

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Hey there, listeners. Before we start, I wanted to tell you about a new podcast from the Watson Institute. It's called Brazil Unfiltered. Each episode, Brazil expert James Green hosts a fascinating guest for an in-depth conversation about contemporary Brazil. And fun fact, Jim's our guest this week on Trending Globally. So you're about to hear from him right now. Stick around after this episode to hear a sample of Brazil Unfiltered. We think you'll like it. You can subscribe by searching Brazil Unfiltered on your favorite podcast app. All right, on with the show.

In 1976, James Green decided to spend a few months in Brazil. He had just graduated from college, and as a student had been fascinated studying Brazil's history and culture. But once he got there he became deeply involved in Sao Paulo's progressive political movement. And his trip? It got extended.

**JAMES GREEN:** The idea was to spend six months in Brazil and I stayed there for six years.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** This is trending globally from the Watson Institute at Brown University. I'm Sarah Baldwin. Green is a professor of Latin American history at Watson, where he also directs the Brazil Initiative. His newest book, *Exile Within Exiles*, tells the story of Herbert Daniel a Brazilian revolutionary and activist. Daniel was gay, a fact he kept secret for many years while fighting alongside his leftist comrades. But ultimately his sexuality became a part of his politics. We started though by talking about how James himself got involved as an activist in Brazil, and how that informed his understanding of Herbert Daniel.

**JAMES GREEN:** I started by teaching English to people who wanted to learn English. And I got actually involved in one of the groups that was a part of the opposition to the military regime. And I also was a founding member of the first gay and lesbian rights movement in Brazil in Sao Paulo. And so-- and I also kind of led their left wing, that wing that wanted to build bridges between the LGBT movement and the progressive sectors of Brazilian society, which were all joining together to fight against the dictatorship. And then eventually I went back to school and started a masters at the University of Sao Paulo.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** During those times in the '70s, you were in Sao Paulo, and the subject of your book was not far in Rio, having a similar trajectory. So bring us into your book.

**JAMES GREEN:** Yeah, so *Exile in Exiles* is about the life story, the life and times of Herbert Daniel, who I tagline

as a gay revolutionary, because he was involved in the radical opposition to the military regime. He ended up joining an organization that believed that the armed struggle was the way to overthrow the government. And one of the people in that same organization was former President Dilma Rousseff, who was in the same group.

And I follow him through his period in the radical left, underground, and eventually in exile. He started doing his political work in '67, and left the country in '74, and when he returned in '81 we overlapped in time. He was living in Rio, I was living in Sao Paulo. And as I mentioned in the book, I thought of trying to meet him, but I never managed to do that. And so I actually didn't ever know him personally.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** So what compelled you to write the book about him in particular?

**JAMES GREEN:** So many people argue to me that I'm really writing a story about myself, because there's a lot of ways in which our lives were on parallel paths. I thought that he was an extremely amazing person whose life trajectory had been lost. In the way people were recounting the story of the military regime.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Right, you call this a recuperative biography.

**JAMES GREEN:** Right, so basically I wanted people to know about a person who was gay. Although he's struggled with his homosexuality and he struggled with the left's homophobia in the '70s. But in addition to that, he was a person who passionately engaged in the present and politics at different moments in his life.

So during the dictatorship he was passionate about his radical opposition to the regime. When he was in exile, he went to Portugal, which was-- there was a democratic revolution, of course, and he participated in that. And when he returned to Brazil, he was very much involved in rethinking how progressive forces should be organized and how they should think and what they should be defending and fighting for.

And then he discovered he had HIV/AIDS in 1989, and almost immediately organized one of the first groups for people living with AIDS, HIV/AIDS, and became a very important proponent for very alternative an important way of thinking about how to confront the disease and how to give support to the people who are living with HIV/AIDS.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Jim, you've written that Daniel's biography is a vehicle for rethinking the history of Brazil. Can

you explain what you mean by that?

**JAMES GREEN:** So historians who've written about Brazil's recent past have established a kind of overall narrative of what happens, that is a very heterosexual male oriented retelling of what happened in the complex period of the '60s, '70s, and '80s. And by interjecting a man who eventually was openly gay who was really at the core of the dramatic activities of the guerrilla movement-- the kidnapping of the Swiss ambassador for the release of 70 political prisoners, the kidnapping of the German ambassador for the release of 40 political prisoners, very important people-- I wanted to rethink the way we could understand this period and who was involved in that.

And bring to the foreground figures, personalities, individuals that had been hidden or obscured from the creation of important people who were involved in this movement and this opposition movement. And also places homosexuality on the table as an issue that needs to be addressed and dealt with, as people who are fighting for gender equality are doing. And people in Brazil are fighting for racial equality are doing regarding people of African descent. So it's a way of reframing the way we think of Brazil's past by bringing into the story key people, key moments, key phenomena which really are essential to understanding Brazilians' recent history.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Was writing this book a political act? I mean, how do you reconcile your politics and your academics, your scholarship?

**JAMES GREEN:** So, I mean, as a North American, as an American who's writing about Brazil, writing about Brazilian history, one has to be very original and thoughtful about what can be your kind of academic intervention? What can be this research that you can do that might not be being produced in the country itself? So you can contribute positively and originally to the work.

So my first book, *Beyond Carnival-- Male Homosexuality in 20th Century Brazil* was a social history of homosexuality and in Rio and Sao Paulo over the course of the 20th Century. And no one had written that kind of history before. So basically I opened a new field of studies in Brazil in that area. And I felt really comfortable doing that.

And then I wrote a second book called, *We Cannot Remain Silent-- Opposition to the Brazilian Dictatorship in the United States*, which traced the activities of clerics, Brazilian exiles, activists, returned volunteers from Latin America, who were involved in a campaign against the military regime in this country in the United States. And I had participated marginally in that movement,

so I knew something about it.

The reason I wrote that book is because people in Brazil didn't know about this international opposition movement. There had been censorship in Brazil during the dictatorship. People didn't receive information. So it was a way of telling that story.

And this is the same with *Exile Within Exiles*, as a way of telling a story. Primarily for my Brazilian audience, which is the most important for me, but also for people who read English, because I live and work in the United States, to give people another reference, another framework, for thinking about this period and people were involved in really transforming Brazilian society.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Herbert Daniel is such an interesting character. His mother describes him as lazy, he didn't want to go get the milk. He got his brother to go up the street and get the milk for him. And yet he enters guerrilla training and he abducts ambassadors and then that leads me to the question of what-- his first exile, that is an obvious and literal exile, so he flees the country.

**JAMES GREEN:** So the title of the book *Exile Within Exiles* is a way of playing with the multiple ways in which he was an exile. And he actually says something about this in his first book that he wrote, which was kind of his memoirs. He talked about his first exile when he decided he had to repress his homosexuality. He was in high school, he kind of discovered his sexual feelings towards other men.

And he kind of acted out on that, and met people, but very much in a context of feeling tremendous guilt and shamedness about that. And hiding it from everyone. And then when he joined his first revolutionary organization, he felt the climate was that it wasn't really acceptable for him to be gay. And so he repressed his sexuality for five years.

And it was what he called his first exile. It was an internal exile. It was leaving himself, leaving who he really was for something else. And then he physically goes into exile in 1974 when the organization he's been involved with is repressed, people are all arrested, he's one of the few people who actually manages to escape the police, and goes into European exile.

And there is when he kind of accepts his homosexuality fully and declares love and has a relationship with a person who had hid him in Brazil, [? Claude ?] [? Mesquita, ?] and then starts confronting the left's positions on homosexuality. In the exile, people who are rethinking, what are the strategies to overthrow the dictatorship? And he also says, we need to talk about

other issues.

We need to talk about people's gender, comportment, sexuality, the environment, other questions which the left had basically not taken seriously until that point. And so I think there's a notion of a person hiding from themselves or escaping from themselves or escaping from, in his case, the homophobia he felt and his inability to confront it in the first moment in his life, and then later finding the courage to do that.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** And how was he able to return to Brazil? Because he lived in Portugal and then in Paris.

**JAMES GREEN:** Right, so basically in 1969 two other revolutionary groups kidnapped the US ambassador for the exchange of 15 political prisoners who had been arrested and tortured. And they were flown to Mexico. And then immediately the government passed a new law, a decree which took away the citizenship rights for anyone who had been released in a kidnapping or other kind of armed action.

So then these people went into exile and could not come back to Brazil. In 1979, in the process of re-democratization, a law was passed, an amnesty law, that allowed many political prisoners to come back from exile, and many people who were in jail were released from jail. With the exception of people that have been involved in an action which someone was killed.

And so Daniel had been involved in the kidnapping of the Swiss ambassador for the exchange of 70 political prisoners, and someone else shot the security of the ambassador. And he died. And therefore he was indicted for murder and was not able to come back on the amnesty law when the amnesty law was passed in '79.

However, the statute of limitations for some of the crimes that he had allegedly committed expired in '81, and so he was able to come back to Brazil in October of '81. So he came back in '81 at a different moment, when there was a very intense process of democratization, . And then in '82 he helped one of his fellow guerillas run for a state office, for the state legislature, in Rio de Janeiro on a very original, innovative campaign. And this person actually won the election. Then he became his chief of staff and worked with him in his legislative office in Rio de Janeiro.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** And he eventually died young, of AIDS, in '92.

**JAMES GREEN:** Right. So when he discovered he was HIV positive and actually had AIDS, in '89, his first reaction was total shock. But then he immediately embraced the challenges of figuring out how

to change government policies about HIV/AIDS. At the time, public opinion was that AIDS was a dangerous, infectious disease.

It was called the gay plague. There was tremendous discrimination and marginalization, and isolation of people living with HIV/AIDS. The government was doing essentially nothing to address the problem. And so Daniel got very much involved in advocacy to change government policy. And he also talked about the way that society should think about HIV/AIDS, people living with AIDS.

And he had a very simple slogan, which actually when I read it the first time I said, this is a kind of too banal. But it was the best cure for AIDS is solidarity. In other words, he didn't say the best cure of AIDS is some medical treatment, but we need to reach out to other people who are living with the disease and embrace them and love them and support them because we need to fight against the stigma which destroys people's self-image, and therefore it doesn't allow them to fight the disease at a given moment. And that moment there wasn't a cure for AIDS.

And so he became very influential, first in Brazil and then internationally. And in fact, when he died in 1992, Jonathan Mann who was the leading world expert on dealing with HIV/AIDS and had been working with the United Nations AIDS project, wrote a 1,000 page book called *Global AIDS*, and he dedicated the book to Daniel, because he really felt that Daniel had introduced the most important contributions to thinking about how to address the disease.

Now, Daniel had been a medical student. And so I think he had the benefit of having a notion of medical treatments and the system of medicine and how it can be very negative and treat patients in a very patronizing and difficult way. And so he also really fought for a kind of patients' rights and the rights of advocacy for people who were living with the disease. He really was an extraordinary person.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Is he well known in Brazil today? I'm wondering what, just thinking about your process, what challenges you might have had in doing your research and your writing?

**JAMES GREEN:** So I was actually writing originally an article about homophobia within the Brazilian left. And looking for secondary sources, I'd interviewed some people and I had a very interesting story to tell. But I wanted to have background material, and I found his memoir, which is translated *Ticket to the Next Dream*, [PORTUGUESE SPEECH] in Portuguese.

And it was a very beautifully written memoir of his time in the underground, his life. But it was written in a very baroque way, a very floral way, and his information. So it was revelatory but it also hit a lot. He wrote it while he was in exile in Paris, and he was protecting people. And I think there was really a tradition at the time of not giving too much information to people.

And so I was fascinated by that. And I thought, wow, I really wish I had met him in '81 as I'd hoped to. What an amazing person. I would love to write a biography. I thought, well, I don't know how to write a biography. I'd never written one. I don't read lots of biographies, to have a notion in my mind exactly what a biography is.

And I also thought, well, I don't know how to do it. I don't know any connections to his family. And someone said, well you should interview his mother. And she's in Belo Horizonte and gave me a telephone number-- which is a city. It's the third largest city in Brazil. It's about a nine hour bus ride from the coast, from Rio or Sao Paulo.

And so I went to the city. I called her, and I said, I'd like to meet with her and talk about her son. And she immediately said yes. I flew the next day, I bought a ticket and flew the next day and interviewed her. And she gave me a very wonderful and rich narrative about her son's life. And at the end, she did two things that really moved me.

One is she went into the other room and brought back an almost empty bottle of Chanel number five perfume, and she said he brought that back from exile for me. And every time I want to remember him I put a little bit on to think about him, which just, I went into tears on that one. And then, as I was leaving, she said, write the book about him. He's been forgotten.

So he has indeed been forgotten. The people who were AIDS activists in the '80s and '90s remember him, but many of those people have died. And Brazil has gone through such turmoil in the last 30 years, with such radical economic and social changes, that there is a tendency to look forward and not backwards. And so he didn't gain that notoriety.

Also, when people are writing the story of the military regime and the radical resistance, he was a character which didn't quite fit into a more heroic, masculine notion of virile, Che Guevara revolutionaries fighting against the evil enemy. And so I think people didn't really know how to put him into the story. And so that was my challenge to do that.

And I interviewed almost 90 people, I did as much research as I could in terms of archives and finding all of his writings that were kind of dispersed to many places. And then tried to frame

his story within the larger context of changes that were going on in Brazil before, during, and after the dictatorship.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** I want to go back to something you just said. I am thinking about the time during which you were writing-- researching and writing this book. Brazil was relatively stable, re-democratized. Then there was the impeachment of Dilma and things have changed radically for the worse, I would argue. Do you think that this book is more endangered now with Bolsonaro, and that sort of an atmosphere in Brazil, or is it even more important that it come out now?

**JAMES GREEN:** So I started writing the book about 10 years ago, and it was during the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who was a working class leader who was elected to the presidency and served two terms and was very popular when he left. And his successor, Dilma Rousseff, as I mentioned earlier, was one of the young people who joined the same organization that Daniel was involved in, fighting against the dictatorship.

And so it was-- it was a moment of kind of optimism in the country. Things were going relatively well. The country started to face economic problems in 2013, 2014. And then opposition to President Rousseff's presidency, and she was impeached in 2016. And then we now have in power a far right figure, Jair Bolsonaro, who I-- the press has called him the Trump of the tropics, but I explain these 10 times worse because of his policies.

He's extremely homophobic and racist and misogynistic. And he's against the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil. And has a Trumpian notion of making Brazil great again by going to a nostalgic past that doesn't exist and never existed. Wanting to strengthen traditional family values against the rights of women and LGBTQ people. And so it's a different climate.

It's a polarized society, like in the United States. And though Bolsonaro has a very explicit reactionary program he wants to implement, he's not extremely competent in doing that. And there's a lot of pushback. And so the book came out. And I think there was a lot of positive reception when I launched it last year in Brazil.

And later I was on a very well known TV program for an hour and a half being interviewed. And that really shot up sales when people-- it was aired and people saw that. So I think people are yearning for and will want to learn more about him as a reference for how people can fight against obstacles, against political forces, that are conservative or reactionary and how they can do that with a creativity that he lived his life.

And so I've received tremendously positive feedback from readers who've read the book and have written me how much they enjoyed reading it. The narrative is a light style, I hope. And it's engaging. And so it's kind of telling the story of this person in a way that people can learn not just about his life but about what happened in Brazil in the '60s and the '70s and the '80s into the early '90s.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** And what they might learn for today, lessons that they might learn for today.

**JAMES GREEN:** Exactly, lessons for today. And I think the main lesson is, one of the two, perhaps, is that all people should be very embracing of who they are and not be afraid of embracing that. And secondly we need to build broad, democratic coalitions of people who suffer all kinds of discriminations and exploitation and repression in a united front against those forces that are really fighting against basic democratic rights and social rights that people would like to have in a given society.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Jim, you also started a new podcast here at the Watson Institute called Brazil Unfiltered. What made you want to do that? And what are you trying to accomplish with that?

**JAMES GREEN:** So I and 200 other people in December of 2018 at Columbia Law School formed the US Network for Democracy in Brazil, which is a grassroots democratic non-partisan effort to challenge the current government in Brazil and to support the progressive social movements and leaders who are under attack at this very moment.

And one of the things that we're trying to do is to really disseminate information about Brazil to the US public, who may know something vaguely about the current situation in Brazil which would like to know more. So the idea is to interview specialists working on Brazil, mostly academics, and allow them to give people the opportunity to understand a little bit more about the complexity of Brazilian politics, society, and culture.

And so the podcast will be interviewing people on the current political situation, the current cultural situation, the social situation, the US Brazilian relations, the situation of the Amazonian environment, climate change, and many themes. We're hoping to have a long successful podcast.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Well I wish you that and I'm sure it will be.

**JAMES GREEN:** Thank you.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** Thanks for coming in and talking to us today. It was a pleasure. This episode of Trending Globally was produced by Dan Richards and John [? Maza. ?] Our theme music is by Henry Bloomfield. I'm Sarah Baldwin. And now, here's a few minutes from the first episode of Watson's new podcast, Brazil Unfiltered.

**JAMES GREEN:** Hi there, I'm James Green. Welcome to Brazil Unfiltered. March 14th marked the one year anniversary of the assassination of Marielle Franco. Franco was a politician and an activist in Rio de Janeiro. Her assassination shook the city and the country. Leading up to this tragic anniversary, I talked with Keisha-Khan Perry, an associate professor of Africana Studies at Brown University, and author of *Black Women Against the Land Grab*. It's a fascinating book about black women activists in Brazil.

We talked about Franco's life and work and about how her assassination fits into a bigger story about Brazil shifting politics. We also explored what Franco's story can teach us about our political struggles back in the United States.

**KEISHA-KHAN PERRY:** To really understand how these issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, really operates, I don't know if we can fully understand them in advance as people of conscience without taking Brazil seriously.

**JAMES GREEN:** I started by asking Keisha-Kahn a pretty straightforward question-- who was Marielle Franco?

**KEISHA-KHAN PERRY:** Marielle Franco was a black woman. She was a councilwoman from the city of Rio de Janeiro. She was a lesbian, openly lesbian. And she was from the Marais community, in that city as well. And she was very well known for being vocal against police abuse, for human rights, for women's rights, for working women's rights. So I think it's a combination of those elements why many feel that Marielle Franco, along with her driver, Anderson Gomez, that they were assassinated a year ago.

**JAMES GREEN:** So this happened during the time that the military had occupied the city of Rio de Janeiro. Was there any linkage between the military and police surveillance of black communities and her assassination?

**KEISHA-KHAN PERRY:** So many feel as though what happened to Marielle Franco should be considered as what routinely happens in most black communities, black and brown and poor communities in Rio de Janeiro, but also in cities throughout Brazil. So partly there's an increased militarization of these cities, and that is one of the most important projects that Marielle Franco was working

on, to investigate the human rights violation. So we may well know, every 23 minutes at least one black person is killed in Brazil. And it's happening in the most marginalized and poorest of neighborhoods throughout these Brazilian cities.

**JAMES GREEN:** How exactly did the killing happen on the 14th of March?

**KEISHA-KHAN**  
**PERRY:** So on March 14th, 2018, Marielle Franco had just attended the Black Women's Institution in Rio de Janeiro called [PORTUGUESE SPEECH]. She had just attended an event called Young Black Women Moving Structures, or Changing Structures. Depends on how you translate it. And she left the event and was driving home. And she received four gunshots to her head. Apparently there were seven shots fired.

**JAMES GREEN:** So this was a car that drove by, followed her car, and then pulled up next to her? And shot her?

**KEISHA-KHAN**  
**PERRY:** So part of the investigation so far has revealed that the car actually had been at the event, at [PORTUGUESE SPEECH], while she was participating in the event, waited for her to leave, and then followed her and then killed her on her way home. So it was an execution style killing that also took the life of her driver. And they documented that, at least so far, that the bullets and the weapons are tied to militarized police forces in Brazil.

**JAMES GREEN:** Do you remember what you felt when you heard the news that Marielle had been assassinated?

**KEISHA-KHAN**  
**PERRY:** I was actually on the phone with a Brazilian sociologist. And we were planning the conference, we were talking about the plans for the conference at Harvard on Afro-Latinos, and focused on Brazil, bringing together a lot of activists, including the head of Amnesty International, [? Jurema ?] [? Werneck, ?] Marielle Franco was on the panel that I was supposed to chair.

And immediately coming through on WhatsApp were the text messages. And the tweets were already being circulated that she had been assassinated. So it was actually happening in live motion. We were planning the conference, Marielle Franco was on my panel. And I heard that she was assassinated and I immediately went to the internet. I think there was a sense of disbelief.

But primarily I would say that I was heartbroken, like a lot of my friends who do work in Brazil. For Marielle and her family, and the driver, Anderson Gomez. But I think that there was a part of us that felt as though we knew many Marielles, we knew so many activists, black women,

who put their lives on the front line every day, on the front lines every day, that their lives would be in danger as well. What happens when people take these political stands in a very public way? Were their lives-- you know, were they next?

**JAMES GREEN:** Do we know who killed her?

**KEISHA-KHAN** To date, there's no concrete information about who killed her, who ordered for her to be killed.

**PERRY:** And there's been a lot of discussion about whether or not it was linked to organized crime. And a lot of the activists, for example, who lead organizations such as Amnesty International, as well as her partner, Monica Benicio have argued that there are all these questions that are left unresolved about the murder. So if it's linked to organized crime, is it linked to state officials who are participating in organized crime? So all-- there's so many questions left unanswered.

**SARAH BALDWIN:** That was Brazil Unfiltered, a new podcast from the Watson Institute. You can hear a new episode every other Friday by subscribing to Brazil Unfiltered. Thanks for listening and see you next week.