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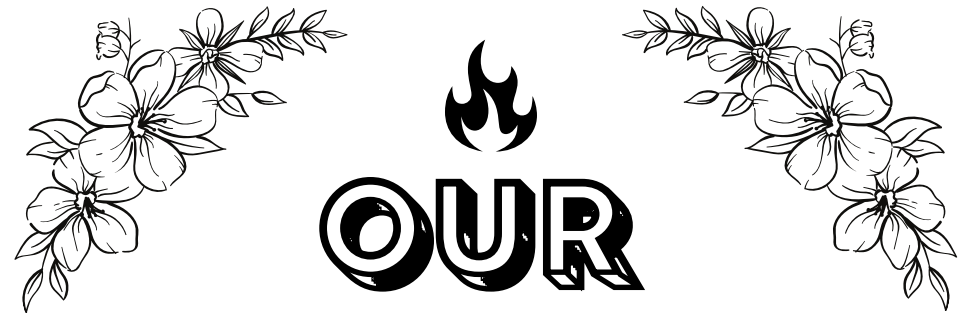
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**JUNE 2022**



# **STORIES OF RESISTANCE COMMUNITIES NOT CAGES**



# Project Description

This coloring zine was created by Detention Watch Network's (DWN) inaugural Artist in Residency, Miguel Lopez. Miguel's Artist in Residency Project spotlights ten individuals either currently or formerly detained in immigration detention facilities that represent most of the #FirstTen detention centers as a part of the Communities Not Cages campaign. #FirstTen facilities were a roadmap of where to immediately begin facility shutdowns when the Biden administration came into office.

These illustrations not only highlight these individuals as fighters, organizers, and leaders, but also highlights their more intimate selves, their pain, their favorite food, what brings them joy, their motivations, and all of those things that are often overlooked in our struggles. Each design illustrates the individual, their story, their personality, their identities, personal goals, current situation, ways in which they're resisting, and other elements they wanted to highlight.

In each image, the detention center is represented based on the individual's description of it, and in each piece the detention facility is being destroyed using tools that the individual uses as part of their respective job. Miguel did this to highlight how most (if not all) of people in detention are part of the working-class, and how that intersection can be used to unify the People and destroy the deportation machine and all the other systems of oppression.

# About the Artist

Detention Watch Network's (DWN) 2022 Artist in Residency is Miguel Lopez. Miguel is a talented artist and long standing community organizer. Miguel's preferred artistic medium is printmaking on linoleum. Miguel has a deep connection to the Detention Watch Network. As the membership organizer at Organized Communities Against Deportation (OCAD) in Chicago, a member of DWN, Miguel has attended, organized and led Network events, trainings and actions.

# Updates on the Facilities

The **Otero County Processing Center** in New Mexico, is operated by Management and Training Corporation and began functioning in 2008. This facility is known for their lack of medical attention and abuse of solitary confinement, it was one of the facilities with the biggest covid-19 outbreaks during the pandemic. Visit [facebook.com/DMSCEIPaso/](https://facebook.com/DMSCEIPaso/) to take action.

The **Karnes Family Residential Center** is also located in Texas and is operated by the GEO group. It started functioning in 2011 as an adult facility, and in 2014 it became a family detention facility, caging entire families with children. Despite the trauma inflicted onto these families and the documented accounts of negligence, this detention center continues to operate. Local communities continue to organize to shut Karnes down, go to [harianbridge.org](https://harianbridge.org) to take action.

Located in Woodstock, IL **McHenry County Jail** is operated by the local sheriff. Known for its bad health standards and mistreatment of individuals, this facility had to end its contract with ICE at the beginning of 2021 due to the IL Way Forward Act state law, led by community groups, which ended immigrant detention in all of IL. To support the struggles of people who were not released during the closures visit [organizedcommunities.org](https://organizedcommunities.org)

The **Farmville Detention Center**, managed by ICA, has been operating since 2010 with a capacity to detain 722 people. This facility was established due to increased immigrant detention under the Obama administration. Local efforts continue to close this place down and have been alerting of the unsafe conditions that take place there, especially the overcrowding which allows for viruses like Mumps and Covid-19 to spread rapidly throughout the facility. Visit [sanctuarydmv.org](https://sanctuarydmv.org) for more information.

# Process

This Artist in Residency project started in February 2020, however due to the pandemic, the initial plans changed and the project was inevitably delayed. Once the idea to make a coloring zine was solidified, we decided to focus on illustrating stories from the #FirstTen facilities, which were a roadmap of where to immediately begin facility shutdowns when the Biden administration came into office. To create the illustrations, these are the steps that took place:

- First, DWN staff connected Miguel with a local organization/collective organizing at each locality and leading the fight to shut down the detention center. Once the connection was made and folks were able to hear about the project and share their interest, those local organizations connected Miguel with a detained/ formerly detained individual interested in sharing their story and participating in the project.
- Usually over the phone, Miguel had a conversation with each person where he'd get to know them better. Through a series of questions each individual would share more about their struggle in detention, their motivations, their future goals and aspirations in life.
- After getting familiar with their story, Miguel created illustrations telling each story and calling for the shut down of each detention center where they were detained. The first draft of the design was then sent to the individual to see if there was anything they wanted to change. Once they approved the design, Miguel also shared it with the local collectives and DWN staff. Once finalized, all the illustrations and descriptions were put together to create this coloring zine.

Miguel deeply appreciates the courage of Angela, Elder, Heber, Jesus, Jorge, Jose, Lourdes, Lucero, Shemai, and Sonia. for sharing their story and their deep commitment to continue fighting for the freedom of the migrant community. Miguel would also like to thank the #CommunitiesNotCages campaign members who are leading local organizing efforts at each of these ten detention facilities that connected him with the directly impacted individuals featured in this project.



 **#SHUTDOWNETOWAH**  **#COMMUNITIESNOTCAGES**

# Updates on the Facilities

Operated by the local sheriff, **Etowah County Detention Center** is located in Gadsden, AL and has been nationally recognized for their constant human rights violations and also known for the longest average length of stay for people detained there. After more than 20 years of struggle to shut it down, in March of 2022 it was announced the huge victory that ICE was no longer going to use the facility. You can find more information here: [shutdownetowah.org](https://shutdownetowah.org)

Formerly a prison, **T. Don Hutto Detention Center** is located in Taylor, TX. It's operated by CoreCivic through a contract with ICE. Since 2006, when the facility started operating, it was used to detain entire families and since 2009 they switched to only adults. Hutto is notorious for the serious sexual assault and harassment by facility guards and the exploitation of people detained. Visit [grassrootsleadership.org](https://grassrootsleadership.org) to learn more information on the campaign to shut it down.

The **Adelanto Detention Facility** started operating in 2011 in Adelanto, CA and it's operated by the private company GEO. It's one of the biggest detention centers in the United States, with a capacity to detain 2,690 people. There has been a strong grassroots fight to expose all the human rights violations and to shut this facility down, you can find more information at [ic4ij.org](https://ic4ij.org)

The **Mesa Verde Detention Facility** in Kern County, CA has a long documented history of not complying with the basic detention standards, including sexual harassment, excessive use of force, and lack of access to medical and legal resources. It's also operated by the GEO Group and it has a capacity to detain 1,800 people including the Golden State and Central Valley facilities, which were an expansion of Mesa Verde in 2020. Visit [cyija.org](https://cyija.org) to learn more about the ongoing organizing efforts.

Located in rural Georgia, **Irwin Detention Center** is a facility privately operated by LaSalle Corrections that can detain up to 1,201 people. This facility gained national attention in 2020 when documentation came out describing multiple levels of abuse including a pattern of unnecessary and invasive gynecological procedures performed on women held at the facility without informed consent. In May 2021, DHS announced that ICE was ending their contract at the Irwin facility, meaning a huge victory for struggle to shut it down. Go to [gadetentionwatch.wordpress.com](https://gadetentionwatch.wordpress.com) to learn more.

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank Angela, Elder, Heber, Jesus, Jorge, Jose, Lourdes, Lucero, Shemoi, and Sonia for sharing their story, their traumas, their dreams and their commitment to the struggle. Without them, this project could not have existed.

Much gratitude also goes to all the grassroots organizers and attorneys who connected me to these individuals and supported me until I was able to speak with them.

And also many thanks to all the Detention Watch Network staff, especially Carly Pérez Fernández for all the support, flexibility, and encouragement in this Artist Residency that took many forms throughout the pandemic and it finally came to fruition.

**Shemoi** is a caring sibling of a big family who he loves and gets strength from. He cares deeply about freedom struggles and his biggest passion is defending human rights anywhere and everywhere he is. Shemoi is originally from Jamaica, the wilderness brings him peace of mind and he identifies with lions. He was detained about four years and while in ICE custody, he spent some time in Etowah Detention Center, where he not only experienced horrible institutional abuses, but he also organized and fought back. Shemoi is currently an active board member of the Etowah Freedom Fund which focuses on providing funds for people to pay their bonds. He is also a carpenter, and in his free time he enjoys playing basketball and reading about science and astronomy. For him, happiness comes from family and freedom to him is having the ability to do what you enjoy doing and being able to support and defend those that need justice. Shemoi's favorite color is red, and he finds motivation to continue organizing by looking at his own experience under ICE custody and reminding himself that no human being should experience what he went through.





**Elder** is a joyful person who loves music and spending time with friends. He recently spent 16 months in Farmville Detention Center, where he endured medical negligence, retaliation for helping others, and psychological abuse. Even though detention scared his whole self, he overcame those challenges with the strength that his daughters and wife give him. The dogs in the image are his pets and they represent the loyal love among his family. During his free time Elder enjoys writing Christian songs which he hopes will be played by a band soon, he loves to sing and is planning to learn how to play the guitar and the drums. He currently works painting and remodeling houses and buildings. Elder enjoys eating coconuts and mangos, he loves trees and he will continue to help his family and community by being a man of faith and using his creativity.





**Sonia** is a fighter, a strong mother who has endured many challenges in her life, but continues to have faith that everything will be ok. She came from Honduras a few years ago after fleeing to protect the life of her children and make sure no one else would be taken away from her by the violence in her homeland. In the illustration, the shadow behind her represents all the anxiety, fear, and pain that follows her after her son was murdered and her experiences at the detention centers here in the U.S; that shadow follows her everywhere she goes. When she has free time, Sonia likes to spend time in her kitchen cooking. She loves to cook different recipes, but soups and stews are her favorite. Her specialty is beef soup with vegetables. She also loves dogs, cats and fruits like mango, mamones and rambutan. Despite all the trauma she has faced, her motivation to move forward comes from her children, her mother and father. The big bright star at the top represents her mother who is constantly guiding her. The pairs of wings represent her four children and one granddaughter who she loves very much. Sonia is currently an essential worker that does cleaning and she is also an active advocate to shut down the Hutto detention center. For her, freedom means being able to walk without fear, and she will continue to move towards healing herself and her community from the constant violence they have to endure.





**Angela** is a friendly, caring person who worries a lot about people's feelings and what they're going through. She was born in Colombia and is the mother of three kids who constantly give her strength. They are represented in the image as butterflies because they are fragile and strong at the same time, they are free, and they came out of her. Angela spent 40 weeks at McHenry County Jail under ICE custody and was released in January of this year due to local community efforts that phased out immigrant detention in Illinois. She identifies herself with the roble tree and how they change with the seasons, sometimes she's sad and in dormant mode, and other times she is fully alive and able to bring shade to others. The sun brings her lots of joy and feeling the fresh breeze of air every day makes her feel free and alive. Angela works as a sales person for a meatpacking company, and when she's able to, she loves to ride her bike. Despite the pain of living through detention, Angela is committed to continue organizing for the release of everyone and she hopes her story could be a light at the end of the tunnel for those who are still detained.





**Jose** is a calm and serious man. He carries a lot of pain and resentment because of all the injustices he has had to endure. Jose was born by the sea in the Port of Guaymas, Sonora, which is also a very dry land with lots of cacti. He eventually migrated to the U.S. and was detained by ICE at Adelanto Detention Center for almost three years. This facility is run by the private for-profit company, GEO, which is notorious for their inhumane treatment of the people they detain. During that long period of time, Jose suffered from different types of abuses including medical negligence, sexual abuse, and retaliation for organizing inside the detention center. Despite all the trauma that he carries, Jose is very active in his community fighting to shut down the Adelanto Detention Center, he finds motivation in his family and his pet Dalaila, who is very playful and smart. Jose is a car mechanic and likes to focus on the electrical part of the work. When he's able to, he likes to take walks in nature and spend time with his family. For Jose, freedom is the most precious feeling there could be, and it means that his wings will not be cut by injustices, and that he will be able to move around in this world without borders.





**Lucero** is a young, peaceful mother who came to the US a few years ago seeking safety. She was detained at Karnes Detention Center along with her mother, sister and niece. During that period, she witnessed the horrible conditions that families were subject to while detained, especially medical neglect. Her mother was never given medication for her diabetes. Despite the different layers of trauma, Lucero continues to fight for her freedom along with her community and her 8-month-old baby is what keeps her going. Lucero enjoys going to the park with her mom and having good conversations. She loves roses, red guacamayas, and her favorite color is pink. She is currently working as a cook in a restaurant and likes to eat broccoli and mangos. For Lucero, freedom means not having fear of being detained - in Mexico by the drug violence, and here by ICE. And even though she does not feel fully free, she will continue to do her part in creating a world where human beings have a right to be free, to live without fear, and to care for their loved ones





**Heber** is a lively, enthusiastic man who enjoys hiking mountains at national parks. He was born and raised in the city of La Ceiba, Honduras. There, he was surrounded by a tropical landscape where he learned to appreciate tropical animals and plants native to that area. He identifies with the lynx the most because of how humble yet fierce they are, and he also loves mahogany trees and orchids. The last several years have not been easy for Heber. In summer of 2018, he was transferred to ICE where he was detained for more than three years. In detention, like so many other people, ICE has treated him horribly and put him through unimaginable mental and physical pain. They kept him in solitary confinement for thirteen months and one week, in a 6x8 ft cell, resulting in major depressive disorder and other mental health problems. He has also constantly been transferred to different facilities including Mesa Verde, which is notorious for their maltreatment and abuses to the people they detain. Although his struggle has been difficult, Heber has not given up and he never will. What keeps him going is the love he has for his children and being close to God. The four turtles swimming around him, represent his four lovely children. Another thing that Heber has always loved doing is playing soccer, it makes him feel free and it allows him to release his frustrations with all of the adrenaline and passion he puts in when he plays. In Seattle, he played for a professional team in the 2nd division of the city. At this time of his life, Heber is aware of the transformation he is going through - as a younger self, he described himself as an arrogant, selfish person, and as time has passed and he has lived through different experiences, now he is a contrast of that younger self. Heber is now a calm, humble, and a sober man, he went from "sour to sweet" as he names it, and it's what the butterfly stages represent in the illustration. Heber is also a professional floor, tile, and stone setter and installer. For Heber, freedom has no price, freedom is love, comprehension, is the future, it's not just a word. Freedom is being able to look all the way from the earth to the stars, it's to live and be present every single moment; and he will continue to fight until that freedom becomes a reality in his life.





**Jorge** is a father, a son and a husband who loves his family. Jorge lives in Alabama and was formerly detained by ICE. During that time, he was detained in different facilities and one of them was the Etowah Detention Center. Jorge is someone who doesn't speak much, but says what he needs to say. He doesn't like to judge, and considers himself a simple person who cares a lot about family. Jorge enjoys reading, especially psychology, novels, and history books. His biggest motivation to continue fighting are his mother and his wife. His roots are in Honduras and he identifies himself with the Jaguar given that it was a sacred being for his Mayan ancestors. Jorge likes to eat mangos, his favorite color is blue, and he is a painter. When he has free time, he likes to box, walk his dogs, go paintballing, and sometimes play video games. Freedom for Jorge means to be able to think and say what you believe and feel, to be able to travel where you please, to be able to speak up for those who have been silenced, and to not be harassed by police. Jorge is and will continue to demand the shutting down of Etowah Detention Center because it's a rotten place that only creates suffering for those locked up inside.





**Lourdes** is a strong, helpful, resilient woman from Bolivia. She was previously detained at Irwin Detention Center in Georgia where she spent almost a year enduring and witnessing many forms of abuse and human rights violations. She describes the place as a "human slaughterhouse." Despite those traumatic experiences, Lourdes is someone who has not given up and finds her strength in her goal of creating a better tomorrow for her daughter and mother; both of them are represented by the scorpions in the image. Lourdes comes from a place of mountains and identifies herself with water, which is represented in the water drops on her sweater and the eternity symbol formed by the scorpions weaving that eternal love for each other and their native land. Freedom for her is being able to have the support needed to accomplish her dreams, being able to see the dawn and the sunset, and being able to feel joy. Lourdes loves owls, birds, magnolia and lily flowers, and her favorite colors are white and pink. Her dream is to continue studying and become a nurse and a painter. During her free time she enjoys painting on canvas and expressing her feelings through art. She also enjoyed riding her bike and playing basketball, but given the medication she was given in detention without her consent, she is no longer able to move her back and legs as she used to. To this day, Lourdes still has very bad nightmares and hears the screams of the women detained screaming for help. She will continue to fight her case and do what's possible to help her friends who were also detained and impacted by the abusive practices of the medical staff at Irwin.





**Jesus** is a caring individual who grew up in the state of Guerrero, Mexico. From an early age, he knew he didn't like injustices, and since then Jesus fought and organized in his home town to combat all the corruption happening. He describes the feeling of witnessing injustices as a volcano exploding inside of him. However, that same search for justice made a target for organized crime, and so Jesus came to the US seeking political asylum. Jesus likes nature a lot because it reminds him of the place he grew up in, a lot of mountains close to the ocean and tropical weather. He identifies with horses because they're strong, noble, and practical animals who can carry a lot of weight on their backs, which resembles his own emotional load that he has been carrying. What makes Jesus smile is having and witnessing social justice victories, it gives him hope, and he pictures beautiful and peaceful things when that happens. His passion has always been technology, he currently works repairing computers and electronics and in his free time he likes to put apart random electronics, study their structure and how they're made up, and put them back together just like they were. For Jesus, freedom means mutual respect, being able to live without harassment from authorities. It means being able to say and scream what I believe without censorship. After a year of being under ICE custody, Jesus was deported. While detained, One of the detention centers he was held at was Otero in New Mexico, and while detained, Jesus was silenced, tortured, and retaliated against due to his activism. He continues to organize from afar and demand the shutting down of the Otero Detention Center. Jesus does not give up and he will continue to fight injustices anywhere life takes him.