

## Interview History

INTERVIEWER: Amanda Díaz – undergraduate student at the University of Puget Sound's History department for her Summer Research project.

### TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Time: Wednesday, August 2nd 4PM

Place: Bellingham, WA

Total number of recorder hours: 50:36 minutes

Persons present during interview: Amanda Díaz and Silky Shah

### CONDUCT AND PROCESSING OF INTERVIEW:

This interview is part of the Summer Research Richard Bangs Collier Scholarship at the University of Puget Sound for the project titled, *The American Creed: Immigration and Detention in Tacoma*. The interview was conducted in English.

Amanda Díaz prepared for this interview by taking the HIS 387: History of US Immigration course taught by Prof. Andrew Gomez in the History department. Amanda has also presented at President Crawford's Inauguration Symposium about the private-immigration detention center in Tacoma, the Northwest Detention Center. She also founded the club called Advocates for Detained Voices, a club that works with a local nonprofit to provide legal and counselling services for families affected by the NWDC.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Records relating to the interview are located in the Archives at Collins Memorial Library at the University of Puget Sound.

## **Table of Contents- SILKY SHAH**

Wednesday, August 2nd 4pm in Bellingham, WA

(0:24)- Biographical Information

(1:30)- 1965 Immigration Law under Johnson and her family's immigration history from India to the United States

(2:55)- Interest in activism and social justice through two pivotal moments in her life, 1- her mother's experience being an immigrant and 2- her best friend in high school was undocumented

(6:06)- Silky's activism in college Univ. Texas, Austin and the impact of 9/11 that happened her junior year of high school.

(7:31)- Silky discussing the national coalition on Detention Watch Network that is "fighting to end the immigration detention system." The coalition was formed right after the 1996 immigration laws were passed. Silky also discusses the impact of 9/11 and how the coalition shifted/changed.

(11:40)- Collaboration between Detention Watch Network and the Northwest Detention Center Resistance started after the 2014 Hunger Strikes at the NWDC. Silky talks about the resources that Detention Watch Network provides to grassroots organizations

(14:18)- Most common ways people are detained is through the connection between the criminal justice system and immigration justice system, for example the Criminal Alien Program or Secure Communities.

(15:53)- Silky discusses how her identity impacts her work both how it helps as she is the children of immigrants and how it hinders because she herself is not an immigrant. Additionally, she shares how her identity as a woman has impacted her work and how a lot of women are involved in immigrant justice work.

(21:23)- The militarization of immigration and border enforcement as well as how the way the United States approach immigration as a problem as opposed to really thinking about the contribution immigrants have or actually being honest about the way this country runs

(23:19)- Silky Shah states that the privatization of immigration detention is not new, she discusses the history of privatised detention and how it relates to today's NWDC.

(28:00)- NWDC as part of a broader trend in private detention system. Silky talks about the similarities and differences between the NWDC and other private detention centers. Silky talks about the tension about shutting the NWDC down, will people end up in other rural parts of the country"

(32:36)- Silky talks about the various perspectives and people that she helps through the Detention Watch Network (DWN) and the importance of DWN not only being an immigrant justice organization but also a racial justice organization

(36:11)- Some of the strategies that Detention Watch Network uses in order to combat erasure of certain groups in her work.

(38:58)- Silky shares stories about family separation and describes some cases that she has worked on that have been separated by immigration.

(42:22)- Things would have to look very different for comprehensive immigration reform to happen. There needs to be a paradigm shift and abolish DHS, and change the way we view immigration.

(44:40)- Response to someone who believes that immigrants are a threat to the United States talk about human dignity and values rather than just the contributions that immigrants bring to this country- it's a moral question.

(47:50)- Silky closes the interview by outlining some of the things we can do as college students, professors, people with privilege, citizens to right for immigration justice.