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Special Order 40



Everyday is Like This

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On September 22, 2011, civil rights organizations, immigrant rights advocates, undocumented students, and community members rallied together to oppose LAPD Sheriff Lee Baca's support for police-ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) collaboration through the flawed and unjust program "Secure Communities" (S-COMM), through which fingerprints and identifying information from every arrest are made available to ICE. Fifty to sixty percent of those deported under S-COMM have not committed any serious offense, nor been convicted of one. Consequently, S-COMM creates alarm and fear among many Los Angeles County residents.

The immigrant community, communities of color and the working class wanted to send a clear message to Sheriff Baca that his support of S-COMM increased crime, perpetuated fear, and violated civil rights. As such, they demanded that Sheriff Baca take a strong stand against S-COMM and denounce the Department of Homeland Security and the Obama administration for coercing states into enforcing the program.

The speech below was delivered at the rally outside of The Southwestern Law School in downtown Los Angeles. Inside the school, panelists included L.A. County Sheriff Lee Baca; Chris Newman, Legal Program Director, National Day Laborer Organizing Network; Nora Preciado, Staff Attorney, National Immigration Law Center; and Timothy S. Robbins, Los Angeles Field Office Director of the Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

On Sunday evening I see a youth in my neighborhood get arrested by the police. He's charged with trespassing. His aunt and family live in the apartments he was trespassing, yet four cop cars and a helicopter are sent to terrorize him.

On Monday my mom recalls her desperation, anger, and impotence when police came into our home last November, kicked her and my father out, while police beat up her son, my brother, and she couldn't do anything but hear his cries. They charged him with resisting arrest and threw out the case.



Photo courtesy of Mariella Saba.

On Tuesday I learn of another youth in my neighborhood who was badly injured and received 15 stitches after running away from police out of fear.

On Wednesday I learn that a fellow DREAMer, undocumented youth leader Matias Ramos is facing deportation and wearing an electric shackle on his leg.

Today is Thursday, and everyday is like this...

Every day I drive in constant fear of encountering police. I'm a US citizen, I don't have deportation to fear, yet the sight of police, sheriffs, ICE, makes my heart pound, my stomach hurt.

Because my heart, mind and body know and witness the violence these authorities impose on a daily basis. I fear my womanhood, my youth, my queerness, my color, my Arab, my Mexican, my immigrant background, I fear for my identity, my family, and the many communities we each represent.



Photo courtesy of Adrian Gonzalez.

This is not normal! Do not normalize violence in our lives, in our families, and our communities.

Police, politicians, ICE agents, media behind these cameras, we understand corruption, power, racism, and money amongst you gets in the way of your ability to reason with what is morally and humanely right.

Yet, I dare you, the way you DARE fifth graders to not use drugs.

I dare you to not beat up that same fifth grader when he's an eighth grader.

We dare you to not murder, to not commit crimes and break the same laws that you are supposedly enforcing,

We dare you to not collaborate with ICE, to put an end to your money-making check-points, to not contribute to the systemic deportation and criminalization of people of color,

We Dare you to end [in]Secure Communities, 287 G, Safer Cities Initiative.

These are not the laws and abusers we want patrolling our communities, be it Skid Row, be it East Los, be it wherever you snoop around or put your money-making check-points.

There's no excuse for police brutality.

In honor of every being murdered by police and the governments they protect,
In their name and spirit
May we awake and rise.

Mariella, age 24, primarily identifies as an educator, writer, theater artist, healing arts practitioner, and community organizer. Committed to impacting necessary change while sharing tools and ideas to continue the struggle for a healthier, humane, and more dignified world.

Lead Photograph

Mariella Saba delivering her speech, "Everyday is like this," at the rally outside of The Southwestern Law School in downtown Los Angeles.



Photo courtesy of Adrian Gonzalez.