Introduction Episode:

*Ambient Ocean Noises [waves and seagulls] (continue through vivid description of shipwreck)*

**Katie:** The night is quiet and still on the shores of Queens, New York. A cool summer breeze blows through the air, the waves gently crashing against the sand. In the distance, a large cargo ship approaches, changing the quiet night to one of utter chaos. The ship halts abruptly, ensnared onto the rigid rocks below. With no other options, hundreds of asylum seekers from China, clutching onto plastic garbage bags full of their life belongings, plunge into the ocean below. Even though it is summer, the water is as cold as ice. *[siren sounds accompany the next sentence]* Sirens blare as the police, Coast Guard, and other rescue teams quickly arrive, trying to extricate men and women caught in the frigid waters. The people in the ocean try desperately to swim to safety. For some, the water’s power overwhelms them, ripping away their dreams for a new life. Those who did make it expected to be welcomed by America. Instead, they were met with handcuffs and prejudices, shattering their ideas of living the American Dream.

*Theme/Intro Music*

**Kayla:** That was the news story that many Americans woke up to on June 6, 1993, when the *Golden Venture*, a Chinese cargo ship, ran aground on the shores of Rockaway Beach in New York, carrying nearly 300 Chinese immigrants seeking refuge in the United States. After arriving in the U.S., they were detained and bussed to several prisons across the states including New Orleans, Louisiana and York, Pennsylvania. Now detained, the passengers were in need of lawyers to make their asylum case to the United States. Isolated from larger communities of support and immigration lawyers available in New York City, members of the York Bar

Association stepped up, represented the passengers, and learned immigration law at break-neck speed.

*Transition Music*

**Sydney**: As students at York College of Pennsylvania, we had a lot of questions about the little-known story of the *Golden Venture.* Join us as we try to answer them over the course of six in-depth episodes.

Our series begins long before these refugees boarded the Golden Venture. We’ll dive into the motivations behind why the passengers of the Golden Venture left China and endured the harsh realities of the voyage to create a new life in the United States.

We’ll focus on the brutal experience of the passengers in detention in York County Prison, including their relationship with prison guards and prison policy.

We’ll highlight the experiences of the women of the Golden Venture, emphasizing the gendered experience of life in 1990s China and their experiences in detention itself.

Our exploration then turns to the relationship between the passengers and their lawyers from the York Bar Association, illuminating the specific struggles they faced in the uphill battle against the Clinton Administration.

We also discuss the local activists and religious groups that offered their support to help the passengers during their four years in detention, creating lasting bonds between the passengers and the York Community.

Finally, we delve into the political and historical contexts of the Golden Venture as it relates to issues of immigration and its continual impacts on modern policy.

*Transition Music*

**Sara P:** During their time in detention at York County Prison, the passengers created intricate paper sculptures, using the materials available to them in detention. Inspired by zhezhi, the Chinese art of paper folding, their version is now recognized specifically as Golden Venture paper folding. It allowed the passengers to stave off boredom and depression in confinement. These pieces of artwork depict their parts of the journey and their experiences in the United States. Their sculptures provided inspiration to us during the creation of this episode, and each episode will be centered around a specific piece of art from this collection. If you’d like to see the artwork for yourself, we will include a link to the Museum of Chinese in America’s exhibit on these pieces and to specific pieces in the show notes of individual episodes.

*Transition Music*

**Laila:** The passengers of the *Golden Venture* wanted to create new lives for themselves and their families in a country that promises such success regardless of age, creed, color, or gender. As they boarded the *Golden Venture*, they might have imagined the harrowing journey that would take them to the United States, but could they ever have imagined the devastation that would meet them on the other side? Despite their expectations, the asylum-seekers started their lives in America under confusing and chaotic circumstances, being detained in a place where they couldn’t speak the language, and struggled to communicate the dire consequences they faced in China. Why is the *Golden Venture* a name we should still think about thirty years later? Did the U.S. government fail the *Golden Venture* passengers? What did it take for them to finally

achieve the American Dream? Join us as we delve into these questions and more on the Golden Dreams podcast.

*Transition Music*

**Sara B:** This podcast is a production of the spring 2024 Podcasting the Past class at York College of Pennsylvania. This episode was written and edited by Sara Bokus, Laila Brown, Kayla Buchanan, Katie O’Neill, Sara Purdon, and Sydney Slack. It was reviewed by Dr. Jacqueline Beatty, Alaina Crowell, Dalton Emig, Zach Grossman, Ryn Johnson, Shane Mundis, Jeffery Paris, and Benjamin Werkley. Special thank you to Professor Shiffman and the York Bar Association. Theme music and sound effects courtesy of StoryBlocks.

*Theme/Outro Music, fade out*