

Transcript of *What'sHerName* Episode 77: [THE ROADBUILDER K'awii](#)

00:00 - 05:02

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[theme music]

Katie Nelson: Hi, Olivia!

Olivia Meikle: Hi, Katie!

KN: Question:

OM: Alright.

KN: What is a road for?

OM: A road... uh, driving on. But then I'm yelling at myself, "What about the walking? What about the biking?" For... sidewalks are for walking... unless you're in the country... [laughs] A road is for... travel. [laughter]

KN: I had never really thought about this before, until this episode. And I got thinking about road building. But I also asked all our [followers on instagram](#). I got a whole bunch of delightful answers. Let me give you a sampling: To travel down. A journey. To make driving from place to place easier. Traveling and transportation. Going places. Going somewhere different. Going home. The journey. To get from one place to another. (I like this one) Singing *super* loud. [laughter]

KN: ... Adventure. To get from point A to point B. Getting places safely without getting lost. To go home. To connect us to each other.

So interesting. I never really thought about how there's so many different takes on what a road is. But in all of these responses, none of us thought about roads or road building as *control*. But that is how it's been presented in Mayan history - that building a road is *conquest*.

OM: Well, that's... the Romans did it that way. You don't have to forcibly control people if you can just make it easier to comply than to not comply, right? It's easier for me to travel on the road than to climb the mountains, so I follow the freeway to your house instead of going off-roading. [laughter]

KN: Instead of trekking across the Rocky Mountains.

OM: Yeah.

KN: So, all of this is so interesting in the context of American History because as far as we know the first person to build a road in the Americas was a Mayan ruler. Her name was K'awiil.

OM: *Her name?*

KN: *Her Name.*

OM: Oooh!

KN: and she ruled in the 'golden age' of Mayan history. So now, with the Maya, we have finally arrived at: pyramids, human sacrifice, giant cities... we're smack in the middle of the Mayan golden age. One woman is just now emerging from the sources as one of the major players, one of the key rulers who made that Mayan golden age happen.

OM: Cool!

KN: So her name is K'awiil. [Note: the pronunciation sounds closer to "Shka-WHEEL" in English.] In Mayan, it's 'i x' at the beginning, and that's a female prefix for *ruler*. In academic literature you see it spelled K'awiil. K apostrophe A. W. I. I. L.

[both test out the pronunciation of her name]

KN: Okay. Stanley Gunter, who has written the latest academic analysis, says "When she died, her kingdom was one of the most powerful the Mayan world has ever known."

OM: Cooooool.

[theme music]

KN: I'm Katie Nelson.

OM: And I'm Olivia Meikle.

KN: And this is *What'sHerName*

OM: Fascinating women you've never heard of.

[theme music]

KN: So, I'd like to take you back to about the year 617, and show you an ancient Mayan city that is so bonkers, so impressive, that eccentrics are inclined to give aliens the credit instead of K'awiil. [laughter]

KN: Our guide is Ezequiel May Escora

Ezequiel May: [speaking in Spanish, conversation continues indistinctly in the background]

KN (to OM): ...whom I met totally by chance in Coba, Mexico. Like literally, our paths crossed. [laughter]

KN: I was walking down this dirt path

OM: Road!

KN: *Road!* Oh my gosh, of course! I *was* walking down a road.

OM [sing-songy]: Your *roads* passed!

05:02 - 10:03

KN: And he's a certified guide there. He is native Maya, and he agreed to show us around and give us the Maya perspective of this ancient site.

OM: Cool.

KN: And here's what I loved about researching this story. I got one perspective on K'awiil from academic articles, and I just went - plowed deep into all of those. But then I also encountered a different take from mainstream media, and then I got the Mayan stories from Ezekiel, which were different also. Once you take all three of those and smush them together, you have a *very* interesting tale.

[rainforest noises]

KN: So - field trip! We're going to [Coba!](#)

OM: Whoo!

KN: Middle of the rainforest, deep inland. Here's what you're going to need: a sun hat, definitely gonna need sunscreen. We're talking like SPF 50.

OM: I mean, that's my norm, so... [laughter]

KN: Bottled water, sturdy shoes, and a readiness to ride around on a sweet vintage bicycle through the rainforest. Pick your color of bike. They have all the colors, they're so charming.

OM: Aw, yellow.

KN: I'm going with purple - of course. Bug spray! You're also gonna need bug spray.

OM [sing-songy]: Not me! I didn't get bit in Belize, I don't get bit anywhere...

KN: That's not fair. [laughs] Coba is amazing. It's a little bit harder to access, so the tourist hordes don't go there. That's the reason I went to Coba in the first place. [laughter]

KN: It's 63 square kilometers, maybe bigger. Most of it is yet unexcavated - it's been swallowed up, and so they've only uncovered sites here and there. And those are connected by [sing-songy] *roads*. Little paths, dirt paths, and these paths are so far apart, you need a bike. Amazing, amazing, amazing. The tallest pyramid in the Yucatan is there, and you can climb to the top of it!

OM: Cool!

KN: But this is *What'sHerName* and we are here for the quirky, lesser-known sites that nobody else cares about, right?

OM: Right.

KN: So where we're going, the main destinations are a group of stelae - those big stone monuments. It's called the [Macanxoc Group](#). And when we get there we will find K'awiil's story - written in stone.

[music, jungle noises]

KN: Right, so get on your bike! Follow Ezekiel, and off we go. Just cruise along through this jungle, weaving in and out of tree roots. Every once in a while there's just a random stone monument in the middle of the road - a spider monkey overhead. And if you get going fast enough, then you can cool off some of the buckets of sweat that is just dripping off of your body.

And you don't know it, Olivia, but as we're biking along here, you're actually on an ancient Mayan road. It's called Sacbe 1.

OM: Ooooh!

EM (on recording): They call the road Sacbe in our language, in Maya Yucateco.

KN: And you can't tell because most of it is completely overgrown, but it is *65 feet wide*.

OM: ...What!?

KN: So is that...that's like a freeway?

OM: Wow

KN: When I learned that, my mind was blown. Because it's *not* a freeway - it comes to a dead end.

OM: Whoa.

KN: And what we do know about that area from excavations is that it appears to be a sacred site. There's no 'living there.' People visit, they leave offerings, and they leave again. Oh, look! We're approaching the dead end up there. Park your bike. And now we're going to climb this hill - bit steep. We're already sweaty, just go for it.

And once we get up to the top - an otherworldly place. As soon as you take one step into there, you're like 'Whoa, what is this?!'

[dramatic music]

KN: It's an elevated area, maybe the size of a [US] football field. And scattered all around, half swallowed up by the rainforest, are these stone stelae. These vertical stone monuments, carved with Mayan script. These are precious historical sources because we have so little Mayan writing that survives.

10:03 - 15:00

KN: They did write a lot of books. A lot of [codices](#), but the Spanish burned most of them. Now there's just three left.

EM: There's three, it was founded in the Mayan lands. One of the codex, they found it in Tulum. [This book is located in Dresden](#), I think. And it's one of the main papyrus story of the Mayans. They try to come back these books in Mexico, but it was very complicated, because they say - the other countries, they have some documents to prove they buy those things, and they have most of the licenses to have those papyrus in museums and in libraries.

KN (to OM): So these stones, we just got to analyze the crap out of them, to try to extract as much story as we can. And so archaeologists have been working on it for *years*. And they have made really amazing progress. So there's nine different stones around here, and they're carved on both sides and there's always a picture of a ruler. A huge picture of a ruler in the middle of it, taking up most of the space, and then little writing around that person telling their story. But, the stones are carved of limestone - so they are *severely* eroded. Some of them almost illegible, except for a piece here and there. I learned the folk tradition from my Coba guidebook: That the Maya for centuries have held these stones as sacred, and people were still leaving offerings at these stones, but the Maya knew them as, like, unknown 'lost kings.' And they believed them to be the guardians of the rainforest, who turned to stone during the day, but they came alive every night. So cool!

[music]

EM: It's interesting because the hieroglyphics - it was all interpreted for different kings about different dynasties.

KN (to OM): But over the years scholars started to say, 'Hey, these aren't nine kings' (so this is in, like, 2009) '...These aren't nine kings! *At least four* of these are women!' they said.

OM: Ooohoo.

KN: The latest scholarship, which just came out a couple of years ago, is saying, "Wait, wait, wait wait wait. This isn't four different queens. This is four different depictions of a **single** queen... K'awiil."

[music]

KN (to EM): How do we know about her?

EM: Well, there is some hieroglyphic, some stela, to talk about her. And they say this is information of a woman. It's the only one actually in the story of Coba.

[rainforest bird noises]

KN (to OM): And you can date the story of her life in those monuments. And so when we put them in chronological order, we can kind of piece together the story of her life from these stones.

OM: Cooool!

KN: I should say - we can never say for sure who this is, but this is the latest, I think, very strong theory. Okay, so let me take you around. Let's go - let's visit all four stelae. And we'll go in chronological order, and we will piece together the story of K'awiil, and how crazy scary she was - and impressive [laughter] and powerful!

KN: Here's stone number one: March 19th, 623. She is 5 years old. Coba is just emerging, it's just barely becoming a really powerful city. She's actually named after the founder-conqueror of Coba, centuries before, who was *also* a woman...

OM: [gasps]

KN: ...and her name was K'awiil Ajaw.

OM: Yay!

KN: and this 'founding mother' story? That is highly unusual, if not unique. They've never found any other founding mothers anywhere in the Mayan world.

OM: Cool!

KN: Okay, now come with me over here to the next one. Highly eroded, this one, but we can make out the date: December 4th, 642. And we can make out the bottom of it, especially, and that's a key part because what you can see - she's standing on the back of a person, who is laying face down in the mud. And they're clearly wearing a loincloth... it's a man

15:00 - 20:00

KN: So they think this is her accession - she just became queen at age 25, and defeated whoever her main rival or her worst enemy was. Pretty awesome!

OM: Coo-oo-!!

KN: So what does she look like at this point? What are these Mayan queens? How do they dress and stuff?

KN (to EM): Have they found any queen's tombs?

EM: There is some - there is a tomb in Chiapas Palenque. They thought it was one tomb with bones inside - according to DNA it was a woman. They gave the name of that woman as the [Red Queen](#), la Reina Roja, right? And because the bones of the woman have the red color, and they used one powder, it's called [cinabrio](#) [cinnabar], and thanks to the cinabrio, the bones - they survive many years. You know, the Mayans, they never mummified the bodies.

KN (to EM): Yeah!

EM: They just put some powders as the chemicals...

KN: They painted her bones red?

EM: The body. Later, the bones, they took the red color.

KN: Oh, I see. So do they think that they painted their bodies red all the time?

EM: Yeah. If they are warriors, they have another color. They liked to paint the body in colors. If they are a king, they have also another kind of color.

KN: Oooh. Like, color-coded people.

EM: Right.

KN: Wow!

KN (to OM): They color-coded *people*.

OM: Wo-ow! So cool! [laughter]

KN: by just putting different chemicals and dyes on their skin.

OM: Wow

KN: So, she probably had red skin, also. And we know a lot about what she was wearing.

EM: They use dresses, it was made with cotton.

KN (to EM): Oh! How?

EM: Yeah, they - they had the technique to make cloths.

KN (to EM): Cotton was growing *here*?

EM: Part of this land, yes - Yucatan. And they use the skin of the animals as decorations, also - jaguar, deer. We know in the classical period, the jaguars was very important. It was one of the sacred animals from the place. And not all the peoples, they can have skin of the jaguars as a dress - it was like an honor to have one of those. And I guess because the jaguar has, like, the color of the forest, the camouflage - that's why when they say, it's going very fast and it's like a spirit of the jungle...

EM: Feathers and of course, we'd see some earrings - how do you say? - necklace, bracelets. Ornamental.

KN (to OM): Okay, next! [sounds of walking] This one has an interesting altar in front of it, and they found fragments of human bones.

OM: Oooh.

KN: near this altar. But this stelae is interesting because she's on the *back* of it, and a man is on the front of it. And it's dated August 21st, 662. We don't know... we can't read enough of it to know.

OM: Right.

KN: *But* Ezequiel told me that they think...

[overlapping voices]:

EM: The story is her husband, the king, is dying in wars with Calakmul.

KN: Her husband died in wars with their arch nemesis, Calakmul.

EM: She decided to take the control of the city.

KN (to OM): [Calakmul](#) is super powerful, and it was ruled by the Snake Kings, they called them. And so obviously they're the bad guys, right? [laughter] Snake rulers.

So, they used to say 'Oh, K'awiil, she probably is, like, a daughter of a Snake King. She's probably associated with them in some way, and that's how she came to power.'

[music grows]

KN: But, lately, Stanley Gunter has pretty solidly argued against that. And It looks like they were enemies - so her husband was killed in the war with these Snake Kings. And what we know about the Snake Kings is it's a *highly* gendered world - incredibly male-dominant. So I just love the idea that you've got [Coba](#) and it's powerful women going up against Calakmul and it's Snake Kings.

OM: Yeahhh, whoo-hoo!

KN: But then, her husband died.

[music]

KN: They've actually found a couple of warrior burials in Calakmul that are labeled 'he of Coba'.

[music continues]

20:00 - 25:04

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KN: So by this point, whatever happened in this monument with her and this man, Coba is a major player. It's even bigger than Chichén Itzá at this point. And she is *in there*, like, she is a *power* player. And Stanley Gunter says she held court over some of the most ambitious and innovative scribes in the Mayan world.

You can tell, in the sophistication of the scribes' writing that this is an intellectual center - Coba. Because Mayan writing? That is no simple task - phonetic, pictographic, and syllabic.

EM: And today we have around 26, 27 letters in our alphabet. But in the time of the Mayas, it was more than 300. Very complicated. And they had a group of people who had the knowledge. So not all the peoples had that knowledge. Just peoples such as the upper class people, the priests, have that information. Yeah.

KN (to EM): Did they keep it secret? Like, nobody's allowed to learn?

EM: Yes, yes. There is one, he's working here in Coba. His name is Renato Cottini. And this person - he tries to produce all the Maya symbols in Spanish.

KN: He's still here?

EM: He's living in Cancun today.

KN: Oh, wow!

EM: Yeah, so thanks to the job of those peoples, now it's possible to translate the symbols to Spanish. And for us, that's very important, because we can speak the language - we cannot write in hieroglyphics. Because - or you will need to memorize what it means, each symbol, and that's very complicated. I have a small brain. [laughter, followed by rainforest animal noises]

KN (to OM): And we're here at the last stone. It's massive! It's the biggest one, and it's the first one you see when you enter this whole Macanxoc Group. And it's carved on all four sides rising up before you. Now, this stone is the stuff of mystery and intrigue - not least of which because of the dates that are listed on it. The last date is... ooh so cool!

Let's start with the first date: June 29th, 672. Now, she's 55 years old. And 672, that's significant - because that is a date that we can firmly tie to the construction of *roads* in Coba. And Coba is the roadbuilding empire. They go nuts!

EM: We have a lot of roads - 46 roads in Coba. It's the number one, the [first] one to build, K'awiil.

KN (to EM): It was *her* idea to build roads?

EM: Yes, yes.

KN: Wow!

EM: Yes. And she started our ancient road - she built a road with 100 kilometers.

KN (to OM): It's like 63 miles long.

EM: It's the long one in all Mayan land. And there is no other road like that one. Sacbe 1, that's located in Coba, and that's connected with another ancient city, and the name of that place is Yaxuna.

[music]

KN (to OM): I didn't really comprehend how much the rainforest wants to kill me... [laughter]

KN: until I entered the rainforest. Like, genuinely frightening. And so dense. And if you were trying to travel across the rainforest of Yucatan - if there's no path, you're not getting through without getting bit by something poisonous. Like, it is a really terrifying place.

KN (to EM): The roads are raised up, aren't they - up high?

EM: That's correct.

KN: Why?

EM: That's because - the *kind* of the land.

KN (to OM): Let me read you, from the Coba guidebook, a description of the wildlife in and around Coba - that you would be dealing with on a daily basis.

25:04 - 30:11

OM: Alright.

KN: Deer, badger, armadillo, mountain hog, skunk, various types of snakes, many species of birds, it was still common to see the occasional jaguar.

OM: Wow!

KN: Not to mention all the spiders. Scorpions. When we were camping there, a giant scorpion just skittered across the bottom of my tent.

[shuddering noises]

OM: We were a little bit south of there, but a giant black tarantula-sized spider *twice* decided to make its home in my son's duffle bag. [laughter]

KN: Okay, so if you're gonna build a road across all that, how ya gonna do it?

OM: Yeah, that's starting to make sense. 'Why the road is so wide? Because you have to keep the animals at bay.'

[rainforest animal noises]

KN: So do you have any engineering ideas for how you're gonna engineer your way through the rainforest and build a 63 mile road?

OM: Uh, there's a lot of cutting down of very large trees going on...

KN: Yes there is, yes there is. But you don't have the wheel - you don't have any machinery. You don't even have metal.

OM: Wow.

KN: What are you gonna do?

OM: Well, flint axes, I guess.

KN: Yep, and obsidian from Honduras.

OM: Or you burn stuff down.

KN: Yeah! and actually that kind of kills two birds with one stone...

OM: Literally!

KN: [laughter] ...if you burn stuff down. Because you've got to burn the limestone in order to create lime plaster, which is what they used to pave the road. So here's what's *so amazing* about it. So it goes 62 miles inland and it covers undulating, extremely uneven rainforest. And there's a flooding problem.

EM: In the rain season, parts of the city can flood. As we saw the parking lot.

KN (to EM): Oh that's normal?!

KN (to OM): The parking lot was underwater when we got there.

EM: Yeah, every year, actually. So that people's not - they didn't know that, and they built their houses close to the lagoon.

KN: Oops.

EM: Bad idea! They did that, that's why we have the problem now.

KN (to OM): The lagoons all around, were populated by crocodiles. [laughter]

EM: Yeah they know that, the Mayas they know that - that's why they build the road with the elevation, yes.

KN (to EM): Wow!

KN (to OM): So she built an elevated road - like, *way* elevated.

OM: Woow.

KN: They could adjust the height of it to the ground underneath. So, sometimes, the road is like 30 inches high. Sometimes it's 19 feet high. And they just fill it in. They build side walls with stones, they fill it in with rubble, they put smaller rubble on top of that rubble.

EM: Just by hands, just with the peoples carrying stones. They use a mortar to glue the rocks. And we know the mortar was made with water, [sascab](#). This material, it looks like sand. Sascab is a Mayan word. And they used also the ash of the limestone. When they mix the three things, they make concrete. That's how they build roads. That's the way they build temples, other constructions - the same technique. And, of course, just with peoples, without animals, and we know they didn't use horses, donkeys because they didn't have it. The Spanish peoples brought the horses here in South America.

KN (to OM): And then, then they pave the whole thing with just, like, tons and tons and tons of brilliant white lime plaster that they made from the surrounding limestone. Incredible!

OM: But why would... that's so weird!

KN: I know! And on average it's 32 feet wide. What an engineering project.

OM: And why do you need it to be perfectly smooth if you *don't have a wheel*?

KN: [gasps] Yeah, exactly!

OM: Like - they *had wheels*, we just have not figured it out. [laughter]

KN: It really seems like it! Like why would you have such wide, smooth paved roads, if you're not pulling carts along them. But, so, all we can say is that people walked along it and carried stuff in baskets on their backs. One of the possible reasons is they think that - so it's elevated so the animals can't get you, as you're walking along it, but also it's bright white and that enables you to travel at night.

30:11 - 35:14

OM: Oh!

EM: At night, the moonlight, the light of stars, they reflect the road. They make it shine, the road. Yeah that's the reason. And they use the road just at night - not in the day, because it's very hot and very humid. It's complicated to transfer something on the back, more if you will have to walk 20 or 15 kilometers. It's the average size that the peoples can walk, during the sunsets to sunrise.

KN (to OM): So that's why it's called a Sacbe. Sacbe means 'white road,' and they built a whole network of them, all over the kingdom of Coba connecting these places.

OM: Wow.

KN (to EM): Do we know how long it took to build the roads?

EM: The theory, it was almost four generations - so almost 200 years.

KN (to OM): So *why* did she build it? And is this a gesture of *control*? Is this a, like, symbol of power? Or is this like, trying to connect people? Our only clues are - here, we're looking at this giant stelae here. She's on the front. She is again pictured stomping on her enemies. You can see poor sad souls underneath her feet. She's always stomping on her enemies, looking very fierce. In one of them, she actually is wearing a belt with jade masks. Only warriors wear those, and she's got one on. So people look at that and they go, 'Okay we got a fierce warrior queen, and she built all these roads, so she must've built these roads to conquer people.'

The very first person to discover Sacbe 1, this road - we call it the first road in the Americas. It was first discovered by:

EM: Alfonso Villa Rojas did an investigation of the roads. In 1964, he walk on the roads with [indistinct] peoples, local peoples, just with a machete, making paths inside of the jungle. And that's why he said, "The road is flat and straight."

KN (to EM): He walked down it and just, with a machete...

EM: [affirming] with a machete.

KN: [gasp] Wow!

EM: A lot of days until they get to the end, the end of the road

KN (to OM): To me, having stood on it, that's absolutely terrifying. Because now it's swallowed up by the jungle again. There's just trees growing out of the middle of it. There's wildlife everywhere, and he just took his machete and he just walked the whole length of it to find out where it went. And he said 'hey, there's a huge road here and it smooth and straight' and everybody went 'Conquering! Coba was using this to conquer the inland!'

But lately? The latest news is a [LiDAR](#) scan. Using LiDAR, they attempted to map the whole of the road and any settlements along the road. They found, like, 800 settlements all along this road.

EM: They find it - the remains of the houses every 20, 15 kilometers. And he's said in his book, it was maybe like where they can take a rest, drink water, it's something, and later then we continue.

KN (to OM): And they have now found that it is *not* just smooth and straight. It actually weaves and winds, connecting all kinds of pre-existing little villages.

OM: Wow.

KN: So to me that doesn't sound like conquering.

OM: No, that sounds like trade or... 'togetherness.' [laughs]

KN: I've just been recently watching this documentary about transportation equity and how important bus routes are for underserved populations - how they need to be able to have access to the world. I had *just* watched that when I started researching this episode, and so I can't help but connect those two in my mind. Like, I'm looking at K'awiil and saying, 'transportation equity' - look at her! No matter how tiny the villages, she's building you a road.

OM: Yeah!

KN (jokingly): Could be, or she could be trying to smash them into the ground, and she builds herself a road to get there and destroy them.

OM: No, because that takes way too long! I mean, there's a reason why you don't build a road to go invade. They notice you [laughs] as you are slowly, laboriously building a road for years and years and years. [laughter] Y'know, this is not a fast moving invasion. This is...

KN (agreeing): No

OM: you're negotiating this or you have already conquered and you're connecting

KN: Yeah! and like if you're conquering - do you care about the tiny villages?

OM: No!

KN: I feel like you would just go to the big cities and you ignore the tiny ones.

35:14 - 40:03

OM: No, yeah.

KN (emphatically): So. I think what we have here is an incredibly powerful, intellectual queen building a female dominated, enlightened kingdom of equity, going up against the evil Snake Kings of the South and fighting for- uh - all the right causes!

OM: Agreed! [laughter] The best.

KN: Yes! That's how it goes. And that is our *expert opinion*. [laughter]

[music grows]

KN: Now turn to this other side of this steale and you can see the date of her death. August 28, 682. She was 65 years old.

OM: Wow.

KN: She lived to a ripe old age. And as I said, when she died - Coba, that's one of the most powerful kingdoms in the whole history of the Mayan world. But afterwards, predictably, it all fell apart.

OM: Of course.

KN: Coba lost this *epic righteous battle for equity* that we're imagining in our heads. Whatever it was she was fighting for, after she died, Coba fell, and decayed, and that's the end of its golden age.

But that's **not** the last date on this stela! Look here, down here. This one has been the subject of *much* intrigue and conspiracy theory and thrilling speculation. Because it reads: December 12, 2012.

OM: [gasps] Oh - oh this is where that comes from!

KN: Yes! This bizarre future date. Why did she put *that* on her stone? What on earth is going on?

EM: The end of the calendars was interpreted in the - like the end of the world: December 21, 2012. And this group in Macanxoc was founded on this - they like to talk about K'awiil, as well as they still like to talk about the end of the Maya calendar.

KN (to OM): She was projecting something into the future -

OM: Yeah

KN: and marking that date. But we *don't know what* because we can't read it, it's so eroded.

OM: Wow.

KN: Was she gonna come back? Who was born December 12, 2012? Is she reborn somewhere else? What's the deal?

OM: [laughs] Cool.

[bird noises and music]

KN: You can go to Coba and stand on Sacbe 1. It was incredibly exciting, but it took us a long time to find it, and we were like 'are we on the road or not?' Like, you can't really tell, because it's in such ruins. But it's still there! And LIDAR tells us there's so much more to be uncovered - they are excavating as we speak, all along Sacbe 1.

OM: Cool!

KN: but that road and these monuments in this Macanxoc Group - it tells me that she was *trying* to be remembered. She was *trying* to tell her story down the centuries and say, 'this is who we are,' and tell an alternative story to the story we're getting everywhere else in Mayan archaeology.

OM: Cool!

KN: So even though we're a little late, K'awiil, we're here - we got it! We're piecing together your story again.

OM: That's awesome.

[music]

EM: Thanks a lot for your visit.

KN: Thank you!

EM: It was nice to meet you. I was so grateful to be your tour guide.

[music and bird noises]

40:40 -

Credits: Special thanks to our guide, Ezequiel May Escora. If you visit Coba, definitely seek him out. You can find lots of photos from my visit, plus academic articles and book recommendations on our website whatshernamepodcast.com.

Music for this episode was recorded by Amulets, ELPHANT, Dan Bodan, Joey Pecorano, and Quincas Moriera.

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