

Slow Italian, Fast Learning

Ep.376: Nige has waited 16 years to reunite with his wife. Now, he fears they never will

Italian	English
<p>In un piccolo caffè nel verdeggiante sobborgo di Warrandyte a Melbourne è in corso una lezione di cucina.</p> <p>Lo chef Nigethan Sithirasegaram, conosciuto da amici e parenti come "Nige", sta preparando un banchetto del suo paese natale, lo Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Per il 49enne, la cucina è un legame vitale con la sua cultura tamil.</p> <p>"I'm going to teach lamb curry one of the iconic curry in Sri Lanka and also I cook beetroot Curry and also raita, rice the full package of meal. When I cooking here, actually I'm really proud everyone likes my food. "</p> <p>E questo significa molto per Nige, che è fuggito dallo Sri Lanka nel 2009 alla fine della guerra civile, lasciandoli in Sri Lanka la moglie e il figlio piccolo.</p> <p>"16 years, almost 16 years I left my wife. Every day is very torture and the painful. I'm struggling and also panic. I want my family with me all the time."</p> <p>In quanto tamil, Nige teme di non poter più tornare in Sri Lanka. Ora ha un visto di protezione permanente in Australia e ha richiesto un visto per coniugi per sua moglie Thusa, che rimane in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>"A very hard time, my wife asks me every day 'when you take me to Australia?' It's very painful for me and also painful for her. "</p>	<p>A cooking class is underway at a small café in the leafy Melbourne suburb of Warrandyte.</p> <p>Chef Nigethan Sithirasegaram ((NEE-GATE-AN SIT-RAH-SAY-GRAM)), known to friends and family as 'Nige', is preparing a feast from his homeland Sri Lanka.</p> <p>For the 49-year-old, cooking is a vital connection with his Tamil culture.</p> <p>"I'm going to teach lamb curry one of the iconic curry in Sri Lanka and also I cook beetroot Curry and also raita, rice the full package of meal. When I cooking here, actually I'm really proud everyone likes my food. "</p> <p>And that means a lot to Nige who fled Sri Lanka in 2009 at the end of the civil war, leaving behind his wife and young son.</p> <p>"16 years, almost 16 years I left my wife. Every day is very torture and the painful. I'm struggling and also panic. I want my family with me all the time."</p> <p>As a Tamil, Nige fears he can never return to Sri Lanka. He now has a permanent protection visa in Australia, and has applied for a spouse visa for his wife Thusa, who remains in Sri Lanka.</p>

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<p>L'immigrazione è un tema elettorale caldo. Il bilancio federale prevede una migrazione netta di 260.000 unità nel prossimo anno finanziario.</p> <p>La vice direttrice generale del Centro risorse per i richiedenti asilo, Jana Favero.</p> <p>"It's really disappointing. What we should be doing is increasing in our humanity and our generosity and our compassion. It's really a tactic used by politicians that are playing into fear and division."</p> <p>Con quasi 140 milioni di sfollati in tutto il mondo, secondo l'UNHCR, Jana Favero chiede un impegno anticipato per aumentare l'accoglienza umanitaria australiana a 27mila posti.</p> <p>"Australia can and should do more to increase our humanitarian intake in response to global catastrophes that are happening around the world. If you have a look what's happening in Gaza, in Yemen, in Sudan. We've had many conversations with the Albanese government about their commitment to increase the places to 27,000, but only having them at 20,000. This is insufficient, and we should do more. We feel that the figure should actually be 50,000."</p> <p>Per Nige, che si preoccupa quotidianamente della sicurezza della moglie, la lunga attesa è un'agonia.</p> <p>"It's really killing my heart. I know the situation, a single woman survive in Sri Lanka in east part or north part is really hard. So, that situation to my wife, it's so breaking heart."</p> <p>Nato nello Sri Lanka orientale, Nige è cresciuto mentre infuriava il conflitto tra le</p>	<p>"A very hard time, my wife asks me every day 'when you take me to Australia?' It's very painful for me and also painful for her. "</p> <p>Immigration is a hot election issue. The federal budget predicts net migration of 260,000 in the next financial year.</p> <p>Asylum Seeker resource centre deputy CEO Jana Favero.</p> <p>"It's really disappointing. What we should be doing is increasing in our humanity and our generosity and our compassion. It's really a tactic used by politicians that are playing into fear and division."</p> <p>With almost 140-million people forcibly displaced worldwide, according to the UNHCR, Jana Favero calls for an earlier pledge to increase Australia's humanitarian intake to 27-thousand places.</p> <p>"Australia can and should do more to increase our humanitarian intake in response to global catastrophes that are happening around the world. If you have a look what's happening in Gaza, in Yemen, in Sudan. We've had many conversations with the Albanese government about their commitment to increase the places to 27,000, but only having them at 20,000. This is insufficient, and we should do more. We feel that the figure should actually be 50,000."</p> <p>For Nige, who worries daily about his wife's safety, the long wait is agony.</p> <p>"It's really killing my heart. I know the situation, a single woman survive in Sri</p>
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forze governative e le Tigri Tamil. I suoi primi ricordi sono quelli della fuga dalla violenza.

"My whole life - war and bombing and disaster. I'm Tamil, so they suspect me and also then trying to kidnapping. I saw lots of torture equipment, lots of civilians kidnapping and killing them on the street, dead body. That's why I can escape from the Sri Lanka without my wife and son"

Alla fine della guerra, temendo per la sua vita, Nige fuggì a Singapore e poi in Malesia. Seguì uno straziante viaggio in barca di 46 giorni verso l'Australia.

"The fuel is not enough, fuel is run out. And also the boat is very old boat and wood boat. Also very big storm and rough sea. There's many people got the seasick. Then finally the Australian border posts taking to me Christmas island."

Nige ha trascorso i sei anni successivi in vari centri di detenzione australiani.

"Detention centre is very hard time because we can't go outside. I'm really struggling detention centre six years mentally and physically"

Nel 2014, nel centro di detenzione per immigrati di Melbourne a Broadmeadows, Nige ha incontrato il fondatore del caffè Derek Bradshaw e il legame avrebbe cambiato la sua vita per sempre.

"We had a house out the back of our café that we decided that we wanted to use to try and support people to get the start that they so badly needed after coming out of detention. And Nige went on to cook and that's when we started doing our Tamil feasts. "

Un decennio dopo i due rimangono buoni amici e nel 2023 Derek Bradshaw ottiene un

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As a Tamil born in Sri Lanka's east, Nige grew up as conflict raged between government forces and the Tamil Tigers. His earliest memories are of fleeing violence.

"My whole life - war and bombing and disaster. I'm Tamil, so they suspect me and also then trying to kidnapping. I saw lots of torture equipment, lots of civilians kidnapping and killing them on the street, dead body. That's why I can escape from the Sri Lanka without my wife and son"

At the end of the war and fearing for his life, Nige fled to Singapore and then Malaysia. What followed was a harrowing 46-day boat journey to Australia.

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Nige spent the next six years in various Australian detention centres.

"Detention centre is very hard time because we can't go outside. I'm really struggling detention centre six years mentally and physically"

At the Melbourne Immigration Detention Centre in Broadmeadows in 2014, Nige met café founder Derek Bradshaw and the connection would change his life forever.

"We had a house out the back of our café that we decided that we wanted to use to try and support people to get the start that they



visto di studio per il figlio di Nige, Ruksi. Il ricongiungimento con il padre è stato un giorno che l'adolescente non dimenticherà mai.

"Touching him, hugging him. It's so crazy when I see him I have a hug and it's all the feeling about my dad. It's like feeling in real life in front of my eyes and I can feel it. This is my dad!"

È stato un grande momento anche per Derek Bradshaw.

"When we picked up Ruksi from the airport he looked at me and said, this is the best day of my life, and sorry, I'll get emotional, but as a father of four kids, I just cannot imagine the trauma and the grief that Nige has gone through. "

Nige e suo figlio Ruksi vivono ora a nord di Warrandyte in affitto gratuito, grazie alla generosità di una coppia locale, Reg Ellery e Olive Aumann.

"Our children had left home Nige's been living with us since 2016. He's a wonderful, wonderful man and his son's a wonderful young fellow. "

Nige e Derek Bradshaw continuano a ospitare feste tamil al "Now and Not Yet" Café, raccogliendo fondi per il reinsediamento di rifugiati e richiedenti asilo.

"When you hear the stories and understand the atrocities that they are escaping - civil war and genocide and things that if we're in those situations, we would absolutely run and escape as well. I'm proud that this sort of sacred community space has become a space where people feel loved when they walk through the doors, that people come in here and connect with others."

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A decade later the pair remain good friends and in 2023 Derek Bradshaw obtained a student visa for Nige's son, Ruksi. Being reunited with his dad was a day the teenager will never forget.

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It was a great moment for Derek Bradshaw, too.

"When we picked up Ruksi from the airport he looked at me and said, this is the best day of my life, and sorry, I'll get emotional, but as a father of four kids, I just cannot imagine the trauma and the grief that Nige has gone through. "

Nige and his son Ruksi now live in north Warrandyte rent free, thanks to the generosity of a local couple Reg Ellery and Olive Aumann.

"Our children had left home Nige's been living with us since 2016. He's a wonderful, wonderful man and his son's a wonderful young fellow. "

Nige and Derek Bradshaw continue to host Tamil feasts at the 'Now and Not Yet' Café, raising funds to resettle refugees and asylum seekers.

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<p>Nige lavora anche nel settore dell'assistenza agli anziani mentre aspetta che venga concesso il visto alla moglie. Jana Favero afferma che il Centro risorse per richiedenti asilo sostiene già più di 7.000 persone in cerca di sicurezza.</p> <p>"We need to invest in family unification so that people can be with their families. That story is extremely sad. And what's sad is that family reunion probably will be one area that is cut, which would be absolutely devastating not only for that individual but for tens of thousands of others who are waiting to be with their family"</p> <p>Per ora, tutto ciò a cui Nige può aggrapparsi è la speranza.</p> <p>"This process takes a very long time. I don't know what the reason. I don't know still how long I'm going to be wait. Every day is painful. But I believe one day, me and wife reunited in Australia."</p>	<p>those situations, we would absolutely run and escape as well. I'm proud that this sort of sacred community space has become a space where people feel loved when they walk through the doors, that people come in here and connect with others."</p> <p>Nige is also working in aged care while he waits for his wife's visa to be granted. Jana Favero says the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre already supports more than 7,000 people seeking safety.</p> <p>"We need to invest in family unification so that people can be with their families. That story is extremely sad. And what's sad is that family reunion probably will be one area that is cut, which would be absolutely devastating not only for that individual but for tens of thousands of others who are waiting to be with their family"</p> <p>For now, all Nige can cling to is hope.</p> <p>"This process takes a very long time. I don't know what the reason. I don't know still how long I'm going to be wait. Every day is painful. But I believe one day, me and wife reunited in Australia."</p>
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Report by Sandra Fulloon for SBS News.

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