

SE02EP05

Casey Daley

H: Welcome to Noles Abroad, a podcast by Florida State University International Programs! I'm Hannah

Z: And I'm Zoe! And we're your hosts. On this podcast we'll talk about study abroad from the perspective of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni who make it an experience worth sharing. We'll also bring you travel tips and fun facts from around the globe.

H: In this episode we caught up with Casey Daley, an FSU Alum who spent his first year abroad in Panama City, in the Republic of Panama. From his apartment in Brooklyn, New York Casey shared what it has been like living in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic, connecting with his culture through study abroad and creating space for others to engage with the intersection of their identities.

H: Hey Casey, how are you?

Casey (C): I'm doing well how are y'all?

H: Doing really well we're excited to talk to you today. First off, can you just introduce yourself?

C: Yeah, definitely so my name is Casey Daley. I graduated from Florida State University in Fall of 2017. I studied Finance and Economics while that Florida State University. While I was there I did my first year abroad in Panama, the Republic of Panama. In addition to that outside of IP, I actually did it another study abroad program where I went to live in Jamaica for the summer. Right now I'm currently living in Brooklyn New York. I work as a senior project manager for technology consulting firm.

Z: So before we jump into your study abroad experience we just wanted to ask you, like, how's it been living and working in New York throughout the pandemic? And I know you moved there like just before the pandemic, right?

C: So actually I was already living in New York. So I've been living in New York since 2018 but, the interesting thing is I got a new apartment. So I was already living in Brooklyn but I got a new apartment in March, I got a new job in March. And then the whole world shut down March 15th.

Z: Wow.

C: And so its been an interesting experience. For anyone whose been to New York, everybody knows how busy and packed it is so definitely uncanny seeing the streets empty. I was driving through Times Square in New York and no one was there and many native New Yorkers have said they've never seen Times Square completely empty so is definitely been an adjustment not having to subway 24/7 and not having your normal New York activities and not having the reasons why people move to New York for the experience. Just seeing all those things kind of disappear and fade away for a time period was definitely a weird experience.

H: Yeah it's been weird enough in a small town, I can't imagine what it was like in a city like New York City.

C: Yeah, definitely.

H: Yeah so next we want to know, we're going to jump into more of your study abroad experience, so in what ways did your study abroad experience impact you the most?

C: Yeah so for me my study abroad experience it was for me it was about strengthening my bond with my heritage. I've always had a strong heritage, my mom actually being born and raised in Panama, my dad being born and raised in Jamaica. And kind of being raised in West Indian neighborhoods I've had a strong West Indian identity but for me going back and living in Panama and going back and living in Jamaica was the most important part. Having that connection with my family and actually living in the country and experiencing certain things, seeing certain streets, going to certain markets, I felt like that was a missing piece from my childhood so that's something I definitely wanted to expand on when I got into college. So when I, a big, the number one reason I actually came to FSU was because of the study abroad program there if I'm being honest.

Z: That's awesome. So we know that in addition to your consulting position, you and some friends also started a business in New York City, can you tell us a little bit more about that and how maybe your study abroad experience influenced that?

C: Yeah definitely so this year we launched Big Yaad. And big Yaad is a Caribbean events company it was for queer Caribbean people and their allies. And so I started it with my best friend who I actually met at an internship in Jamaica and a mutual friend who's also Jamaican here in New York. As someone who is very involved in cultural, who's been very involved in my culture from my childhood, who studied abroad who was also involved in cultural organizations on campus, I was part of Panamanian Students Association and Caribbean students Association, I noticed that if you hold the LGBTQ+ identity usually what happens is that you have to choose between engaging your culture and keeping up with current events music-wise or party-wise with the culture, or fully exploring your LGBTQ+ identity. And so for me and my friends who all live at that intersection, we realized that's not an option. I just love the Caribbean culture too much, it's something that is very near and dear to me. And so we decided to create a space specifically so people can engage both of their identities at once because it is both part of them and they shouldn't have to separate one from another.

H: It's so cool that you were able to use your own lived experience to reach out and create that space and community for other people that you know who are also living through that and living that experience, so it's really cool to see how you were able to put that for good and to create that space for others. So we're also curious how have your own experiences and identities shaped your career and education goals? So what's up next for you?

C: So after I graduated I went into FinTech but I've recently and this has always kind of been the case especially through college with my involvement at FSU but I've taken more of an identity of more you know how people say global citizen? I feel like I have more of a global citizenship or global identity with the Caribbean as a whole, and Latin America as a whole and so that has kind of inspired, or brought up an interest in studying journalism so I could start going back and telling the stories of the Caribbean and Latin America. And not just from places that hold heritage in but the Caribbean as a whole, and Latin America as a whole and learning how to tell those stories. I don't know if I want to make that a career but I would like to get a masters in it to learn how to do it in an effective way and an ethical way.

H: I love the idea of just exploring that from just a personal and hobby perspective not necessarily something that you're looking to pursue career wise but just something to grow as a person. Kind of a

little backtracking, a little off topic, but what was your favorite part of studying abroad in Panama? I know you talked about just that connection to your culture but, what was it like being a student and studying while you were in Panama?

C: So my favorite part about Panama was interesting enough, anybody who's been to FSU Panama campus they have what's called the 2 + 2 program so anybody from Latin America, the Caribbean can come and study there for two years and then transfer to the Tallahassee campus for two years with in state tuition and other benefits I'm not remembering right now. And so actually one of my favorite things was not necessarily reconnecting with Panamanian culture but learning so much about everywhere else. So going to FSU Panama you're around people from Jamaica, Curacao, Aruba, El Salvador, Venezuela, Colombia and just learning about everybody's cultural experiences, everybody's different experience, learning about the political situation in everybody else's is country, so is that cultural exchange. In Panama itself they always call, it's kind of like the New York of Central America, so Panama itself is a very is a melting pot so there's a lot of immigrants from different areas. So just having that experience of actually going back to Panama to connect with my Panamanian heritage but getting that much more from other people's culture was the best experience.

Z: That's so cool, it sounds like that kind of informed you know where you are now in your career and like you were saying you want to record stories and have that journalistic side of things and I think that that's awesome that you kind of got a taste of that just through experiencing that cross cultural communication when you're in Panama. I know a lot of students talk about how Panama also is a really neat place 'cause you're able to just see the level of trade and the amount of trade that goes on there with the Panama Canal. I'm wondering if you had that experience, or like how maybe the academics were for you while you're there?

C: So with the Panama Canal, from more of a historical standpoint, we lived by on one of the it's called Miraflores Lot we lived right on it but what interested me more was the various ethnicities within the Panamanian identity. So my family specifically came from the West Indies, Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados, to build the Panamanian Canal way back in the day, a couple generations before my mom was born. So I think it was my great grandparents who are actually from the West Indies and so that's a completely different ethnic group, with a completely different story and completely different proximity to the canal. But then you have what they called Zonians who are American citizens who were born on American bases in Panama and my aunt is actually, because my grandma married an American soldier, she's actually a Zonian and a West Indian Panamanian, so she hasn't intersection. And just learning about the different identities outside of that and how that plays into people's identities with proximity to the canal and how the canal has affected immigration, has affected the culture of Panama altogether, the way in which people speak, the music in which people listen to, is very informed by migration that's has happened and a lot of that migration happen completing the Panama Canal so just kind of seeing that up close and personal is really cool.

H: The complexities of culture and generations and communities are so interesting, like you're explaining, and I know a lot of that you probably came to know from your own family but for students who don't have that connection to culture, to get to live in these places and learn a little bit about that and kind of see how the world works beyond our own little bubbles is just so cool and that the Panama campus is right there next to that lock and next to the Panama Canal that students have the opportunity to learn

about those things is just such an awesome product of study abroad that we're so lucky to get to offer to students.

C: Yeah definitely, definitely.

Z: So our last question for you is just what advice do you have for students that would be considering study abroad?

C: So my advice would be, someone told me this my orientation in college before sort of college, say yes. I say it's an experience that everybody should do. Say yes to the experience. Within reason right, you know? If you could get a scholarship or something that's always good but, just say yes. Find a place, go abroad, learn something new, learn a different perspective, practice another language. It really does shape the way in which we view the world, it really does shape the way in which you can open your mind. I feel it for our generation specifically we're very open-minded generation, but you don't realize how much more open minded you can be until you've seen something that you've never even imagined. So I'd say, say yes. Go for it, do it, find a way you can make happen.

H: Well thank you so much for saying yes to studying abroad and saying yes to being on our podcast. We really appreciate you sharing your story and sharing some time with us this morning Casey, thank you.

Z: Thanks!

C: Thank you for having me!

H: Before we disembark, let's revisit the topic of culture!

As we mentioned in episode 2, culture can include various aspects of a society such as customs and social habits, language, music, religion, art, and food. Today we want to discuss music and briefly explore how music is a great way to get to know another culture!

From reggae in Jamaica to bagpipes in Scotland and everything in between, music encompasses many aspects of culture from politics and language, to history and religion. Music, artists, and songs can shape whole generations of people, influence fashion and trends, preserve history and folklore, and even change people's ideas and beliefs on social issues and politics.

Zoe: When visiting another country, a great way to get to know the culture is to engage with music while you're there. Stopping to listen to the local street musicians, going to a concert, or learning a new type of dance are all ways music can help you learn about the local language, history, and traditions.

Music has been called the universal language and is a way to better understand various cultures and communities. As Billy Joel said, "I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music."

<https://www.contiki.com/six-two/10-ways-music-helps-cultural-identity/>

<https://thoughtconomics.com/the-role-of-music-in-human-culture/>

H: If you have questions about study abroad, join us for our IP Ambassador Virtual Tabling event coming up on October 14th. Study abroad alums will be there to answer your questions and to talk about their experiences. Drop in to the Zoom to say hello and ask questions between 2 and 5pm that day. You can find the Zoom link on social media @fsuip.

Thank you to Casey for chatting with us and to each of you for listening!

Z: This podcast is a production of FSU International Programs. The music was composed by John Bartmann. Our logo was designed by Vanessa Guirey. Sound engineering is done by Chris Bret-Harte. Editing, transcription, and research is done by us, Zoë Crook and Hannah Meister.