

The following is a full transcript of Episode 11 of the 2020 season of the Praxis Radio podcast. You can download it as a pdf [here](#) and listen/subscribe [here](#).

## **Praxis Radio 2020 Podcast**

### **Episode 11: Sanctuary & Solidarity, Denver, CO**

*<orchestral music intro, "Praxis Theme" by Jason Cross continues to play under narration>*

**Taylor, the host of the show:** "Welcome listeners to a new installment of the 2020 season of Praxis. This is the penultimate episode of this series. If you're just listening for the first time now, you can find all of the earlier episodes on the website at [praxisradio.com](#) or by subscribing anywhere you listen to podcasts. This season is a revisit of a radio show road trip that I took in the summer of 2015. It felt like a big moment to me, and to many others I met in social movements around the country. While the Trump years finally wind to a close, I think it's extra important to revisit this moment and remember that while Trump and Trumpism are certainly vile and have unearthed a more overt version of our national dysfunctions and evils, that our problems of racism, of inequity borne out of capitalism, and in this week's episode—of the injustices visited upon immigrants—come from a time before Trump and were born within a two-party consensus of the ruling class.

This week, we're back in Denver, where in a lucky stroke of timing, I was able to connect with the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and meet Arturo, who was celebrating his final day of nine months living in sanctuary in the basement of the First Unitarian Church to avoid deportation.

*<music fades out>*

In trying to reach him again, I learned that after ICE under the Obama administration told him he was not a priority, he was later, under Trump, surveilled by ICE and arrested at work, taken into custody and threatened with deportation. The community rallied again to protect him from this, including with a private bill, one of the last honored by ICE. In 2018, he was released to attend his daughter's graduation and was able to stay longer due to the private bill. He was then told to leave the U.S. and that is his last known status. I want to share our full conversation from 2015, because his case is far from unique. Tens of thousands of people face similar situations all over the country while countless more in need of asylum or opportunity struggle to enter and remain in the US. As we enter the Biden era, I implore everyone to remember that there were separated families under Obama, and that we will need to remain vigilant to protect our undocumented neighbors and welcome new immigrants.

All of that is a long way of saying, I was not able to revisit my conversation with Arturo directly, but I was able to reach Jennifer Piper, who works with the American Friends

Service Committee and who interpreted in our 2015 conversation. She can wrap up my thoughts about Biden better than I ever could, along with many more updates about this work in Denver and beyond, so here is our conversation from December 9, 2020.”

*<interview fades in>*

**Taylor Roseweeds (TRW):** “Do you maybe just because we don't have it, want to introduce yourself a little bit about who you are and what your role is.?”

**Jennifer Piper (JP):** “Sure. My name is Jennifer Piper, and I work here in Denver, Colorado, with the American Friends Service Committee, which is a Quaker based peace and justice organization. And in Denver, we work specifically on supporting the rights of immigrants.

**TRW:** And you've been doing that work for some time, when did you start doing that work?

**JP:** So I actually started doing immigrant rights work in Denver in 2003, as a volunteer, and then came on to staff with the American Friends Service Committee in 2008. In one way or another, I've been involved for about 17 years now.

**TRW:** And I guess, can you speak just briefly, like, to what's changed during that time? I think people know, on some level, especially people who either are undocumented, or have people in their lives who are, but just kind of that sweep from through the Obama years and then into Trump, and now?

**JP:** When I first got involved with the immigrant rights movement, it was a really exciting time, it was the year of one of the big pushes for an overhaul of our immigration system. And that was under President Bush after September 11. And so even at that time, in the early 2000s, there was a real movement and push for change in our immigration policies. There was more and more focus on punishing and excluding immigrants throughout the 90s and so in the early 2000s, it became more and more urgent with more and more of a security focus at the national level to have clear and transparent path to status and path to enter the country. And there was a lot of hope, a lot of movement. And immigrants were at the forefront of designing the the immigration overhaul policies that were coming down the pike. And unfortunately, those packages didn't pass. And so the rest of my time organizing allies in support of immigrants and working with immigrant communities, we just saw a deepening of the crisis that existed when I first got involved with immigrant rights.

So throughout President Bush's administration we saw more and more policies and programs that partnered local law enforcement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), we saw an extensive investment...in a border wall and the militarization of border communities. We saw a real expansion of the construction and contracting with for-profit corporations to detain people. And we saw the way that the for-profit money then became a part of campaign finance and policy development in

future efforts to try and reform our system. So by the time President Obama took office, there's a well established, well-oiled deportation machine already in motion, but that the vast majority of people knew nothing about. Including people even at the highest levels of government— there's often a reluctance to look at the way in which that really is a machine.

And so President Obama took office with a lot of promises to work on immigration reform. And instead, that machine just continued to ramp up across the country. And the militarization of our border continued to be sort of a bipartisan punching bag slash talking point. And after the first term of President Obama, the immigrant rights movement really began to hold him accountable and to make visible the ways in which the deportation machine was ripping apart our communities. A lot of people came out as undocumented and unafraid during that period, both youth, but also immigrants who had been here much longer, were much older, insisting on the right to driver's licenses to be able to be safe and contribute in their communities, to have business licenses, and also started holding accountable local law enforcement and local politicians for their roles and their complicity in the deportation machine. And so by the end of his second term, you have programs like DACA, you have a commitment to really encourage the agency to utilize their discretion when making decisions about whether to detain or deport people, and you have...you start to see a real questioning of ICE's integrity and credibility as an agency.

So then President Trump is elected, and they, his administration weaponized immigration policies. So basically, Stephen Miller and other advocates for immigration restriction, who also have a lot of ties to white supremacist organizations, went through the immigration code. They had been going through it actually for several decades and finding all the ways to do the most harm with the restrictive, exclusive, and punitive laws that Congresses— both Democrat and Republican— had passed for three decades and started using those laws to the fullest extent they could possible and transferring funds from agencies like FEMA, agencies designed to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, into ICE and Border Patrol to continue to carry out the President's agenda when Congress wouldn't give him the money to do that, on rare occasions where Congress wouldn't give him the money he had asked for to do that.

So while we didn't see a huge spike in deportations, mostly because the courts were being overwhelmed and couldn't possibly hear all of the cases that were being sent their way, in such a short timeframe, what we do see is a real... a rhetoric that is very exclusive and is designed to create fear and to push people back into the shadows. I think it's a real credit to the courage of leaders like Jeanette Vizguerra, like Ingrid, like Rosa, Sandra, all of the folks who have been in sanctuary and other leaders throughout the country who refuse to be pushed back into the shadows and continued to organize. That now we're in place where I think the immigrant community across Colorado anyway, it's really ready to push for the dignity and the equality that they deserve after dedicating decades of their life to this country.

**TRW:** Mmhmm

**JP:** And I don't think that those communities are looking for crumbs from the table of President Elect Biden or democratic majorities in the House and potentially a tied situation in the Senate. I think that people, after so much pain and after being targeted and used as a scapegoat over the last four years, are very much ready to insist that they have already done enough for this country and for their communities. And they have been— they have sacrificed enough. And now is the time for our country to adjust their status, and to overhaul our immigration system so that we don't go through this again in 10 or 20 years. And so that it is... we have a clear, transparent, equitable immigration system where people know what to expect and are able to access a pathway here, and then a path to status.

And I think the community overall is much more aware of all of the different ways in which our laws are designed to exclude and to punish than they were maybe four years ago. I think that folks have become very deep experts, even folks who are not that involved with the organization have had to become experts on these policies because their futures have been hung in the balance so often. Whether you're someone who's received DACA, or you have temporary protected status, or you have... or you're a permanent resident, an asylum seeker— this administration under Trump targeted all of those folks and looked for every possible way to strip people of status or prevent them from entering the US in the first place, even with legal and founded claims of asylum. So people had to become experts on these different policies and areas of law because they were being debated and appealed through the courts all four years. And on any given day, you could have status and then not have status based on an injunction or something a judge said or new policies the Trump administration came out with. The ground was constantly moving under people's feet.

**TRW:** Yeah. Wow, thank you. That's such a good summary of so much that has happened. And I think you know, you're right, that that capacity that people had to build is not going to go away, right? I think that's a good good way to think of it. I guess the only other thing I would love to hear for sure is how... how do you recommend folks plug in to this movement for immigrant rights, whether they're directly impacted or whether they're wanting to, like, express solidarity with people who are at this point?

**JP:** Yeah, there's so much. I think that if people are wanting to get involved, if you're directly impacted, I would look for organizations that have immigrants on their board, or their leadership team, that are making the decisions about the campaign that that organization is leading. And then I think if you're not an immigrant, or maybe you're a naturalized citizen now, or if you were born in the US, I really recommend looking for organizations that are trying to educate your— and engage— your own community. So the organization that I work for, has a group called Coloradans for Immigrant Rights, and that was my entryway as an ally into this movement, and really thinking about how to talk with my own community about these policies.

So, rather than trying to come in and save the immigrant community, more coming into it with a lens of 'what does my community need to know?', what can I learn from my

friendships and relationships with immigrants and being a part of those organizations that I can take back to my community and, and ask, share stories and help people, other people, get engaged, and other people get interested about how we transform the system. And I think that worked for me, has been really transforming and continues to be challenging. Even after all these years, I learned more about myself and more about my community every time I step out, so... I think it's really critical that folks who have a citizenship privilege, use it in a way that that gets the back of immigrant leaders who've been doing this work for so, so long. And there's so many different good organizations. And my recommendation is just to, you know, see if you can get into a membership meeting, or maybe go to some trainings— that I know it's COVID times, there's a lot of online trainings, and just start asking questions, start figuring out what role you'd like to have and organizations will find a way to put you to work, I promise.

*<laughter>*

**TRW:** It's actually easier in some ways to get to trainings, you don't have to fly anywhere for a conference, you, you know.

**JP:** It is. And I think the other thing that excites me about this moment in time is that because things were so difficult over the last four years, I feel like the immigrant rights movement has had the opportunity to have a lot more conversations about— about other movements, and how they intersect with immigrant rights. And I feel like at this moment in time, there's not only new people wanting to get involved, but many new coalitions that have formed over the last four years, between Black Lives Matter and immigrant rights organizations, between economic justice organizations and immigrant rights. I feel like people who have been in the streets over the last four years formed a really deep bond and shared analysis. And I hope that we can take that forward into this new administration, and demand justice for everyone.

**TRW:** Absolutely. Yeah. I hope so too.

*<laughter>*

**TRW:** Well, yeah, I want to respect your time. Is there anything else you think I should think about? Or no, as I go into, like, editing and doing this whole chunk?

**JP:** No, I just, I guess I just want to say that I really appreciate your thoughtfulness about talking about immigration in the context of, even if we just look at from like, '86 to now, you know? Because I do, I think like one of my biggest fears is that people will be like, problem solved, because Trump is not president.

**TRW:** God...yeah.

**JP:** And kind of like, go back to sleep— in my community, on the citizen side, I'm not worried about that in the immigrant community, but in my community, in particular the white citizen community. You know, that's one of my biggest worries is that people will

feel like, 'oh, now everything will be fine in immigrant rights'. And I guess the one other thing I would say is we're looking for President Elect Biden to issue a lot of policies, a lot of rule changes, on day one, but he has to follow the process around those changes. And so a lot of these changes will take six months, nine months, a year to actually make.

A lot of what President Trump did, he would issue a policy that was not legal, they hadn't followed the procedures or done the public comment, and then would get challenged in court. And they'd go back and do the public comment and modify the policy, and then go back to court. You know, it, there was a lot done that wasn't done following the procedures under which you should change things. But Biden will have to follow those procedures unless he also wants to get sued by the other side. And also, because those are the rules we've agreed upon as a country to change a rule. And so he can't, some of them, he actually cannot change on day one, but he can start the ball rolling on day one. And I think that's what we will be looking for is that the ball starts rolling on day one. And that it's not just returning all these policies to a pre-Trump reset, but looking for ways to better the policies and the rules that we had before Trump.

And then the other piece is really on Congress. They have punted this issue for so long now, almost as long as I've been alive. *<laughs>*

**TRW:** Yeah.

**JP:** You know, honestly, you know, it's like, eight years, or like 10 years, short of how long I've been alive, that they've been kind of tossing this football around. So I think, yeah, we need to keep an eye on the administration and make sure they do their part. But then the people who really need to do something, and who have a lion's share of the blame for the system we have now is Congress. And so, I think the other call to action is for people to really engage their congressional [representatives] in the urgency of needing to overhaul the system. That is not something that should wait, five or ten more years, you know. And so, I hope that when people are looking at mass action and calls to action over the next couple of years, when there are so many things that need to happen that Congress needs to tackle, that they keep this one, you know, in their top ten or top five.

**TRW:** For sure. Thank you. That's so helpful to have all of that in one place.

**JP:** Yeah, that's super awesome. Thank you so much.

**TRW:** For sure, thank you.

**JP:** And will you send me like a link to the... ?

*<music fades in>*

**TRW:** For sure.

**JP:** Thank you so much.

**TRW:** Yep, bye.”

**JP:** Bye.”

*<sound of phone disconnecting>*

*<music continues under narration>*

**TRW:** “You’re going to hear Jennifer’s voice again, now, and before that, I want to give her a big shoutout because she helped me to connect with updates about Arturo’s case, as well as with others who are part of the sanctuary and immigrant rights movement in Denver, and to help me make decisions about how to share this story in a sensitive way. She is the voice you will hear interpreting in our conversation. Here is the conversation she helped facilitate between me and Arturo on July 20, 2015, his last day in sanctuary at First Unitarian in Denver.”

*<music fades out>*

*[Note on the following transcription: Spanish appears in bold face, English in regular. Spanish transcription may be slightly less accurate. Square brackets are used to provide translation that was not included in audio or was implied in conversation.]*

**Taylor (T):** “I suppose we should just start at the beginning of your story, wherever you think it starts, if you could just introduce yourself and say a little bit about how you ended up here in this basement.

**Arturo (A):** “Yeah, so I’ve been in troubles with immigration since 2010. This started my problems with immigration, I have five years fighting my case in immigration. **Quieres que hable en español? Yo te traducir, o?** [Do you want me to speak in Spanish? And you translate, or...]

**Jennifer (J):** “**Como quieres, como...** [However you want]

**A: Y tengo cinco años ya peleando mi caso, yo tuve un problema en mi trabajo y me acusaron de algo y la policía me arrestó.**

**J:** So I've been fighting my case for five years. And my case started with a problem at a job site where somebody falsely accused me and the police arrested me.

**A: Y en ese tiempo, no sé si todavía lo estén haciendo, La Policía trabajaba junto con ICE y yo salí de la cárcel de la policía, pero ICE mi arresto y me pasaron a un centro de detención.**

**J:** So when I posted bond in my criminal case, I was immediately picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and detained by them.

**A:** **Los cargos de la policía... yo fui a un juicio, me quitaron los cargos. Yo tengo un récord limpio. Tengo 16 años viviendo aquí en Colorado.**

**J:** So the charges against me, I took them all the way to jury trial, and I was found innocent, and I've been living here in Colorado for the last 16 years. I have a totally clean record.

**A:** **Tengo familia, tengo...ha cumplí 17 años de casado. Tengo dos hijas. Tengo una hija de 16 años que ella nació en México.**

**J:** I have a family. I've been married for 17 years. And I have two daughters. My oldest daughter is 16. And she was born in Mexico.

**A:** **Ella tenía como tres o cuatro meses cuando llegamos aquí a Colorado.**

**J:** But she was only three or four months old when we came to Colorado.

**A:** **Y tengo una hija de diez años que es ciudadana. Ella nació aquí en Colorado.**

**J:** And then I have a younger daughter who's 10 years old who was born here in Colorado.

**T:** **¿Y su esposa es de México?** [And your wife is from Mexico?]

**A:** **Sí, mi esposa es de México. Somos de Chihuahua, México y este... Sí, venimos aquí, pues a trabajar, a buscar un futuro en Colorado. Y de niño nunca pensé está en un problema como esto, no están en la cárcel, nunca lo había estado y fue en tiempos difíciles para mí.**

**J:** Yeah, my wife is also from Chihuahua, Mexico, when we came here, you know, just looking for work and for better opportunities. And I never imagined I would end up in this type of situation or with these problems. I'd never been in jail in my whole life before this happened.

**T:** It was in the facility...ICE has its own facility? Outside of the county jail? Their own detention center?

**J:** **¿Inmigración tiene su propia facilidad de detención, aparte del de las cárceles del condado?**

**A:** **Sí, tienen sus propios cárceles.**

**J:** Yeah, they have their own detention center here.



T: What are the conditions like and how long were you there?

**J: ¿Como fue las condiciones en detención y por cuanto tiempo estuviste allí? En lo de inmigración?**

**A: Inmigración... Estuve quince días y pues es duro, y más cuando uno nunca ha estado en la cárcel y que pues que nos traten como criminales cuando sólo venimos a trabajar. Es duro, no? Es difícil.**

J: So yeah, I was there for 15 days. And I was very difficult, especially having never been in any kind of jail before. And you know, the whole time you were in immigration detention, you were treated like a criminal, even though you just came to work.

T: And then— so how did, how did the church end up involved? When did the kind of sanctuary start? And what's the... what are the logistics of that whole situation?

**J: ¿Cómo empezó la coalición Santuario? ¿Cómo involucraron las iglesias? Y... Cómo contactaste con...**

**A: Esa pregunta se la contestaría mejor Jennifer. <laughs> Pero bueno, en mi caso, como le digo, yo tengo cinco años. Yo fui a cortes de inmigración. Duré como mi caso duró como tres años en cortes.**

J: So I think the history of sanctuary maybe Jennifer would better answer. But in my case, I... you know, I was fighting for five years, I went through court.

**A: E...Yo sentía que tenía un buen caso para poder quedarme con... con mi estatus aquí en Estados Unidos, porque el presidente Obama en el 2007... 2008 había puesto la ley de Morton.**

J: So I felt pretty confident that I was going to win my case, because President Obama had put in place this Martin memo back in 2011, actually.

A: Eleven?

J: Yeah.

**A: Este, este programa que Obama puso es que las personas que tuvieran familia o hijos, ciudadanos que tuvieran un buen record, no iban a ser deportados, no iban a separar más familias. Pero esto lo dejó a discreción de los jueces, o de las personas de migración, y ellos no están cumpliendo con eso, con esos requisitos del presidente.**

J: So the Morton memo instructed immigration to use their discretion in cases where people had long roots in the community and family and clean record and all of that. But

it left it up to the discretion of immigration officials. And obviously, they weren't very interested in giving discretion to people.

**A: Y sí— el juez, cuando cerró mi caso, la juez dijo que pues que yo era una buena persona, que todo estaba bien, pero que no calificaba para quedarme en Estados Unidos. Eso fue... fue su argumento, nada más.**

**J:** So the judge, when he decided against me in court, he said I was a great person, I had good moral character, but that I didn't meet the qualifications to be able to remain in the US.

**A: Después de eso, legalmente... me abogados seguimos. Metimos una apelación antes de llegar aquí a Santuario, se hicieron como cinco peticiones, que fue una apelación tratar de reabrir el caso e tratar de esperar mi petición que tengo por parte de mi suegro, que es ciudadano. Y tenemos una petición, mi esposa y yo, del 2005 y hay otras dos peticiones. Fueron como cinco y todas me las negaron en el transcurso de un año y medio.**

**J:** So after the judge decided against us, we continued to legally fight my case, we submitted an appeal we submitted, that was denied. We submitted an application to have my deportation delayed until there was a decision and my father in law's application for us because he's a citizen, and he applied for myself and my wife, and that was denied a motion to reopen and a couple of stays of removal and all of those petitions were denied.

**T: ¿Por qué? ¿Que fue [el] razon de la corte? [Why? What was the reason the courts gave?]**

**A: Ellos nunca han dado un argumento, es casi todas las peticiones, es solo 'no'.**

**J: ...la corte si tenian como un lo de Andrea, el sufrimiento, no? [The court did have a thing about suffering, like in Andrea's case, right?]**

**A: Oh, sí, pero eso fue bueno, sí, que el sufrimiento de mi familia no era suficiente también para quedarme aquí. Ese fue el otro argumento que dieron y el otro... no sé si ellos estaban tomando como la razón por la que yo estuve en la cárcel, que aunque no me no me hallaron culpable, ellos lo estaban tomando como si yo tuviera sus cargos o como si yo fuera culpable cuando no los tengo.**

**J:** So on the court side, the judge said that the hardship and suffering that my family would face if I was deported, didn't rise to the look didn't meet the bar of extreme hardship and suffering. And on the immigration side, you know, they never gave very lengthy reasons, but I feel that they held against me the fact that I had been arrested even though I was found innocent.

**A: Y el caso es que el 21 de octubre del 2014 yo ya tenía mi orden final para estar, era mi último día para poder estar aquí en Estados Unidos y no iba a ser arrestado nuevamente por inmigración.**

**J:** So all of that led to up to October 21 of 2014, which was my final day that I was allowed to be in the country. If I didn't leave, I was going to be detained by immigration most likely and deported. So I had a final order that was pending for that day.

**A: Y como...como tres semanas antes de esa fecha yo escuché un anuncio en el radio por medio de CIRC, que es un grupo...como es? [What does the acronym stand for?]**

**J: la coalición de derechos inmigrantes en colorado. [Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition]**

**A: Y este... yo nunca había tenido contacto con él, ni con AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) ni con CIRC (Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition), pero escuché ese mensaje en el radio y pues yo estaba pensando 'cómo?'. Cómo podría la forma de poder quedarme aquí con mi familia? Y escuché ese mensaje en radio y llamé y les expliqué mi situación y empezaron ellos a ayudarme.**

**J:** So about three weeks before that final date, I heard an ad on the radio from the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition giving a hotline number. And I had never been involved in immigrant rights. I didn't know CIRC I didn't know AFSC and, but I had been thinking a lot about how to remain in the US with my family. And I heard that radio ad and I called.

**A: Ya después de que les expliqué mi caso a ellos, ellos me pusieron en contacto con Jennifer, que ya estaban organizando Santuario. No sé cuánto tiempo llevaban ya organizando, porque otra persona iba a usar santuario, pero no lo necesitó. Ella pudo arreglar... e Jeanette se llama la señora que íbamos al santuario, pero ella pudo obtener una que...un stay remuevo, entonces serían ya no... no fue necesario venir a Santuario y bueno, pues usted dijo que estaba todo listo para mí.**

*<laughter>*

**J:** So um, I'm not sure exactly how long the Sanctuary coalition had been organizing before I got here. But I know that they started in response to another immigrant who had asked for sanctuary thinking they were going to need it. And that person never ended up needing it, she got a stay of removal. And so when I called everything was just like, there waiting for me.

**T:** And what is...what does that look like? What is the sanctuary coalition? I don't know, yeah, who to ask that to. But what, what does that really mean, in terms of, like, what infrastructure did you need and what was organized?

**J: ¿Como es la coalición Santuario de... de quién está compuesto y cómo es la logística para tener a una persona en Santuario?**

**A: Bueno, hagas lo que seas un poquito más difícil esta pregunta para mí. Yo le digo a Jen tiene esa respuesta.**

*<laughter>*

**A: Pero bueno, a el grupo de AFSC, *the American Friends Committee*, ellos es una organización sin fines de lucro y este pues ya empezaron ellos a apoyar lo que es grupos de inmigrantes y todo. Y entonces ya que empezaron a tener pláticas con la iglesia que era lo primero que se necesitaban al santuario, con los ministros, con la... con la congregación de las iglesias. Y me imagino que fue un trabajo largo el caminar por varias iglesias, saber quiénes están dispuestos a ofrecer la iglesia. Y bueno, no sólo la Iglesia, sino también pues dinero y muchas otras cosas.**

**J: So I think maybe Jen could answer a little better. But I was like, you answer.**  
*<laughs>* So he was just say, you know, AFSC is an organization that's a nonprofit that has been doing immigrant rights work and accompaniment for a number of years. And so, you know, the first part of the work was approaching different churches and um, exploring with them where they would be interested in doing sanctuary and being the host community. And that that was a long process that involved a lot of conversation, before this church decided to become a host congregation. And then, it's not just the space, it's also the money and the support for fighting the case that's involved, and then approaching other congregations after that.

**A: Y pues ahorita hay alrededor como de siete iglesias involucradas en santuario. Aparte de estas, son siete iglesias más pues que con el apoyo. Pues como dije ahorita, con dinero, con tiempo, con reuniones, con apoyo de la comunidad para hacer eventos, a protestas y todo.**

**J: So right now, there's seven other churches that are part of the immigrant... of the sanctuary coalition. And, you know, they help with money, with time, with organizing events, with spreading the word about my case, and about immigration and the system and what's happening.**

**T: So, you can't be deported then in sanctuary? Is that the...**

**J: So— por qué es una protección, santuario? ¿No puede ser deportado de aquí, de la Iglesia o qué?**

**A: Bueno, pues no hay...no hay ley que les prohíba inmigración entrar aquí. Ellos pueden hacerlo, pero no lo hacen por respeto a la congregación, a las iglesias y**

**en las escuelas con la que no entre y arrestan a la gente ahí y es por eso que es como una protección, pero no hay legalmente, no hay nada que se los prohíba.**

T: Ok

J: So there's no law that says immigration can't enter a church, but churches and schools, they have a policy that they don't enter them out of respect for the church, and also out of respect for them, kind of the safety of schools. And so there's no law that keeps them from coming in and deporting me. But there is the sort of this policy position that is a protection.

T: **¿Y ahora? Celebración...mañana...por que?** [And now? Celebration tomorrow... why?]

A: **Bueno, pues después de mucho esfuerzo y mucho trabajo de de toda la comunidad y de las iglesias y este el día... la semana del 10 y que fue del 16? Del 16 de Julio al 19 es de...um...**

J: **Junio**

A: **de Julio?**

<laughter>

J: **Junio, de June**

A: June?

J: Mmhmm

A: Oh, ok

<laughter>

A: ...el mes pasado. sí, sí, el mes pasado. Ya pierdo un poquito la noción del tiempo. Están cerrados.

J: So, um, tomorrow's announcement is really the result of a lot of hard work over the last nine months, including some actions that we took in June— the week of June 15. And it... we were joking about which month it is because he kind of loses track of, of time in here.

A: **Bueno. Estuve, estuvo Jenny, junto con otras personas de la coalición de Metro de Denver Santuario en Washington, en D.C. y junto con una abogada, también pudieron tener contacto con personas de migración en D.C.**

**J: Quieres explicar el ayuno, también?** [Do you want to explain the fast, too?]

**A: Esa semana se hizo un ayuno de tres días, que fueron los tres días que estuvieron en Washington D.C. Que la ayuno se unieron más de 200 personas.**

T: Mmm

**J:** So, Jenny, and three other members of the Metro Denver sanctuary coalition went to Washington DC as part of like, a national fast that Arturo and Ana organized, and more than 200 people across the country participated in the fast and we were able to meet with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials the last day of the fast.

**A: Y pues ellos logran tener una buena reuniones en D.C. con los oficiales de allá, este que fue un buen acercamiento con ellos, pero claro, dos meses atrás también ya se había tenido acercamiento con ellos. Ya había estado mi esposa y mis hijas en Washington. Había habido personas también otras anteriormente en Washington. Hablando de mi caso, no es de una semana, no. Trabajo de nueve meses.**

**J:** So we were able to get have this really productive positive meaning with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But it's not just because of that one meeting. My wife and my daughters have twice been to Washington, DC, since I've been in... in sanctuary and met with officials about my case, and other people from other faith groups have met with officials about my case. So, it's not like just from that week to the next, something shifted.

**A: Y este... Bueno, después de esa semana, de Junio del 16 al 19 más o menos, como a las dos semanas o tres...? me mandó una carta**

**J: Una semana después.**

**A: ¿Una semana? Sí?**

J: Mmhmm

**A: Por què no me digo?**

**J: Sí...**

*<laughter>*

**J:** The about a week after folks got back from DC, which is... so the fast was from June 16, to June 19. And then, about a week later, we received a letter from immigration and I thought it was three weeks, but I guess it's a week.

T: A long week

J: Yeah

<laughter>

J: A long week

**A: Y bueno, la carta pues la mandan escrita con mi nombre, diciendo que no soy una prioridad para ser deportado, que puedo prácticamente regresar a mi casa. No estamos obteniendo nada, ni un estatus legal, ni un permiso, ni una residencia, ni nada. Sólo se comprometen a no arrestarme y a poder seguir peleando mi caso. Pero ya desde mi casa, allá afuera.**

J: So the letter has my name in it. And it says, basically, that they're going to use their discretion that I'm not a priority, and that I can return home. I'm not getting any legal status or any temporary status or any work permit out of it at this point. But it allows me to go home and continue to fight my case from from home, they basically promised not to deport me.

**A: Y legalmente, la abogada Laura Lichter, que es mi abogado de inmigración, este tiene va a meter una apelación, una moción, para reabrir mi caso. Entonces es posible que en las próximas semanas, una, dos, tres semanas, no estamos seguros, pero más o menos se va a mandar esa moción para tratar de reabrir mi caso y continuar peleando mi caso legalmente para poder obtener al menos...**

J: And my lawyer, my lawyer Laura Lichter has been looking at my case and finding some new factors and we're exploring putting in a motion to reopen my case are some other legal options in my case, so that I can hopefully in a couple or three weeks have something submitted that will provide me better protection... more permanent protection.

**T: ¿Hay muchos casos como tuyo en los Estados Unidos ahora? [Are there many cases like yours in the US right now?]**

**A: Sí, muchísimos casos, porque como le comente anteriormente, por los jueces y los oficiales de inmigración no están usando su discreción como deberían, ellos continúan separando las familias cuando es algo que el presidente ha querido supuestamente par aguar también, no? Las deportaciones de las familias y pero no ha sido verdad. Ellos han deportado miles y miles de padres de familia, mujeres y hombres, papás y mamás y entonces yo creo que ojalá. Y en mi caso y de las otras personas que están en santuarios alrededor de del país puedan podamos ser escuchados no por los altos mandos a Washington D.C. Paren esto porque según ellos quieren arreglar la situación, pero no estamos viendo que eso esté pasando.**

**J:** Yeah, there are thousands and thousands of people just like me, like I said before, you know, President Obama supposedly wants to stop the deportations, the separation of families, but they're— the officials are not using their discretion in these cases. And I hope, and many parents have been deported both mothers and fathers away from their families and their children. And I hope that both myself and the other people who've taken sanctuary around the country, I hope that we can be heard by officials in Washington in both the administration and Congress, that they see that the situation hasn't changed and the deportations continuing and that they take action.

**A:** En las noticias, o ellos le hacen saber a la comunidad que están ahí. Que están arrestando y aportando criminales y no es cierto y tan claro está. Como mi caso no... es lo más transparente que pueda ver que no tengo ningún récord. Y aún así están intentando deportarme. Y así lo han hecho con muchos otros. Que sus casos no han salido a la luz, que no han sido públicos y que ya están deportados o separados con han dejado hijos aquí sin tener récord criminal. Yo creo que es importante que la gente sepa eso. Es una de las cosas importantes que hemos tratado de hacer ver a la comunidad. No, que no es verdad que sólo están deportando criminales.

**T:** Mmhmm

**J:** Yeah, when you hear things on the news, they always make it seem like all the people who are being deported have really serious records. And, and that's not true and they're, you know, my case is a perfect transparent example of someone who doesn't even have any record who has been denied over and over again, is still in deportation. And, you know, there are many other cases like mine, where people have already been deported, and their case was not public, and it hasn't come into the light yet, really how many people are in this same situation, but that's something that we've tried to show is that, you know, they're not only deporting people with serious records, they're deporting lots of other people too.

**A:** Cuando yo entré aquí estaba un caso muy similar al mio, de José Luis Guerrero. Fueron a su casa buscando otra persona que no era él. Y lo arrestaron a él por estar ahí.

**J:** Cuando entré al santuario...*<makes noise and laughs as she realizes she is not translating>*

**J:** When I when I entered sanctuary, there was another man whose name is Jose Luis Guerrero, they went to his house looking for someone else who didn't even live there. And just because he was there, they detained him.

**A:** So we're twisting now, she's speaking Spanish and I'm speaking English

*<laughter>*



T: I'll do what I can in either

**A: Y lo arrestaron a él y lo deportaron. No le dieron mucha oportunidad de defenderse legalmente y con cuatro o cinco hijos ciudadanos.**

J: And they so they detained him at his house, even though he wasn't the person they were looking for. And, and he was not able to get out of immigration detention, they deported him without much legal process. And that's even though he has four or five citizen kids here in Colorado.

T: With the five minutes or so that we have left, what else do you want people to know about immigration in this country, how your case fits into the big picture, or anything else that you want people to know?

**A: Sí, bueno, creo que a la mayoría de la población de Estados Unidos está de acuerdo, a lo mejor con una reforma migratoria, no? Y solo son unos cuantos políticos en DC que están en contra y que están tratando de de ensuciar todo para que la gente pueda tener un status legal.**

J: So I've seen many polls that show that the majority of Americans support some immigration reform. And it seems like there's just a few, a handful of politicians who are standing in the way of that and muddying the waters and keeping it from moving forward.

**A: Y puedes decirle a la comunidad que se unan para tratar de apoyar, que se unan a los grupos pro inmigrantes y trata de empujar para poder obtener una reforma migratoria más amplia para... para muchas familias, no, mucha gente que son solteros no tienen hijos, pero que son buenos ciudadanos y poder obtener un status legal en el país.**

J: And I want to encourage my community to get involved to— to join pro immigrant groups and, and get involved in passing immigration reform. That's, that's more broad. You know, that includes not just protection for families, but also individuals. There's a lot of single people in the US who are hard workers and good citizens who who deserve being a part of reform like that.

**A: Y creo que sí se puede. Tenemos a muchas personas, a ciudadanas que están apoyando y que están dispuestos a luchar con nosotros para obtener algún día ese status y que poder seguir manteniendo las familias juntas, que es lo más importante, que muchos hijos han quedado solos. Y hay gente sufriendo por esta situación.**

J: And I think we can do it. Like, 'yes, we can'. And, and, and it's important for people to get involved and to be a part of things. You know, this situation has to stop where families are being separated and many kids are left at home without a parent.

**A: Y pues a invitar a las personas que pueden utilizar su voto, van para votar por las personas correctas, no? Que nos puedan representar y que puedan hacer algo por la gente inmigrante. Entonces yo creo que es el poder más importante el voto y votar por las personas correctas.**

**J:** And I want to encourage people who have the privilege of a vote to... to think about the candidates they're voting for and what their policies are on immigration and to vote for candidates that really support us being a part of this community.

**A: Es todo. Gracias por interesarse en mi caso. Gracias por venir y gracias por llevar este mensaje a más gente, gracias.**

**J:** So I think that's all and I just want to thank you so much for coming and for taking this message to so many more people. Thank you.”

*<music fades in>*

**T: Gracias por hablar conmigo en su día final.** [Thanks for talking with me on your last day.]”

**A:** *<laughs>* Si.”

*<music continues under narration>*

**TRW:** “It’s hard to listen to this now in some ways. It was such a hopeful day when we talked, and now knowing what happened to Arturo and so many thousands of other people under the past four year’s of Trump’s immigration policies, it’s sad to look back upon. As I said at the top, these years have been marked by malice, cruelty, and overt racism along with daily unpredictability which has kept the movement by and in solidarity with immigrants reacting and fighting without rest. In the last part of the show, we’ll hear from someone on the solidarity side of the movement in Denver, Arnie Carter. He talked with me by phone this past October about his churches’ experience and his own, and shares what he hopes to see moving forward. There are also links to news stories and more about the current state of the movement, led by powerful undocumented women I was unable to connect with in time, in the show notes below.”

*<music fades out>*

**Taylor Roseweeds (TRW):** “Maybe just tell the story of how you became involved in the Sanctuary Movement?”

**Arnie Carter (AC):** “Yeah, I’m Arnie, in Denver, Arnie Carter. Back in like 2003— 2003 to 2004— I was really involved in the Iraq War trying to, you know, organize around stopping the Iraq war, and went to a rally at the ICE Detention Center here in Denver, right outside of Denver. And, you know, I just saw that, you know, this is some violence happening right here in my town. I started getting involved in immigration issues, and

got involved, started helping... encouraging people at my church to get involved in immigration issues. And we formed our immigration task force shortly thereafter. And we were just involved in different different aspects of immigration and trying to educate ourselves and others about the system and what we could do. People in the community, people being affected by immigration, came to us and asked us to consider being a sanctuary church. So, it didn't just come out of nowhere, it came from the community came and asked us, and, yeah, we worked really hard to get our church behind it. In our church, you know, the whole congregation has to vote on it. There was quite a process to get that approved. It didn't look like it was gonna happen at a couple of points there, but we just kind of stayed with it. And it passed overwhelmingly with the congregation, finally. And when we renewed, it passed unanimously. Yeah, anyway, that's how I got involved.

**TRW:** Yeah, and that's, that's the Unitarian Church. Is that correct?

**AC:** First Unitarian of Denver, yeah.

**TRW:** Nice. So for folks who maybe aren't familiar with that movement, I'll talk about it a little more also, maybe before this interview, but can you just explain what it means for your church to be a sanctuary in that sense? For folks who maybe aren't familiar with the history of that movement?

**AC:** Yeah, it's, you know, churches have always, you know, throughout history have offered sanctuary, for people being persecuted, usually politically persecuted. In Nazi Germany, some churches hid out— hid Jews, in Greek times, people hid people in churches and protected them in ancient Greece. And here in the United States, the Dirty Wars in Central America, people were having people hide in churches that were, you know, at risk of being deported back to Central America. And that was back, I believe, in the 80s... 70s and 80s.

**TRW:** Yeah, that sounds right. Which, which leads into something in that... I mean, obviously, you know, you and I didn't meet five years ago when I was on this trip, but this is work that started long before Trump. You know, immigrants have been under various forms of attack in the US since before Trump. Can you speak to maybe the ways that the situation and the political atmosphere has changed in the last five years? As seen through your movement?

**AC:** Yeah, we— we started this when Obama was president, and, you know, and he was, you know, the 'deporter in chief', right? And he was deporting a lot of people. But back in the Obama administration, like, we could work with, you know, somebody was in sanctuary or even in cases of people that were just fighting their case, there was like... we could negotiate with them and get people, you know, some temporary reprieve, or get their cases resolved, get some, you know, stay of deportations. Since Trump is coming into office, it's just like, people that enter sanctuary now, I mean, they're just there. There's no, no movement in their cases. There's no... there's no negotiation. Of course, there's a lot more fear of ICE coming into the churches and taking people even

though it's against ICE policy. We know that they don't, they don't play fair. They don't care about fairness. People are a lot more reluctant to come into sanctuary now. Because there's, you know, they realize that it's like— I mean, Jeanette, who is in sanctuary now at First Unitarian and has been through most of the Trump years, I mean, she's been in sanctuary for like, at least three of the four years of the Trump administration and there's been no movement in her case, but she's not giving up. She's fighting it anyway. She'll fight as long as she has to, but...

**TRW:** Yeah, and the thing with the church is, I mean, it's not a law that ICE can't go into churches and schools, right? It's just kind of always been their practice? Is that an accurate way to say that?

**AC:** Yeah, it's a... it's a written policy, it's not a law, it's a policy.

**TRW:** Oh, ok. And we've seen how those...change quickly. Under this...yeah.

**AC:** Yeah, you also aren't supposed to go into schools and hospitals. And we've seen that happen, too.

**TRW:** Yeah, so yeah. Yes. So in July 2015, I actually ended up meeting Arturo, in the basement of your church on his last day in sanctuary. He was about... he was getting out. He was leaving the next day. And do you know, have you been connected to his case since then? Can you... since people, it seems like in general haven't been able to reach him and confirm exactly what's happened? Do you have any parts of that story you can fill in?

**AC:** I can fill in parts of it. Arturo, when he got released under the Obama... Obama administration, all he had, I mean, he did not get to resolve his case, or they weren't letting him resolve his case, but they gave him an email, it stated that he was not a priority for removal. Right? So they've, like, not a guarantee, but like, okay, we're not going to look for you. So, you know, you're okay, you can go back to work and go home. And as long as you stay out of trouble, you know, you're gonna be alright is basically the way we read that. And the best we could negotiate from ICE was that's what they were saying, that he could go home. Since the Trump administration, they are not recognizing that. They don't even like, acknowledge that they ever sent that email, even though we have copies of it. And they picked up Arturo at one point, like in about 2017, I think it was, and, you know, we organized and got him out on bail. Since then, like Arturo's taking care of himself, you know, he's...

**TRW:** Well, good, I mean I hope he's safe...wherever that may be.

**AC:** Yeah, me too. Last I heard he was safe and doing okay. We don't— I don't try and reach him. He's got my number if he needs me.

**TRW:** Sure, exactly.

**AC:** I don't wanna, I don't want to shine any light on him in case somebody's listening to calls or in emails or text or something.

**TRW:** Sure, sure. So that brings up... obviously just having your church be a sanctuary is a large effort to coordinate and, and all of that, and then, you know, there's people who are working in the courts and doing advocacy work, how do the different parts of this movement kind of work together? And where are the gaps where it's hardest to protect people who are vulnerable to these policies, especially as the policies change so suddenly, and are so aggressive?

**AC:** You know, at one point we were— we really were working a lot of different pieces and parts were working really well. You know, we were important people as they went to the courthouse, and, you know, we kind of looked at sanctuary as not only protecting people in sanctuary, but preventing them from having to take sanctuary. It just kind of seems like people have become more and more hopeless as this administration has dragged on. And so a lot of pieces and parts has kind of fallen by the wayside. And hopefully, we can reorganize and get that going again, but yeah, all the pieces and parts. I mean, we used to really organize, like out of the detention center, did a lot of organizing out there and we'd support people, when they went to their check ins, we would help people with lawyers, and things like that, but it just kind of seems like both the immigration community and some of the faith community has, like, become overwhelmed and disheartened... heartened.

**TRW:** Sure, yeah, I mean, it's a... it's an overwhelming, disheartening time for a lot of us, I think. Especially people who are in that long term work.

**AC:** Yeah, and people that are facing... not a lot of good news is happening. Not many people are winning their cases at all. They're not getting asylum or anything.

**TRW:** Yeah, and it seems like, am I right to say that— the people you mentioned, Jeanette, but the people who are in sanctuary right now are also major parts of the organizing itself, too.

**AC:** Oh, definitely. Definitely. Jeanette is a heck of an organizer. She's... I don't know if you've ever had a chance to talk to her yet, but she is, or have you done any research into who she is?

**TRW:** I haven't done much yet. I was waiting to hear back from her. But if you want to share, that'd be great.

**AC:** Well, she was a, one of the 100 people... *Time* magazine's 100 people in *Time* magazine in 2016. One of the, you know, 100 most important people, the year that Trump got elected, they were both in that 100 people.

**TRW:** <laughs> Wow.

**AC:** And she's like, you know, she's, we have like, almost given up, like, there's nothing else, you know, nothing we can do to save Jeanette, and she like... organizes and next thing you know, you know, she's out and fighting and fighting for other people. She's formed a lot of different organizations. She's just amazing. You know, do any kind of research on her at all. She's incredible.

**TRW:** Yeah, I will. I've got some time. So just to change gears a little bit, when I was talking to people five years ago, I was asking them all a couple of the same questions. So, I'm gonna ask them to you. And they're simple on the surface, but we'll see if they feel simple. Um, what—what is most frustrating to you right now?

**AC:** There's a lot.

*<laughter>*

**AC:** Yeah. Lots is frustrating. Knowing how dirty that ICE plays...how they lie and trick people is very frustrating. Yeah, the fact that we give the ICE and the police so much money, instead of like, funding, you know, justice things like community organizing, and jobs and food and healthcare and education, you know. We're throwing away all this money, just burning it. I guess those are a couple of things.

**TRW:** Mmhmm...and then, I guess, despite all of that, what makes you most hopeful right now?

**AC:** The youth, young people make me very hopeful nowadays. Seeing people organize around Black Lives Matter movement over the summer. And then, you know, people keep organizing around the Dreamers and young people in schools, young people organizing around climate change. Yeah so I guess, young folks.

**TRW:** Yeah, that's mine, too. They're... they're kicking ass right now. I guess aside from that, I mean, I don't like to have people make big grand predictions, but what do you see in the immediate future of the Sanctuary Movement in Denver, and then maybe more broadly in the immigrant rights... immigrant solidarity movement across the country?

**AC:** Well, you know, I can't make predictions either. I think that we might be in for some very difficult times around this election. Yeah, but, but [if] Biden wins, I think that people will re-energize folks, you know, because he is...even though his policies aren't great, he's somebody that we can push the same as we did with Obama. I mean, Obama's, like the DREAM Act, it didn't come out of anywhere. He was pushed into a corner and had no choice.

**TRW:** Mm hmm...I guess the last thing I'd really ask is, what advice would you have for folks who might be looking to a worst case scenario with this election? You know, we're recording this in October, it might actually play after the election, I'm realizing, but folks who are anticipating a worst case scenario—what advice would you give to people who

are maybe thinking of opening up their church or different part of their community in a more direct form of support, like sanctuary?

**AC:** In either case, in any scenario, I would just recommend that people try and do this work. It's both hard and beautiful, both at the same time. And to approach it as a justice issue, not a, you know, a charity 'doing good' thing. It's... it's fighting for justice.

**TRW:** Yeah. And I guess, given that Biden is likely to echo Obama policies, in some ways, at least in some ways cause he was there the first time, [sanctuary] might not be something we just don't need, you know, if he's to win.

**AC:** Yeah, I think, you know, to get a just immigration bill or whatever, legislation or anything, it's going to take a lot of work, there'll be a lot of push to make it not...not something that we'd like. Yeah, I was gonna say that I'm, you know, pessimistic too, that, you know, Biden wins, but, you know, civil war breaks out, or who knows what's going to happen? *<laughs>* You know?

**TRW:** Yeah. *<sigh>* Yeah.

**AC:** Which is a whole 'nother can of worms, but...

**TRW:** It is, it is. It's something that I think has been on a lot of people's minds who I've talked to. We'll just have to see, but is there anything else that you want to make sure people, people know? Any resources that you want to share? Anything else before we wrap up?

**AC:** Yeah, just one thing that we've learned during this work, and Jeanette has taught us in particular, is that it's really, really important to listen to the people that are affected. And to listen hard, not just pretend to listen, you got to listen very deeply.

**TRW:** Yeah, that's a good reminder. Well, thank you so much for talking with me. I appreciate it. Just getting some follow up on— from the folks I met before and I'm just glad that people are hanging in there and doing this work, even though it's, like you said, it's hard.

**AC:** Yeah, it's hard and beautiful. And thank you, Taylor. When you do the show, is there any way you could send me a link or...?"

*<music fades in>*

**TRW:** Oh, definitely, definitely."

*<music continues under narration>*

**TRW:** "Thank you so much to Arturo, to Arnie, and to Jennifer for talking with me both in the past and today. As I said, there are more links to stories about the movement in

Denver in the show notes below, along with a transcript of the full episode. As the dominant culture in our country commemorates the birth of a child by an mother seeking protection and being turned away by those in power, I hope that this week's show can remind us all to turn toward those who need protection, from deportation, eviction, and state violence, now and until we are all free. See you next week."

*<music fades out>*

**END**