

HEART OF THE MATTER



**Reflections from the Fight For Immigrant Justice
During the Second Trump Administration**

Edited by Fanny García & Ela Banerjee

INTRODUCTION

“LOVE IS AN ACTION, NEVER SIMPLY A FEELING.”

—bell hooks

This collection began as a love letter to our larger community—and as a response to a nightmare that at times has felt inescapable and hopeless. In January 2025, Donald Trump was elected for a second term to the US presidency. At the time of this writing, about 16 months into this administration, Trump’s immigration policies have resulted in an all-out, national assault on our country’s immigrant community, only building upon the horrifying actions of his first term. We have seen thousands of people ripped from their homes and their families. Neighbors terrified to venture outside even for groceries. Due process thrown out the window as people are brutalized at court hearings and disappeared without a trace. Allies murdered in the street in broad daylight.

As oral historians, we wanted to use the tools we know best to fight back against the violence and cruelty unfolding in our communities. And so, we gathered stories. We know that stories have the power to illuminate the truth, to affirm the dignity and agency of the narrator, and to transform feelings of hopelessness and despair into actions of solidarity and resistance. These stories emerged from oral history interviews conducted in January through April 2026.

We made this book as a thank you to the community of organizers, memory workers, and activists who have used oral history as a tool for social and narrative change. And it is also a megaphone, developed to amplify the words of those who are on the ground at this very moment, fighting for immigrant justice and for a future where the rights of all people are honored.

In designing this collection, we purposely wanted to share the voices of our narrators as a chorus, rather than separate, individual stories. We share Ramón’s story first as a prologue, detailing the dehumanizing treatment he and his brother have directly experienced as immigrants at the hands of the U.S. government. His story grounds us, so that readers can understand what our five other narrators are responding to and who they are fighting for. These narrators are working towards justice in different ways—they include two immigration attorneys, two community organizers, and a therapist—but the connection between their experiences is clear. Most of the narrators don’t know each other personally, but they are all in conversation with each other about how the current situation is connected to past anti-Black and anti-immigration policies and police brutality. And despite deep challenges and fatigue, they refuse to give up in their struggle against oppression.

Some of the questions we asked the narrators include: what does this work really feel like? In your body, mind, and soul? Within your heart? How do you keep going? We chose to present the voices of our narrators in distinct themes so that readers can better understand the emotional experiences of doing this work. Too often, the mainstream media flattens the stories of immigrant justice into statistics and political takes that feel disconnected from everyday life. But at the core of this fight are real people with real emotions, processing fear, anger, love, humiliation, frustration, heartbreak, and hope. We want you, as the reader, to truly feel what they feel and we hope this empathy will encourage you to resist (or keep resisting) oppression, too. At the end of this collection is a list of ten things you can do—actions, big and small, that can make a difference in uplifting the humanity of our immigrant family members and friends.

Love went into the making of this book and we hope love guides you as you sit with these stories and invite them into your own heart.

Fanny García and Ela Banerjee

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ABOUT THE NARRATORS

Ramón cares deeply for his ten siblings and his wife and daughter, and is a great cook. He has travelled a long way to be able to provide for his family.

Veronica is an immigration attorney supporting asylum seekers at East Bay Sanctuary Covenant in Berkeley, California.

Aaruba is a therapist supporting immigrants and refugees at Partnerships for Trauma Recovery in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is preparing to begin a PhD program in Utah.

Margaret is an immigration attorney and the Advocacy and External Relations Director at the Immigrant Defenders Law Center. She is based in the New York Tri-State Area.

Nora is an activist, oral historian, and cook who grew up between Mexico City and New York City. She is working towards a world free of borders, police, and bosses.

Monica is a Mexican American artist and organizer, whose artistic and political work center around liberatory and abolitionist principles. She grew up on the border and lives in New York City.

PROLOGUE

Ramón

Yo soy de Colombia. Yo soy muy apegado a mi hermano Miguel. Hubo un momento en que un grupo armado que se llama FARC, intentó reclutar a una de mis sobrinas. Mi hermano y yo tuvimos un encuentro con esas personas y nos golpearon y todo por rescatar a mi sobrina. Nos amenazaron y nos dijeron que nos teníamos que ir inmediatamente del pueblo. A mi hermano y a mí, nos tocó salir y nos fuimos a Europa y peleamos en la guerra apoyando a Ucrania. Yo fui herido tres veces. A mi hermano le tocó entrar a una misión y le explotaron drones kamikaze y mi hermano quedó sepultado. Cuando eso sucedió, lo reportaron muerto. Yo le pedí a Dios por mi hermano. Y no se como pero otro soldado compañero miro donde mi hermano quedó sepultado y metió la mano por un hueco y él sintió que algo se movió, y jalo a mi hermano.

Después decidimos regresarnos a Colombia mejor. Y al llegar a Colombia siguieron las amenazas, estábamos festejando con mi hermano y llegaron unos tipos y nos golpearon. Y le dije a mi hermano que nos fuéramos a los Estados Unidos a trabajar para ayudar a nuestras familias y para salir del peligro. Llegamos a Estados Unidos y nos entregamos a la migración, a una patrulla fronteriza. El oficial nos pidió documentos y cuando mi hermano fue a sacar los papeles, un agente le pegó una patada en el pecho a mi hermano. Y el oficial le gritó, "Qué estás buscando?" y mi hermano le dijo que tenía los papeles en el bolso. Y el oficial lo tiró al suelo y le puso la rodilla en la cabeza. Y yo me acerqué para defender a mi hermano y el oficial me cogió y me tiró al piso. Nos dijeron, "Tú solo eres un inmigrante, tú no tienes valor en este país."

Migración tuvo a mi hermano detenido dos meses y medio y después lo soltaron. Le hicieron que fuera a una audiencia del miedo creíble y mi hermano pasó su audiencia.

En los Estados Unidos, nos ha tocado muy duro. El arriendo es caro, y es difícil conseguir trabajo. Y lo poco que ganamos, lo usamos para ayudar a nuestras familias.

Pero luego ICE captura a mi hermano. El ya se había presentado con ICE y a los 15 días después le dicen que tiene que ir a presentarse otra vez. Le dijeron que no había ningún peligro, que no lo iban a detener. Entonces él fue a presentarse y fue cuando lo capturaron.

Desde entonces hemos vivido unos días muy terribles porque mi hermano aguanta hambre en detención. Y los oficiales lo empujan para ver si mi hermano reacciona para luego ellos golpearlo. A veces mi hermano me llama con ira. Lo único que le digo es que se calme, que le pida a Dios que todo va a pasar. Si mi Dios nos sacó de ese campo de guerra en Ucrania, de aquí también nos sacará.

Mi mamá ha caído en depresión. Mi mamá llora todos los días por mi hermano. Todos los días mi mamá se levanta a las cuatro de la mañana para orar, poniéndole velas a nuestro señor Dios, rezando por mi hermano.

Yo solo le pido a mi Dios que por favor ICE suelte a mi hermano, que no lo humillen, no lo golpeen. Él no ha hecho nada malo. No ha cometido ningún delito. El único error es el de llegar a los Estados Unidos a trabajar. Buscando un futuro como todas las personas que buscan una oportunidad más. Eso era lo que nosotros queríamos. Nunca nos imaginábamos que fuera así tan duro. Que íbamos a sufrir esto, íbamos a pasar por esta humillación como la que le hacen a mi hermano.

Esta ha sido la experiencia de nosotros acá. Y pues estoy esperando que cambie todo, que puedan liberar a mi hermano. Eso es lo que le pido a mi Dios.

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Después de nuestra entrevista con Ramón, su hermano Miguel fue puesto en libertad de un centro de detención estadounidense y regresó a una zona alejada de su familia en Colombia. Está agradecido de poder reunirse con su esposa, hija, y sus padres después de dos años, pero él todavía está buscando la manera de emigrar otra vez, porque ya han empezado las amenazas de nuevo.

PROLOGUE

Ramón

I'm from Colombia. I'm very close to my brother Miguel. The FARC tried to recruit one of my nieces. My brother and I had a confrontation with those people, and they beat us up. They threatened us and told us we had to leave town immediately. My brother and I went to Europe. We fought in the war in support of Ukraine. I was wounded three times in Ukraine. My brother had to go on a mission, and kamikaze drones exploded, burying him. When that happened, they reported him dead. I prayed to God for my brother. And I don't know how, but another soldier, a comrade, saw where my brother was buried and reached his hand through a hole, and he felt something move, and he pulled my brother out.

Afterward, we decided it would be better to return to Colombia. And when we arrived in Colombia, the threats continued; we were celebrating with my brother when some guys showed up and beat us. So I told my brother we should go to the United States to work to help our families and get out of danger. We arrived in the United States and turned ourselves in to immigration, to border patrol. The officer asked for our documents, and when my brother went to get the papers, an agent kicked him in the chest. And the officer yelled at him, "What are you looking for?" and my brother told him he had the papers in his bag. And the officer threw him to the ground and put his knee on his head. And I stepped in to defend my brother, and the officer grabbed me and threw me to the ground. They told us, "You're just an immigrant; you have no value in this country."

Immigration officials held my brother for two and a half months and then released him. They made him go through a credible fear hearing, and my brother passed it.

In the United States, we were met by my wife's sister. It's been really tough for us here. Rent is expensive, and it's hard to find work. Whatever little we earn, we use to help our families.

But then ICE captured my brother. He had already reported himself to ICE, and 15 days later they told him he had to report again. They told him there was no danger, that they weren't going to detain him. So he went to report, and that's when they captured him.

Since then, we've been through some terrible days because my brother is starving in detention. And the officers push him to see if he reacts, so they can beat him. Sometimes my brother calls me in a rage. All I tell him is to calm down, to be patient, and to ask God for strength—that this too shall pass. If God got us out of that war zone in Ukraine, He'll get us out of this one safely too.

My mom is depressed. She cries every day for my brother. She gets up at four in the morning to pray, lighting candles to our Lord God, praying for my brother.

I just ask God to please get ICE to let my brother go, not to humiliate him, not to beat him. We haven't done anything wrong. We haven't committed any crime. We just made the mistake of coming to the United States to work. Seeking a future like everyone else who's looking for another chance. That's what we wanted. We never imagined it would be this hard. That we'd have to suffer this, that we'd have to go through this humiliation like the one they're inflicting on my brother.

This has been our experience here. And well, I'm hoping everything will change, that they'll release my brother. That's what I'm asking of God.

After our interview with Ramón, his brother Miguel was released from a U.S. detention center and was returned to an area far from his hometown in Colombia. After a week, he made it back to his family. He is grateful to have seen his wife, daughter, and parents after two years, but is working on finding a way to emigrate again, since he's already begun to receive death threats.



MEMORY

Monica

I was born on the border in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. I definitely saw the change in a post 9/11 world. I saw the border wall being built throughout my time. I witnessed the growing presence of the National Guard stationed all through the Rio Grande River. I noticed the lines became much longer to cross, our car was searched a lot more. Before 9/11, when my grandmother crossed the border she would just say, "U.S. citizen," to the officer at the border kiosk, and they would believe her and let her go. It's wild to see how different it is now. There was a fluidity before and now the border is so solid and so violent, it is unable to be penetrated or crossed without risk of literal death. It's hard to wrap your head around how there's literal infrastructure where people could just take a bus and cross a border but instead people are having to swim and get caught in really fucked up barbed wire flotation devices that the U.S. has put at the border. Or that people are being hunted via Border Patrol on horse. All these things are so cartoonishly evil and I think more and more people are starting to understand that what Border Patrol and ICE are doing in our streets are some of the same things that have been happening forever at the border.

Margaret

One way to try to break down a fight for justice is to belittle it, and one way we've seen the Trump Administration do this (and other administrations in the past, too) is how we've seen people's rights be trampled on, the attempts make those individuals seem less than. This is what happened with the Zero Tolerance policy and the separating of children and families at the border, and we see it in the humiliation the men incarcerated at CECOT experienced. The administration clearly has an intent to have the United States only look and sound a certain way. And anything that doesn't fit, they want to disappear and get rid of from this country. All the while we're seeing people being held in really egregious detention facilities and in really bad conditions. At the same time, United States citizens who are trying to fight on behalf of immigrants are being wrongly stopped, profiled, and detained. Our asylum system is almost at a complete halt. The border is essentially closed. So all of these systems are connected. This entire system that we're seeing right now is about trying to create a white nationalist empire and we need to fight against it in order to make clear that the United States of America is not, nor has it ever been a white nationalist dream. It's quite the contrary.

ALL THESE SYSTEMS ARE CONNECTED

Veronica

I don't think we anticipated how difficult it was going to be now. There's really a clear shift. Honestly, I thought the first Trump administration was the worst, but this is just ten times worse. In San Francisco we used to have very sympathetic judges, we had the highest asylum approval rates in the country. But those judges were all let go last year. Before we were dedicating 10 hours for one case, now we're dedicating 20 or 30 hours. Recently, I went to a case where the judge was appearing via webinar. My client had been prostituted by MS13 for five years, all under the age of 18, and she's a trans woman. The judge said, "No, you haven't overcome the one year bar," which is the law requiring asylum seekers to apply for asylum within one year of their last arrival into the U.S.. I had submitted a brief on why she qualified for asylum. I had another attorney write a brief on why she should overcome the one year bar and then I had another attorney write a brief on how her being forced into prostitution for MS13 is not material support to a terrorist organization. And then she still got her asylum denied? A year ago, that would have been a slam dunk case. That's the horrifying part, that it's just because of the times we're in and the judges we have. A lot of judges have the discretion to approve asylum and so when they don't, it's like, "Where is your humanity?"

Aaruba

Even before the election in November 2024, our therapy clients started expressing their anxieties. There were more conversations and questionings of, "Is it safe for me to be here in the United States? Is it safer for me to literally go back to a country where I am being persecuted and targeted?" Several clients of mine brought that up and posed it as a serious question. Now that feeling of persecution has followed them to the US. Increasingly with this Trump administration, with ICE, there's a question about whether their rights will be recognized as refugees and asylum seekers.

FIST

SHOW THEM THAT YOU'RE NOT AFRAID

Margaret

We're almost at the one-year mark when over 200 Venezuelan and approximately nine Salvadoran men were forcibly disappeared by the United States government to CECOT in El Salvador. And we now know, unfortunately, that torture is commonplace at the facility. Immigrant Defenders Law Center is proud to be representing six of the men in a Federal Tort Claims Act civil complaint. On a very basic level, they just need to have their name cleared in order to move on with their lives. It means everything to them to have the United States government, who falsely accused them of being gang members, to clear their names. They also deserve economic compensation because what they have been through impacts their ability to get a job. The men want their dignity restored. They are not Tren De Aragua members.

Achieving justice for them would mean economic compensation for the losses they've suffered. For example, from the moment they were detained, the men had their personal property taken away. One of the men had jewelry from his mom who had passed away. This meant so much to him. He just wants that returned to him. Financial compensation cannot replace the value of something that belonged to his mom, who's no longer in his life, but it's a start.

Nora

I am just angry. I mean a lot of these ICE guys are these thugs, like frat-boy-stupid and steroided-up men. I think there's something so personal about my hatred of them. It's like every man who's ever humiliated me is really embodied in those guys. And they are humiliating people, in the same way that in the past Black men have been targeted for incarceration. It is a process of humiliating people until they are either mentally ill or dependent on drugs or unable to provide for themselves. It's the same way that Trump talks to women, for example. This administration is using humiliation as a tactic of repression. What motivates me to do this work is that as a witness I really find it intolerable to live the way that we have under capitalism. And the chasm between these billionaires and these oligarchs and the rest of us is becoming really big. And even those of us who've been able to live without experiencing hunger and without experiencing deep discomfort are starting to feel that intolerableness. I hope people wake up. If we go back into trying to ignore it, it will go on for longer. I'm really hoping there is a big shift. I do think that this is the revolution. It's happening right now.

Veronica

When clients are telling me, "I'm scared, I don't want to go to court," I tell them, "I'm here for you, I'm going with you, I'll be there." I've often told people to have my bail money ready. Luckily, I haven't had any interactions where ICE is there at court, but if they're coming after my client, I'm going to get in their way and I'm going to end up getting arrested. It comes from my parents and how they raised me, always to fight for people. You show up for the people that can't show up for themselves or that need help. I see the news and I get so pissed off and angry. How I can shove it to DHS and the government is continuing to represent these clients, continuing to be there and being able to do that work.

Monica

My first protest was in New York in 2014, right after they murdered Eric Garner. I remember just being on the street in Midtown. I'm small, I'm 5'2" – and this cop just tossed me on the hood of a car and called me a cunt. That's when I figured out that I had a fight instead of a flee response. Cause I bounced back from that hood so fast and got in his face. He wasn't expecting that and to see his fear was pretty rewarding. He was decked out in riot gear. He obviously chose the easiest target to make himself feel good, to slam against a car. And I was just like, "You're the cunt!" You know? And he was just like, "What?!" He didn't really do anything after that. I remember feeling really shaken, but also thinking, "I don't have to be afraid of them." I think if you show them that you're not afraid, they get really freaked out. Recently, I also had an instance at immigration court with a notoriously violent ICE agent, who I've seen throw women and young girls around. I could see it in his eye, like a shark's eye, he was just looking for whoever he could to toss around. I saw him walking in front of me in the hallway and he immediately turned around and he told me to stop following him. I told him, "I'm not following you." We just happened to be walking in the same direction and he was in front of me. He turns around again and says, "I'm going to slap the shit out of you." I could tell that he really wanted me to be afraid of that. I told him, "Okay, slap the shit out of me then." He did not like that. He threw me up against a wall, handcuffed me, broke my shoe, and hit me repeatedly once we were inside the elevator with all his other ICE guys. I found out later that day though that no one got kidnapped. So that was one of those days where I was like, "Okay, I am glad that one time all this led to something good." I think there's sort of a beauty in showing ICE that they actually don't hold any authority.

SOUL

Aaruba

For myself as a person, there's definitely feelings of just being scared and overwhelmed. So I actually bring in those feelings of fear, of stress, of shared hopelessness in with the client. We sit in it for a little bit. I know there's some people that are thinking, "Well, the provider has to always have the answer." And I would say that's the antithesis of what I think of therapy, because I'm not someone who's coming with an answer for the client. I'm helping them discover the answer they find is best for their lives. I think sharing in the sadness lessens it for two people, rather than sitting in it by yourself. It allows you to kind of remind yourself that you're not alone in this. And then it allows the client to realize that I'm also human and I'm also experiencing the issues of the world alongside them. It does no one any good, and I think it only adds to the power hierarchy, to say, this is something that only you are going through and I am removed from the situation. So it just helps to connect the client to feeling like, "Okay, I'm not alone in this." For myself, I also see the strengths they bring in, especially the determination even to keep coming to therapy. When you're feeling hopeless, you don't want to do anything. The fact that they're coming to therapy is enough for me to reset and reframe and then continue to be there for my clients.

Margaret

For the men that were sent to CECOT, there were so many moments of humiliation, pain, and misery. They shared that it was humiliating to have to completely take off all their clothes in front of men and women when they first got there, after their heads were forcibly shaved. One thing I want people to understand about the head shaving is that when the men speak about it, it is painful for them to recall. It speaks volumes that people at CECOT took every measure at every moment to make things humiliating for them. Taking away their hair was a way to take away their identity, their joy, their humanity. But not only did they take all that away, they did it in a very physically abrasive manner to also cause pain. Someone might say, "Well, why is it so humiliating? You're in a prison and that happens." Just imagine though that you wake up one day, after not having the right to be heard by a judge, and you are now on a world stage being called subhuman and paraded in a way you would never want the world to see. All the while we're seeing people, including mothers with young children, being held in really egregious detention facilities and in really bad conditions.

SHARING IN THE SADNESS LESSENS IT

Veronica

This process of applying for asylum is exhausting. It's long and I feel like it takes a little piece of people's soul to do it. Put yourself in their place and imagine having to relive the worst moment of your life and having to justify to people that it's "good enough" to be able to qualify for asylum. Just having to tell your story over and over to attorneys to psychologists, to a judge, to random people. Then having someone scrutinize you and say you're lying or contradict what you're saying. It's not easy and it's not fun. People just want to be able to provide a safe place for themselves and their children to live. They want to work hard and be able to provide their kids with the life they didn't have.

Nora

My anger is hard to hold. It's taken many forms. I also have a lot of grief. I was doing court watch for six months when ICE was abducting people from the courts and from their hearings and I had to stop doing it because it was so hard to watch and not be able to do anything. Because in that case, you are really just a witness. You can't do anything. Or you'll get arrested, which you can only do so many times. I was just a witness and I found that feeling of helplessness too hard to hold. So I stopped going to court watch and started doing the rapid response network organizing. I'm really sad. I'm really sad. Being next to, talking to, and knowing people who have had family members detained or deported. And just people I know who have gone through the immigration process, which is so long and hard. They are now faced with living in a country whose government is trying to hunt them down and kick them out after all the work they did through legal channels. I have anger and I have grief and sadness, and then I also have joy at seeing what people are capable of and what's inside of the people in Minneapolis and in Chicago and in Los Angeles and here too in New York City. It is all happening at once and we have to be able to toggle between all of it because it's hard to hold the anger and the sadness all the time.



Monica

One wrong form or one missed appointment could mean that someone is just taken away and disappeared. I feel like anytime that I've submitted paperwork, I just can't breathe until it comes back. Anytime I accompany someone to court, it's so stressful. I could be the last person to see this person before they are kidnapped. And then what does that mean for me and what I'm doing? Does that mean that I failed or is it this system that is constantly making us feel like we are failing? The fact that they're proudly kidnapping people because they don't speak English or because they are shopping at a certain place or simply because you are not white—it just fills me with such deep anger and it's really hard to keep hope alive because how do you dismantle something like the United States or capitalism? But I can see us winning against ICE. If we continue to really push, I could see it being like a good first win that maybe could be a spark to other things.



BODY

**YOU HAVE TO REFUEL,
YOU HAVE TO KEEP GOING**

Aaruba

I have seen two different reactions from our therapy clients. One is focused on this present issue of like, "Am I safe here in the US? Can I trust any authority figure?" Including our own organization, including their lawyers. It's felt so much that their past trauma is kind of blocked out. So it turns very present-focused and there is almost a refusal to talk about the past, which is understandable. There is an avoidance, which is their brains and bodies indicating that this is stressful enough, they don't want to go into more stressful parts of the past. And then the other reaction is that this current time is highly traumatizing, it is re-traumatizing, and it is reminding them of what happened in their home country. In both of these cases, I think what has been helpful is when clients are able to name that this is a feeling they've experienced before and we can explore what is different this time, especially what social supports there are now, both near and far. Because I would say a big part of what this administration is doing, what ICE is doing, and what a lot of systems in general are doing is trying to isolate one another and make you feel like you are alone in this.

Margaret

The work is heavy emotionally, even mentally, because there's so much change in immigration law. You're constantly being challenged, not only in your heart and soul, but also your mind. For myself, I would go through moments of disbelief about everything that was happening. For instance, with my work on the CECOT cases until the men were released, I would count down the days, try to plan my next strategy, while continuing to advocate on cases. It's kind of like when you hear in your mind that "tick, tick, tick" of a clock. It felt like every second of every day of the month there was this ticking of a clock in my mind. Some days I'd say, "Okay, this may take a lot longer than I thought." You have to refuel, you have to keep going, but it brought more dismay and sadness than anger. I remember one of the first job interviews that I had as a young attorney by one of the leaders who started Legal Services of New Jersey asking me, "What do you do to relax?" That question seemed unimportant at the time, but it is so profound. It planted a seed in my mind about the importance of taking care of myself. If you want to help people, you have to start with yourself. You have to take care of yourself. You have to laugh. You must find joy in your family and your friends. You have to give yourself the space to reset the clock and keep going. It's important to remember that you are just as important as the people you are helping.

Nora

What I've heard from organizers and protestors who are also U.S. citizens who have been detained, driven around, and then ultimately let go is that ICE is making gross, racist, sexist jokes at them. It's like they have to humiliate everyone who is not X, Y and Z so that they can feel good about themselves. There's no way for this country to keep pretending that white people are better or that billionaires should exist forever without the humiliation factor that's really been a huge part of this administration. I have such a personal hatred of them. And to see them fall on the ice or to see them get hit with dildos, that's joy. I think a lot of people are having a really strong physical response to the repression, and being able to act that out joyfully is important.

Veronica

Our clients are terrified that even going to court means they're going to get deported. You're following the rules, you're going to court to try to defend yourself, but then you're getting detained. I've had at least two occasions where the client just doesn't show up, they're too terrified. I feel like it had always been scary, but you gave people the opportunity to defend themselves and now, they're not being afforded that opportunity. When a lot of clients are testifying, we do see that they're really nervous, they're anxious, they start shaking sometimes. I think people were still nervous before this administration, but it wasn't like this. Right now, they are circumventing the Constitution, they are circumventing due process and it's just enraging, it's terrifying. How have we become this? I usually have the capacity to put things in boxes and just disassociate myself when people are telling me things. People might see it as me being a little cold and not as emotional, but really I'm just trying to get the facts that I need in order to be able to win your case. But in the last year, I have not been able to box it up. In the last two weeks, I cried like four times at work. During the first Trump era, I almost quit. This time, I haven't really thought of quitting but I'm just more emotionally burned out. I offset declarations to my paralegals now. A declaration means having to dig deep into everything a client has gone through and if I still had to meet with clients to do them, it would take a bigger toll on me. That's how I put up a boundary, to be able to keep going.



HEART

MAKING SURE THAT WE EACH SURVIVE IN THIS WORLD

Margaret

I believe that we have a duty to take care of one another. We have a duty to better the lives of complete strangers. We have a duty to make positive change, and we have a duty to fight against systems that are inhumane and fight against people that are callous, cruel and selfish. Bearing witness to injustice can create change. It uplifts the truth of the matter and helps us to prevent injustices from happening again. Right now, it's difficult because people are afraid to speak out publicly, but you could speak out anonymously. You can speak out through social media just sharing posts or you can speak to your neighbor or a friend about what's happening. You can go visit a detainee in an immigration detention center. You can donate even a dollar to an organization that's providing legal services or food to immigrants. The important thing is to not stop and to be creative about how you can help, how you can fight against what you know is not right.

Nora

I think love has a lot to do with it but I also know that I've done too much therapy about why I do this to be able to say it's just about love because I think it also comes from darker, more profound places. For sure there is a desire to love and be loved that I don't know how to separate from this work. I feel a lot of love for people who are doing organizing work and for people who are interested in the kind of connection we're talking about. I don't know if even solidarity is the right word. It's more like connectedness but it goes even beyond the social contract. It's about making sure that we each survive in this world because we're so tied to each other.

Aaruba

At the beginning of my therapy sessions, each time I say, "Thank you for being here." I want to emphasize each part—thank you for being present, for surviving such a difficult childhood or adulthood, for making it to the office, for making it to the Zoom, for making it another day. For being here with me, to allow me to be a part of the journey in healing. I am not providing any solutions. These are all things that they do on their own. I am just a watering can. I'm helping them maybe water themselves. They are the plant. They are the tree. They are the flower, in bloom and coming to fruition. And so I'm just very grateful to exist in the same world as them and to be able to witness their resilience and their strength. So I say to them, **"Thank you for being here."**

Monica

We sometimes joke with my mutual aid comrades that it's just the same 20 dollars being passed around. People doing this work don't have a lot either, you know? I'm thankful for the amount of people that do this work alongside me. It's very hard and taxing and the work can come with a lot of terrible news related to seeing people you've tried to help be taken away by ICE at immigration court. But it's just something I feel like I can't not do.

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

1

Educate Yourself & Your Friends: Current anti-immigrant policies are part of ongoing, historical systems of oppression. Learn more about them by reading books, listening to podcasts, and following trusted advocates on social media. We recommend starting with Border & Migration titles published by Haymarket Books: haymarketbooks.org.

2

Know Your Rights Against ICE: Many immigrant organizations have Know Your Rights resources on their websites. Here's one from one of our partner organizations, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant: eastbaysanctuary.org/know-your-rights

3

Attend a Demonstration: Assess your personal risk level and decide to attend a local demonstration or rally in support of immigrant justice policies.

4

Contribute to Mutual Aid & Community Funds: If you are able to, consider donating funds, food, time, or other needed supplies to food pantries, scholarship funds, mutual aid organizations, and other community efforts that support immigrant neighbors in your community.

5

Use the Power of Your Vote: If you are eligible to vote, use your voice to vote for pro-immigrant candidates and campaigns at the ballot box. Contact your elected officials to encourage them to support just policies. Help other eligible members in your community register to vote, too.

6

Support Language Justice: If you speak a language other than English, consider offering translation and interpretation services to local organizations and nonprofits that serve immigrants and refugees.

7

Join a Local ICE Watch/Patrol Group: Research and join local community organizing efforts to respond to ICE. These actions can include joining a neighborhood foot or bike patrol, distributing alert whistles and red cards with Know Your Rights details, or calling ICE Watch hotlines. Find one at unitedwedream.org/our-work/deportation-defense/migrawatch-hotline.

8

Attend an ICE Hearing: If you want to volunteer to accompany someone to their ICE hearing, connect to an organization providing this service in your community. You may also connect to the Migrant Accompaniment Network run by the Jesuit Refugee Service on their website: jrsusa.org/jrs-usa-migrant-accompaniment-network

9

Help Others Find Legal Representation: To find an immigration attorney, visit the website for the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) at ailalawyer.com. Be aware of scammers, or unscrupulous "notarios," and make sure to always ask an attorney's license number to verify they can practice law. You can verify license information with the DOJ EOIR Professional Conduct Search: justice.gov/eoir/attorney-licensing-verification

10

Be Present & Stay Involved: No matter your background or capacity, you can resist apathy and stay informed long-term about the fight for immigrant justice. Simply getting to know your immigrant neighbors and letting them know you care about them and their safety can have an impact.

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For every person dedicating their heart to the fight for immigrant justice, we see you and we are with you.

And for all those directly impacted by these unjust policies, we believe in you. We are witnesses to your experiences, your courage, and your determination. We love you.

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