

12 Dotun Adebayo

Claire Clotley: My name is Claire Clotley and this is American Dreamers, an Aurra Studios original production. I've been having fascinating conversations with Black Brits, Black Americans, and their families, exploring their experiences of living, both in the UK and US, so together, we can decide where is better for black people to live and thrive.

There are many examples of black British journalists and actors doing well in the US. The evidence potentially suggest that Black British creatives fare much better in the US than they do in the UK. On this episode of American Dreamers, my guest is one of my personal role models. He is a British radio presenter, writer, actor and publisher with over 30 years of journalism experience. Dotun, had to bio's contributions to the arts and creative industry are remarkable. He was awarded an MBE, Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, by Queen Elizabeth II. Big things. Welcome, Dotun, how are you?

Dotun Adebayo: I'm very well, thank you very much, Claire.

Why don't you just hate it when your guest has to correct you immediately with their first response, but, it's very kind of you to say by the way, it's very kind of you to say, but I cannot claim to be an actor anymore or not for the last 40 years, I think.

Claire Clotley: I mean, you still got the credits though. We can't, we can't discredit the credits.

Can we?

Dotun Adebayo: This is true. That is part of my narrative and an important part of my narrative as well.

Claire Clotley: We've got a bit of a personal professional relationship. I had the privilege of working on Apple Nights, which is a BBC Radio 5 live program, which you've been part of and hosting and producing on since 2001, or something like that.

Dotun Adebayo: Yeah, 20 years and counting. You go that right Archroma is tell you what day in 2001, it was every single day of those 20 years is imprinted on my brain. So, um, it is 20 years, 20 years now. And, uh, two weeks.

Claire Clotney: The thing that I have always found so impressive about you is you're like an elephant. You never forget.

You remember dates. You remember people. You remember titles. Dotun, you've been in the game for a long time.

Dotun Adebayo: That is why I might come across as knowing a lot of things and having a long memory, but I assure you, I'm more like an elephant in other ways.

Claire Clotney: Really. I'm not going to ask in what ways. Share where you were born and raised. Share what your, um, your childhood was like and how it's set the foundation for where you are now.

Dotun Adebayo: All of this is very clear in my mind because at the moment I'm writing a memoir and it's not self-absorbed memoirs, it's a different kind of memoir. Let me just say that. They undoubtedly happiest time of my life, I think where the first six years of growing up in Nigeria, where I was born. First three years, can't remember anything obviously, but, uh, the next three years I do have some very happy memories. Personally, living with my grandmother in my last year in Nigeria, before myself, my older brother joined our parents who were already in London at this time, preparing for us to come and join them. So I was six at that point. My older brother was seven. We lived in this big house, not in Lagos where I was born, but out in Bardon where my grandmother, my grandfather built a house there, this massive kind of house for all of his progeny, to be able to have somewhere to live.

You lived community in Nigeria, you know, people talk of their house. They really talk of their compound, you know, because my father's generation and obviously my grandfather's generation before that people. Lived community or families lived community. So for example, you know, your compound would be a source of rectangular or square.

If you like, uh, formats of house down one side house, down another side household, a couple of houses down each side. And the point was that as your children grow older and they bring their own families, they've got somewhere to live. So they will live on that compound with you, and if the numbers grow, the compound gets bigger, etc..

I experienced that. Not so much in a compound, but in a big house, the big yard, all around it with crucially dozens of cousins and waifs and strays, you know, my grandparents or probably my grandmother in particularly was not averse to

opening up our homes to some homeless child that happened to be wandering the streets and that kind of thing.

So because, and I know this because you're looking at family photographs within our family group, both here in Nigeria and in the United States, and we've been trying to identify people in these photographs. And he said, no, definitely not a relation of ours. And it's like a kid of our age. And then it's like, "What are you doing in our house?"

But, yeah. So w w we had a lot of fun, as you can imagine. I had a lot of fun playing from dusk till dawn out and about in the yard and getting into all kinds of mischief, not the kind of mischief I would later get into in London, which was a more kind of cynical and perhaps sinister mischief .

Claire Clotney: So you arrive in the UK and family life changes significantly.

I can imagine the compound shrink significantly to a British size a bed sit. Okay. Yeah. I didn't want to say it, but I could imagine them huge transition. And then you attended school in the UK. Yeah, we

attended school the day after we arrived. You've got cast your mind back when the world was very small, traveling from Nigeria to the United Kingdom to London was like traveling to the moon.

So you into. Completely different from the world that you came from. Remember we're only six years old. We haven't seen streets like this. We haven't seen people are going up and down like this. I haven't seen houses like this. I haven't seen people talk like this. You know, we spoke English obviously, but it was genuinely either we were the Martians or they were the Martian.

Up until today. I'm not quite sure which, and I took us down the road a hundred meters down the road and he said, here's the keys, you know, the way back. And, you know, he went because parents went and worked in those days or studied or whatever they were doing. And we were really. Kind of became known as latch, key kids, latch key kids, and the technical term was parents would leave a key dangling from a string just inside the letterbox of your front door.

So you could put your hand through the letterbox, pull out the key on a string, but of course anybody else could. I'm not sure if anybody else did we. Technically like that, but actually we have the key and I, and you know, our

parents told us to go, but anyway, they got chucked out there because there was supposed to have kids.

It was student accommodation. There began a sort of a roller coaster of moving from one place in London to another. I ended up going to about 11 schools in about the space of about, you know, the first three or four years. My being in, uh, in, in, in London, we eventually settled down when I was eight years old until.

In north London. And although I had gotten into kind of like, you know, kids gangs, you know, when did talk back gangs, it was like a group of friends, but like we were on the streets, you know, working class culture, the kids were on the streets in London till darkness. You soon discovered the way of the, what you might call the Cockney working class demographic in London.

So that's

two cultures come from Africa, west Africa, Nigeria. To the UK for an in, at the deep end, all of that cultural learning, but also learning to be very independent at quite a young age. I've definitely relate to you when you land in a new place that you. Never been to before. It does feel very surreal.

What you see, did that have any influence on your creative

Dotun Adebayo: thinking you are right. It is like being a bystander in a movie rather than being a spectator. You're already part of a cinema going audience. You're actually in the movie, but you're just a bystander and everything else is going on around you.

But as a kid, You pick that up very quickly and you assimilate very, very quickly. I didn't want to be in England and I cried for the first week and my father tried everything. He bought me a cowboy outfit and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And then officer week, you said, look, that's enough. Whether I liked England or not.

That's where our home now was.

Claire Clotney: How did you go from this? A little bit of a rebellious street kids to embarking on the journalism.

Dotun Adebayo: Wow. That's a long journey. Ultimately, I have a love for writing ultimately, which I probably didn't know. Well, I probably did know quite early on. I certainly remember writing film scripts.

And sending them off to film production companies, you know, like the UK versions of the big Hollywood companies, like Warner brothers and everything, and writing those when I was about 11 or 12. Well, but they all seem to be a variation of one of these like rock and roll films. Um, the girl called help her or something like that.

I would change the name of the girl from Jane solu seal, but you know, the language well, you know, we loved America as you know, growing up, we thought, why can't we be Americans? Why is everything better in America? You know, watch TV, you watch your movies. You listen to the music. You want to be a member of the Jackson.

Well, I call, we be like that, especially growing up black at this time in prison where America seemed, because we got magazines like Ebony and jet, and we looked to all these middle class, rich Americans. There was nobody like that when we grew up, we knew, but there was nobody in the public art that we could go to to say, wow.

Okay. That person has followed that trajectory. It's nobody. So we want it to be Americans. Men America in the 1960s, you know, I'm talking about the late sixties, early seventies, whether it was politically with civil rights, with cool, with style, we did have our own styles because it's the way we absorbed it.

Sometimes we'd appropriate a little bit like the Afro for example, the Afro comes from the stage, the first real self-made. Melania company, black company that I knew of London was a company called Dyke and dried in they're based in wood green in north London, but they made their fortune initially by being the ones that may the Afro comb, that's what they made their foods, you know, and selling us the Africa home.

But what we did black London is did is we stuck our Africa, the back of our hair, and we walked around like that all day long. So we have the Afro. With an Afro comb stuck at the back, you know, to the back of its hop. If you like just stuck into the hair. And we walked around, I, now we thought that was cool actually.

And we knew Yang's didn't did, they were finishing off to do that. So we did take some Yankee stuff and do it our own way. I was influenced by American

very much. So I thought I was James Dean at the age of 12, and somebody had to point out to me that, you know, he was a white guy and I had to replace.

Claire Clotney: Awesome. What age did you get to America? Cause I know that you've dabbled.

Dotun Adebayo: If you ask me what age did I first come to? Got to America. Probably 17 when I was hitchhiking in a very, very cold Sweden with snow piled high on both sides of the road. And I thought I'm going to die here. If I don't get a lift and appalled, uh, the local teenage gangs who drove around in big American cars from the fifties and sixties and with a big American flag flying from it.

And the guy slowed down for me and he said, Hey, you I'm an American. And I was like, yes, yo. Yes, sir. Yeah. I'm I'm the American. Yeah. Yeah, I hear so what, right. Jump in. He was like charging me up to Starrco, which is about 500 kilometers away. As we're driving home, he kept asking me to interpret all these American soldiers.

He would know all these American songs would, they'd be like. One word in the song. They couldn't quite make out, you know? So what does Elvis mean when he says,

Claire Clotney: oh shit. So at the age of 17, you claimed to be American and then you actually arrived in America. When, when

Dotun Adebayo: I first arrived in America, proper would have been in New York.

Thankfully, when I was about maybe 24, 25, something like that, you know, sometimes you go to a place and people say, Uh, you know, you should go to Canada and you think, wow, I went to Canada, man. It was miserable. I said, nah, you didn't go to the right place in Canada. And they're right. You know, if you go to the place that hits your spot, you're going to love a place.

But if you go to the place that it doesn't hit your spot, it's not as whack. And again, nothing. And there are places like that in the world. I'd say I would never go back and see her again. And people tell them is, you know, best place in the world or whatever. So thankfully New York for me, agreed of staying with a friend of mine, crystal ball, who's black, British woman.

He's now a lecturer at Bristol university in the west of England, but she lived in America for many years, uh, with her white Italian boyfriend in park slope in Brooklyn as an interesting dynamic, it was a difficult time for them. They, they charted New York into green areas and red areas in the green.

They would walk hand-in-hand and in the red areas, they wouldn't, you know, that's what people have to do to maintain the relationship. And they told me one story that was sitting on the tube in New York. And so black woman was looking at them, you know, just watching the opposite and just watch her. And she said, I know, I know I.

Um, so yeah, New York word for me, and one of my guides, my best friend in America, and he's a drummer and one of the coolest guys I know as well on top of everything else. And he knows New York and believe me, I saw and experienced. Coolest things in New York, the best coolest, the underground, the, the shit Snus as was it daily?

So, or was it Q-tip that used to say that I experienced that

Claire Clotney: you had these experiences? I mean, you've been to America multiple times. You've got connections there. Did you ever see yourself living there? Well, I've got

Dotun Adebayo: the opportunity to live there in 1990 to work for a newspaper out there in Los Angeles and California.

I could see myself living out there. When I was at university, they did these kinds of exchange things. And I was trying see if I could get to do a year at a university in the United States. Well, it wasn't ideal. I mean, there's one in New Jersey and one in Minneapolis. So the exchange ones that were close to New York, that my university had a relationship with.

So I did want to live out there. I definitely did want to live in New York, but. Being sent out to Los Angeles, as a journalist came off, the plane in Los Angeles, got taken straight to the Grammys at St. Pitchers backstage of the Grammys, snapping people like Barbara Streisand or Bette Midler. I always confused as to together, but, you know, imagine that, imagine that lifestyle and I've still got my job in London and they're calling me up to do stuff from Los Angeles and I'm in the swimming pool.

In my backyard. Imagine that for people in London, they're like, don't stop taking the flipping piss now. Okay. Remember, we don't have swimming pools

in London, so don't rub it in. Okay. Just do the work. Don't tell us where you come from, your swimming pool at seven o'clock in the morning while you're doing your laps.

And it's still sunny there, by the way, in the open air swimming pool. And you've been in the jacuzzi. Don't tell us that. But like I say, everything is sweeter than the United States. No. If it had been New York, I'd still be there now to be Frank. I think I had enough of Los Angeles. I probably didn't give it enough chance.

Paso. A lot of Los Angeles is not sort of bad in good. I didn't have the right job. It wasn't the right job for me. And I missed home and most of the people were actually very cool, but you know, Uh, one person can make your life difficult. It's not even so difficult. You wonder why am I thousands of miles away from home taking this?

You know, he's just going to say, oh, nice. We'll just go. I was on a sabbatical anyway. I had a lot of fun in LA. I won't lie, but if it'd been New York, I think New York suits my intellect, whatever that means

Claire Clotney: opportunities. Do you think that the U S offers to black Brits that the UK.

Dotun Adebayo: As you know, Claire, every American things we speak so wonderfully.

So for broadcasters like you and I, the world of America is our oyster. If we so choose to dare and who dares wins, some of the. Black British actors of late, as everybody knows last 20 years, certainly since it was elbows and the wire, actually, it was probably Marianne. Jean Baptiste was the person who really broke through, uh, initially on TV.

Claire Clotney: Well, well, let's not forget Jeffrey. Um, from, um, Joseph,

Dotun Adebayo: Marcel, I would say he's slightly different. Because he's a wonderful actor and I've seen him in theater in London. Absolute fabulous. So it's not a criticism, Bernie, but it was like a stereotype, typical thing who else was going to play that part, but a black Brit.

Whereas what you're seeing now is about Brits playing parts. That anybody could play. And I think something new has happened. So

Claire Clotney: you definitely see that the way that we speak is, um, an advantage over here that you've been creating for years now. And you could have come over here and you could have done very well over here, but you stayed in the UK.

Dotun Adebayo: Why? When you go to a place, a country or city, if your first experience. Is bad. It just sours your holes or thinking about it. It takes a lot to bring yourself to go back for. And I think that was a mistake on my part. Um, gates, Los Angeles. Another thing is, it's a sacrifice you've got to be in the right place and time to do.

I wasn't quite fair. I went back to university. In the United Kingdom after doing a university degree overseas. And I think I wasted three, four years in that. So by the time I was establishing myself in London to pursue journalistic career, you know, you've got to spend time doing that and I left it quite late actually.

But then, you know, I settled down and I had children and then cause. An artist. I couldn't sort of uproot her from her business. So I stayed here and, you know, I got a good job that alight and I enjoyed. And even once I've been doing this job, I've had a couple of offers from the United States, but I think it's not what I want to do anymore.

I want to go live in New York for six months. I would like that six months or a year, I would like that to have that experience and of tick that box off. But then again, I'd like to go and live in Paris for six months and I go to Paris regularly, but I don't stay for that length of time, you know? And I'd like to go and spend a year in Jamaica and a year in Nigeria.

I think I've passed the time where I could go like yourself to relocate to America on a permanent basis.

Claire Clotney: Looking at the black British journalists, who've been in the game for awhile in the UK. To me, it seems as if the media industry in the UK pigeonholes them and puts them in categories of like news, current affairs, really serious gritty stuff, less of the lighthearted entertainment, the fun stuff.

And I think. In the U S they, they value age and wisdom and experience more. I, I definitely see that they value that, and I'm not sure the UK have the same mentality or embraced. That was the. And the same way we run

Dotun Adebayo: the risk obviously of stereotyping, but I do know what you mean, but, but it's also our anecdotal experiences.

And after a while, when your anecdotal experience tallies with mine and Sally's who the next person tells you the next persons, then we have to conclude something. I wouldn't use the term ageist in terms of America, because in other ways, I think there are more ages in America called Lu. I went to America.

Uh, the publisher of the newspaper I was working for, he was 64 years old and he said, can you take a publicity photograph for me? And I said, yeah, sure. I took a beautiful publicity photograph of him. And then the editor told me they're not going to use it. It was shit. I was like, whoa, that's not shit.

We'll say shit. I couldn't understand what's them to tell me what is shit. Brilliant photograph. Then I realized what it was when I saw the one that they redid. Basically, I hadn't airbrushed anything. You know, we an air person in the United Kingdom you might do. If you're doing a sort of a commercial product and everything's got to be AMSE perfect, but we don't airbrush our own first-class we look young like this because black British don't

Claire Clotney: if you cream it, I always say it don't crack.

If you cream it, if you do not use moisturizer, you will look ashy.

Dotun Adebayo: Thank you for reminding. Sorry, sorry. Sorry. I forgot it's cream. This me, I forgot. Okay. I think in America, ultimately the focus is much more on the bottom line. You know, what can you bring to the table? It's a business. Okay. You can be creative, but you got to make some money.

And if you can make money for the other person without the employer, I'm not saying that the racism's gone away, but my experience of it in America, and also even looking at it from this distance, I think if you don't have the S. That people need or looking for that is in demand or that is commercially viable that I think you will struggle.

You know, you will find people thinking, well, look got 50 million people unemployed, and you will find that the people at the bottom, the last to be employed will be African-American. So in America, I believe that his case, if I'm wrong, forgive me, but that's been my experience. That's what I keep seeing in Britain.

Things are changing. Claire. You've noticed that, uh, the British economy has taken a nose dive since you left. Um, is it, um,

Claire Clotney: no, it's not a coincidence, but it's interesting because there's podcasts that I'm doing, you know, it's a British company that has affiliation in the. And I do like what's happening. I do like the shift, but I'm also as a freelance of the way in working that I've been accustomed to for 10, 15 years now is, you know, to do contracts, to work remotely.

The UK have started to embrace that more as well as the

Dotun Adebayo: U S yeah. Everybody has now post COVID. I think that's going to be the way things are changing over here, but I fear in Britain that things might, yeah. Revert. So be difficult because the internet has opened up everything and the gatekeepers of old who let's face it, it was the gatekeepers that kept us down, you know, kept black people down, whoever the gatekeeper.

Well now we'll keep them locked down. The internet has opened up. It's a blow. My brother in Houston said to me at the very, very beginning when people used to calling it the information super highway, it's the poor man's tool. And I had no idea what he meant. I. Looking at it as the black man and woman's to etiquette the musical innovation that has happened in Britain since young black, mostly boys.

It has to be said, but there are women involved in it started. Using the tools available to them via the internet and vibe, you know, new technology, looking at grime music. Where did that come from before that drum and bass? Where did that come from? Remember trauma base isn't live studio music, the, the tools that were available, all these sorts of, um, music recording tools that have opened.

What was a, uh, impenetrable world because it costs so much money to go and record an album. Trust me. And I know, cause I've done it now. The kids can sit there all day long and they can cut and paste and do this and that. And that's opened up. I think it's always been like this, but it's much easy to achieve.

Now. The world thrives on an exchange of ideas when I'm in America. My. Creative thinking. And more importantly, my critical thinking is on fire because everything I see around me is just making me think of a song, think of a poem, uh, think of a book, think of making a film, think of starting a new career.

Uh, think of everything around me. Everything is exciting to us, you know? Cause it's like, wow, boss, boss, boss left right center. And I imagine it's like that for Americans who come to Britain, it gives them an opportunity to view

from a different perspective. And that creates something original. And that's what the world thrives on it thrives on difference.

Why go and have more of the same when you can actually go and have more of a slightly different thing as you think the Beatles became so brilliant. If it wasn't for the sailors, many of them black porno, exclusively coming over from the United States who have Tamla Motown records and all of these in the days when you couldn't just click on the internet and hear it, how'd you feel?

What would you listen to their early songs? It's Tamla Motown.

Claire Clotley: You're kind of saying what a number of guests on this podcast series have said, and it's really emphasizing the importance of travel.

Dotun Adebayo: A hundred percent.

Claire Clotley: The word immigrant is what I hear associated with Black people who travel. I hear the word ex-pats associated with non-blacks who travel, yet, there is something in that word, immigrant, when a black person travels that always to me present someone who is going to be hardworking, who is going to grab opportunities, who's going to be willing to learn and share and just grow. The word expat doesn't have that same energy, that same thirst for success.

And I might be very wrong. There might be people who consider me an expat because I am of a certain generation. I'm of a certain class, but I actually liked being a black immigrant.

Dotun Adebayo: I love it.

Claire Clotley: I like being the child of black immigrants.

Dotun Adebayo: It is a different narrative. You can't argue that. One narrative, the expat, is a narrative of choice.

You choose don't you to be an ex-pat. The other narrative is less of narrative of choice. It can be of choice and it can be par part of choice, but there is more of a, an impetus, a compulsion maybe to achieve something, um, a necessity, perhaps that it's a different, um, I would not one against the other, but it's like working , I mean, Americans may not understand this, but you know, in Britain, we're very much a very classed society and nobody tells you the Britains

become a classless. As I tell him the talking absolute nonsense, show them a thousand years and you'll see Britain. Ain't never going to become a class.

This as I am is who we are. And, you know that, for hundreds of years, culture has come from the working classes. I mean, pre-industrial revolution. Call them what you want serve. So, you know, the masses or the great unwashed or whatever, it's come from working people. Middle-class is didn't want to go to theater in Shakespeare's days.

I mean, you, you go and look at the replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theater on the South Bank of London. You'll see that 90% of it is for poor people, 95, 99% of it. You know, the stalls takes up most, you just standing up watching the play for three and a half hours, just standing up. It's like a beer pit in there, the stores. The rich people, they paid to sit on the stage. So there was only one or two of them because generally rich people looked down on the theater, but now they've appropriated that culture in Britain. From poor people from working classes. So theater is a rich person's experience or a middle-class person's experience, but then the middle classes don't have the natural culture.

The working people seem to have being closer to the earth, being closer to each other. It's being closer to animals and trees and nature, and appreciation of life as being more than just, uh, you know, material things. It's a really important thing. Working class people know the value of a pound. And I think out of that, Struggle.

If you want to call it that comes a creativity, a critical thinking.

Claire Clotney: Do you think that's where Black Brits can relate to African Americans?

Dotun Adebayo: Ooh, that's a good question. Uh, I relate to African-Americans almost like a besotted fan, you know. I want to talk like them. I want to be light them. And, and, and, um, I apologize to anybody listening.

I don't mean that I'm sorts of, um, putting them on a pedestal like us and them, but I'm saying that the culture. And the struggle of African-Americans has been very much part of my struggle. It's shown us the way in many ways in our civil rights movement in Britain is predicated on civil rights movement in America.

It's part of our DNA. I'm not hankering to be an African-American. I'm hankering to being like them, because I think there's a lot. When I remember what it meant to see Tommy Smith and John Carlos put their gloved fist up or

the Mexico, 1968, an Olympics sacrifice everything. Their own livelihoods amongst other things to show the world that we ain't going to stand for this no more.

Well, it meant something to us. You know, it meant a really powerful thing for us as well. So thank you to them. When you can relate to African-Americans through the struggle.

Dotun,

Claire Clotney: I could talk to you all day long, but I'm going to steal some of your wisdom for myself, my personal benefit, my personal game.

What's my USP out here, Dotun? What's my strategy? What'd you reckon? Give you girl some advice.

Dotun Adebayo: I reckon you keep doing what you're doing. Don't let people stand in your way. America is the land of opportunity. It is cause there's so much of it. Don't stand still, keep doing it. Also, I think crucially do it yourself if others won't do it with you.

Claire Clotney: So stay independent, basically.

Dotun Adebayo: Uh, not necessarily, but I'm saying go through everything, show them your wit, you're sparking wit, and what you can bring to them. Everybody wants to know how can you make them profit? Why try and play them at their own game that they know better than you?

What you can bring to the table is Black Britain, Claire Clotney, that came to America from Britain, whatever that entails, which have a perspective that gives you that's your USP.

Claire Clotney: Dotun, you have been doing exactly what you've told me to do. And you have been standing strong. You have been persistent, you have been consistent.

You have, being a role model for so many people, not just in the creative space or in broadcasting, but just as someone who has always been so integral and always delivered, and you've also been palatable for a very diverse audience. What can we expect to see from you in the coming months and years, Dotun?

Dotun Adebayo: As I said to you earlier, I'm working on my memoirs, my heart, as I said to you was writing, I wasn't naturally a broadcast. I was a newspaper journalist before that. And then obviously I, uh, ran a publishing company, but I haven't written something for awhile, and people been asking me because they have the anecdotes I tell on the radio and people have been saying, well, you should write your autobiography or whatever.

And I hate the sound of the word. And so I started seeing memoirs, but that still hated the sound or the thought of memoirs because they seem to be so self absorbing. You know, it's not a format that I warm to, although I read the read and what can you say in an autobiography, but the one day about seven or eight months ago when I was doing some building work at the boss of my garden. That's my lockdown profession. I learned to build, uh, during the lockdown. And, uh, I was at the bottom of the guard working on this outbuilding and the penny dropped like a Eureka moment as to how I could write my memoirs and hold my head up high and change the format.

So that I can challenge people who write memoirs to say, no yours can't be a real memoir. Anyway, I figured it out and I've been writing it. That's my memoirs, my memoirs of bad memories. Ain't going to be easy. Ain't going to be an easy read.

Claire Clotney: Dotun, it's really horrible to say that I'm looking forward to reading it.

Does that make sense? It feels weird saying yes, I'm looking forward to reading your bad memories, but I am. I know there'll be some inspiration in there cause look where you are now.

Dotun Adebayo: When you read them, you may not believe them by the way. And it's written in a way that I've never seen any memoirs written. I think you'll be proud of me as I'm proud of you..

Claire Clotney: Dotun, I'm always proud of you. And I'm so glad that we've had this conversation whilst not everything will go on the podcast. I'll definitely be keeping the whole Wolf format for myself.

Dotun Adebayo reflects on his cultural and professional journey and remains objective when discussing the pros and cons of black people in the UK and US. When speaking about America, he consciously reminds us that America, isn't just one place. And when speaking about the black experience, he reminds us

how diverse and wide ranging this can really be. Contextualizing these stories is key. You can see why he stays relevant in the storytelling business.

To share your experiences of being black in the UK versus USA, email us directly at americandreamerspodcast@gmail.com, and please rate and review American Dreamers on Apple Podcasts. It's the best way for people to find this podcast.

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