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La Historia de Nuestras Vidas: A Cultural Awareness Lesson Through Immigration Stories

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“La Historia de Nuestras Vidas”: A Cultural Awareness Lesson Through Immigration Stories

Dawn Shattuck - NICC

Grade Level (Req.): 9th-12th grade	Content Area (Req.): Social Studies	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		
Time Frame (Req.): Two 55-minute class periods or one 2-hour block	Goal (Req.): Students will understand the importance of culture.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will be able to identify cultural and/or economic conditions that influence one’s desire to migrate to or from a country. Students will become aware of cultural differences and will develop a non-judgmental attitude of acceptance, understanding that there is more than one way to behave or more than one way to organize society. Students will be able to empathize with one from another culture. Students will be able to respect the strengths and weaknesses of cultures.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of “Sam’s Story”, a story of immigration from Ecuador to Chile • Copies of the play “La Historia de Nuestras Vidas” in English and Spanish (if anyone wants to present the play for public viewing to contact the authors—email contact is Alex Skitolsky [mrvinal@hotmail.com]) • Optional props: 12-15 concrete blocks, up to seven hard hats (one orange, one green, others white), flashlight • List of resources used • Background information • • 	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): What’s behind the decision to immigrate? As an introduction to the lesson, read the parable of “The Blind Men and the Elephant” or watch a YouTube video presentation of the story as a class (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=152-fG-71gg). Following the parable, admit to the students the topic of immigration (legal and illegal) draws out of us a lot of emotions and preconceived attitudes and ideas that are really only part of a much larger picture. With today’s introduction to real-life immigration stories of men in the USA (Iowa) and another in Chile, we can add to our current knowledge of immigration, enlarging our understanding of the issue.		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell, read, or have a student or students read “Sam’s Story”, a story of a young man who immigrated to Chile from Ecuador for economic relief. 2. Before reading the play together, ask students to pay attention to the similarities and 		

differences between Sam’s story and the Postville, Iowa, men’s stories. Ask them to make notes for discussion that will follow the reading of the play.

3. Assign reading parts to seven students (perhaps rope name plates over students’ heads): Juventino, Victor, Oscar, Luis, Aaron, Onofre, and Javier. Read “La Historia de Nuestras Vidas” as a choral reading with students sitting/standing across the front of the room. If interested, assign minimal use of props (suggested props – concrete blocks, one for each student actor, for use as stools, outlining the shape of a truck, etc; and hard hats of a variety of colors – white, orange, green). If interested, add some sound affects (whirring of helicopters, barking of dogs, whistles and hums in the workplaces, etc.).
4. Give students time for reflection following the play. Ask students to organize their notes on the similarities/differences between “Sam’s Story” and the stories of the men from Postville, Iowa. Possibly use the accompanying discussion questions as a student worksheet.
5. Hold a classroom discussion.
6. ***Background information will be provided throughout the procedure.
7. Enrichment: Students will ask permission of the authors of the play to make a public presentation followed by a public forum on immigration topics. Students will invite the players to perform the play in the students’ community. Students will attend a public performance of the play. Students will explore the effects of the May 12, 2008, ICE raid in Postville by contacting Postville residents, government officials, and community leaders via mail, phone, email, and video-conferencing.
8. Remediation: Students will watch a video-taped performance of the play. Students will listen to an audio recording of the play. Teacher will read the play one-on-one. A small group of students can read the play aloud in a reading circle.
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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Class discussion, student understanding

Assessment (Req.): Students will write letters to the authors of the play. Students will recommend immigration policy changes to state and federal legislators.

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Literacy, grade 9-12: Read for a variety of purposes and across content areas.
- Behavioral Sciences, grade 9-12: Understand the influences on individual and group behavior and group decision making.
- Behavioral Sciences, grade 9-12: Understand current social issues to determine how the individual is able to formulate opinions and responds to those issues.
- Behavioral Sciences, grade 9-12: Understand how social status, social groups, social change, and social institutions influence individual and group behaviors.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations.
- History, grade 9-12: Understand how and why people create, maintain, or change systems of power, authority, and governance.
- History, grade 9-12: Understand the effect of economic needs and wants on individual and group decisions.

- History, grade 9-12: Understand cause and effect relationships and other historical thinking skills in order to interpret events and issues.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

- Writing, grade 6-12: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth’s surface
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Location
- Place
- Human-Environmental Interaction
- Movement
- Region

School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

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21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.): Complex Communication, Collaboration

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

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Other Essential Information (Opt.):

Other Resources (Opt.):

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Background Information:

From 2008 Issue Brief 1: Immigrants in Iowa: A Demographic Snapshot, "Information about immigrants in Iowa is often inaccurate or misleading regarding their numbers, contribution to the workforce, and influence on public safety. The Iowa Immigration Education Coalition provides accurate, fact-based information about Iowa's immigrants to inform common-sense approaches to immigration policy that enhances Iowa's economy and quality of life.

A May 12, 2008, raid of Agriprocessors plant in Postville, Iowa, was the largest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on record. It has had local, national, and international implications. 389 people were detained by ICE forces in the raid. 306 were sentenced on felony document fraud charges, 270 received 5-month sentences, and of 53 workers originally sent back to Postville with electronic ankle bracelets, 28 remain a year later. Four have had their bracelets removed. Twenty obtained U-visas, which allow them to work in the country legally.

"La Historia de Nuestras Vidas" is a play written by six Guatemalans and one Mexican man. These men grew up in poverty and came to the United States to improve their lives. They crossed the border at great risk. Eventually they made it to Postville, Iowa, where they found work at Agriprocessors. All of the men were detained in the immigration raid at Agriprocessors on May 12, 2008. The men experienced fear and confusion as they were hauled off to the Cattle Congress facility in Waterloo and dispersed to various correctional facilities. They had no idea what would happen next. This is the story of their lives. It is a story that is ongoing. The men speak honestly and bravely about their situation. The play is performed in Spanish but comes with an English translation. It is very easy to follow by listening to the men's tone of voice, watching their movements, and following along in the script. The play helps build empathy and understanding. It gives immigration a face and a voice. The play sends a powerful message of hope.

The population of Postville, Iowa, was 2,300 pre-raid. One year later, the estimated post-raid population of Postville is 1500. Much of the town's Hispanic population moved away. They made up more than 20 percent of the town before the raid.

Mr. Erik Camayd-Freixas, Certified Federal Interpreter, Postville, Iowa, hearing states, "*The story of Postville will open your eyes and shake your deepest human and patriotic convictions. It is at once an epic story of survival, hope, and humble aspirations, of triumph, defeat, and rebirth. you will see the profound personal sacrifice of dozens of simple parents, toiling to secure a dignified future for their children, tragically fall prey to a secular injustice, and yet rise as a living and enduring testament to the human spirit. This is the story of a heartland town struggling to survive and keep together its multiethnic fabric against the arbitrary shredder in the blades of prejudice and globalization. It is the spectacle of the world's most powerful government crushing the lives of the most humble and destitute. But it is also the momentous history of a community and a nation rising together to reclaim its democratic values, its humanistic spirit, and its rightful place in the community of nations, as the last champion of liberty. At every corner of this moral saga was the unblinking lens of Guatemalan- American filmmaker Luis Argueta. Thanks to his vision the silenced masses now have a voice, and the epicenter in the most crucial social struggle of our generation, finally, as an all too human face.*

<http://www.abusedthepostvilleraid.com/>

Resources:

Alex Skitolsky <mrvinal@hotmail.com> Contact Alex Skitolsky for permission for public use of the play "La Historia de Nuestras Vidas" or to invite the players to present the play in your area.

Books:

- Devlin, Michele; Grey, Mark; and Goldsmith, Aaron, *Postville USA: Surviving Diversity in Small Town America*, GemmaMedia, 2009.
- Gaston, Jan, Pro Lingua Associates, *Cultural Awareness Teaching Techniques*, 1992.
- Gibbs, Virginia and Ede, Luz Maria Ramirez, *Voices from Postville*, 2009.

Videos:

- *AbUSed: the Postville Raid*, Luis Argueta.

Online resources:

- <http://www.iowaimmigrationeducation.org/>
- <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2008/07/14/opinion/14ed-camayd.pd>
- http://www.iowaimmigrationeducation.org/en/resources_information
- http://www.iowaimmigrationeducation.org/documents/filelibrary/documents/iiec_issue_brief_1_2008_08_18_ejb_69A51F8F5B382.pd
- <http://www.abusedthepostvilleraid.com>
- <http://www.uni.edu/studyabroad/news/downloads/pvillefinaldraft.pd>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ellenmac/3619146533>
- <http://sites.google.com/site/postvilleiowavista/may-12-2009/la-historia-de-nuestras-vida>
- http://www.agriprocessor.com/agriprocessors_history/postville_slaughterhouse_story.ph
- <http://wcco.com/entertainment/slugtherhouse.raid.play.2.1080145.htm>
- <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/collections/special/columns/state-of-the-arts/archive/2009/07/the-lost-boys-of-postville-iowa.shtml>

Sam's Story

We met Sam outside Mercado Central July 7, 2009, where he is working as a server in a restaurant. He emigrated three months ago from Ecuador where he'd been working as a bus inspector at a bus station checking bus arrival/departure times.

Sam's whole family came with him from Ecuador —his wife and young daughter. The three of them are living with Peruvians in an 8'x10' room in a house. They share kitchen space. He pays \$7500 CLP per month (\$15 USD) for rent. He found out about the rental through people he met on the street who were holding up a sign.

Sam left Ecuador because of the poor economic conditions. He said, "We came here to find a future here. There is a better future here than in my country. We can't survive in Ecuador ." Sam said there was no help from the government. It was not an easy life. His situation was terrible. He did not consider going to Venezuela or Brazil . Sam was able to cross the border into Chile by bus. He had only to show his passport then enter the country. It was not illegal for him to come to Chile . In Chile , he needs a Chilean ID card in order to work. Sam's boss is working with him to get the ID card.

Sam said, "I want to save some money." Sam earns \$280,000 CHL (\$150 USD) each month and sends money home to his sister in Ecuador . He wants her to come to Chile as soon as she has enough money. The plan is for his sister to move in with his family and to watch the daughter so that Sam's wife can also go to work. She wants to work at the same restaurant where Sam works.

As we left, Sam stressed the importance that his ability to speak English was for getting hired in his present job. Sam spoke English very well. He learned English at school and while watching TV.

"La Historia de Nuestras Vidas"

Discussion Questions

1. Under what conditions would you ever consider leaving your comfortable home and moving to another country to earn a living?
2. What joys and hardships might you personally experience if you moved to another country to work?
3. What are the similarities between Sam's story of immigration from Ecuador to Chile and the Guatemalan and Mexican men's stories of immigration to Postville?
4. What are the differences between Sam's story of immigration from Ecuador to Chile and the Guatemalan and Mexican men's stories of immigration to Postville?
5. How do your reasons for considering leaving the country for work in another country compare with those of Sam and the men in "La Historia"? Explain.

La Historia de Nuestras Vidas *(The Story of Our Lives)*

English Version

An original, collaborative play about
Immigration and the 2008 Postville, Iowa, raid,
As written and performed by Teatro Indocumentado

Prologue

Juventino - This is a story that is still being told.

Victor - How it ends, we cannot know.

Oscar - It is the story of our hopes and dreams;

Juventino - The story of a long, difficult journey

Aaron - The story of disappointment,

Luis - Imprisonment,

Onofre - Fear and waiting.

All - This is La Historia de Nuestras Vidas.

Onofre - *This is The Story of Our Lives.*

Part 1 - Life in Mexico and Guatemala

Javier - When I was little, I didn't think about work. I played behind my dad in the field.

Onofre, Aaron - When I was little, I dreamt of being a soccer player.

Luis - I dreamt of being a pilot in the air force – but my parents wanted me to do something less dangerous,

Onofre, Aaron, Luis – to work in the fields with my Dad.

Oscar - When I was small (Well, I have always been small.), my parents couldn't afford to continue my education. I went to the countryside to work with my dad, caring for cows...

Victor - I couldn't attend school – I had to help my father in the fields.

Juventino -When I was a child, my father sold our land so that he could drink. When he died we had no place to live, and I walked the streets with no shoes.

Onofre, Aaron, Javier - Life is hard in Guatemala

Luis - And in Mexico

Oscar - The crops never earn enough, and everything is expensive.

Victor - We plant with borrowed money, and our debts always grow.

Juventino - Some days there isn't enough to eat.

Oscar, Victor, Juventino - I wanted to make a better life for my family,

Javier, Luis, Onofre, Aaron - So that my brothers and sisters might finish school,

Juventino, Victor, Oscar - So that my children might finish school,

Oscar - I wanted to build a house out of brick.

Juventino - This was more than just a dream;

All - It was a necessity.

Part 2 - The American Dream

Victor - It is more than just a dream. People like us have gone very far away in search of a better life.

Oscar - Those in my neighborhood who came over to the United States were prospering.

Victor - They returned with good clothes, and they bought new cars.

Oscar - They built beautiful houses for their families.

Luis - "Everywhere in America there are women, beer, cars, and money."

Juventino - "An hours pay in the U.S. equals one day's work in Guatemala."

Aaron - "You can buy everything your family wants when you return."

Onofre - "It's easy to cross – I know where you can get forged papers very cheap...."

Oscar - Like my friend said, the papers are really cheap - they only cost 5 months in jail!

Victor - Yes -What about the risk? What if we don't succeed?

Oscar - What if we die in the streets like others who have tried?

Victor - What if we cannot pay back the debts?

Luis, Juventino, Onofre, Aaron - But, you must work!

Javier - Yes, I must work

Luis, Juventin, Onofre, Aaron - Then, you must go!

Javier, Oscar, Victor, - Yes, let's go!

Javier - Let's live -

All - *The American Dream!*

Juventino - Yes, yes... But getting there won't be cheap!

Javier - How will I pay to cross? I have no money.

Onofre - Borrow the money.

Javier - From whom?

Luis - Not from me! I don't have any money.

Aaron - Me either.

Juventino, Onofre - Sorry.

Luis, Juventino, Onofre, Aaron - Good Luck!

Victor - One has to borrow the money to get here and go even further into debt.

Oscar - It's hard to leave one's wife and children,

Victor - To long for your family and your traditions.

Oscar, Victor - The journey is difficult and the path is uncertain.

All - Is it worth it?

PART 3 - Immigration

Javier - If I had known how difficult and dangerous the trip would be, I may not have come.

Victor - The trip cost 6,000 dollars, 45,000 quetzales in Guatemala.

Oscar - The trip takes twenty-five to thirty days.

Juventino -Through the mountains,

Onofre -Through the desert,

Aaron - Through forests,

Luis - Through rain,

Victor - Sleeping by day and moving by night,

Oscar - Sometimes by bus, but mostly on foot,

Javier - We walked for days,

Javier, Victor, Oscar - And days,

All - And days!

Onofre - The helicopters were circling above, we had to hide – we couldn't look up or the helicopters would see our eyes.

Javier - The ants were crawling all over me and biting me, but if I moved they would find me.

Oscar - I heard the immigration officer yell, "We're going to get you!" "We're going to get the dogs to find you!" I dove into the thorny brush and waited until they passed. Only then could I pull the thorns from my skin and clothes.

Onofre - When we reached the meeting point, the guide called for the truck. When the truck arrived, the twelve of us all crammed in, piled and packed on top of each other.

Juventino - The truck was like an oven, we were drenched with sweat. When the driver told us to get out, three people fainted from the heat. The driver returned fifteen minutes later with water, and we helped the others get back into the truck.

Luis - At the border, we had to climb four, very high fences. One woman climbed the first fence, but she was too scared to jump over. I don't know what happened to her. I cut my hand on the fence, and I looked for help in El Paso. I knocked on the door of someone's house, and I asked if I had arrived in Postville. She said no, I was a long way from Iowa still.

Victor - After we crossed the border, we had to wait in one ranch for two days and another ranch for three days. We waited in an empty room. We couldn't go outside, or we might have been found. We were tired and bored.

Part 4 - Arriving in Postville

Luis - I finally arrived in Postville, Iowa on –

Aaron - November 2, 2006

Juventino - May 24, 2007

Victor - March 23, 2007

Oscar - December 2, 2007

Onofre - May 29, 2007

Luis - February 8, 2007

Javier - January 29, 2007

Luis - When I arrived, I expected a city much bigger than Postville – I didn't imagine it would be such a small town.

Javier - When I arrived it was late at night.

Oscar, Juventino – I arrived to friends and relatives,

Victor, Javier - To co-workers and countrymen.

Luis - My cousin showed me around town –

Onofre - "Well, Luis - this is the United States!"

Luis - As we continued to walk, I saw a group of men dressed all in black, and I thought there was a funeral.

Onofre - They were the Rabbis who worked at the kosher meatpacking plant.

Luis - I arrived in Postville and soon began to work there too.

All - We worked.

Victor - There was little time for anything else.

All - We worked hard.

Javier - We were too tired for much else.

Part 5 - Working at Agriprocessors

Javier - Some said that working in the U.S. was easy.

Todos - But not for me!

Luis - At Agriprocessors, we worked long hours -

Victor - Fourteen-hour shifts,

Javier - Or fifteen-hour shifts,

Juventino - Sometimes eighteen-hour shifts!

Onofre - And we weren't always paid fairly for those long hours!

Oscar - We worked fast and with little rest.

Aaron - We worked with sharp knives and dangerous equipment.

Onofre - I was unaccustomed to that kind of work, and it pained me.

Aaron - Many of the other workers couldn't hold-up to the heavy work in our department. And when the Chicano in the yellow hat took over, we had to work faster and faster -

Juventino - (as the Chicano) "And faster!"

Aaron - He pressured us and treated us badly.

Juventino - (as the Chicano) "If you can't do the work –there's the door! Eleven people could do the work of the 64 in here!"

Aaron - He fired many of the workers, and denied us our breaks.

Oscar - In Department 14, we could only rest when the conveyor would suddenly stop. But then the boss in the orange hat would arrive angry and shouting:

Victor - "What's up!? What's going on!?"

Oscar - All while the Rabbi stood watching and not working.

Luis - When I started working in Department 6, I didn't know any of the others. Like now, I was the only Mexican in a group of Guatemalans. In time, I became friends with the other workers.

Javier - I worked in Department 6 with Luis, packaging fake ham and sausage in boxes. The work was boring, we didn't do much.

Luis - Our boss in the green hat was good, better than some of the others.

Javier - He was also Guatemalan.

Luis - It was better than the job I had before in Postville, working in construction. The boss didn't give us a lunch break, and we had to eat our lunches before work in the morning.

Onofre - At Agri-processors we had half an hour to eat.

Oscar - But we had to change out of our bloody uniforms, goggles, and masks

Onofre - And then wait in line for the microwaves,

Oscar, Onofre - Which were always full!

Onofre - By then it was almost time to change back into our uniforms and re-start the line.

Victor - Cutting and deveining,

Juventino - Clearing and fixing,

Onofre - Quartering and cleaning,

All - Day after day.

Aaron - That is how our time passed, until the day they came for us.

Juventino - The day our dreams ended

All - The 12th of May

Luis - The day of the raid.

Part 6 - The Day of the Raid

Aaron - I had heard rumors around the plant that Immigration was coming.

Luis, Aaron, Oscar - I didn't believe it.

Luis - Every year there were rumors that Immigration was coming, but they never arrived.

Oscar - Two days before that, on Saturday, my brother-in-law had warned me:

Onofre - (as the brother-in-law) "Be careful, Oscar! La Migra is coming tomorrow!"

Oscar - But that Sunday passed and nothing happened.

All - I didn't believe it.

Javier - On Monday morning, I entered the Agriprocessors plant at fifteen minutes before 10. At first, nothing seemed different at the plant. But as I went inside, I saw the helicopters above – I didn't know why they were there.

Oscar - Suddenly the assembly line of the machine stopped, - I didn't know why. By the time we saw the immigration agent entering our department, the plant was already surrounded. We tried to find a way to escape. We ran into another room, but there was no exit. There was no place to hide.

Aaron - Our lunch break started at 10am. I went down to the office to change my gloves first, and I saw the men wearing jackets and hats that said "ICE". I didn't know if they were police or immigration agents. I went around to the dining room in order to warn friends who were already at lunch.

Javier - Soon after I entered the plant, officers blocked all of the entrances, so no one could escape. I knew by their uniforms that they were immigration agents.

Juventino - I had just arrived to my department and began putting on my uniform. Right as I finished, someone nearby starting yelling,

Oscar - "La Migra! La Migra!"

Luis - It frightened me when I heard all of the people yelling "La Migra!"

Javier - "La Migra!"

Aaron - "La Migra!"

Oscar - "Hide! Hide!"

Juventino - Everyone was running.

Luis, Juventino - We ran.

Juventino - To the 2nd floor, where I hid with four of my co-workers.

Luis - To the 3rd floor, where I hid between boxes.

Juventino - I waited there for two hours, listening to the police and immigration officers pass by, scared that they would find me.

Luis, Juventino - They found me.

Juventino - The police were everywhere, and the helicopter circled above. There was nowhere left to hide and nothing we could do. They told us no to worry, that nothing was going to happen. They weren't yelling; they were talking.

Onofre - "Don't worry. We're only here to observe - you can return to your jobs."

Luis - "Don't worry - it's only a safety inspection."

Victor - "You'll be able to return to your homes."

Oscar - But nobody returned. Everything was surrounded.

Aaron - I asked my boss, "What's happening?"

Juventino - (as the boss) "I don't know."

Javier, Oscar, Aaron - I don't know.

Javier - I asked the immigration official, "What will happen to me?"

Onofre - (as the official) "I don't know."

All - *I don't know.*

Onofre - (as the official) "That will be decided by a judge."

Oscar - We waited this way, in sadness, passing the hours without knowing what might happen to us.

Javier, Oscar, Aaron - We waited.

Juventino - *We waited.*

Aaron - Wondering about the penalties, about what might happen to our families and friends.

Oscar - They finger-printed and photographed each of us.

Juventino, Oscar, Aaron - One by one.

Aaron - The first of many times we performed this ritual.

Juventino - Stamp, press, turn, flash. Stamp, press, turn, flash.

Oscar - They chained our ankles,

Aaron - Our waists,

Juventino - And our hands.

Onofre - Hundreds of Guatemalans and Mexicans were marched single-file through the plant and loaded on many "department of homeland security" buses that were waiting outside.

Luis - Seated on the bus, I thought "So long, Postville! So long, America!"

Todos - *"Goodbye, Postville! Goodbye, America!"*

Victor - There ended our days in Postville.

Onofre - There ended our American Dream.

Aaron - *There ended our American Dream.*

Luis - Outside, we could see TV news cameras and people taking photographs, as the caravan of white prison buses left the Agriprocessors plant.

Aaron - For two hours we sat chained on the bus, without knowing our destination.

Oscar - Without knowing our fate.

Juventino - Watching America pass us by through the window.

Javier - Scared.

Aaron - Silent.

Luis - It was the first of many such trips we would take.

Onofre - Crowded together with other immigrants in vans, buses, and airplanes.

Victor - Never certain where they would take us next.

Juventino - We arrived to the fairgrounds in Waterloo.

Luis - They had prepared a place to hold us – *The National Cattle Congress* – a place meant for cows.

Javier - Like the cows we butchered at Agriprocessors.

Oscar - But now we were the ones being processed.

Aaron - *Now we were the ones being "processed."*

Juventino - They made us remove our pants and shirts

Javier - They took all of our clothes, everything we carried.

Juventino - I was shivering from the cold.

Javier - I was trembling with fear.

Oscar - They took us from our rooms, one or two at a time.

Aaron - And led us to a giant stadium, where games are played.

Juventino - They asked a mountain of questions.

Javier - Questions about everything:

Victor - "Where are you from?"

Onofre - "How did you arrive?"

Victor - "Who brought you?"

Onofre - "Who did you get your ID from?"

Victor - "How did you find out that there were jobs at AgriProcessors?"

Onofre - "Do you have a wife?"

Luis - Almost all the officials knew Spanish, they were Latinos.

Aaron - For almost three hours, we sat there,

Oscar - In pain and sadness,

Juventino - Trembling with fear.

Javier - And shivering from the cold -

Aaron - While our questioners sat calmly, drinking hot coffee.

Javier - For the first time that day, we were given something to eat -

Juventino - Potato chips, soda, and water.

Oscar - But I couldn't eat, because I was too nervous.

Aaron - And I couldn't drink, because my hands were bound.

Juventino - We were given a military type cot for the night.

Javier - But I couldn't lay still, shivering under one thin blanket.

Aaron - And I couldn't sleep, because they kept coming in to remove others from the room.

Oscar - So ended that horrible day.

All - The 12th of May.

Juventino - This is only a small summary.

Part 7 - Imprisonment

Victor - After three days and two nights, we received our sentences – they told us that we would have to spend the next five months in prison.

Onofre - The many immigrants were taken in smaller groups to nearby jails – what would only be the first stop in a long series of prisons.

Victor - I was held in Waterloo for three months, and during that time I hardly spoke a word. I don't know what I was thinking – I was filled with sadness. I missed my wife and my family. I didn't have any money. I didn't have anything. They gave me sandwiches for every meal, and there was no heat.

Onofre - It was so cold, and we spent all day long sitting on the bare floor. There, one didn't wait for anything, only food.

Victor - And even then, only sandwiches.

Luis - We were very hungry. The night that we were taken to Mason City, I remember that the officials that had lots of pizzas and pops, and we requested a piece of pizza and they told us no, that they had already distributed our food.

Javier - I was taken to a closed room at the Benton County Jail, where there were no windows and I couldn't see anything outside. One could go crazy without ever seeing the sun. I could only watch the day pass from the time on the TV. A cell-mate made a calendar and put an X on each day, and each day a guard would enter with more prisoners.

Victor - We were always moving from one prison to another, without ever knowing where or for how long.

Javier - To Cedar Rapids for one day.

Juventino - To West Union for a week.

Victor - To Mason City for three weeks.

Juventino - Back to West Union for eleven weeks.

Victor - To Kansas for three days

Javier - And back to Cedar Rapids again – until the flooding began there. When the waters rose and the electricity went out, we were all loaded into the back of a moving truck. – herded together with chains on our feet, like pure animals.

Aaron - Like cows.

Onofre - In Cerro Gordo county jail, no lawyers ever visited me. They forgot about me, and I worried a lot that maybe my problems were worse than I thought. They took me to another cell, where I was with more serious criminals. They wouldn't let me watch the TV, and if I put it on the Spanish channel, they would take the remote control from me. We didn't understand anything.

Victor - And all throughout these weeks, we had little contact with our friends and family outside. They went long periods without any news from us.

Luis - Often, I didn't have money to call them.

Victor - Often, they didn't know where I was being held, only that I was imprisoned somewhere.

Todos - In Kansas again.

Javier - I was in Kansas for three months.

Onofre, Javier - I felt a little freer there.

Javier - We were allowed to get out into the prison yard.

Onofre - There were microwaves and we could buy soup. One is accustomed to eating a lot, but in jail it is very hard. If I ate in front of my friend, he also was hungry, so I had to give him a little bit. And we had to share something with the others. Sometimes six or seven of us shared a little bit of soup, with one spoon, nothing more.

Javier - I was content now that this was how all my time in jail was going to go. But they came and told me that I had to fly somewhere in an airplane.

Javier, Victor - I thought of Guatemala.

Javier - At the airport, 150 of us waited in chains. Everyone thought that we were going to Guatemala.

Victor - I was excited, thinking that I would finally return home. But, I asked an official where we were going and he told me:

Oscar - "I don't know--some other jail."

Victor - I was very sad - It wasn't the news I'd hoped for.

Javier - We arrived in Miami at about 2:00 in the afternoon.

Victor - They interviewed us, asked questions, took blood, and gave us another set of jail uniforms - so many things. We didn't finish until eleven o'clock that night. When I finally got to my cell, the prison guard gave me a blanket and told me to take the top bunk of one of the beds. There was no mattress on the top bunk - just the metal frame - so I didn't sleep at all that night.

Onofre - In Miami, the Latino prisoners got together to share food and clothes. The Colombians and Cubans helped us a lot - many of them had more serious legal problems. They told us that we shouldn't even be there.

Aaron - "You are workers; you don't deserve to be here. Don't worry; God will help you."

Victor - I was there for almost two months. I was happy that I had almost served my time in prison, and that I would soon return to Guatemala to see my wife.

Javier - Fifteen days before I was supposed to leave, they came down from the office and told me that I had to sign a work permit.

Victor - I told them that I could not sign it because I did not know what it was for and my lawyer had told me not to sign anything without consultation.

Javier - But they said I would have to spend even more time in jail if I didn't sign it.

Victor, Javier - I signed it.

Victor - Already a group of prisoners had left for Guatemala. They gave me three shirts and three pairs of pants, and an official told us that we were going to Guatemala. I felt very happy.

Javier - They told me that I would leave that Friday they and arrive in Guatemala on Saturday. On Friday I got up at 5 am, expecting I would finally go home.

Luis - They also told me that I was being deported to Guatemala - not to Mexico. The consulate said that I would go with a group to Guatemala first, and then home to Mexico. But I didn't know how it was going to happen because I didn't have money.

Onofre - But we did not return to Guatemala.

Oscar - Instead we were taken to the immigration center (in Virginia?).

Onofre - Then onto Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Kansas -

All - Again.

Oscar - To Des Moines, Dubuque, and Cedar Rapids -

All - Again.

Luis - But now things seemed to change. They didn't treat us like criminals.

Onofre - We saw lawyers and went to court. They replaced our handcuffs with GPS bracelets.

Victor - They gave us phone cards and told us that we were going to Decorah.

Luis - The supervisors offered us hamburgers and pop from McDonalds. I had never imagined that I would eat another time in McDonald's, or that I would ever be free in Iowa again.

Part 8 - Epilogue

Onofre - But this was no longer the United States I had imagined.

Juventino - Our American Dream had become a nightmare.

Oscar - And the land of freedom had become our prison.

Aaron - We came here so that we could provide for our families and improve their future.

Javier - But we'll return to them with empty hands.

Victor - We made friends here, but now they are gone, deported.

All - I don't know where.

Luis - And meanwhile, we wait – without knowing for how long.

All - We are still waiting.

Oscar - Unable to make a life here and unable to return home.

All - This is the story of our lives.

Juventino - It is only a summary.

Onofre - *This is the story of our lives -*

All - So far!

Javier - It is the story of Guatemala,

Luis - And Mexico,

All - And *America*.

Oscar - It is the story of thousands of immigrants who cross these borders in pursuit of a dream.

Victor - It is a story that is still being told in the fields and factories of the United States.

Juventino - How it will end, we cannot know.

Luis - But we have hope, because you are listening.

Aaron - *Thank you for listening.*

All - Thank you.

Reprinted here with permission from *Teatro Indocumentado*: Onofre Macario Aguilar, Juventino Lopez Pichia, Luis Enrique Moncada Quiroz, Javier Lopez Sajche, Oscar Mejia Santos, Victor Sis Tepaz, and Aaron Junech Vega; facilitated by Alex Skitolsky, Kate Blair, Megan Nelson, and Amanda Brooks. June 2009

La Historia de Nuestras Vidas

Spanish Version

Introducción

Cada uno hace un gesto/acción para mostrar su parlamento...

Juventino: Esta es una historia que todavía se está contando –

Victor: Solo Dios sabe como terminará.

Oscar: Es la historia de nuestras esperanzas y sueños;

Javier: La historia de un camino largo y difícil,

Aaron: La historia de tristeza,

Luis: Encarcelamiento,

Onofre: De miedo y de esperar.

TODOS: Esta es La Historia de Nuestras Vidas

Onofre: This is The Story of our Lives //

Parte 1:

Todos: Part One: Life in Guatemala Luis: And in México

Empieza acciones de la granja con sonidos....

Javier: Cuando era niño, no pensaba en trabajar. Jugaba en el campo detrás de mi papa.

Onofre, Aaron: Cuando era pequeño, soñaba ser futbolista.

Luis: Soñaba ser piloto en la fuerza aerea – pero mis papas querían que hiciera algo menos peligroso (*!explosión del avión!*)

Onofre, Aaron, Luis: trabajar en el campo con mi papa

En las líneas siguientes, cada uno sale para sacar los bloques...

Oscar: Cuando era pequeño (bromeando, "pues pequeño siempre soy"), mis papas no pudieron darme más el estudio. Fuí a trabajar en el campo con mi papa, pastoreando a las vacas...

Victor: No pude ir a la escuela – tenía que ayudar a mi papá en el campo.

Juventino: Cuando era niño, mi papá vendió nuestra tierra para tomar. Cuando se murió no tuvimos donde vivir, y caminaba descalzo.

Onofre, Aaron, Javier: La vida es difícil en Guatemala.

Luis: y en México.

Oscar: En el cultivo nunca gana lo suficiente, y todo es muy caro.

Victor: Sembramos con dinero prestado, y nuestras deudas siempre crecen.

Juventino: Trabajábamos y algunos días no hay suficiente para comer.

Oscar, Victor, Juventino: Quería darle una mejor vida a mi familia.

Javier, Luis, Onofre, Aaron: Para que mis hermanos y hermanas pudieran terminar la escuela.

Oscar: Quería hacer una casa de block.

Juventino: Esto fue más que un sueño...

Javier Empieza con TODOS: Fue una necesidad. (*Javier pone el último bloque*)

Todos: Part Two: The American Dream

Parte 2: El Sueño Americano

Victor: Es mas que un sueño. La gente como nosotros han ido lejos para buscar una vida mejor

Oscar: Los vecinos quienes fueron a los EE UU estaban prosperando.

Victor: Regresaron con ropa buena y compraron carros nuevos.

Oscar: Construyeron casas bonitas para sus familias.

Luis: mujeres, cerveza, carros, dinero....

Juventino: Pagan por hora. Una hora en los estados unidos es igual al trabajo de un dia en guatemala.

Aaron: Uno puede comprar mucho para la familia cuando regresa.

Onofre: Es muy fácil cruzar, el viaje es fácil...y yo se donde pueden conseguir los papeles baratos.

Oscar: Si, como dijo mi amigo, los papeles son muy baratos. Sólo cuestan cinco meses en la cárcel.

Victor: Es un riesgo.

Luis, Juventino, Onofre, Aaron: !Pero, tienen que trabajar!

Javier: Si, tengo que trabajar.

Luis, Juventino, Onofre, Aaron: !Necesitas irte a los EEUU!

Javier, Oscar, Victor: !Si, vamos!

Javier (*Levantase en bloque*): Vamos a vivir the American Dream!

Todos: (*todos levantanse*) **The American Dream**

Juventino: Si, si, pero para llegar allá no sale barato!

Javier: ¿Cómo voy a pagar? No tengo dinero.

Todos: !Tienen que trabajar...

Onofre: y prestar el dinero!

Javier: ¿De quién?

Luis: !Yo no!

Aaron: de mi tampoco.

Luis, Juventino, Onofre, Aaron: Buena Suerte.

Victor: Uno tiene que pedir prestado el dinero para llegar aquí. Va a tener más deudas.

Oscar: Es difícil dejar a la esposa y los hijos

Victor: Uno extraña a la familia y las tradiciones

Oscar, Victor: El viaje es difícil y sólo Dios sabe como va a terminar

Luis, Onofre, Juventino, Aaron: ¿Vale la pena?

La imagen de la familia, Oscar y Victor ayudan a Javier con el bloque en su espalda.

Parte 3: Inmigración

Javier, Oscar, Victor: Part Three, Immigration

Javier: *(Se mueve... lentamente para mostrar la pesa del viaje)* Si hubiera sabido la dificultad y el peligro del viaje... tal vez no hubiera venido

Victor: El Viaje cuesta \$6000, Son 45 miles de quetzales en Guatemala

Oscar: y el viaje tarda 25 - 30 días

Juventino: Caminamos en trocas y en las montañas

Onofre: Caminamos 4 días y 4 noches en el desierto

Aaron: Por los bosques

Luis: Todos empapados bajo la lluvia

Victor: Durmiendo en el día y trasladando por la noche

Oscar: A veces por bus, pero la mayoría a pie

Javier: Caminamos por días

Javier, Victor, Oscar: y días

Todos - Y días

ONOFRE Imagen: HELICOPTERES ARRIBA Aaron representa el coyote, 3 veces les tiren en la tierra.

JAVIER Imagen: Hormigas

OSCAR Imagen: CORRIENDO A DOS LADOS . . . Onofre representa la migra, de repente, Onofre esta detras del publico y él grita, "Detenganse" Todos les tiran al suelo. Apagan las luces. Entonces, ellos muevan furtivamente....Onofre trae una linterna y dice, "Vamos a traer los

perros para buscar a la gente" Después, Onofre sale porque no puede encontrar a nadie. Los otros se levantan del suelo y quitan las espinas de la ropa.

ONOFRE Imagen: en el PICKUP en el desierto. Aaron llama a Juventino y dice, por favor, trae la troca. Bloques en la forma de troca, uno para el conductor. Juventino maneja y busca nerviosamente, chequeando que la migra no esta. El llama a los hombres para que vayan a la troca. Los otros hombres vienen en la troca, uno encima del otro. Juventino pone la troca al lado del camino. Onofre: conductor.

JUVENTINO Imagen: TROCA Y DESMAYANDO Hace mucho calor en la troca. Muestran el color con acciones. Imaginando que estan sudando mucho. 3 hombres, Luis, Javier, Oscar desmayan después de salir de la troca. Otros hechan aire para que Luis, Javier, y Oscar se puedan levantar y continuar.

LUIS imagen: maellas

Oscar, Victor hacen maellas con sus manos y abrazos juntos...

Aaron, Javier hacen maellas con sus manos y abrazos juntos

Luis sube y brinca las dos mayas....Se corta su dedo en la Segunda maya. Onofre representa la mujer quien tenia miedo y quien no podia brincar la maya....

Luis llega en El Paso. El pregunta "Estoy en Iowa?" a Juventino, Juventino le ayuda con su dedo, y responde que el necesita ir en taxi, y otras formas de transporte para llegar a Iowa.

VICTOR Imagen: EL RANCHO, uno, dos, tres, mueve. Los bloques muestran un cuartito donde todos los hombres están sentados, sin mucho espacio. No se pueden mover muy bien. Intentan moverse, pero cuando el uno se mueve empuja otro, y cuando el otro trata moverse, empuja otro. Muestran el cansancio, aburrimento. Continuan las acciones por un rato, mientras Victor dice su historia, cuando Victor termina su historia, el va juntos con ustedes y hay aun menos espacio. El Rancho era muy pequeño. Estabamos cansados, Nos quedamos en un racho por 2 días, y en otro 3 días....

Parte 4: La Llegada

Luis: Part Four: Arriving in Postville

Luis: Finalmente, llegué a Postville, Iowa el -

TODOS: *(poniendo sus bloques a diferentes tiempos)*

EL _____ (numero) de _____ (Mes)

JUNTOS: (año)

Luis: Finalmente, Cuando llegué, estaba esperando una ciudad mucho más grande que Postville – no me imaginaba un puebito

Javier, Oscar, Luis, Aaron: Cuando llegué fue muy tarde.

Oscar, Juventino: Llegamos con nuestros amigos y familiares,

Victor, Javier: Nuestros compañeros y compatriotas

Luis: Mi primo me enseñó el pueblo -

Onofre: "Luis – ¡esto es los Estados Unidos!"

Luis: Caminamos por el pueblo y vi a un grupo de hombres vestidos en ropa negra. Pensé que a había un funeral o algo así. . .

Onofre: Eran los hombres que trabajaron en Agri (*Luis y Onofre imaginan que están mirando a los judíos – señalan con sus ojos*)

Luis: Llegué a Postville y también empecé a trabajar allá. (*todos muevan a la línea para crear la máquina*)

TODOS: Trabajamos.

Victor: No tuvimos tiempo para nada más.

TODOS: Trabajamos mucho y duro.

Javier: Estábamos demasiado cansados

Parte 5

Todos: Part 5: Agriprocessors

(Empiezan las acciones y sonidos de sus trabajos en la planta – Oscar empieza con su sonido de los pollos, al principio, empiezan un velocidad mas omenos, despues, todos escuchan y van mas rapido, muy rapidamente, y despues, se cansan, y "la maquina" va mucho mas lento, mostrando la cansancia de trabajar mucho)

Javier: *(para su acción, porque se siente mucha cansancia)* Algunos dijeron que el trabajo en los Estados Unidos era fácil.

Todos: *(todos paran sus acciones)* !Pero para mí no era!

Luis *(saliendo)*: En Agri, trabajamos mucho.

Victor *(saliendo)*: Turnos de catorce horas.

Javier *(saliendo)*: O de quince.

Juventino *(saliendo)*: A veces de dieciocho horas!

Onofre *(saliendo para sacar el casco)*: Y no nos pagaban siempre por las horas extras!

(IMAGEN DE CUCHILLOS – TODOS Llevan CASCOS)

Oscar *(respresentando Aarón)*: Trabajamos rápido y duro y sin mucho descanso.

Aarón (ESCRITO): Trabajamos con cuchillos afilados y con equipo peligroso

Onofre: No estaba acostumbrado a ese tipo de trabajo, y me lastimaba.

Aaron: Muchos de los compañeros no pudieron mantener el trabajo pesado. Trabajábamos con cuchillos y era duro y rápido. Cuando vino el chicano del casco amarillo a nuestro departamento, todo era diferente, y tuvimos que trabajar aún más rápido.

Juventino: *(como si fuera el chicano)* "¡Más rápido!"

Aaron: Nos presionó y nos trató mal

Juventino: *(como si fuera el chicano)*: Si uno no podía trabajar, las puertas están abiertas, allí estaban....11 personas pueden hacer el trabajo de todos de los 62 aquí

Aaron: Él despidió a muchos de los trabajadores, y no nos dio un descanso.

(Juventino como casco amarillo, despida a Javier y Luis, y todos salen del imagen)

(Aarón y Onofre (rabi) crean el imagen del pollo y el rabí, Victor detrás)

Oscar (ESCRITO) : Trabajé en departamento 14 en la matanza de pollos. Uno no podía descansar. A veces pues se veía a uno descansando pero tenía en la mano el pollo esperando que

el rabbí viniéra a matar el pollo. El mayordómo llegó enojado pero era porque el rabbí no estaba trabajando...El mayordómo, con casco anaranjado gritó

Victor: ¿Qué pasa? ¿Qué pasa?

Oscar: Mientras el rabbí miraba a todos sin trabajar.

(salen del imagen)

(Victor, Oscar, Aarón, Onofre representan el trabajo que hicieron Javier y Luis mientras Javier y Luis hablan, Juventino lleva casco verde)

Luis (ESCRITO): Cuando yo empecé a trabajar en el departamento 6, no conocía a los demás. Porque era el único mexicano dentro de un grupo de guatemaltecos. Con el tiempo, hice amigos de guatemaltecos y mexicanos.

Javier (ESCRITO): Yo trabajé en el departamento 6 con Luis, empacando jamón y salchicha en las cajas. El trabajo era aburrido, no hacíamos nada, mojaba las salchilcas, y Luis las colocaba en carros para que se cocieran...

Luis: Nuestro jefe era buena gente, mejor que los otros. Tenía casco verde y me daba horas, nada mas, fue muy fácil con él.

Javier: También fue mi mayordómo. Era de guatemala.

(otros muevan a crear el imagen en el comedor – crean microandas con bloques)

Luis: Era peor que el trabajo que tenía antes en Postville, trabajando en construcción. Allí el patrón que me tocó fue muy malo, no nos daba lonche, break, teníamos que comer antes, salí porque llegó el invierno y porque fue muy mal.

Onofre (ESCRITO): En Agri, nos daban media hora para comer.

Oscar (ESCRITO): Pero primero nos tuvimos que cambiar la ropa ensangrentada, lentes y máscarillas.

(Cambian ropa)

Onofre: Y después hacer fila para usar las micraondas,

(Hagan fila)

Oscar, Onofre: !Que siempre estaban ocupadas!

(Comiendo, sentando)

Onofre: Entonces casi era el tiempo para cambiarse de nuevo a la ropa y empezar de trabajar.

(La linea de la fabrica otra vez)

Victor: Cortando y desvenando.

Juventino: Quitando y arreglando.

Onofre: Destazando y limpiando.

Todos: Día tras día.

Aaron: Así es como pasó el tiempo, hasta que terminó el día que nos agarraron.

Juventino: El día que terminaron nuestros sueños.

Todos: El 12 de mayo.

Luis: El día de la redada.

Onofre: Part Six, The Day of the Raid

Parte 6

Aarón (ESCRITO): En la planta habían rumores, escuché que tal vez iba a venir la migra

Luis, Aaron, Oscar: No lo creía.

Luis: Cada año, dijeron que venía la migra, pero nunca llegó.

(todos salen del imagen)

Oscar: Dos días antes, el sabado, mi cuñado me advirtió -

Onofre: *(como si fuera el cuñado)* "Ten cuidado, Oscar! Mañana viene la migra!"

Oscar: Pero no llegaron el domingo; pues nada pasó.

Todos : No lo creía.

(Aarón y Luis – miran los helicópteros arriba)

Javier (ESCRITO): El lunes en la mañana, llegué a Agri quince minutos antes de las 10. Nada parecía diferente en la planta. Pero cuando entré, vi arriba unos helicópteros, no sabía porque estaban allá.

(La línea de la fábrica)

Oscar: De repente paraban la línea de la máquina, no entendíamos por qué. Todo estaba rodeado. Cuando salimos tratamos de escondernos, no teníamos salida...

(Oscar, Javier, y Aarón Corriendo y Escondido)

Aaron: La hora de almuerzo empezó a las 10am. Me fuí para abajo a cambiar los guantes, y ví a los hombres vestidos en chaquetas y gorras que decían "ICE". No sabía si eran de la policía o la migra. Fuí al comedor para avisarles a mis amigos que ya estaban comiendo.

Javier: Después de entrar a la planta, vimos policía – el casco y bata. Se miraba que inmigración estaba en la entrada de la puerta rodeando. Estaban vigilando para que no nos escapáramos.

Juventino (ESCRITO): Llegué al dept y me puse la bata. Acaba de ponermela y empezar, cuando alguien gritó,

Oscar: "La migra! La migra!"

Luis (ESCRITO): Me asustó cuando escuché a todos gritando "La migra!"

Javier: "¡ La Migra !"

Aaron: "¡ La Migra!"

Oscar: "Escóndanse! Escóndanse!"

Juventino: Y cuando entendimos que inmigración había llegado, nos escondimos pero fué en vano.

Luis, Juventino: Corrimos. ***I ran.***

Juventino: Fuí con compañeros al 2nd nivel donde nos escondimos

Luis: Al tercer piso, donde me escondí entre las cajas...

Luis, Juventino: ***I hid.***

Juventino: Allí esperé escondido por dos horas, escuchando a la policía y a la migra caminando cerca, asustado que me encontrarán.

(Victor y Luis encuentran a Luis y Juventino)

Luis, Juventino: Me encontraron. ***They found me.***

(Luis – deja el escrito, pone casco de ICE, y es un oficial de ICE con Victor y Onofre)

Juventino (ESCRITO donde Luis estaba): La policía estaba en todas partes y los helicópteros volaban en círculos arriba. No había ningún lugar donde escondernos y no pudimos hacer nada. (Pausa, Mira los Oficiales de ICE). Nos dijeron que no deberíamos preocuparnos, que nada iba a pasar. No estuvieron gritando, estuvieron hablando.

Onofre: "No se preocupen. Solo estamos para observar – pueden volver a trabajar."

Luis: "No se preocupen – nada más es una inspección de seguridad."

Victor: "No se preocupen - Puedan volver a sus casas."

Oscar: Pero nadie volvió. Todo fue rodeado.

J, A, Os: Estabamos preocupados.

(Pausa – Momento de tensión)

Aaron: Pregunté a mi mayordomo, "¿Qué está pasando?"

Juventino: *(como si fuera el jefe)* "No lo sé."

Javier, Oscar, Aarón: No lo se.

Javier: Pregunté a uno de los oficiales, "¿Qué me va a pasar?"

Todos: "I don't know."

Onofre: *(como si fuera el oficial)* "Un juez decidirá todo."

Oscar: Así esperamos, pasando las horas sin saber que nos iba a pasar a cada uno de nosotros.

Javier, Oscar, Aarón: Esperamos.

Juventino: We waited.

Aaron: Preguntándonos sobre los castigos, sobre lo que iba a pasar a nuestras familias y a nuestros amigos.

Oscar: Tomaron nuestras huellas y sacaron fotos de cada uno de nosotros.

J, A, O: Uno por uno.

Aarón: La primera vez de muchas veces que tuvimos que hacer esta rutina.

Juventino: Huella, Presion, Mira, Foto. Huella, Presion, Mira, Foto.

Oscar: Nos enchacharon en las tobillas

Aarón: y de Las caderas

Juventino: y de Las manos

Onofre: Cientos de guatemaltecos y mexicanos caminamos en fila por la planta y abordamos los buses del departamento de Homeland Security que estuvieron esperándonos afuera.

Aaron: Fuímos llevados en los buses blancos que estuvieron esperandonos.

Luis: Sentado en el bus, me puse a pensar "Adios Postville! Adios Estados Unidos!"

Todos: "Goodbye Postville! Goodbye America!"

Victor: Allí terminaron nuestros días en Postville.

Onofre: Allí terminó nuestro Sueño Americano.

Aarón: There ended our American Dream.

Luis: Afuera pudimos ver las camaras de los medios de prensa y la gente sacando fotos mientras la caravana de buses blancos y prisioneros salían de la planta de Agriprocessors.

Aarón: Por dos horas estuvimos encadenados en el bus, sin saber nuestro destinacion.

Oscar: Sin saber nuestro destino.

Juventino: Vimos América pasando por la ventana.

Javier: y estabamos asustados.

Aaron: Silenciosos.

Luis: Fué el primero de muchos viajes parecidos

Onofre: Saturado junto con otros inmigrantes en camionétas, buses y aviones.

Victor: Núnca seguros de dónde nos iban a llevar próximamente.

Juventino: Llegamos a Waterloo.

Luis: Hubían preparado un lugar para detenernos – The National Cattle Congress – un lugar hecho para vacas.

Javier: Como las vacas que matamos en Agri.

Oscar: Pero ahora eramos nosotros quienes iban a ser "procesados".

Aaron: But now we were the ones being "processed."

Juventino: Nos hicieron quitar nuestros pantalones, camisetas y batas y nos pusieron la ropa de la carcel.

Javier: Se llevaron toda nuestra ropa; todo lo que cargabamos.

Juventino: Yo estuve temblando del frío.

Javier: Yo estuve temblando del miedo.

Oscar: Nos sacaron de la sala uno o dos cada vez.

Aarón: Y nos llevaron a un estadio donde se juegan los deportes pero esta vez nos toco de perder y no de ganar.

Juventino: Nos preguntaron un montón de preguntas

Javier: Preguntas sobre todo....

Victor y Onofre: ¿Quién te saco el ID? ¿De dónde eres? ¿Cómo llegaste? ¿Quién te trajo?
¿Como supo que habían trabajos en Agri? ¿Tiene esposa?

Luis: Casi todos de los oficiales de ICE hablaban español, eran latinos.

Aarón: Por casi tres horas, nos sentamos allá

Oscar: en dolor y con mucha tristeza.

Juventino: Temblando de miedo

Luis: Y yo estuve temblando por el frío.

Aaron: Mientras nuestros interrogadores se sentaron con calma, tomando café caliente.

(PAUSA: Víctor y Onofre estan tomando café mientras Juventino y Javier estan temblando por el frio....Javier y Juventino se levantan y dar una vuelta para mirar al publico mientras Luis da

los chips y agua a Oscar y Aarón. Víctor y Onofre empiezan a construir los tres catres militares con los bloques.)

Javier: Por primera vez aquel día, recibimos algo para comer.

Juventino: - Comimos sabritas con agua y nos quedamos con hambre. *(Pausa: Oscar y Aarón trata a comer y beber pero no puedan porque las cadenas)*

Oscar: Pero no pude comer porque me sentía tan nervioso.

Aaron: Y no pude tomar porque mis manos habían sido amarradas.

(Aquí, muestran la imagen de las cadenas/ las esposas en sus muñecas y cómo no podían comer.) (Luis es el líder para Aarón y Oscar para ir a los catres militares. Aarón y Oscar van en los catres militares. Víctor y Onofre están como las guardias a las puertas)

Juventino: Nos dimos un tipo de catre militar para la noche.

Javier: Y no pude acostarme tranquilo, temblando con frío con una sola sabana, con la cadena presionando mi cadera.

Juventino: Pero no pude dormir porque vinieron muchos a sacar otras de la sala.

(Onofre entra la sala de nuevo, llama a "Aarón", cheque el bracelet en la muñeca de Oscar, dice a Aarón, 'levantase', Aarón siga a Onofre afuera de la sala. Javier siga a Luis al catre militar vacío. Javier está en el catre militar. Víctor llama a "Oscar", "levantanse" Oscar siga a Víctor afuera de la sala. Juventino siga a Onofre al catre militar vacío. Juventino está en el catre militar)

Aarón, Oscar: Así terminó aquel día tan horrible.

Todos: El 12 de mayo.

Juventino: Esto es solamente un pequeño resumen.

Victor: Part Seven: Imprisonment

Parte 7

Victor: Después de tres días y dos noches, recibimos nuestras sentencias – nos contaron que íbamos a tener que pasar los próximos cinco meses en la cárcel.

Luis: Inmigrantes, ilegales, indocumentados, son iguales.

Onofre: A los inmigrantes los llevaron en grupos pequeños a las cárceles cercanas – lo que solamente será la primera de una serie larga de cárceles.

Victor: Estuve detenido en Waterloo por tres meses, y durante aquel tiempo casi no pronuncié ni una palabra. No sé que estaba pensando – me sentí lleno de tristeza. Extrañé mucho a mi esposa y a mi familia. No tenía nada de dinero. No tenía nada. Me dieron sandwiches para las tres comidas, y no había califacción.

Onofre: Hizo muchísimo frío, y pasamos todos los días sentados en el piso. Allí uno no esperaba nada, solo la comida.

Victor: solo sandwiches por los tres tiempos de comida.

Luis: Teníamos mucha hambre. Aquella noche nos llevaron a Mason City. Recuerdo que los oficiales tuvieron mucha pizza y refrescos, les pedimos un pedacito de pizza y nos dijeron que no, que ya nos habían dado nuestra comida.

Javier: Me llevaron a un cuarto cerrado en la cárcel de Benton Country, donde no había ventanas y no pude ver nada afuera. Uno se vuelve loco sin ver el sol. Solo pude saber del paso del tiempo por ver el reloj de la televisión. Un compañero de celda hizo un calendario y marcaba una "X" por cada día que pasaba, y cada día un guardia entraba con más prisioneros.

Victor: Siempre nos mudaban de una cárcel a otra, sin saber a dónde o por cuánto tiempo.

Javier: - A Cedar un día

Juventino: - A West Union una semana

Victor: - A Mason City por tres semanas

Juventino: - De vuelta a West Union para 11 semanas

Victor: - A Kansas por tres días

Javier: - Y de nuevo a Cedar Rapids – hasta que empezaron las inundaciones. Cuando subió el nivel de agua y cuando falló la electricidad, nos metieron en una camioneta con cadenas en nuestros pies, como animales.

Aaron: - Como si fuéramos vacas

Onofre: En la cárcel de Cerro Gordo, nunca me visitó ningún abogado. Se olvidaron de mí, me preocupaba mucho que tal vez mis problemas fueran peor de lo que pensaba. Me llevaron a otra celda, donde estuve con los criminales serios. Ellos no me permitieron mirar la tele, y si salía un canal en español, me quitaban el control. No entendíamos nada.

Victor: Y durante todas de estas semanas, tuvimos muy poca comunicación con nuestros amigos y familia.

Luis: No tuve dinero para llamarlos.

Victor: Gran parte del tiempo no supieron dónde estuve, sólo que estuve en alguna prisión.

Todos: En Kansas otra vez.

Javier: Estuve en Kansas por tres meses.

Onofre, Javier: Me sentí un poquito más libre allá.

Javier: Nos permitieron salir a la yarda.

Onofre: Habían microondas y pudimos comprar sopa. Uno se acostumbra a comer mucho, pero en la cárcel es muy difícil. Si comía en frente de un amigo que también tenía hambre, entonces le daría un poquito de mi comida. A veces compartíamos una sopita entre seis o siete, con una sola cuchara, nada más.

Javier: Estaba contento de que así iba a ser mi tiempo en la cárcel. Pero entonces me dijeron que tenía que volar a algún lugar en un avión.

Javier, Victor: Pensé en Guatemala.

Javier: En el aeropuerto, ciento cincuenta de nosotros esperábamos encadenados. Todos pensábamos en que íbamos para Guatemala.

Victor: Estuve emocionado, pensando que por fin iba a regresar a mi país. Pero le pregunté a un oficial y me dijo

Oscar: 'No sé, algunos a otra cárcel!'

Victor: Sentí mucha tristeza – no era la noticia que yo esperaba.

Javier: Llegamos a Miami más o menos a las dos de la tarde

Victor: Nos entrevistaron, nos tomaron muestras de sangre, y nos dieron otro uniforme – muchas cosas. No terminamos hasta las once de la noche. Cuando por fin llegué a mi celda, el guardia me dio una cobilla y me dijo que me duermiera en una de las camillas de arriba. No habían colchones en las camillas de arriba – sólomente el bastidor de metal – entonces no dormí nada aquella noche.

Onofre: En Miami, los prisioneros latinos se juntaron para compartir la comida y la ropa. Los colombianos y los cubanos nos ayudaron mucho – muchos de ellos tuvieron problemas legales más serios. Nos dijeron que no deberíamos estar en la cárcel.

Aaron: *(como los prisioneros en Miami les dijeron)* "Ustedes son trabajadores, no se merecen estar aquí. No se preocupen, Dios les ayudará."

Victor: Estuve allá casi dos meses. Estuve contento que casi había terminado con mi sentencia en la cárcel, y que de pronto regresaría a Guatemala par aver a mi esposa.

Javier: Quince días antes de salir, vinieron desde la oficina para contarme que tenía que firmar un permiso de trabajo.

Victor: Les conté que no podía firmarlo porque no sabía de qué era, mi abogado me había contado que no firmara nada sin consultarlo primero.

Javier: Pero me dijeron que si no lo firmaba tendría que pasar más tiempo en la cárcel.

Victor, Javier: Sí, lo firmé.

Victor: Ya había salido para Guatemala un grupo de prisioneros. Me dieron tres camisetas y tres pantalones, y un oficial nos dijo que íbamos para Guatemala. Me sentí muy contento.

Javier: Me contaron que iba a salir el viernes y llegar en Guatemala el sábado. El viernes me levanté a las cinco de la mañana, esperando que por fin iba a Guatemala.

Luis: También me contaron que iba a ser deportado a Guatemala – no a México. El consulado dijo que primero iba a Guatemala con un grupo y después iba a regresar a México. Pero no sabía como iba a pasar eso porque no tenía dinero.

Onofre: Pero no regresamos a Guatemala.

Oscar: En vez de esto nos llevaron a un centro de inmigración en Virginia

Onofre: Después a Oklahoma, Kentucky y a Kansas.

Todos: Otra vez.

Oscar: A Des Moines, Dubuque, y a Cedar Rapids.

Todos: Otra vez.

Luis: Pero esta vez las cosas parecían diferente. No nos trataron como criminales.

Onofre: Vimos a los abogados y fuimos a la corte. Reemplazaron nuestras esposas con braceletes de GPS.

Victor: Nos dieron tarjetas de llamadas y nos contaron que íbamos para Decorah.

Luis: Los supervisores nos ofrecieron hamburguesas y refrescos de McDonalds. Nunca me imaginé que comería otra vez más en McDonald's, o que iba a estar libre de nuevo en Iowa.

Parte 8

Todos: Part 8: Our lives now...Waiting

Onofre: Sin embargo, no era los estados unidos que yo me imaginaba.

Juventino: Nuestro Sueño Americano se ha vuelto una pesadilla.

Oscar: Y la tierra de la libertad se ha hecho nuestra carcel

Aaron: Vinimos para pudiámos proveer a nuestras familias dar una vida mejor a nuestras familias.

Javier: Pero regresaremos con manos vacías.

Victor: No conocimos a nuevos aquí pero ellos se fueron, fueron deportados.

Todos: Yo no sé a dónde.

Luis: Y mientras tanto esperamos – sin saber por cuánto tiempo.

Todos: Todavía esperamos.

Oscar: No podemos continuar la vida aquí y no podemos regresar

Todos: Esta es la historia de nuestras vidas

Juventino: Sólo es un resumen

Onofre: This is the story of our lives

Todos: hasta ahora

Javier: Es la historia de Guatemala

Luis: y de México

Todos: and America

Oscar: Es la historia de miles de inmigrantes que cruzan las fronteras siguiendo un sueño

Victor: Es una historia que todavía se cuenta en las fábricas y los campos de los Estados Unidos.

Juventino: ¿Cómo va a terminar? No sabemos. Solo Dios sabe.

Luis: Pero tenemos esperanza de que nos escuchen.

Aaron: Gracias por escuchar

Todos: Gracias

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