

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: Monday, July 18th at 4:30PM

Place: Family Support Center in Tacoma, WA

Total number of recorder hours: 51:03 minutes

Persons present during interview: Amanda Díaz and Wendy Pantoja

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- WENDY PANTOJA
Monday July 17th at 4:30PM in Tacoma, WA

(1:37)- Background of her family history, her grandfather was the leader of Partido Socialista en Yucatán, Mexico who fought for farmworkers right.

(4:20)- Wendy talking about how the true leaders of the NWDC Resistance should be people who are directly affected by immigration, immigration detention, and fears of being undocumented.

(5:30) - What are the most common ways people get detained at the NWDC?

(6:36)- Wendy talking about how her identities help her work because she is able to relate to the racisms and discriminations that they all face. She discusses some of the privileges that she holds like not being undocumented, not being black which are identities that are the most marginalized.

(8:53) - As she speaks about children yearning to be with their families, or children who are in foster care as a result of their families being detained in the NWDC, tears run down her face and her 8 year old daughter maya wipes them off for her.

(10:15)- Wendy discussing the challenges that many people detained experience like not knowing how to organize important documents, financial difficulties, lack of legal help and how the NWDC Resistance address these challenges.

(13:55) - Then Wendy shares the process from start to finish of how one would visit their family members.

(16:16) - Wendy lists three different occasions where the rights and humanity were violated by officers. Some of the conditions inside of the detention center like only one hour allowed outside, high levels of depression, attempts of suicide and violent fights.

(19:30) - The role of the privatization of the NWDC like the fact that there are little regulations, there are a lot of restrictions on public information, corruption in the commissary, the NWDC is registered as a “real estate” property.

(23:16) - Wendy discusses how immigrants aren't given the right to an attorney so many defend themselves and as a result of that, they get very little time in the legal library and usually they are not in their native tongue.

(25:13) - The impact by the Northwest Detention Center on the Latinx community in Tacoma and the fear that dominates their lives by being undocumented like not accessing medical resources, not going to parent-teacher conferences, and not sending their children to school, not reporting domestic violence because of that fear.

(28:10) - The role of the legal community and activist, the number one way is educating people about their rights, being able to sympathize with their experiences and empower them.

(30:36) - Message to people who with privileges like being citizens of this country and what they should do like work with organization that prevent this kind of violence

(35:38) - Children who are affected by their parents who are detained and as a result they are placed in foster care. Additionally, Wendy discusses some of the hurdles that LGBT community faces because of the discrimination against them.

(38:20) - Wendy discusses the intersectionality and other communities that the NWDC supports like Asians, Blacks, Russians who are the second largest population but they especially support the Latinx community in Tacoma. Wendy discusses the difficulties that many Black immigrants face because of the racism and others

(41:30) - Length of detention can be anywhere from 6 months to a year and the reason why it is so long is because there are 1500 detainees and only 3 lawyers. Because there is a high influx of people detained and rapid deportations, they are placing people in county jails.

(44:40) - Wendy discusses the result of the poor quality of food since the guards don't have food handlers cards or are trained to handle food. The quality of the water hasn't been tested and could be contaminated because the pipes are on the Tide Flats.