of it, It was up to me to fall in line between excellent writing, research, actor performance. Okay.

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Now, can I raise the bar a little bit as well? I, like I said, I saw how good the potential was for this project. I've been editing for years and the act of editing is really not that difficult. Okay. I've been a musician almost all my life. And I find a rhythm in on almost any task that I'm doing, I could be outdoors painting and all of a sudden I've picked up on some type of a rhythm of the brush against the siding or the background noise. Yeah it's always a rhythm that's in my mind that I'm trying to be aware of. And that process, once you've got your basic edit, you've got the material there, then the finessing comes into play. Slight movements of timing in a delivery can enhance that performance. If you put just a little more pause in there, the intent stays the same, but the emotional value starts to increase a little bit.

Rick Stone: It sounds like some of it's intuitive for you. It's a very intuitive process. But you made choices. I don't know if you can step back and get a little distance and say what informs some of the musical selection process as you were beginning to build out these sound designs that I think support the story so

Dave Wilson: Well, very early on, just hearing the story from Mark, thinking of presenting listenability I also thought this doesn't need to come across as a history lesson. And when I had mentioned that, threw it out to Mark, I said, I'd like to use not necessarily try to be period pieces on this and be somewhat, as accurate as you guys have been, but bring it more modern day forward in terms of musical design, percussion, but keep it entertaining.

Rick Stone: As you think back on the episodes you've edited and what has been maybe one of the highlights of some of the scenes that you got done, you went, wow, that, that I just hit a home run there. That was incredible. Just because it exceeded even your expectations of yourself.

Dave Wilson: They had pulled off, hijacking the ship, throwing the deacons overboard, everything laid down quiet. And Gracia says, do you hear that? Diogo pauses, we don't hear a lot going on. There's strings starting to build there. What? The sea? She said, no, sweetheart, freedom. We could always leave an episode on a moment like that where we would swell up with some emotion and then you know it for me I'm then hopefully the listeners.

Dave Wilson: I'm wanting to know what comes next episode. It really you know is intriguing. Yeah

Rick Stone: I want to thank you for just everything you've contributed to this project. It just, it would not have, it would not be the success it is without what you've been

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Dave Wilson: able to

Rick Stone: accomplish.

Dave Wilson: I'm so pleased to be a part of the team and I just bow to each and every one for bringing their specific skills at such a high level that, like I said I'm proud to be a part of this team.

Rick Stone: Yeah, thanks so much Dave. So I think that we conclude with conversations with some of our important actors who brought these historical figures to life and get their take on these characters and what the experience of being part of this ensemble cast has meant for them. With us today is Ian Russell who has won four one voice awards for performances in video games and animation and the prestigious voice of the year award in 2020. He was also presented with the 2022 Voice Arts Award for Outstanding Audio Description for his work with the Hans Holbein Exhibition for the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Ian, you're an English transplant living in South Carolina these days, and for us, your acting and voice skills made you a natural pick to play James Oglethorpe, the founder of the Georgia Colony. As Oglethorpe, you play a central role in this series. What's your sense of Oglethorpe as a person, and were you at all familiar as an Englishman of his pivotal role in American history before working on the show?

Ian Russell: That's a really interesting question. At least when I was at school, Oglethorpe is not a figure that we learn anything about. But, my wife was living in Savannah when I met her. So in that sense I knew, I know, knew who Oglethorpe was before I got involved in the show, but certainly from an English historical perspective, we don't really talk about him in the UK at all. As far as who he was, I think, again, You arrive in Savannah and you wander around the squares and the Spanish moss and you know the oaks and all of that and you see this massive great statue of the man and all you really think about is oh there's a man who founded Savannah and you know you don't even really think about Georgia I don't think and that's all you think about so you don't really know anything about the person really. And from the script and the way we've portrayed him, he's clearly driven. He's got this huge ambition to make a difference in the world. And I think that shows, with, he's willing to stand up and speak for his and other people's rights without fear of contradiction.

Rick Stone: What have you learned from playing this role? You do a lot of voice work and acting work. What was this project like for you in this first season and bringing to life this pivotal character?

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Ian Russell: First off because I was a little bit aware of his position. It's certainly in Georgian and Savannah's history. It felt like an honor to be taking on a role with such weight. So so that was that felt like a step that was important certainly for the show, and certainly for me. From a, a technical point of view I've learned a lot about the character and about the history of a place that I've visited many times that I didn't know before. So I've learned an enormous amount of historical fact.

Rick Stone: It's been a pleasure working with you on the show, and we're looking forward to the next season and exploring all the ways Mr. Oglethorpe becomes a key figure, not just in Georgia history, but American history, so I want to thank you for taking some time out of your schedule and spending a few minutes with us this morning.

Ian Russell: You're very welcome.

Rick Stone: Also with us today is Juan Pablo Gamboa, whose career took off when he began acting in Latin American soap operas. Known in the business as telenovelas and has become well known in the Hispanic and U. S. markets, working in film and television in Mexico and Colombia, and receiving worldwide exposure with the sales of his projects to over 120 countries. Juan Pablo, welcome. As Diogo Nunez, you play a central role in the series. What has it been like to be a part of this story about a Converso family fleeing the violence of the Inquisition and anti-Semitism in England?

Juan-Pablo Gamboa: One of the things that I love the most about acting is that the imagination can put you in these contexts of real life situations, especially when they're historically correct. And I'm a big family history buff. So I find a way of attaching to that context one way or another. I know that I have a [00:35:00] certain percentage of Ashkenazi Jew way back. So that for one makes you empathetic to the situation in a certain way, but mainly it helps you identify with it. It's that. And it opened a whole bunch of different perspectives for me historically and emotionally as well. And especially to be able to put it in the context of today, where you still see that antisemitism is rampant, and I think it's important to be able to look into a story like this. To put that time into our present context and understand how it hasn't really changed in many ways, one of my best friends is a rabbi in New Jersey, and I talked to him a lot about this and he was really interested because he didn't really know too much about Don Diego. He had heard about it, but but he found it very interesting and to understand that was sort of Mayflower, if you will, as far as immigration was concerned. And what they did was so great in Savannah eventually that they're

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still there, the symbols, everything. And that, that I find amazing. I was proud to, to be Don Diego.

Rick Stone: JP, we were really proud to have you as part of the show. Your acting skills contribute so much to the success of the show. And we really appreciate you taking a couple minutes out of your morning and visiting with us.

Juan-Pablo Gamboa: Oh, thank you very much.

Rick Stone: Thanks. Angelines Santaña plays the pivotal role of Zipporah, the daughter of Samuel and Rebecca Nunez. Angeline started her acting career at the tender age of four in her native country of Mexico, and has been working with her voice since age seven. Angelines' currently works and lives in Los Angeles. Angelines welcome. Was there anything about the character of Zipporah Jacobs that you related to?

Angelines Santaña : First of all, thank you so much for having me here. It's so cool for me to be able to talk about this. And I want to congratulate you because the project is amazing. I couldn't be more proud to be part of a such an important project. For me playing the Zipporah. It was very important because such a strong character, such a strong woman that fought for her right to keep practicing her beliefs and to keep her family together, didn't matter what. So very strong women that I was so proud of portraying, very proud of that. Very difficult at times. Just learning her story and learning the challenge that she has to come across in order for her to move to America. It's a little bit related to my mom's story as well because she was an immigrant that, took a boat from Spain, moved to Mexico with her family at such a young age. She was 13, my mom as well. So I relate the story. It was so important to me to learn the struggles because it was the same struggles that we went through in Mexico back in the day.

Rick Stone: Angelines, when your mother left Spain to go to Mexico, was it because of just needing a change or was there something going on, some oppression driving the transition?

Angelines Santaña : Absolutely. It was a mix because they were coming out of the the civil war, the Franco era, and the whole Spain, it was struggling very poor. So my, my family's mother they went through all the struggles of the civil war her family. So they were extremely poor. A very good opportunity arise for my grandfather to work in in Mexico in an insurance company. So they left like a huge family behind and only the four of us moved to Mexico. It was very hard

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for her because after she passed away she I found her journey, one of her journeys that she used to write on when she was 13, 14. And it was so sad for me to read how she didn't want to, I'm just talking about it, I feel like crying. She didn't want to leave her people behind. She didn't want to leave her friends behind. She didn't want to leave her roots, her food, her country. And she was like, why? Why do I have to move? It was very. So listening to Zipporah's story, it reminds me a little bit of that struggle and that I have to leave everything behind for a better life.

Rick Stone: How do you relate to Zipporah now that you've gotten to know her as a person and as a character?

Angelines Santaña: How she always maintains her spirits up. That's pretty much how I am. All the adversities and everything that she got to go through and hiding her religion and all that. And me, as an immigrant, Coming to the States as well and finding the diversity and how loving this country embraces diversity and other cultures and other countries. To me, it's a full circle. To be honest, I love playing Zipporah Jacobs. I just love it.

Rick Stone: Angelines, it's just been a pleasure to have you on the show. And we want to thank you for taking just a few minutes today out of your schedule and to talk with us about your role and what it's meant to you.

Angelines Santaña : Thank you so much for inviting me. I really appreciate it. And until next time, until next season.

Rick Stone: Finally, I want to welcome Francois Clemenceau to our studio. [00:40:00] He's calling in from Mexico City. A city where he was born and raised. And he's known for his fast-talking, intense roles on stage, screen, and voice acting. Francois was the official voice of Cartoon Network Latin America from 1998 until 2014, and has received numerous accolades for his performances as a main voice actor for Salsa, a comprehensive award winning program for young children featuring puppets. Francois, for Flames of Freedom, you played multiple roles, but most prominent was that Visitor General, who was a complex character responsible for torturing thousands of Jews during the Portuguese Inquisition. But as we came to know you, your choice to be a part of our cast had a particularly personal backstory. Would you be willing to share with us and our listeners the story of your grandmother and the keys that she showed you when you were a teenager to the house in Spain that they left in 1492?

Revealed Transcript: Team Wrap-up

FRANÇOIS CLEMENSEAU: I was born in Mexico City in the sixties. And I remember when I was a little boy seeing some keys, all very old keys in Mexico that were hidden from plain sight. They were very old keys. They were not used in any of the doors of any of the places that I knew either here in Mexico City or where my grandparents live in a small town in the state of Jalisco. I heard whisperings into that we were coming from conversos. They never talk about that openly. So I bump into those keys from time to time through the years. But when my mother died in Mexico City, I found those old keys and I was asking my family, older uncles and aunts about the meaning of the keys. And the information that I got is that every time they had to move from one town to another because of persecution, they would bring with them the keys of those houses, hoping to going back at some time. As it had happened prior in, in history.

Rick Stone: Francois, that story impacted Mark and I so much that we were in the middle of writing when we first heard that story. And we decided to write it into the show, which I think gives it a certain gravitas and power because it's a universal story of leaving behind a world that one may never see again.

FRANÇOIS CLEMENSEAU: So going into the ancestry of my family, I found that they came from a Jewish in Spain that they convert into Christianity. in the late 1400s, early 1500s. But later, some of them were persecuted for practicing the law of Moses, I will say. When I got into your project, it was very interesting for me because I could relate your history, what you guys wrote, to things that happened in my family. So I was very touched and very close to this project. I just knew that I had to do it. Now, being the very bad guy of the project, it was also interesting because one of the of my ancestors was an inquisitor. So the funny story was that three or four generations later, One of his descendants married one of the descendants of the people that he judged, that was in Spain, and for some reason they also met in Mexico. So these families, they knew each other in Spain, some of them moved to Portugal, so they knew, they were in touch, and they got in touch back here in New Spain. So it's very interesting just going and finding all this information living for, I don't know how many years of my life without really thinking that you have a Jewish ancestry,

Rick Stone: Francois, thanks for taking some time out of your busy schedule while you're visiting Mexico city and for sharing your family's powerful journey as conversos. It provides a powerful historical backdrop for our story and a foundation for where we hope to take the show.

Revealed Transcript: Team Wrap-up

Rick Stone: Thanks for listening to Flames of Freedom Revealed, hosted by Richard Stone and produced and directed by Mark Simon. Our executive producer is Lance Toland. Original music by Dave Wilson at Cue Tone Productions. Special thanks to Rabbi Saul Reuben, whose assistance throughout the development of this series was invaluable. And for their guidance and support of this project from its early inception. Additional thanks to Rabbi Robert Haas of Congregation Mikvah Israel in Savannah, Georgia. Rabbi Rachel Bregman of Temple Beth Tefilah in Brunswick, Georgia. Rabbi Shalom Morris of Beavis Mark Synagogue in London, England. And Lord Peter Levine of London City, England.

And the Jewish Heritage Alliance for their support. This has been a production of Lance Toland Entertainment. Copyright 2024. To learn more about the story and the scholars on the Flames of Freedom Revealed interviews, join the conversation on Facebook at Flames of Freedom or visit flamesoffreedom.net.

If you like this podcast, please recommend it on your listening platform and to your friends and colleagues. On behalf of our entire creative and production team, this is Richard Stone. Thank you for listening and keep in touch as we plan to continue the story in season two. Until next time.