

## CHAPTER TWO

### Learning the Story for Myself: Growing Up Undocumented

Late in the evening of November 4, 2008, Ximena sat anxiously in front of the living room television. When it became clear that Barack Obama was pulling ahead in the election results, Ximena told me, laughing, “Literally I started running around the house screaming, ‘I’m going to be a citizen!’ ...My parents were sleeping, and I was like, ‘Obama won! We’re going to be legal!’” Ximena had good reason to hope. As a candidate, Barack Obama had been outspoken about his desire to implement meaningful immigration reform. Undocumented immigrants across the country thought this could be a crucial turning point for immigration policy. But when President Obama’s Proposed DREAM Act—which would have created a path to citizenship for millions of young immigrants—failed to pass the Senate, hope gave way to despair, and Ximena was awakened again to reality: “Undocumented people have no power. They have no voice. They are not [considered] human.”<sup>1</sup> For Ximena, being undocumented meant being inexorably tethered to feelings of inefficacy, anonymity, and fear.

Ximena (whose preferred pronouns are they and them) was born in Colombia and arrived in New Jersey with their parents at the age of five on a tourist visa. Growing up, they excelled academically and placed into a prestigious honors high school. “It was a big deal,” Ximena recalled during our interview in early 2016. The high school emphasized college preparation—it was a foregone conclusion that graduates would go on to bigger and brighter things—but, for Ximena, higher education was not financially realistic. After graduation, while many of their friends left for dorm rooms and lecture halls, they continued to live at home and took a job doing manual labor in a warehouse. “Worst experience of my life,” they confessed. “Just absolute, like—it was just terrible. I was verbally abused, bullied.” During breaks, Ximena would check

Instagram and see photos of friends. “Anywhere I would go—any social media—it’s just, ‘Freshman year! Pledging! Blah, blah, blah,’ and I’m like, ‘Okay, cool. I’m here hiding between boxes because I hate my life because it’s horrifying.’”<sup>2</sup>

But Ximena did not stop dreaming. After working in the warehouse for a year, they applied for DACA, obtained a work permit, and accepted a job with an airline that allowed them to attend two courses per semester at a local community college. While the promise of higher education was becoming a tentative reality, Ximena still felt embarrassed that they did not go to a more prestigious college like many of their former classmates. These feelings intensified when they started dating a student at New York University and trying to establish new friendships. “It’s like we meet cool people. Then they always end up going to all these cool ass schools and then they’re like, ‘Where do you go to school?’” When these questions arise, Ximena feels like “I have to give them my whole life story because I don’t want to sound like I’m not ambitious.”

Schooling is only one of the challenges Ximena faces. They revealed, “I have barriers that are outside of the academic world. The fact that I’m smart enough to fund my own school and budget my own schooling and survive, I feel is a lot. Not to mention this entire time I’m still gay. Well—I’m queer.” Navigating the terrain of an evolving gender and sexual identification is daunting for many, but these experiences are further complicated by Ximena’s undocumented status and their family’s cultural expectations. “It’s like all the while I’m dealing with [these issues] not only [in] American society, but with the society I come from. Like my Colombian roots, my Catholic, Latino, machismo thing that runs in my family.”<sup>3</sup> Attempting to push back against what felt like a repressive culture of masculinity and to connect with others who would understand, Ximena has discovered agency and solidarity online. “I find social media useful with the whole queer identity, because where would I be if I told my parents this and then they

send me to reparative therapy and then I have to keep it all inside? ...At least I know that people watch my story and that I contributed,” they told me.

Ximena recently filmed their story and shared it online through *Define American*, Pulitzer-winning undocumented journalist Jose Antonio Vargas’ digital campaign for undocumented storytellers. It was an opportunity for Ximena not only to find their voice, but also to raise it—personal narrative becoming social activism. “I really appreciate the fact that the campaign is about recognizing people as Americans, recognizing like a national identity,” Ximena told me. “You can’t strip that off of me. You can’t take that away. You can’t take away my American accent. You can’t take away my American memories. I have just as many memories as any other American.”

In the months following our interview, Ximena was accepted to Columbia University and began a transgender transition. We stay in touch via email, and they periodically stop by my office to talk. Although thrilled to be studying at Columbia, they have yet to meet any other undocumented transgender students. “It’s a very lonely feeling,” Ximena wrote in a recent email. “But being an immigrant is married with being lonely, to be honest.”<sup>4</sup> I found that this sentiment reverberated throughout my interviews with undocumented narrators. While their individual stories are unique, the loneliness they expressed is pervasive.

This chapter chronicles the ways young undocumented immigrants like Ximena uncover their lack of legal status experientially—through interactions with parents and others, attempts at pursuing rites of passage reserved for citizens, and as audiences of governmental rhetoric. It examines the questions that often confront undocumented youth, such as, “What do you do when you’re not sure if you’re a victim or a criminal?”<sup>5</sup> The narrators recount their immigration stories and explore the personal and social ramifications of discovering their status, including

these feelings of isolation and anomie. Finally, I provide a close reading and analysis of the publically available governmental guidelines for apprehending and detaining undocumented immigrants, and demonstrate how these documents and the protocol they describe endeavor to maintain a culture of fear and uncertainty for undocumented immigrants across the United States.

### **Learning My Own Story**

Piash arrived in the U.S. from Bangladesh when he was ten years old. “We came on a tourist visa,” he remembers. “I didn’t know at the time, [but] within three months it was expired.” For the next six years, Piash lived without any knowledge of his undocumented status; the subject simply never came up. His experience is not unusual. Before they are old enough to apply for a driver’s license, children who do not attempt to travel by plane are rarely required to show legal identification or present social security numbers. In 2006, Piash discovered his status when his father was deported back to Bangladesh. “I guess in the back of my mind I knew something was wrong,” he remembers, “[but] I never really questioned it, because as a kid, you know, papers and stuff like that doesn’t come up in conversation until you need to get a driver’s license or you need to join a sports team and they ask you for your social security number, stuff like that.” Even after Piash’s father was deported, he explained, “I knew that we didn’t have the right status but I did not know the extent of what it meant.”<sup>6</sup> His experience testifies to the reality that many undocumented youth discover the full implications of their status experientially, over months or even years, often through a series of events and interactions involving family members.

I met Sam in September of 2016. She and her twin sister were born in Colombia, where their family was both wealthy and outspoken against the government.<sup>7</sup> They moved to New

York just a few days before September 11, 2001, after the family received written threats from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) against Sam and her sister, of whom they would sometimes take and publicize photographs to prove their ability to get close enough to the family to cause harm. When the family's application for permanent asylum in the U.S. was denied, Sam's parents disagreed over whether or not to tell the girls about their undocumented status.<sup>8</sup> "When [my mom] wanted us to know, my dad didn't want us to know. As we got older, my dad wanted to tell us that we were undocumented in case something ever happened, but at that time my mom no longer wanted us to know," Sam remembers. When her uncle's family, who also lived in the U.S. without status, was deported, Sam's parents lied and told her that his family had "randomly decided that they were going back to Ecuador" and that it was "for the best." Sam remembers, "When we got older and asked that same question, we were told the truth—that they got deported. Little by little we started learning about what that meant." She went on:

In high school my mom started to tell us details little by little as to why we came [to the U.S.], but not that we were undocumented, just seeking asylum. When we applied to colleges we were asked our status in the country and I didn't know how to answer that question. ...When we had to fill out scholarship forms or even the FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid] paper, I didn't know whether we were permanent residents or what I would put under "Details" once I checked "Other." My sister and I would talk late at night and we questioned whether we were eligible to go to college. We were frustrated—not at our parents, but rather the situation. Knowing that our family was undocumented became clear to us days before Christmas on our last college year when my parents received the

deportation notice [for my father]. My parents told us every detail, and we knew that my father would have to present himself in court, be arrested, and we would then meet him in Ecuador soon. My sister and I spent nights reading about what would happen to my dad and why he couldn't just come with us in the same plane.<sup>9</sup>

Sam's experiences illustrate the uncertainty that plagues the lives of many young undocumented people, exemplify the ways one's status may be discovered over time, and demonstrate how youth may supplement intergenerational messages about family status with research from existing media to determine the implications of their lack of documentation.

After learning the stories of their immigration, some undocumented youth who arrived in the U.S. when they were young feel an immediate sense of gratitude. "I'm very thankful that my parents made the decision for me [to come to the U.S. from Ecuador],"<sup>10</sup> one narrator named Francisco told me. Many of the narrators expressed their admiration of the bravery their parents showed throughout the process.<sup>11</sup> But in some cases, when a young person learns about their undocumented status, it can create a rift in family relations. Kattia, who was born in Peru and arrived in the U.S. with her mother and brother when she was nine years old, realized she was undocumented when an employer asked her for some documents after a job interview. "I asked my mom for them, but she told me that I didn't have them because I'm not a legal immigrant. I felt very frustrated," Kattia remembers. I asked her to tell me more about her attitude toward her mother in that moment. "It made me think that she was selfish and that she kind of made rushed decisions without thinking about mine and my brother's future. I think I hold a little bit of a grudge against her because of the decisions that she made, and that still affects me." Since I had spoken with several other immigrants who also felt this initial sense of resentment, but later

came to respect their parents' decision to come to the U.S., I asked Kattia, "As you grow older, is it easier for you to understand why your mom made the decision to bring you and your brother here?" She replied,

I understand a lot more this last year because I've started to see a therapist, and I've started to talk about my experiences, and the things that I went through as a child, and the things that I went through because I moved here. That helped me out, a lot, to understand where she was coming from, but it also makes that grudge a little bit *bigger* because it's hard...for your parent to be that selfish. Personally, I've had to kind of censor myself around my mother so that she doesn't feel guilty about the way I feel and how it affected me, but lately I've decided to not walk on eggshells around her because it invalidates my feelings and it doesn't help to *not* talk about what happened. It's just not healthy. That's just how I've grown up. You know, not talking about things or acting like it didn't happen.<sup>12</sup>

Here, Kattia delineates the essential role that communication—or lack thereof—plays in the discovery of one's status. Parents' decisions to withhold or reveal their children's status to them, and the ways they communicate or do not communicate about it once their children are aware, may have a direct impact on the ways young immigrants come to see themselves and their place in the U.S.

Sonia is a twenty-two-year-old musician who was born in Mexico. She arrived in the U.S. when she was six but did not know that she was undocumented until she was sixteen, when her father prevented her from attempting to get a driver's license. "I wish my father would've told me more," Sonia told me during our interview in August 2015. "Because I think in his process to protect me from my identity, he never told me I wasn't documented until I found out

myself. By him not telling me, I think it made it very shameful.”<sup>13</sup> But Francisco had a nearly opposite experience. He told me,

In my household, we were open. We were always open. My parents never felt embarrassed to say it [that we were undocumented]. That’s why I don’t feel very embarrassed. In other households, sometimes they try to not mention it. Some people pretend that they’re not illegal immigrants just to hide that. Then when people find out, they feel very embarrassed. I guess it just depends on the environment you grew up in.<sup>14</sup>

The disparity between Kattia, Sonia, and Francisco’s experiences testifies to the importance of parental narratives in shaping children’s perceptions.

Whereas some parents attempt to reassure their children, others instill fear and uncertainty. Omrie’s mother was furious when she learned that he had revealed his status to a few friends. “She’s paranoid, as always,”<sup>15</sup> he told me. Omrie was born in Jamaica, but his mother brought him to live in New York when he was only one month old, and thus, he has lived his entire life undocumented for a crime he “committed” as an infant. His mother recently told him, “Be careful who you talk to, you have to be careful who you’re saying this to, wrong people might get you, they might catch up with you.” Unlike Omrie’s mother, other parents choose to reinforce the likelihood that their undocumented children will *not* be detained or deported. Piash remembers that when he felt nervous after learning about his status, his parents would tell him he would be okay if he would just “do well in school and go to college.” Researchers Lykesa, Brabeck and Hunter found that in cases where parents attempt to reassure undocumented children that they are safe, they may “reassure children with incorrect information that they will not be deported since they are not currently committing a criminal offense.”<sup>16</sup> While these



messages are comforting, the authors argue, they may leave children unprepared if their family does face deportation, which can happen quite suddenly, leaving families little time to process or plan for the future.

The implications of realizing one's status are not merely personal. Undocumented youth are well aware that their decisions about how to negotiate their status—and whether to come out publicly—could have direct effects on their families, especially those members who also lack legal status. This reality prevents even some bold, potential activists from having full confidence in their decisions to reach out to others and make their status public. For example, Jin told me,

Sometimes I'm a little apprehensive about whether I should be saying this stuff because I'm protected legally, but my parents necessarily aren't. There's always an internal conflict that I feel because I have relief from deportation under President Obama's executive order [DACA], but that doesn't extend to my parents, so even though I want to be vocal and I want to talk about and deal with this, it always feels a little scary because I know what the realistic possibilities are. That's something that I always try to find a balance about. My parents, they always encourage me to do what I feel is right, but what I feel is right is sometimes to not say anything because of that fear.<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, Ricardo explained, "I've always been very secure about myself. For me, if it was just me, I wouldn't care about what will happen to me, but it's my family too, so I also have to think about them. For me, that was, I guess, the hardest part to think about if [coming out] was worth it or not, because when I come out of the shadows, they will come out of the shadows as well."

Ricardo did ultimately decide to come out of the shadows. He has gone on to gather acclaim as an activist photographer, and has been featured in a short film called "Meet the

Undocumented Immigrant Who Works in a Trump Hotel.”<sup>18</sup> The film has been viewed more than 400,000 times on YouTube. Though Ricardo was initially concerned about how his mother would respond to the film, “when she saw how big it blew up, she just was proud, I think.” He remembered, “I think for a while she was also maybe a little bit scared, but she knew that it meant a lot to me... she was just really proud. I think that how proud she was of me, that’s overshadowed how scared she might’ve been maybe.”<sup>19</sup>

As these narratives suggest, parents play a large role both in the discovery of one’s status and the negotiation about what to do with that knowledge once it has been made clear. Still, parents are not the only influencers who provide indications to undocumented children. Contemporary undocumented youth are increasingly likely to use digital mediums for uncovering the details of their status and the possibilities for their future. Often, these searches lead them directly to information concerning immigration enforcement and control that is made available on websites owned and operated by the U.S. government.

### **Governmental Storytellers: Maintaining a Culture of Fear**

Approximately 11.3 million immigrants without legal status live in the United States. Each year, around 700,000 are apprehended by the government—roughly six percent of the entire undocumented population.<sup>20</sup> Several of the narrators I interviewed recounted having friends or family members who had been through deportation proceedings; others reported seeing news reports of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids and border patrolling. These memories are ever-present for many immigrants as they decide whether or not to step out of the shadows and reveal their status publicly. But this decision does not only exist in cases of potential activism; it also factors into decisions about seeking certain government benefits

available to immigrants, such as DACA. Despite the temporary respite it offers from the threat of immediate deportation, many immigrants are wary of applying to DACA; they fear that if an anti-DACA president takes office in the future, s/he will use the information collected from applications as a means to identify immigrants for deportation.

The pervasive fear of arrest, detention, deportation, and separation with which many undocumented immigrants live is sometimes upended when undocumented activists confront immigration officials, only to be turned away rather than arrested. In his 2013 film *Documented*, Jose Antonio Vargas visits a detention center with his film crew and essentially offers himself for deportation—a stunt that results in an anticlimactic refusal by ICE to engage in conversation with Vargas. These encounters raise a couple of questions: If an undocumented immigrant can present himself to authorities and walk free, what is the real risk of sharing undocumented stories? How well founded is the fear of detention and deportation? To answer these questions, one must turn to the stories of immigrants told by the U.S. government and consider what narratives appear in the directives used to justify the removal of some immigrants and not others.

As I will demonstrate, the digital and print documents produced by ICE tell a clear story of who immigrants are, what they are doing in the United States, and how they should be managed. In the following pages, I describe how these documents perpetuate a culture of fear through conflating dissimilar types of immigration crime, reducing immigrants to the threat or benefit they pose to the nation, and maintaining an ambiguous system of quotas and priorities based on limited resources.

The front page of ICE's website displays the seal of the Department of Homeland Security and a rotating banner of headlines paired with photos. Currently, two of the three photos show outdoor scenes of ICE officers in uniform with their faces digitally blurred, holding

handcuffed immigrants—with fully visible faces—by the arms, in front of what appears to be a detention facility (see figure 1).



**Figure 1: Photo from Front Page of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Website**

The third rotating image shows a close-up photograph of a little girl’s big brown eyes overlaid with the text, “Human Trafficking: A Global Problem.”

Much of U.S. immigration policy is determined behind closed doors, inaccessible to prying researchers; however, because the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must coordinate with so many ICE offices and entities across the country, the key documents governing the detention and deportation of “aliens” are easily accessible via the ICE website. When immigrants search for information about their status, as articulated in this chapter, it is quite likely—but not guaranteed—that they will encounter the ICE website, as it is frequently linked from other sites, including those owned and operated by the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Notably, some of the narrators seemed to be aware of the nature of ICE's website even if they had not seen it firsthand. During our interview, Kattia explained that before DACA was available, she would "go on the USCIS website because they have a lot of information." She described the USCIS site as "very helpful" and even "friendly." I asked, "Do you remember ever coming across the ICE website?" She replied, "No. I think it seems a little scary to me. Because I don't want to see the content that's there because it would seem like, I mean, I don't know. It just doesn't seem enticing to go on their website at all." I was curious as to why Kattia would find the ICE site frightening since she had previously described the USCIS site as useful and friendly. I asked her what she imagined was on ICE's site, though she had never seen it. She answered, "I don't know. Maybe content about different strategies that they use to find illegal immigrants, or, I don't know. Maybe if they're targeting young immigrants, which—I don't even *want* to know about how they would go about that. I think that's why it's a little scary." The ICE website does indeed discuss strategies for finding and removing both child and adult immigrants. I reminded Kattia that USCIS and ICE are funded by the same faction of government, and asked her how she thought they could be so different if this was the case. "USCIS is trying to help the people," she replied. But she believes ICE is written for "citizens that don't want illegal immigrants here."<sup>21</sup>

Two aspects of Kattia's experience are of particular interest. First, even though she maintains that she has never visited the ICE website, Kattia remembers seeing other ICE-related media as a child: "[I] heard about it when I was younger on the Latin television shows and news, and how they would break into people's houses, I think in Texas, and just take a lot of people just because."<sup>22</sup> Kattia saw these television broadcasts of ICE's invasion of Texas homes before she learned that she was undocumented at nineteen years old. It is likely that these childhood

encounters lingered in Kattia's memory and influenced her decision to avoid the ICE website. This ability of one mediated encounter to direct a user's experience on another medium is a clear argument for the contextualization of media, and a reminder of the ways a mediated encounter may linger in one's memory to be recalled and put to use even many years later.

Secondly, the Department of Homeland Security's ability to maintain these two fronts—the USCIS website offering friendly and helpful information, and the ICE site appearing anti-immigrant and frightening—may serve as a useful “good cop/bad cop” strategy. The origins of this metaphor describe a practice in which two police officers from the same department treat a person of interest with divergent tactics for the purpose of control. The good cop makes promises and offers benefits to engender trust, while the bad cop threatens and intimidates to provoke submission. This dual strategy obscures the fact that both cops are working in tandem toward the same end.

The USCIS website advises its audience about applying for DACA, coaches them on methods to avoid fraudulent immigration lawyers, and assures them that “USCIS seeks to secure America's promise as a nation of immigrants.”<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the ICE website maintains an unyielding focus on the protocol for the detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants. The most in-depth information about this protocol appears in two documents that are available for download on the site. The first is a 35-page booklet titled, “Protecting the Homeland: Tool Kit for Prosecutors.” Published in April 2011, the first page of the document defines its purpose; the Tool Kit is “aimed at helping prosecutors navigate situations where important witnesses, victims, or defendants may face removal because they are illegally present in the United States.”<sup>24</sup> The second document is a 2014 memo from Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, to the Directors and Commissioners of ICE, Customs and Border Protection, and

USCIS. The memo, titled “Policies for the Apprehension, Detention, and Removal of Undocumented Immigrants,” lays out “new policies for the apprehension, detention, and removal of aliens in this country.”<sup>25</sup>

Throughout these two documents, immigrants are rendered and classified only in terms of their benefit or detriment to the nation. For example, page two of the Tool Kit reads, “ICE recognizes that there may be situations where our federal and state prosecutor partners may benefit from having a foreign national remain in the United States for a period of time to assist with an ongoing investigation or to serve as a witness.” In these cases, an immigrant’s deportation is suspended indefinitely, or, as the Tool Kit states, “for a specific period of time that ICE determines to be appropriate.” In the same document, DACA is described as an “administrative convenience to the government” to be employed when “the government has decided that it is not in its interest to arrest, charge, prosecute, or remove an individual,”<sup>26</sup> and readers are reminded that an administrative stay of removal is granted when “a stay is deemed to be in the best interest of the government.”<sup>27</sup> The forthright intention of ICE to work in the best interests of the government, rather than in the best interests of the immigrants they encounter, offers support for skepticism that comprehensive immigration reform will ever pass.

Economically, the government may have more to gain by refusing legal status to the more than eleven million individuals who (1) are subject to the law without receiving protections from the law, (2) pay taxes while remaining ineligible for many of the services tax dollars provide citizens, (3) fill hard labor positions that do not comply with minimum wage laws nor allow eligibility for employee benefits, and (4) pay a substantial amount into the U.S. economy.

In addition to characterizing immigrants as either threats or assets to the nation rather than as people, the ICE website and especially these two supporting documents equate vastly

divergent types of immigration crimes. In a short film on the front page titled “Think You Know ICE?” a series of short phrases appear on the screen to suspenseful music over images of ICE officers at work. “We promote homeland security and public safety by ENFORCING immigration law...PROTECTING children from sex crimes...TARGETING worksite immigration violations,”<sup>28</sup> the film’s text reads. Of course, worksite immigration violations (in which undocumented immigrants work for cash because they do not have labor authorization) and sex crimes do not pose equal threats to homeland security and public safety, but the appearance of these statements side by side sends a clear message: No matter how large or small an immigrant’s crime, one can anticipate a similar outcome.

This conflation of violent and nonviolent crimes is repeated in the 2014 memo.<sup>29</sup> This memo clarifies that ICE should focus its efforts primarily on deporting immigrants who qualify as “Priority 1: Threats to National Security, Border Security, and Public Safety.” This priority includes “aliens engaged in or suspected of terrorism or espionage,” immigrants with records of participation in a criminal street gang, and those convicted of aggravated felonies. But Priority 1 also includes “aliens apprehended at the border”—that is, immigrants who have not committed any crime in the United States other than their entry.<sup>30</sup> These newly arrived immigrants join the felons, gang members, and suspected terrorists among the top priority for deportation unless there are “exceptional factors that clearly indicate the alien is not a threat to national security, border security, or public safety.” In other words, all of these Priority 1 immigrants are guilty until proven innocent, and their crimes deemed equally deserving of deportation. Further down on ICE’s list of priorities appear “Priority 2: Misdemeanants and New Immigration Violators” and the ambiguously titled “Priority 3: Other Immigration Violations.” Using a system of priorities rather than consistent directives about which immigrants will be deported and which



will not ensure that even the most innocuous immigrants can never be fully confident of their safety and security in the U.S.

On the “Newsroom” page of ICE’s website, one can find more detailed information concerning the kinds of dangers posed by the “aliens” ICE apprehends. At the time of this writing, the top four headlines on this page read:

ICE Chicago office deports fugitive wanted in Mexico for murder

Federal jury finds NM man guilty of sex trafficking

ICE removes Salvadoran citizen wanted for homicide

Rhode Island man pleads guilty to sex trafficking young girl<sup>31</sup>

The message is clear: immigrants are criminals and ICE is made up of the heroes that deport them in order to keep America safe. But this message is somewhat incongruent with the data that appears a little deeper into the website on the document entitled “ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report: Fiscal Year 2015,” which reveals that in the last eight years, approximately fifty percent of the immigrants detained and removed from the country by ICE were “non-criminal immigration violators”<sup>32</sup>—that is, they have been convicted of no other crime apart from their physical presence in the United States. Since the site carries an overwhelming focus on the removal of violent criminals like murderers and sex traffickers even though half of ICE’s deportees are non-criminal immigration offenders, one may wonder, what effect might this have on young immigrants who have recently learned from their parents or guardians that they lack legal status? Framing all undocumented immigrants as criminals allows the U.S government to present itself as powerful enough to grant gifts to immigrants, but judicious enough so that the slightest misstep by an immigrant may be grounds for rescindment of that gift. ICE reminds its readers, “No alien has the right to obtain DA [Deferred Action, or,

temporary protection from deportation]. Further, the fact that an alien has been granted DA does not preclude ICE from commencing removal proceedings at any time against him/her.”<sup>33</sup>

Through this messaging, ICE presents itself as an omnipresent and omnipotent enforcer of laws against a swath of indistinguishable criminals.

In addition to promoting a culture of fear through the conflation of varying levels of crime, the ICE site advances uncertainty about who will be implicated for their crimes. While both the Tool Kit and the 2014 memo promise to provide the key information necessary for determining if an “alien” should be detained and removed, in fact, they both maintain a notable amount of ambiguity. Consider the following statements from the Tool Kit:

Discretion may be utilized at any point in the removal process and *may* involve a decision not to arrest, charge, prosecute, or remove an alien.<sup>34</sup>

The legal requirements and the available scope of discretion will vary based upon the unique facts and circumstances of a specific case.<sup>35</sup>

ICE’s decision to grant DA [Deferred Action] is purely discretionary.<sup>36</sup>

Likewise, the 2014 memo explains that the government “may exercise prosecutorial discretion at any stage of an enforcement proceeding,” and this discretion applies to a wide range of actions, including “whom to stop, question, and arrest; whom to detain or release...and whether to grant deferred action, parole, or a stay of removal instead of pursuing removal in a case.”<sup>37</sup> Such statements promote the impression that ICE maintains implicit authority during every step of the process to act in favor of or against an immigrant. The outcome is perpetual insecurity; law-abiding undocumented immigrants can never be certain of their future in the U.S.

These feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity are further complicated by the repeated indications that a lack of resources may lead ICE to apprehend fewer immigrants than they

would prefer. The Tool Kit states, “Discretionary decisions should implement ICE priorities and conserve limited agency resources.”<sup>38</sup> And, “Given its limited resources, ICE strives to utilize its detention space for dangerous criminal aliens.”<sup>39</sup> Likewise, the 2014 memo reads, “Due to limited resources, DHS and its Components cannot respond to all immigration violations or remove all persons illegally in the United States.”<sup>40</sup> This statement implies that, were such resources available, removal of all undocumented immigrants would be preferred and may be attempted.

The ICE materials establish clear priorities—ENFORCE, PROTECT, TARGET—while simultaneously referencing a lack of resources to implement them, creating a kind of panopticon. As described by Michel Foucault, a panopticon is a method of monitoring in which a surveillance tower is placed at the center of a circular row of prison cells. Though prisoners cannot see into the tower, the guards inside can see out. The productivity of such a tower, Foucault describes, is that once the tower is in place, it accomplishes its goal even when no guards are inside the tower surveilling the prisoners—just the possibility that someone may be monitoring their behavior is enough to make the prisoners behave.<sup>41</sup> In *Domination and the Art of Resistance*, James Scott reveals the way a similar threat may pervade the relationship between a master and a slave. By ensuring that other slaves are watching when one slave is arbitrarily punished through beatings, humiliation, and/or insults, masters maintain control through fear. In this way, they control the behavior of many through the punishment of few. “A particular slave, for example, may be lucky enough to escape such treatment but the sure knowledge that it could happen to her pervades the entire relationship,”<sup>42</sup> Scott describes. Punishment is possible at any moment, without cause or warning, and its threat affects the lives of all who are present, transforming their actions accordingly. With this in mind, the headline images of immigrants

being apprehended by ICE, such as the one in Figure 1, take on a greater degree of power. Read through this lens, limited resources may be less detrimental for ICE than they appear—the constant threat of detention remains in place whether ICE has the immediate means to enforce its priorities or not. This reality, coupled with the impression of implicit authority, promotes fear by employing minimal resources for maximum impact.

The for-profit prison system in the United States demands that detention centers meet certain quotas, which in turn has a direct effect on the level of priority that ICE decides to pursue. Specifically, the Department of Homeland Security's 2015 Appropriations Act requires DHS to "maintain a level of not less than 34,000 detention beds."<sup>43</sup> *The Washington Post* reported in 2015, "Republican members on the House Appropriations Committee largely have defended this requirement, saying it compels ICE to enforce the law."<sup>44</sup> During a May 15, 2015 talk on immigration broadcast on C-SPAN, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton remarked, "We have to reform our detention system...I'm not sure a lot of Americans know that a lot of the detention facilities for immigrants are run by private companies and that they have a built-in incentive to fill them up, that there is actually a legal requirement that so many beds be filled. So people go out and round up people in order to get paid on a per-bed basis."<sup>45</sup> The result of this capitalist detention system is a reinforcement of a hierarchy—rather than a consistently enforced determination—of offenses that could lead to detention for undocumented immigrants. If the quotas are met, individuals low on the list of ICE's priorities are somewhat safe from this harm; if they are not met, even an upstanding resident who has committed no crime other than his or her physical presence in the U.S. could be detained. It is this reality that reconciles the fierce directives that ICE publicizes with the aforementioned friendliness of USCIS and the ability of individuals like Vargas to walk free after revealing himself at a detention center.

At an April 2015 ICE budget hearing, U.S. Congressperson John Culberson (R-Texas), who serves on the subcommittee that oversees ICE's funding, reprimanded ICE Director Sarah Saldaña for failing to meet the bed quota: "I don't see that it's ambiguous—the requirement that you use not less than 34,000 detention beds. That's statutory in the Homeland Security bill," Culberson scolded, adding, "There's no shortage of folks coming over the border illegally."<sup>46</sup> Saldaña reassured Culberson that ICE is using its system of priorities to meet the quota. "We are working to use them. Every day people are out there trying to find—particularly with respect to people with criminal records and those who meet our priorities. We are trying to find those folks."<sup>47</sup> The exchange that follows outlines the effect the bed quota has on the decision to apprehend and detain certain immigrants:

Culberson: We want you to use 34,000 beds.

Saldaña: That's absolutely clear to me.

Culberson: You've got plenty of demand. You've got plenty of demand—

Saldaña: But sir, we don't detain people just for the heck of it.

Culberson: I know that, but...I feel very confident you could find an extra 9,000 criminal aliens that needed to be detained to fill those beds in a heartbeat.

Saldaña: We're working on that.<sup>48</sup>

ICE's overemphasis on immigrant criminality as well as the directive to meet the bed quota offer evidence for the reasons immigrants may live in constant fear, despite the relatively low likelihood that any one law-abiding undocumented immigrant may be apprehended. The possibility of detention and/or deportation may seem more likely than it is, given a hierarchical system of quotas that leaves plenty of room for ambiguity.

When considering the ways the U.S. government narrates undocumented immigration, one should keep in mind that messages do not always have their intended effect; just because a message appears in a fear mongering way does not necessarily mean that fear will always be effectively mongered in its audience. Immigrants are active audiences. They may encounter U.S. government officers themselves, view media representations of ICE, or hear stories of friends or family members who have been detained or deported, yet fail to experience the fear that is induced in others who encounter the same experiences. As Columbia sociologists Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton famously wrote, “To know the number of hours people keep the radio turned on gives no indication of the effect upon them of what they hear.”<sup>49</sup> In light of this reality, one must listen not only to whatever media exists at the site of analysis, but also to the audiences who encounter it with varying responses.

The reality that immigrants are active audiences with agency does not preclude the influence and authority of governmental priorities, quotas, and protocol in their lives. Available texts, like the ones described above, institutionalize, standardize, and normalize a limited set of possibilities for the management of immigrants without status in the U.S., while simultaneously and silently removing other possibilities. In other words, the power of required documentation works not only to collect and aggregate data about a specific population, but also to limit, control, and normalize the choices of that population. There is great irony here. Documents—the lack of which renders an immigrant “illegal”—become the very mechanism through which the nation enacts power over immigrant bodies. As Radha Hegde noted in a discussion about the documentation required for international travel, “While paperwork is necessary to have the freedom to move, the process delivers individuals into the complex apparatus of state control.”<sup>50</sup>

Lacking required legal documents both excludes undocumented individuals from the protection of law and implicates them as perpetrators of a law that is enforced through documentation.

Analyzing the ways the U.S. government narrates immigration can provide a better understanding of the justification behind contemporary immigration policy, including detention and deportation. But one must also consider what these narratives do not reveal. As Lazarsfeld and Merton remind their readers, “To the extent that the media of mass communication have had an influence upon their audiences, it has stemmed not only from what is said, but more significantly from what is not said.”<sup>51</sup> For example, one may consider what kinds of immigrants ICE does not portray, and what effect such an omission might create. While the majority of immigrants in the U.S. have not been implicated in any crime aside from their lack of status, ICE’s website has little room for law abiding immigrants, choosing instead to foreground violent criminals. Similarly, while many of the immigrants I interviewed arrived in the United States as young children and without any knowledge of their lack of legality, ICE’s site negates such a possibility by failing to mention in any circumstance how treatment of immigrants who arrived in the U.S. without giving consent would differ from others. This lack of intent to disobey the law appears through omission to lack any significance to ICE. These omissions leave many young immigrants with questions about their place in the U.S. and concern for their futures.

Kit, who was born in Hungary, told me she has recently seen “a lot of immigration news on TV about deportations, and there was a lot of ICE trucks actually in my area. It was people talking about people coming into your house at night and raiding the places that they knew that immigrants lived in. It just made me feel like, I guess I was scared all the time because we’d been here for a while and it was just like, okay, so now what?” Kit’s mention of feeling fear “all the time” is common among the immigrants I interviewed, some of whom had internalized the

rhetoric the government uses to describe them. Even though Kit was only twelve when her parents brought her to the United States, she explained, “I felt bad about it. It makes you feel like maybe I *am* a bad person for being here without any documents.”<sup>52</sup> Because immigrants like Kit grapple with their status in ways that have direct effects on their futures, in the next section, I examine the ways that narrators negotiate their place in the United States after becoming fully aware of their status.

### **Growing up Undocumented: Isolation and a Lack of Certainty**

When I first met Chris, I asked him how many other undocumented people he knew growing up. He answered, “I’m sure there’s a lot of undocumented people...I hear about it all the time. But I don’t know anyone.” At the outset of this project, I had presumed that because of the large population of undocumented immigrants in New York compared to other parts of the U.S., the narrators would have experienced more face-to-face, interpersonal conversations with other undocumented immigrants than individuals in rural areas. In fact, this was not the case; most of the narrators mentioned intense feelings of isolation growing up. Several reported long bouts of alienation and, like Ximena, expressed the ways “being an immigrant is married with being lonely.”<sup>53</sup> As a result of direct instructions from authority figures, fear of legal or social consequences, lack of emotional preparedness, or shame, some of the narrators grew up afraid to reveal their status in interpersonal settings—even when they cross paths with other immigrants lacking documentation.

Esther, a videographer and digital content developer who was born in Spain in 1987 and arrived in the U.S. at three years old, remembers, “I wanted to get a job at the local movie theater because it was, like, a cool place to work. I was about to turn sixteen. That’s when my parents



told me that it might not be possible for me—that it was going to be complicated. I was, like, really angry. I didn't really understand." Shortly after she learned about her status, Esther met a girl in high school who was also undocumented, but she decided to keep her own status a secret because, Esther described, "I was scared. I think that when you're young, you see people who have problems, and it's almost like you think it's contagious...I didn't like to be seen with other [immigrants] when I was young. It's very wrong, but I wanted to fit in."<sup>54</sup> Kattia, too, experienced perpetual isolation from other immigrants. She explained, "I don't feel connected to the immigrant community...It's not like we interact, and it's just not public."<sup>55</sup> Pang was born in Thailand in 1985, arrived in the U.S. at eight years old, and knew about her immigration status from a young age. She described an encounter she had with an undocumented coworker:

"Walter told me about how he had crossed the border and he was very scared," Pang remembered. "At the time, I was still very uncomfortable with sharing my story, so I didn't say anything. I said, 'I'm really sorry, Walter, that must've been really tough for you'...I really tried to want to talk about it, and try to share my own experiences, but I couldn't. That was really the only time that I had come across somebody who was undocumented, that I know of."<sup>56</sup> These instances reveal that young undocumented people often have a desire to empathize with others and build a community, but fear and the pervasive threat of consequences immobilizes them.

During my interview with Ximena, I explained that I was somewhat surprised that more undocumented immigrants did not know each other since the population is so large. Their reply helped me to understand more about why this is sometimes the case:

It is such a large population—eleven million—but it's hard to find unity when everybody is scared to come out as undocumented and when there [are] raids going on and where the government can just snatch you and take everything away

from you. It's hard to find unity and it's hard to find a presentation. It's hard to be considered valuable in America, or to be considered yourself as valuable, or consider yourself important when the government is working against you.<sup>57</sup>

This isolation from U.S.-born citizens, legal immigrants, and other undocumented immigrants may leave young people with the feeling that they have nowhere to turn for help or acceptance. Piash explained, "It is kind of like a hidden thing. Kids would ask me—in my senior year, they would be asking me why I'm not getting my driver's license or stuff like that. I would just play it off [like] I didn't want to get a car...you don't talk about that because anyone who doesn't like you could call up the INS and be like, 'Oh, I know someone who is illegal.'"<sup>58</sup> INS, or the Immigration and Naturalization Service, was the agency responsible for immigration detention and deportation until ICE was created in 2002. The fear that someone may report immigrants to the government for coming out about their status was a common theme among the participants. Ricardo told me, "I think when you're undocumented, you want to not tell people. It's to prevent people from telling other people or to prevent yourself from getting in trouble, I guess, with the law and stuff like that. You don't know who might get this information and have bad intentions and maybe call ICE on you."<sup>59</sup> Ricardo's fear is not unfounded. The Customs and Borders Protection website states, "If you would like to report illegal aliens, please call Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at 1-866-DHS-2ICE (347-2423). They will need to know names, locations (either work place or residence) and any other specific information you can provide. Visit [www.ice.gov](http://www.ice.gov) for more information."<sup>60</sup>

Many young undocumented people who are forthcoming about their status regularly encounter threats of deportation encouraged by these digital exhortations to report "illegal aliens." I follow several of the narrators on social media including Facebook and Twitter, and

have witnessed instances where other users have attempted to report them. When Ximena, who Tweets at @undocuqueer, posted a link in October 2016 to a GoFundMe page to raise money to cover their housing costs while at Columbia University, another Twitter user replied with the ominous tweet, “Pack your shit,” and a screenshot from FBI.gov that read, “Thank you. Your tip has been submitted.” Just fifteen days later, a different user replied to another one of Ximena’s tweets with “This fag is getting deported and there’s nothing he can do about it!” Ximena currently has deferred action through DACA and therefore is not at immediate risk for deportation, but for less vocal undocumented immigrants who follow Ximena’s feed and are watching from the shadows of an unrevealed status, witnessing such exchanges can induce terror and encourage continued isolation.

Some social services are available to U.S. residents regardless of immigration status and determined on a state-by-state basis. Sadly, several narrators reported being so afraid to seek out this information before they came out about their status that they were not able to take advantage of these services. Esther told me, “It wasn’t until after DACA that I even felt brave enough to Google immigration issues.” Pang agreed. She wouldn’t look up immigration-related content or events online “because of paranoia. I didn’t want to make an Internet trail...what if there was a way for us to be tracked?” Jon confirmed, “When your entire life is at risk, you’re probably going to be a lot more paranoid, I suppose, [about] what you do, even if it might seem innocent.” These reflections reveal the challenges those seeking to provide help to undocumented immigrants may encounter. No matter how helpful or even essential these services may be, they will remain useless if immigrants are too afraid to seek them out. Sadly, the immigrants most vulnerable and in need of support are often the least likely to seek assistance.<sup>61</sup>

In some instances, undocumented youth might attempt to reach out for help or even just for friendship, only to be scolded or reprimanded. The later chapters of this book chronicle the work of young undocumented activists, but it is important to remember that many of these individuals had to negotiate or go against their parents' wishes to begin to speak publicly about their lack of status. For example, Javier's parents are fearful of his involvement in activism. Javier was born in El Salvador and began reading poetry about his immigration journey at protests in San Francisco. But his parents would sometimes forbid this, fearing police intervention. "Their fear is twofold," Javier explained. "One is because of the status. And two is because, in their mind, the poets that they know in El Salvador, most of them were exiled or murdered during the civil war. They were really scared for me."<sup>62</sup> Katherine, who was born in the Philippines, believes that the propensity for isolation among undocumented youth stems in many cases from "being raised by individuals who already carr[y] their own sense of a culture of silence."<sup>63</sup> This experience was evident in Sonia's story. She explained that she did not want to connect to others who were undocumented because, "My dad made it seem like we should just always, never tell anyone that you're undocumented, never ever, it's the worst thing you can do. That gave me a lot of anxiety for a lot of years." Portrayals of immigrants in media reinforced her father's warnings. Sonia remembers, "Sometimes I would try to forget about it, pretend that it wasn't real. Because at first it just felt like a very shameful thing. It felt like it was something so dirty and wrong. The way that it had been portrayed in the media, I felt like I was criminal."<sup>64</sup> Likewise, when Pang started working on a coming out film, she approached some acquaintances at a Thai restaurant where she thought a few of the workers may be undocumented. She explained, "[I told them] how I wanted...to come out and how I wanted to share my experience with someone, and a lady took me back to school in her car. When she dropped me off, she said,

‘You know, this is a really dark secret; we don’t share with people who are outsiders.’<sup>65</sup> As Pang and other narrators reveal, even when immigrants desire to come out and speak with others, both interpersonal and mediated messages may reinforce the need to keep one’s undocumented status hidden from public view.

It is difficult to conceive of the power of undocumented storytelling without a prior understanding of the prevalence of isolation in young undocumented immigrants’ lives. The lack of meaningful connections with others who could relate to them leaves many immigrants with a lingering feeling of perpetual in-between-ness; they may never feel completely at home in the nation that renders their presence illegal, but they have no other home to which to return. Piash explained,

If I go back to Bangladesh now, I would not fit in. I would be lost there. I don’t even speak the language that well anymore. I can barely read it. I don’t feel it culturally. Religiously, I’m not religious. I really don’t pray, [and] Bangladesh is a very Muslim country—even though it’s a secular country—it is very Muslim. People pray there every Friday and this and that. I know for sure I would not fit in there. I’m not alone in that. So many people from all over South America, Central America, Africa, Europe would not fit in their country anymore because they have been living here for so long.<sup>66</sup>

Piash is stuck between two worlds, and worries he will never fully belong in either. Because undocumented immigrants risk forfeiting the ability to return to the United States if they travel to the countries where they were born, there is no opportunity to visit the place of one’s birth in order to compare their perceptions of that place to reality. Instead, like Piash, they must rely on

stories from family members and mediated representations to learn about life in the place the United States government insists is their home.<sup>67</sup>

An ever-present lack of certainty about the future weighs heavily on many immigrants. Gabriella, who was born in El Salvador and arrived in the U.S. when she was thirteen, explained to me how stressful this lack is: “You’re afraid you don’t know what your future is going to be like. It’s always uncertain.”<sup>68</sup> Undocumented youth as well as those who are DACAmented with temporary protection from deportation cannot know if the U.S. government will act in ways that will sustain or compromise their wellbeing in the future, and so their lives remain in a perpetual state of limbo. This feeling of in-between-ness, where one has no place in the world that offers all the comforts of home, holds only marginal similarity with the esteemed notion of “hyphenated identities” popular within globalization discourse.<sup>69</sup> In much of this discourse, the idea of living a hyphenated existence is a result of a privileged cosmopolitanism in which a traveler has moved away from a home that s/he might return to at any time. Though cosmopolitans may indeed feel the lack of a singular home, many promising possibilities remain available to them. For undocumented immigrants, neither their birth nation nor the U.S. offers an unproblematic existence. Mexican-American writer Gloria Anzaldua gives firsthand testimony of this existence in *Borderlands*, where she muses about a life lived between two worlds: “As a *mestiza* I have no country.”<sup>70</sup>

Few immigrants who arrive as children in the United States understand the full implications of a lack of legal status until later in their lives; and before they can share their stories with others, they must learn it for themselves, sometimes over several years of discovery. As they described in this chapter, communication—with parents, peers, and through mediated accounts of governmental positions and policies—is central to this learning. Sometimes, these

encounters are empowering; too often, they are traumatic. For the narrators I interviewed, coming to terms with a one's undocumented status is almost always accompanied by questions of belonging and feelings of isolation in the place they know as home. Recognizing the weight of these experiences with isolation can work to shed light on the reasons why undocumented immigrants may decide to confront the risk of exposure to share their stories. In the next chapter, several narrators recount the decision to tell their stories, and the narrative strategies they employ along the way.

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<sup>1</sup>. Ximena Ospina, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 17, 2016, transcript.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>. Ximena Ospina, email to Sarah C. Bishop, August 29, 2016.

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- <sup>5</sup> Katherine Chua Almiranez, *Undocumented* (New York: 2011), <https://undocumentedtheplay.com/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Piash Ahmed, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 31, 2016, transcript.
- <sup>7</sup> Sam (pseudonym), interview by Sarah Bishop, September 16, 2016, transcript.
- <sup>8</sup> Asylum is protection that is granted by a nation after an individual has arrived in a nation. It is reserved for individuals who are facing persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. If one's application for asylum is approved, they may become eligible for refugee benefits. For more on asylum, see "Asylum," United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, last modified August 6, 2015, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum>.
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- <sup>10</sup> Francisco Barros, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, April 14, 2016, transcript.
- <sup>11</sup> For more on gratefulness to parents, see chapter three.
- <sup>12</sup> Kattia Minaya, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, October 21, 2016, transcript.
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- <sup>33</sup>. “ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report: Fiscal Year 2015,” United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2015): 2, <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/fy2015removalStats.pdf>.
- <sup>34</sup>. “Protecting the Homeland: Tool Kit for Prosecutors,” 5.
- <sup>34</sup>. “Protecting the Homeland: Tool Kit for Prosecutors,” 4, emphasis added.
- <sup>35</sup>. Ibid., 4.
- <sup>36</sup>. Ibid., 5.
- <sup>37</sup>. “Protecting the Homeland: Tool Kit for Prosecutors,” 2.
- <sup>39</sup>. “Protecting the Homeland: Tool Kit for Prosecutors,” 4.
- <sup>40</sup>. Ibid., 8.
- <sup>41</sup>. Ibid., 2.
- <sup>42</sup>. Dustin O’Hara, comment on Michel Foucault. “Foucault: Panopticism from Discipline and Punishment,” *up the hill & through the woods Blog*, October 14, 2009, <https://upthehillandthroughthewoods.wordpress.com/2009/10/14/foucault-panopticism-from-discipline-and-punishment/>.
- <sup>43</sup>. James Scott, *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xi.

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<sup>44.</sup> *Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act*, HR 240, 114<sup>th</sup> Cong., 7<sup>th</sup> sess., *Congressional Record* 161 (March 4, 2015): H 1535. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/240/text>.

<sup>45.</sup> Michelle Ye Hee Lee, “Clinton’s inaccurate claim that immigrant detention facilities have a legal requirement to fill beds,” *Washington Post*, May 15, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/05/15/clintons-inaccurate-claim-that-immigrant-detention-facilities-have-a-legal-requirement-to-fill-beds/>.

<sup>46.</sup> Tierney Sneed, “Clinton Criticizes Immigrant Detentions Under Obama,” *U.S. News*, May 6, 2015, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/05/06/hillary-clinton-criticizes-immigrant-detention-practices-under-obama>.

<sup>47.</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, *Budget Hearing: Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, 114<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2015, <http://appropriations.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=394119>.

<sup>48.</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee, *Budget Hearing*, <http://appropriations.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=394119>.

<sup>48.</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee, *Budget Hearing*, <http://appropriations.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=394119>.

<sup>49.</sup> Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert King Merton, *Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 19.

<sup>50.</sup> Radha Hegde, *Mediating Migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 107.

<sup>51.</sup> Lazarsfeld and Merton, *Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action*, 24.

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<sup>52.</sup> Kit (last name removed at the narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, June 15, 2016, transcript.

<sup>53.</sup> Ximena Ospina, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 17, 2016, transcript.

<sup>54.</sup> Esther (surname withheld at narrator's request), email message to Sarah C. Bishop, September 26, 2015.

<sup>55.</sup> Kattia Minaya, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, October 22, 2016, transcript.

<sup>56.</sup> Pang (surname withheld at narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, May 6, 2015, transcript.

<sup>57.</sup> Ximena Ospina, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 17, 2016, transcript.

<sup>58.</sup> Piash (surname withheld at narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 31, 2016, transcript.

<sup>59.</sup> Ricardo (surname withheld at narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 3, 2016, transcript.

<sup>60.</sup> "Reporting Illegal Activity," United States Customs and Border Protection, accessed October 29, 2016, [https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/735/~/-reporting-illegal-activity](https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/735/~/-reporting-illegal-activity).

<sup>61.</sup> For more on vulnerable immigrants' avoidance of support services, see Marissa Raymond-Flesch, et al., "'There is No Help Out There and if There is, It's Really Hard to Find': A Qualitative Study of the Health Concerns and Health Care Access of Latino 'Dreamers,'" *Journal of Adolescent Health* 55 (2014): S18-S19, doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.10.051.

<sup>62.</sup> Javier (surname withheld at narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 21, 2016, transcript.

<sup>63.</sup> Katherine Chua Almiranez, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, April 14, 2016, transcript.

<sup>64.</sup> Sonia Espinosa, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, August 18, 2015, transcript.



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<sup>65.</sup> Pang (surname withheld at narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, May 6, 2015, transcript.

<sup>66.</sup> Piash (surname withheld at narrator's request), interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 31, 2016, transcript.

<sup>67.</sup> Because of these travel restrictions, several of the narrators I interviewed reporting missing the deaths and funerals of family members living in their birth nations.

<sup>68.</sup> Gabriella Quintanilla, interview by Sarah C. Bishop, March 14, 2016, transcript.

<sup>69.</sup> See Ulf Hannerz, "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture," *Theory, Culture, Society* 7 (1990): 237-251, doi:10.1177/026327690007002014; Matt Bai, "The Way We Live Now: 10-28-01: Encounter; Hyphenated Americans," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 28, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/28/magazine/the-way-we-live-now-10-28-01-encounter-hyphenated-americans.html>; Linda Trinh Moser and Kathryn West, *American Multicultural Identity* (Ipswich: Salem Press, 2014); Chay Yew, David Roman, and Craig Lucas, *The Hyphenated American: Four Plays: Red, Scissors, A Beautiful Country, and Wonderland* (New York: Grove Press, 2002).

<sup>70.</sup> Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderland/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 102.