

La Historia de Nuestras Vidas

Stories lived and told by Aaron Junech Vega, Onofre Macario Aguilar,
Juventino Lopez Pichia, Javier Lopez Sajche,
Luis Enrique Moncada Quiroz, Oscar Mejilla Santos, Victor Sis Tepaz
Process Facilitated and Recorded by Megan Nelson, Amanda Brooks,
Junette Maxis, William Montoya, Alex Skitolsky, Martiza Navarro, Megan
Kailhofer, Antonia Lliteras Espinosa, Kate Blair

Prologue – Life in Guatemala and Mexico before immigration

William breaks the ice. Tells of when he was young, his dreams of being a soccer player when he grew up...

Luis: When I was little, I was a rebel. I didn't do the things my mom and dad wanted. My parents did not approve of the career I wanted to do. When I was growing and changing, I wanted to study and I wanted to be a soccer player. My parents told me no to being a soccer player, because I needed to study.

My dream was to be a pilot in the air force. My parents wanted me to do something less dangerous.

So, I worked planting corn and beans with my dad. My dad had many plantings of beans and corn. Later, my dad went to the U.S. illegally to get ahead, but my dad never sent money to my mom or my brothers and sisters. He never looked after the family. I wanted to go to the U.S. but I could not.

My dream was to the U.S. to help my mom and brothers and sisters to get ahead, to get what I didn't have. I fell in love and I had a daughter, and my dreams changed into dreams of having a house, etc., to create a family, and complete my dreams. We didn't have anything to get ahead. I had to help my mom and my brothers. I have a lot of anger towards my dad because he didn't help the family. I am still going toward what I wanted.

Javier: I speak (spelling?) and Español – Cakchiquel I only speak, I don't write. I speak Cakchiquel mixed with Spanish, it is not pure.

When I was little, as Luis said, my life was just going out in the street, to play, ride bikes, I didn't think about work. I played behind my dad in the field. We did not have food every day. I thought about coming to the U.S.

when I was 16 or 17 years old, in order to do things, to have a house for friends, to have a car and houses. Dad said that I could not go to the U.S. I wanted to come because my companions already had cars (of the second level? Used?) and houses, and good clothes. I had a desire to have my own. My brother arrived in 3 years, he bought his car and I thought about coming here, I had the dream of doing some things. Thanks to God we came to Decorah.

work

Photos of the land there

I saw my friends – the others

16 years old

I was thinking to leave - - - more than anything, to make my wishes come true – my compañeros had cars they had cars. I didn't know that also

I thought I wouldn't go because its hard, difficult

I didn't want to go They had made

I arrived here in February – I had a brother, I was with him for 3 years – He bought it all (for me?)

I grew up more, Everything there is always ...there is time that one loses .
When the raid happened, my dreams ended.

Oscar: From when I was little, well, I can't say 'when I was little' because I have always been small!, I was in school for a few years, but unfortunately my parents did not have the possibility to provide for me to continue education. I studied 4 years and after I went to the countryside to work, with my dad. I worked caring for cows. So that is how my life began, going to the countryside. At age 12, I began to work, to earn in order to help my parents. I always was working, helping my parents. I got together with my wife, and then things were different. I was already working for my family, and I wasn't helping my parents as much as before. Before, I gave half to them. After our children were born, I felt it was very difficult because life in Guatemala is very difficult. It is hard to make ends meet. Then I thought about coming here. What I earned I spent on clothes and food. When in Guatemala one thinks, I want to buy an apartment (?) and a car. Well, it is very difficult and very difficult to make a house.

And as my compañeras said, in Guatemala people have seen that others were prospering, and could make their little houses and be a little better off than before. They were of cornstalks and their stems and above they put pieces of metal or aluminum tile to make the roof . . . It was expensive for those who had their house out of a block of cement. One didn't have money to make

the house so Thanks to God I made my house of block (de bloque.)
Therefore it is for that reason that I came here : to get ahead for my family,
to give my children the opportunity to study more. With the help of God,
Yes, I could give them more chances to study. Well, its better.
I was in the U.S. here one time and I left to see my family. I wanted to work
there (in Guatemala) but what one plants doesn't earn enough....What I
earned was very little. I wanted to work there but I had losses so I decided
to begin again and to come here.
I arrived one day in 2007, I began to work there in the Plant
(Agriprocessors), I began to work in January. Then all my dreams ended on
the 12th of May. The thoughts of the future from when I arrived there... We
went to jail and we thought that we would go to Guatemala but they detained
us and we didn't find out because already my dream in US had ended in the
jail. So then I thought of Guatemala. I give thanks to God for the other
opportunity that God gave us. In this moment the situation that we are
in...during this year of these imprisonments, my children almost couldn't
keep going to school. I couldn't continue to buy the necessary things and
everything. Only God knows how it is that I could buy what is necessary.

Oscar (continued):

I wanted to work in Guatemala but the land, the planting wasn't enough – it
didn't provide enough.

For that reason I returned here because there I couldn't. December 2007, I
worked in the Agriprocessors Plant. 2 children, one son and one
daughter.

I worked in January, but the raid ended my dreams, We were for a time in
jail and when I went to leave they detained me and put me apart from the
others. "What is going to happen, Everyone left , they told me. They had
me stay and Thanks to God (Gracias a Dios) they gave us a second
opportunity.

1st time that he came – 23 años en 2002, I went 2006 and returned 2007

Situation in my family. My children almost could not study. No money.
Wife stayed to keep everything working. . . .(?)

Aaron: My parents enrolled me in school (?) I left school. I suffered(?) more because I wanted to work. So then I worked on my own till 18. At 18 I decided to work in factory of añosa(?) de pollos. Later out of necessity, to survive, and because others had come to the U.S. and had been better off. My brother came to the USA after my second year working the company/factory.

In November 2006, I came to the USA to help my siblings. My parents separated. My siblings stayed with other relatives (familiares – friends) I decided to come here to help my dad. And between the two I decided to build a house. I mailed money to my siblings for education. The dichotomy is that Guatemala there are many poor people, and everything costs a lot of money. When I was young, I wanted a professional group Mejolata (?)

Aaron (continued – in response to questions) : I have one son. What I miss most is my family and to spend Christmas with them, and independence day, and 2 of November.

2 noviembre family ? Elevado caretias?

Onofre: QUIEN? (Onofre?):

Mam is my first language. I spoke a little Spanish when I was growing up, and then I learned in school

When I was 10 years old. I speak Español and Mam.

My parents wanted me to study.

My religion is Catholic.

I was five years when I went to go school. I graduated from high school.

I wanted to continue studying in Usa or Cuba or Guatemala – No money - - - difficult in Guatemala to have money to study. I decided to come and work to get money.

(in Postville?) I wanted to have a bike so I wouldn't have to work, in order to do this I needed .

Now I want to return to Guatemala (?) and study English. I wish to continue to study in the university.

Well, I have 7 sisters and 2 brothers. In total we are ten. And now I have 7 nieces & nephews. One sister is 4 and another brother is 3 years old. Mam is my native language. I spoke Mam since I was 10 years old.

Aaron:

6 years my parents enrolled me in School

I graduated at 12 (12th grade or 12 years?) my dad suggested to me that I continue studying and I didn't want to study

From 12 – 18 años – years – I worked with my dad planting tending harvesting (sembrando) verduras – vegetables

At 18 I worked in a chicken company through Laños (?)

My brother came to the U.S., out of necessity to see others with more g(?)_____

At 20 I decided to come too, in Nov. 2006, because of the necessity. My parents separated and my brothers also were boys and they needed help.

They stayed with some aunts and I stayed with my dad.

Only two older brothers studied and the others did not finish primary school.

Pa and I made a house out of cement. I was mailing money to help them.

There they earned only enough to eat, dress and one or two other things.

Houses were expensive there and for that reason people came here (to the U.S.)

Dreams began and later they ended.

I loved playing football and I wanted to played on a sports team.

I miss my family and the traditions

Onofre:

At 6 years old, I began to study, walked 1.5 hours each day – to go and return home from school.

I studied secondary and prep school

I wanted to continue studying but no money, I applied for a break (? In tuition?) but they didn't give it and I came to work in the U.S.

Bicycle

I got up at 5 :30 a.m. in order to arrive at 8 a.m. at the school

If I could get money to return to Guatemala to study engineering and learn English

I walk to continue studying

In order to study there is no age

My parents supported me

7 brothers , 2 sisters

studying they helped

Victor (version 1) (sitting on chair, blue hooded sweatshirt, tie blanket on chair, playing with it while talking, smiles when talking about going to

school, when listeners make eye contact, he smiles back. Looks down a lot when telling the story):

I remember when I was 10 years old.

We were 9 siblings – 6 men and 3 women. Dad didn't have opportunity to put us in school.

My dad worked ___ in order to pay the expenses for the house. I had to help my dad pay - - - I was growing and always earning (?). I was not in school for any days.

I worked 10-16 years, not for my own check/income, ___ years to get a wife.

When I was 17 years old, I began to earn my own check, for the expenses, for my little brothers and sisters. Everything changed when I was 18 years old. I got married when I was 18 and a half years old. We did not have our own place to live for a long time so we lived with my dad (double check?).

We worked on a farm all the time. I worked for a long time. I worked a lot.

I worked for (or I had?) a farm cutting coffee. We cultivated coffee, my wife and I. We were paid 8-10 something ? quintales de café (?). The coffee had enough _____. We made more, 20-23 pounds.

We had 2 daughters – and it came that the situation was going to get difficult.

We didn't earn anything. We weren't paid much-----When the coffee didn't _____ much, it cost almost nothing. We had kids. My wife wished, my wife saw the news of others like us who lived better – a dream that I was thinking. From the news, I or my wife (?) Heard about the U.S. – where they pay by the hour. It was more than just a dream. People like us have gone. Very far away. One has to pay money. We didn't have money. I didn't know anyone with money. We didn't know WHEN. It is very far away, and we could but where would we get the money?

Another time with the kids, we couldn't (earn enough?) I lived there with a very tiny bit of money. I had to give something up. If you aren't paid, you have to solve your money problems. I decided to come here for myself in 2007. "You can loan money and after give it back to me" I Left on March 5, 2007 (or 2005?). I walked 23 days on the path. I suffered. I ate almost nothing, one time each day. Its easy to come, someone told me. It was a little hard.

On the 27th or 28th of March, I arrived in Postville.

In Postville someone(who?) gave me a place (or told me where I could) to sleep. They told me I could work in the plant. They told me there is work in April to pay the debts I owed. I applied in the Plant started on the 12th of April. I was tired. First I had to pay the debts. I didn't have the same luck as other people. I didn't have houses for my children like the others.

Thanks to God I at least paid the debts (double check this - - - (Or I had to work two more months (after the raid) to pay the debts (?))

The day of the raid was very hard, I told myself that I hadn't known anything (would happen?)

The middle of the day of the raid, I lost everything that I had dreamed. The dream I brought when they took us now is no more. It was fine, we were going to have to stay 8 – 15 days

In my case, I didn't have more than the

....or I didn't have more than him (? ? ?)

I stayed free...(what does he mean by Quedaba Libre...)

I didn't know anyone here....

The day of the Raid:

I lost everything, not just the dream

The dream that I had carried

Was not possible to follow. We thought that everything was fine and easy (bien facil), but no. It was not days, or weeks, but It was 5 months we had to spend in jail. We only paid our debts

I thought that everything would come to be equal, but the day of the raid everything ended.

Deportation from 10-15 days, I didn't know – I thought three to four weeks, but we didn't know

It was 5 months in Jail

If we didn't accept, we'd be given more time in jail.

The months of imprisonment

The situation was Very difficult

I spoke with my papa and he told me that things would be different – strict laws of the U.S. – I want to return to see my family.

From the raid to the day out of jail was very duro – difficult – hard.

The laws of this country are hard, are rather strict, rather hard. Not as strict in Guatemala. The laws are less strict in Guatemala. Until then, I wanted to return because the laws here are very strict.

Katie preguntO : Quiere regresar – Do you want to return?

Victor: Por el momento, Si. At the moment, Yes.

Victor (version 2):

Victor:

10-17 years of working I began to earner for my, but I continued helping. (my family?)

18-19 wife – we didn't have (our own) place to live for a long time we were on a farm. We cut coffee - my wife and I. The didn't pay much – 8 quintales (quetzals?) for getting coffee.

20-23 lb – almost not earning much

In the news I saw that people were coming here

We thought to come and the trip is very long - - the money, and we didn't know (the place)

I couldn't live with the _____ (loaned?) money that I earned.

Loan = Guaranteed

I decided to come in March 5, 2007. . . 23 days of te trip, I suffered, final part of March

Some amigos offered (estancia?) and I begin to work in 12 of April in a factory

I wanted to get ahead for my family, to pay the debts and (((((something about must be _____ places))))

Not everyone had the same luck.

Carlos (Cousin of Onofre) version 1:

I went to primary and secondary school after working for _____? I left school in the middle of the primary school.

I worked 6 months in Mexico. Brother in Law. I moved to Florida. Then to Michigan where I worked in an apple orchard. Then to Tennessee working in Tobacco. Then to Mexico for 15 days. January 2000 or 2002?, to Chicago. (they – who –left?) We came here working in Chicago. Worked in Postville, accident, in bones – 4 (?) - 3 days in the hospital. I couldn't walk for six months. After when immigration came down, I went to Wisconsin. There wasn't much work there. Everyone went there but we didn't work. After, I worked here in Decorah at Wapsi for 3 weeks in chicken. Now works _____.

Carlos (Onofre's cousin) (version 2) :

I came to Florida with a brother in law and after went to Michigan, Tennessee (tabaco), mexico for 15 days, January of 2002 the U.S. sisters went to Chicago after returning, but the second time and return, - - - - car accident
- - - three days in the hospital - - - 6 months of no walking – fractured ankle

I work – I left Friday from work, went to Wisconsin for the week, I went to construction – much water, rain, 3 weeks in the chicken farm, I work on a

farm with pigs. I worked in the ranch, all the time (in Guatemala?) When my brother in law came, I had the dream to come to the U.S. I crashed with a car and for that reason, I could not walk for 6 months.

Juventino (told on January 15th, 2009): Where do I begin? From what I remember I was six years old when I could not return to the May (Yo). I am the oldest of my family. My dad did not have a place to live and what I remember is that he sold our land so he could drink. So then we didn't have any place to live. When I was 10 years old, he sold the land and the house where we lived. I was 10 years old. Already there were 3 of us. I am the oldest. We spent time living in a town where my dad was often drinking. It is the town where I am from now. He couldn't let his drinking habit go. In the house, when I was 13 years old, another child was born (a brother) and we were 4. I was 13 years old, the baby was three months old when my dad died and we didn't have a place to live. And as I am the oldest, I began to look for work, but I also began to drink like my dad. I was 13 years old and I had to work for everything. At 16 years old I remember I had to walk in the street without shoes. At 17 years old, I bought shoes. We always rented, we didn't have money. We were without land, without a house. There were four kids with my mom. I began to work in order to sustain. .

At 19, I met a person who I got married to when I was 25 years old. We worked a lot on the land but even so, we didn't earn enough to buy. When I was 30 years old, my son was (5 or?) 6 years old. During this time, I began to plant with loaned money, not my own money. I arrived at 34 años - (and I had two boys and one girl and our debt began to grow. Now (Juventino crossed his hands) My wife and I didn't get ahead. - - -When I became 36 years old, I had an American Dream. I looked at the men that came here and people who bought land. If they could do it, I too could arrive in the U.S., too. I could do it, but I didn't have money to come. Until one day I spoke with my wife and one person loaned us more money in order to come here and that is when I decide to come here. I loaned from many people (or one person?). My wife and I talked about where we could loan more money in order to come here. I received.... (?) One day, more money to come, I made the decision to come on or I left on April 30, 2007. It was difficult because I left my wife and kids without knowing what was waiting (pause) in the path. I walked for about 24 days and arrived in Postville. When I arrived, I called my wife, and I told her now got my destination. Don't worry if I will be able to pay (my debt) because already I am on this side. I started to work after (or within) 15 days of being in Postville. I began to work on June 6 of the same year. Everything was going well, little by little,

I sent money to my family. I had paid 60,000 (?) of the debt. I had began to pay the debt, until the bad dream of 12 of May happened. I don't want continue more. I would not like to remember the more. Bad Dream. What I have seen (done to) my companions . . . How can this be ?

the 12 of May (voice broken, meeker, starts picking at pillow, and cracking knuckles, takes a deep breath) There is nothing more. (Has a tattoo on his right forearm, of a bird, outline in black) . . .

Javier: I came here with companions. One said that everything is smooth and easy. But the path is different, _____ I had to _____ (return- - - and I came

Some days, I didn't eat, I only walked in the mountains till 10 at night, and went on a bus. We didn't sleep at all at night. We stopped when the other group of 6 arrived at 6 in the evening. We traveled in a bus. There were 21 of us, one man took us. He said, "Look----immigration" - - - On a mountain, there were ants. I couldn't do anything. The mountain was small. Until immigration left, I couldn't' do anything. We went up the mountain. 8 days to the river - Immigration was in front of us.

Another time (or 4 times?) – tres de la tarde. Alto cerrado (?) 6 were sleeping there. We arriving in Texas, 6 sleeping, one on top of the other, no one could sit,

(If there was someone selling, I would have bought a coke or hamburger ? ?)

There was a place filled with water - -

When we arrived in Texas – three days later. We got to Postville on Friday.

Monday of February, Tuesday – Began,

Easy

On Saturday, we didn't work in Guatemala.

I thought about everything (in Guatemala?)

When I came, everything was sad. After three month of working, - - - (raid)

Thought I would be going to Guatemala in three weeks – We felt this situation was very difficult – I didn't know I would be going to the jail

Thursday at about 9 at night, there was a court meeting.

2 – Recorded January 15th, 2009

Puntas de Vista sobre los estados unidos cuando estaban en Mexico or Guatemala = Points of view about the United States before arriving (thoughts while in Guatemala and Mexico)

Henri explained could not talk tonight (due to his son's death)

Onofre (Onofre was sitting on the couch, feet tucked under the carpet, swirling black stocking cap around on his hand as he talked): When I was in Guatemala I never imagined that the work would be so hard. Many people came here and then they returned with new cars, women, houses. I thought that everything was easy, but the reality was different. Everything was different. I am imagined something very different. When one lives, everything changes, its very distinct. A cousin lived in Postville and for that reason I came, and my cousin told me there was work. He said I could false papers for very cheap. . .

Oscar (interjects): that are worth 5 months in jail

Amanda: Porque - Why Postville?

Onofre: Because I had a cousin. Sister in North Carolina but had false last name. (has siblings in North Carolina and Atlanta)

OSCAR AND JUVENTINO (Mini Drama – Imagination exercise Oscar made up):

Short conversation between Oscar and Juventino discussing how the pay for working one day in Guatemala is equal to the pay for working one hour in the USA.....and how it is not easy to be away from one's wife and children.....IS IT WORTH IT?

Oscar (sitting on a rocking chair, short sleeved button down shirt.)

Oscar speaking to Juventino: What do you(usted) think...if you earn a good amount, if you earn dollars....you can't get ahead in order to care for your family in Guatemala.

Juventino: Various times I have thought of another country. 7-4 in the afternoon 1 (dollar?)

7 quetzales = \$1

in the United States, to work one hour here is like working one day in Guatemala. What I have found is when one would arrive....
But what if we don't succeed? What if we die in the street with others? What if we stay with our debts?

Oscar: You have to fight for family, but...you'll know what the benefits are after everything goes well.

Juventino: Its not easy to leave family. One loses his/her family there. It is a risk you have to take. Let's do it, this time. Let's go, Oscar. [to the United States]

Victor: When I walked on foot, when I went up the mountain...I came (thinking everything was easy?). If I had known of the fact before, I would not have gone. We passed through forest, a mountain, there was rain. We went on bus sometimes, and sometimes had to walk. One thinks that everything is easy....(the) Work is very difficult as well. When one is poor, in order to get money, one has to work rapidly, one has to have this value (belief) and be animated / enthusiastic in order to be in our country.

Oscar: I want that you all earn money – that you get ahead. If \$6, 4 a.m. – 8 p.m. in Guatemala. Heard that earn \$6/hour in US. Work 8 hours is like working 8 days. If _____ to come, one would move in the road - - - Change direction.

It is not easy to leave the family and one's children, because when you leave, the more you love them. Waiting for mail?

Juventino: I also thought about it (the US). In our country, **one works one day for eight hours, and earns 6 dolares (42 quetzales) 1 din = 1 hour (United States)**

I don't have to live where it is like this, and I thought about going but immigration took everything. I lost but I had to take the risk.

Oscar: Adventures one does. One has to fight if one decides to go, one has to because of family there, to intend to support the family and God knew it. The benefits can be worth it.

Juventino: Yes, its true, but it is not easy to leave family. I could have lost everything in the action (intento = intention of leaving) It's a risk to arrive in order to make it.

(Juventino or Victor?) : The people say that everything in the U.S. is beautiful and that its easy, but when one comes walking the whole time, it is much more difficult. Walking through mountains, forests, and its hard. When one comes in a bus, it's a little bit easier. One thinks that everything is easy, but the work is hard, and one wishes that they were with family, but one comes to work, to put values first, and have enthusiasm to continue working.

Juventino: We lived though much more and we have much more to tell, that our stories would last hours.

Luis (tucked in the corner by bookshelf, sitting close to Javier, holding onto white bed pillow, gray and blue jacket, stonewash jeans, 2 rings on left hand, pinky and ring finger – NOPE, it's a rubber band/hair tie that he's playing with while talking)

6,000 (6000 mil or 6 mil?) in Mexico in one week

I was here 1.5 years before the raid.

Javier (red and black striped stocking cap, gray, black, red sweatshirt – hooded), sitting next to Luis, 2 bed pillows laying on legs. Hands crossed across chest. Talks like he's bored with the process, almost like a chore of some sort (not bored in any way)

Only worked three months before the raid happened.

Victor: People in Guatemala talk about the U.S. beauty, I came walking, it is not so easy. Pretty wet, falls the rain. Walking on foot, its hard.

Megan or Maritza: Why do the people that return to Guatemala tell others that it is easy?

Juventino and Onofre answering: I think it is because most people have pride.

Talk about if you return to Guatemala, what would you say?

Juventino: For us it is very different because we spent 6 months in jail. We're going to tell more because we spent 6 months in jail.

Javier: What Luis said, walking is suave – soft

Maritza: How many of you changed your opinion?

All: Todos – We all have.

3 – Inmigracion – el proceso de llegar a los estados u nidos

Aaron: I, well, I decided to come from Guatemala to here. first I looked for someone who could bring me. I got someone who could bring here. Then I left from Guatemala. 4 of October of 2006. I came, well, to the entrance of Mexico. We came in a part of Mexico first they took us (Public Security?) they took us when we were in our house, sleeping. They took us to the mountain. They requested from us a big of money for two nights in the desert and then after walking they were going to bring us in our car one Sunday in the road to Texas. He didn't arrive in a car.

23 people stayed on the mountain, hidden, without water, and without eating anything, and then they went to bring us on Monday at 4 in the morning. And then we went in a big car. Cabimos (?) all 23 of us, and we came, and we arrived at Texas. After that, some went to Miami, others to New York, others to Los Angeles, for Sante Fe, and many came to Postville. 10 or 11 of us came to Postville. They – my cousin, my brother, and my brother in laws, gave me food. It was _____

We ate dinner at 10 p.m. 12 of November and after I went to walmart in order to buy things. That is my trip to Postville.

Luis: When I came here, in the border, I left from my house, I spent twelve hours on the bus. In Juarez there came a coyote that took us and prepared us. I have to cross the river. We crossed. We jumped. 5 companions. El Paso, Texas, we didn't succeed. Immigration, - - - (_____ fill in details here)

Running – hotel, we thought that we were in Iowa. I arrived sooner. Another Coyote picked us up. We crossed, another arrived, Closed doors half hour walking until we got there. When I realized they weren't going to liberate us, I cried. I talked with my dad and mom – they spent a lot of money so I could come (? Double check) 8 days here without doing anything. I didn't see the U.S. that I imagined. 2000 en mil – from the company (?). The work was heavy and hard. I didn't enjoy it. I am returning with empty hands. We were working in the company when immigration arrived. Passed 1/2 year, in jail.

Victor:
When I came, I was with or we were 12 people. We left from Guatemala, well, we got on a bus. Chimaltenango. It is almost at the border, in the center. We stayed in a hotel. They didn't give us food. Three in the morning, we woke to cross. Raining (or crying?) We walked three minutes, seated.

HUECHES? Paradas (?Bus Stop?)

We were frightened. When the truck was going, I didn't know anything. We came in cars. We got out....Caminos (Walks) Portuelos (?) to pick us up because we came – we arrived at another town. The twelve I was with were people I did not know. They are from Guatemala. We were together. We stayed together another night. We walked all the day. We were on a bus during all of the night. In Monterrey, well, there... We lost some (4 people)

In a square (like a town square) – We looked – it became late

We came in a bus. We didn't arrive until late.

Border - - - in the bus, we waited about 4 days in the border. We couldn't cross, because there were many helicopters and airplanes crossing over the river. We were there with pain or penalty (.or guilt - - estamos alli con pena) because we were afraid that they would take us. On Sunday, we rested, we began to leave on Monday, There we were leaving to be picked up in Texas – in a truck, they gave us food, clothes, everything was dirty because we had to walk. Another friend came and left (with?) three people in the car – (to go to?) Postville – I, another male, a female, and the driver that drove. We were afraid when....they said that they took him.....fear....we brought...only one time.....if we.....I had more than anything confidence in God that we would arrive.

Onofre: version 1 (**first part is not about getting to the US – its about getting to Mexico**): When I came, I didn't pay a coyote. I came alone – only my cousin and I. My papa traveled for Chiapas He followed me. **A false Mexican birth certificate – one for me and one cousin.** We had to pay 8000 pesos for the bus, each person. **Immigration made me get off the bus, they told me I wasn't Mexican, and I showed them my Mexican birth certificate** We lived in Chiapas for a time. They requested a birth certificate from us. We didn't have anything. They thought that we were Mexicans, and that we could give them money.

The feds were around (?) in all the towns.

In the hotels, we came alone. It cost 6500 pesos for each. We stayed in the hotel on the border. My cousins knew people who crossed the border. They arrived for us in order to cross the desert the next day. We bought food – 4 nights, 4 days. At night, we walked, during the day, we rested.

We began again to walk. We came through the desert walking. Each one had to carry a backpack, a backpack that weighed a lot.

Nothing - - -

Helicopters passed by, but didn't get us. I never saw immigration in the desert. One day we were resting and all the sudden there was a big NOISE – a big snake! We began to run, to continue walking/running. I got up – A truck came for us.

19 people walking

No more than one truck came for all of us.

There were 2 kids from Guatemala who were 8 years old. They got tired of walking. It was a heavy load to carry for one person. We arrived at a place. We arrived all of us at 6 in the morning. We were one on top of the other, in the bus. It was 2 hours till Arizona.

In the house, the señores that brought us – the coyotes, _____
2 days in the house,

My cousins, my cousins who I knew, lived in Postville. I arrived in car in Postville. I was tired. Each time I saw a police, we were thinking that they were waiting for us.

Yes, we ate. We got out of the car. We came and ate. Our trip was not so hard. It is more dangerous to walk in the desert or to come by train.

Version 2: I paid for the trip, lived for a while in Mexico (?). 8 thousand pesos for people for the car. The people thought that we were Mexicans because it is more difficult for the Guatemalans. We traveled in many town. We passed 4 days walking at night and resting in the day. We had very heavy backpacks, with food, water in the hand. One day we were resting by a tree and there was a big....

We were 19 people, but I only knew my cousin, we didn't find the others at the border. We had to bring a kid who was 8 years old who couldn't walk very well.

We arrived at Arizona after 2 hours of walking to arrive in the USA. It was very dangerous, especially when we saw the police.

Victor:

We were 12 in Guatemala (chimaltenango)

We paid the hotel. We got up at 3 a.m. in order to get toward the border of Mexico. We arrived in other towns. We didn't know anyone between us. We lost each other. We were very scared when we arrived in the USA. We walked in the night. We arrived at Texas by bus. 3 arrived in Postville. Thanks to God we didn't have problems with immigration.

Juventino :

I am the oldest in my family.
My dad drank alcohol and I was 10 years old when my dad sold the house where we lived and three of us and I in the family lived without a house.

And I was the oldest. We moved to live in a town and dad drank and rented the house in

13 years and another brother was born. 3 months from birth and dad died and we stayed in the street. The 4 and mom. I began to work at 13 and I began to drink like my dad. At 16 years barefoot – I didn't have money to buy 1st pair of shoes

Renting

At 19 years I met my wife, we worked cultivating land. Our money wasn't enough to rent (?).

When I was 30 years old – 1 child who was 6 years old.

I began to plant(cultivate land) with loaned money and my debt increased.

34 years – 2 varones and 1 daughter

Debt grew and we didn't have time

36 years – American dream

I saw the others that came to the U.S. y contruir (?) I wondered ? – If they could make it, I could also make it.

No money, Couldn't come.

Having a conversation with my wife, I told her, “more debts if I come to u.s.”

One person told her where to go in order to ask for a loan

April 30, 2007, I came to the United States

I left my children and wife without knowing what was going to happen.

24 days of the trip to arrive in Postville – I called my wife and I told her I was going to pay the debts and for that reason I was here. 15 days later I began to work. 6 de junio 2007.

Everything was going well, I started to send money to my family. I paid 60,000 and I should almost the same amount (should have also paid the same amount by now? ?)

12 de Mayo everything ended

I experienced pain for everything that happened that day.
10 years I worked 2nd new son
3 women
4 in school, but for me they put me to work to pay the debts of the house
no education
father could not pay debts alone

- * * * where is this part?

Luis: I left from my house for the border of Juarez and Texas. I went on a bus for 12 hours. A coyote came to pick us up the same day. I crossed the river, jumped **fences**, and arrived at Texas. 3 could not pass. They passed through the .
We thought we were in Iowa but we were not. Another coyote picked us up in a cajuela – large metal tool boxes in pickup truck.
For 3 hours.
Already we didn't obtain , and I talked with my parents and I didn't want to stay and they told me, 8 days after arriving in Iowa and 12 days after beginning to work. **Got to hotel and it was sad, discouraging, called home and told parents I wanted to come home. My parents told me to keep going, they would have to pay back the coyote from Mexico \$1500 = half, up front.** The work was heavy, hard. Cousin told me I would make \$600. But returning with empty hands and I began to work at the company and immigration arrived and 6 months in jail.

Javier: I only had water when one came. The bus left us on the mountain and went to get more (people). I couldn't sleep – There came a snake
At 6 am the others arrived at the hotel and at 10 am we went in a bus. It was 21 people. Immigration was ahead of us (out in the distance). **There were ants and one could not do anything because we had to lay on the ground, so immigration couldn't see us, there were ants all over, biting them.**

We got on the bus and spent 8 days in the desert in order to arrive at the river. Immigration – we saw three times they passed and the fourth time they passed (autocerrado – self closed ?)
7 of us were sleeping in the car. I couldn't sense because we couldn't see them. we hadn't eaten.

When we arrived in Texas we stayed 3 days and after we went to Postville in April and after we began to work – on Sunday I didn't work and I rested on Saturday. In Guatemala it is the reverse. I worked 3 months in the factory

and then immigration arrived. 3 weeks waiting. I didn't know I would be incarcerated.

Oscar (told 21 de enero): I came here from Guatemala...eh...Bueno....As I already commented, I was previously here for three and a half years. I came in October of 2002 and well, I passed through Mexico, sometimes walking, sometimes in Bus, and but I was in a place where I spent 10 days. For example, in the mountain in the forest/ mountain I was there 8 days. We were in a group of companions that were going to bring more. They didn't arrive...(who?)

Well, stationed there, sleeping in the forest, in the pure forest, we slept. One morning, we went with a señor, in order to **buy food** in a place where I stayed under the leaf of a palm. I didn't know if there were dangerous animals there. So I spent time with companions. An animal bit me. **El piquete, a small animal, bit me.** It was very hard. **I was dizzy, unconscious for a while.** I couldn't see what small animals. I could not continue walking. But with the pain, I arrived at a place where I could eat. Bueno, well, I carried a remedy. Already I couldn't talk because I covered my throat. Bueno, well, so it passed in the road. I came well, but I didn't know what was going to happen. There were going to be many things. **So I arrived at the U.S. and I was here 3 and a half years.** I left for Guatemala but I wanted to see my family. I was in Guatemala A year and 7 months. I came to the united states because it is very difficult in Guatemala.

There are various failures in Guatemala. For that reason I came another time here, I came in 2007 in November. By the same route I came with others in a bus and walking. I arrived at the border. When I crossed the border, immigration ran at us in the night, at about 7 in the night. When we were hidden, they stopped as we continued walking. Well, we left running in two groups. One went one way, and the other group went the other way. One went to one side, and the other went to the other side. I could not move. There were many chutes (spiny needles of a plant) and espinas – spiny plants (At this point, Oscar got up and said, Katie, now I am going to begin the theatre – so he could explain the difference between spinach and spiny plants to Katie)

There was a road. He was standing in the road. There were plants – spiny plants. He could not move because the plant had spikey pointy things. So we left....I carried a gallon..I put the gallon on my stomach, I threw myself down on the ground, and I hid myself.

Bulla = Ruida = Noise

It hurt me. I was only waiting till they got me but they didn't get me. So a car and the people from immigration focused with lanterns. I was waiting there, as they focused....I thought they were going to focus on me, but thanks to God, no, no. They said that they are going to bring the dogs. There we were. I couldn't move. I waited until they left, like one hour and a half, or 2 hours.

I didn't find my companions. Well, yes, one I found, and the others, I don't know what happened. We passed the night like that, and immigration arrived. No se metio buscarnos on the mountain. They looked for us, They didn't see us. Immigration only went in the roads. And we returned to the river where we had crossed from one side to the U.S. We crossed the river, behind, another trip. A Boat, a canoe, I passed through. Another time we passed walked through the river. So we returned another time because we couldn't pass. Already we passed well. I came. I walked three hours from there. We got in a truck till we arrived in Texas at Dallas. Some of us went to Postville.

Katie : How did you find the others after you got separated from them?

Oscar: So, 8 people crossed the river. The following day (after we lost the people), 2 or 3 people returned and the day after that day 2 or 3 more, a girl...I don't know if they got her. We didn't see her. I don't know what happened there with us – them.

We crossed with 8 at the beginning of the trip.

18 of January 2009

Victor - pure Marimba music in Guatemala

4-La Llegada

Aaron: My life in Postville...I arrived in November of 2006. It was the 2nd of November that I arrived in Postville. I arrived in a house where my brother and my cousin and a brother in law of my cousin and other friends...Well, there were 14 of us in the house.

They told me I was going to start working but I waited a week. At the end of the week, I began to work, the work was hard or (wasn't hard?) and I couldn't rest. I began to work in the chicken area in the night. I worked

seven weeks in the chicken area. I decided to leave Agri, so I could enter another time and work in a different area.

I applied another time and they told me that the shift began at 3:30 a.m. and we left at 4 p.m. but at times we didn't leave till 9 or 10 at night. When there was a lot of work we left at 9 at night. That is how time passed. The work was rather difficult in this area, well we worked only with knives. Many others didn't hold up because it was a very difficult and we had to work very fast. Many left because it is heavy and hard work. The work was hard and we had to go fast. The boss who told us what to do was one from the U.S. and he was a good person. Another was a good person, one with a green hat, a Mexican. The one with the yellow hat, from here he decided to leave from the factory.

Here, a pause – explain the colors – listed with “most important” first:

Casco Naranja : Orange Hat

Casco Amarillo: Yellow Hat

Casco Verde: Green hat

Casco Dorado: Hard Hat

Casco Blancos: White hats

Gris...?

Then a chicano who was born here (in the US) entered the company and from the time the chicano with the yellow hat began to work, everything was different. Everything had been fine, tranquil, but when the boss left, and the chicano treated us badly and didn't give us break, and he pressured us . . . He fired 7. It could have been different. We worked faster. Sometimes, he didn't give us break, many workers decided to leave from the company. That is how time passed the time till the 12th of May came when immigration arrived. On the 12 of May, when La Migra arrived, we only had half an hour of work left to go. I had heard rumors. Many had said that la migra was going to come but I didn't believe them, I never imagined that they would come. We went down for break at 10 for lunch. I went down in the office to change my gloves. There were two lines of people from La migra. Almost all spoke Spanish (or didn't speak Spanish?). I only saw ICE and I didn't know if it was immigration or not. We left behind the dining room in order to warn friends that were at lunch. I asked my boss, who was with me, who was from here, from the U.S. what was happening and he said, “I don't know.” We went behind where to the area where we usually ate lunch. There were two entrances and the dining room and 2 lines (of people –

immigration officials?) arrived at the other door and they told us, "Don't worry. We're only here to supervise, at this moment you can return to your jobs, We just have something to do." They took me and they arrested me. I went to the jail, well, I didn't go, they took me. It was four hours (of not knowing?) Already the police came, I didn't know what was happening. I don't know if it would be immigration or the police. We didn't know if it was the police or immigration. No one believed me when I saw the entrances and lines of people from immigration. We got together in the lunch area. When ICE entered, they said 'No one move' the supervisors _____ salud.....that nothing would happen, and not to worry., the supervisors said. You all are going to return to your house, the majority of the supervisors know Spanish. Nobody returned, everything was surrounded. I am done with my story.

Javier: When I arrived with my brother(s?), it was Friday, 8 at night. We arrived in the car. They called my brother at about 9 at night. We slept in the morning. He took me to Walmart for things, shoes, clothing. I

5 – La Vida en Postville , Las Condiciones al Agriprocessors

Onofre (recorded January 25, 2009, wearing black stocking cap, black sweatshirt, stonewashed black jeans, chewing gum, sitting on chair, hands behind head...laughter, shifts sits with elbows on thighs): [My life in Postville was] no more than work. When I arrived already 2 cousins were here. They bought clothes. They took me to Walmart at the beginning of the week I began to work. It pained me a lot as I wasn't accustomed to work that way. I worked in the cow killing area. I began at 7 (or 6 sometimes) and sometimes worked till 10 or 11. I arrived at the house with only enough time to prepare food for the next day. I bought a bicycle (smiles, laughs). I suffered a lot working every day for many hours and sometimes they didn't pay us for all of our hours. I told them I worked...(for more than they paid me?) The day went from 6 till 10 or 11 in the night. I worked 11 months, killing cows. For a month, I walked in order to get to work. Later my cousin gave me a ride, but sometimes my cousin left at a different time. I used my bike...in the winter. That is life. La Migra arrived on the 12th of May and there ended my life in Postville. We were five people living in a house, my two cousins, and two other people that I didn't know, they were friends of my cousins.

We had half an hour to eat (at Agri) but it took time in order to get changed so that we didn't get ourselves dirty, and then more time to heat the food in the microwave. We had ten to twenty minutes to eat...20 at the most, to eat lunch. They gave us a 15 minute break but it wasn't sufficient. And we had 15 minutes to eat dinner. The microwaves were full, we had to be there to begin the line so we returned to the house to eat dinner. I almost never rested. On our days of rest, we had to come here (to Decorah) to buy food at Walmart for the following week.

Luis (gray fleece, jeans, white tennis shoes): When I arrived, I had imagined a city much bigger than Postville, I didn't imagine a town so small (laughs). I remember that I arrived at 10 at night in front of Caseys. My cousin showed me around the town, and I remember he told me, "this is the United States." We continued walking somewhere (sin chiquitos? - - porque esta enero - quien se murio? - who died? - it was the men who worked the plant, they were dressed like that) one week passed without working. I lived with five people in an apartment (we were a little bit friends) After getting the papers, they took my papers from a _____. At work, in the factory, Agriprocessors, for three months. I began to work in Agriprocessors in the Department 16 (or 6?) and I did not like the work. I worked there for 2.5 months. After I met more people. Summer came, and I worked 8 months in construction. the boss was very bad because he didn't give us lunch or break. We had to eat lunch before beginning work. I was very hungry. I worked nine months there, then winter came. I left because it was worse than Agri (?) I returned another time to the factory. Some cousins and I made a plan to begin a musical group. We formed it. (ask for more details here.....) We met on the weekends.

I worked in making sausages. In my construction job, I had to get up at 5 in the morning. I left at 6 or 7 in the evening. In Agriprocessor I had to get up at 4 in the morning and left at 3 in the afternoon. Or 4 in the morning till 6 or 7 at night. At first I didn't know any of the others. I was the only Mexican (in my area?) of the plant. I worked with Guatemalans. After days passed, I became friends with the others. The boss was good, he was from Guatemala. After three months, immigration came. I didn't believe it, but each year people said that immigration would come and they never arrived. I asked the boss, and he told me, yes, they are going to come, but not to take people. They are coming for nothing more than to check insurance (or social security numbers= seguros), but it was 10 or 10:30 (in the morning) when immigration arrived we were going to break for lunch at 10:30. It frightened me when all the people came yelling "Immigration". On the 3rd

floor, I hid. This is not immigration, this is police, I thought. When Immigration arrived, he (or someone else?) told me immigration was coming and he said 'don't worry, everything will be fine, they are only coming to check, do inspections/investigations,' and the people told us that they were only going to supervise and observe. Then when it was 10:30 it frightened me when all the people were yelling, "La Migra", o "Migracion." I hid in the plant and desgraciamente they found me. The police found me and that is when my American Dream ended. . . . I lived with people, I rented an apartment. That was my life in Postville. I had a few friends, but the few friends I had they took them, and deported them. For that reason I don't want to return to Postville because I would feel alone. There is no one to listen or talk to who I could talk to about whether everything is fine or if things were bad. In Agri I worked from 4 am till 3 pm. I made sausages. I felt sad when they[immigration] came because now I couldn't not accomplish my dreams. I asked an official what was going to happen with us and he told me 'I don't know. That is going to be decided by a judge.' We passed hours till 4 in the afternoon – and then began trucks – they put us in chains. Amarrar the people. I didn't believe it. Never I have seen. The truth, felt very ugly in that moment. The moment that I began in the bus, I was thinking Adios, Postville, y Adios a los Estados Unidos. I was put abrado (?) I responded as they moored/corralled us (?), sitting on the floor, it seemed that – the people could not because we were moored. How to get up? We stayed....We..

Javier: When I arrived on a Friday, I arrived with my brother, when we came my brother called (or they called my brother) and I left to receive it. We arrive at 8 or 11 p.m. The next day they took me to Walmart in order to buy clothes, shoes to work in. I was in the house for 10 days, not doing anything. My brother had a car. In the factory, I began at 6 am (?) Where I worked it was not hard, but here I had to work on Sundays. I thought that here in the U.S. was easy, but no. I didn't know anything about it When immigration arrived, I had entered (Agri) fifteen minutes before 10 (am). I had been there about 10 minutes inside when La Migra arrived. La Migra was above, I didn't see anything when I was entering the plant. I was going inside when the helicopter arrived, I saw it, I didn't know what it was. When La Migra entered, we didn't know what it was, police or migra, but we knew it was something.

And we were wondering, why are there helicopters? After being inside, we saw the police, the hat and the jacket they wore showed that they were immigration. In the entrance of the door, they were making sure no one could escape on foot. When I arrived in the factory, already they had taken everyone, taking photos. They weren't yelling, they were talking. They took us and they put us in chains and I was outside about 2 hours when I saw the lines and people taking photos, one by one. They took everything from me, keys, billfold, cell phone, and after when I saw my companions in the truck I saw that they were in chains. My turn, they put me in chains. They quickly put me on the bus. Then began the food they gave us - - Ham...

Onofre interjects: the same sausage we had made they gave us

Javier: I was in Postville for almost no time. I was only there 2 months and a half. I wasn't there much time. I live where 7 lived....with my cousins, brother...On my days of rest, I stayed in the apartment 7 or house? watching TV or going to Walmart. I arrived here on the 29th of January. I worked with Luis (?) packing jam and sausage in boxes.

Oscar: I was lived here before for 3 and a half years in Postville and after I went to Guatemala and after I returned to the US in 2007. I arrived and then one of my brother in laws I had received me. There were 5 of us, living in an apartment, my cousin and two brother in laws, and a nephew (?). I arrived with them and I was also here a little bit longer than a month without work. The 15th of January I began to work in Agriprocessors. As I had already worked here before, I worked in department 14, in the killing of chickens. This time, I soliticed my job. They gave me the same job. The job was also difficult. We used pants that could get stained with blood and as there was much trash. we had to use glasses so we didn't get dirty, or get stained too much with blood. We covered the car with paper so we wouldn't get blood all over it. It was hard, it didn't let up. So it was the work there and it was hard and so one couldn't rest. You could rest a little. Sometimes, well, I saw someone resting but he/she had a hand on the chicken, waiting. Sometimes one would suddenly stop working - No, because the rabbis - the ones they arrested...Chicken, they hung...sometimes the boss would arrive when [the conveyor] stopped. The boss arrived angry ___ the rabbi was not working. He was watching. . . (? ? regañar? Uno) [we/I did]All of this was to keep a job. But I continued working because if one loses his job its difficult to find another. In Postville, well, life....the weekends, we rested. But it wasn't rest because one had to the laundry or to go to buy things for

the food during the week. We didn't rest well, sometimes we watched tv. So, that is how the day went, without resting. That was how my life was in Postville... Well, until the 12th of May....this day was a Saturday, my brother in law told me that tomorrow La Migra was going to come in order to check our seguros but I didn't believe it and I did not go to work on Sunday and nothing happened, and so I went to work on Monday. I was at work when Suddenly the assembly line of the machine stopped, frozen. They stopped the line, but we didn't know why. Suddenly, a guy was outside, when he entered, there it was surrounded. When we left, we tried to find a way to hide. We went in a room. There was no exit. An official told us "Go outside". "Here is Immigration" and we couldn't do anything because everything was surrounded. We couldn't hide ourselves because there was no place. They told us, "Leave and go outside: There is no problem" We thought that in the best circumstances, the boss would fix everything. They took us outside and everyone was there. Everything around was full of police and when the helicopter was above, they told us nothing was going to happen. an hour and half they told us, "make a line" and they took us below. They saw, "Already now we end everything" Supposedly we had a hope of continuing to work... We went below in order to get our photos taken and they asked us questions. There ended the dream that we had. I don't have anything more to say. That's how life goes, well, and it was a day that no one imagined...but it happened.

In response to question: My brother in law just told me that possibly immigration was going to come.

Victor: My life in Postville, well, I did nothing more than work. I arrived on 23 of March 2007. I was in Postville with some friends in a house, there I lived 6 or 7 people and I was without work for a few weeks. And after I applied for a job. I didn't know anyone, well, my friends worked in another area. I worked in Department 7 and I began to de-vein the cows that were already dead. The boss – the supervisor – told me to work in the line where they cut the meat. For two months I worked there, and after, I changed places and after I worked with the Rabbi in salting the meat and after that, washing the meat. All the meat has names and we selected the meat. I worked there 10 months. The first two months de-veining cows and cutting meat. After I had a set job, after the area where we got the meat. This was my job until the raid happened, well and I could no more than work but later the migra got us. After I didn't think...IT was a dream and already we recorded that before....to do something. My dreams already are not worth

anything....for my family. I met friends from Mexico and Guatemala. I had friends. My friends when the raid happened – I don't know where they went. I went with other people but they were different. My companions from my house were deported. My life in the jail...First I was...They sent us to Waterloo...because we were immigrants, they told us that we would spend 5 months in jail. I was sad, I thought that it was not certain. There we left from Waterloo. We were there 3 days and ...(continued in life in jail section)

6- La Redada

12 de mayo 2007 – ESCRITO de JUVENTINO:

Fue un día Lunes a la 10 de la mañana cuando yo entre en la hofisina arresivir mi uniforme para ponerme a la hora del trabajo entrando en el comedor a dejar mi mochila en el laker y suvi en el departamento numero 19 donde trabajava entrando en el lugar y pocos minutos despues cuando algien grito disiento la migra la migra y todos corrimos de un lugar otro lugar pero no avia donde esconternos. Al fin encuentre un lugar en el Segundo nivel en medio de muchas paletas de platos y charoles yo y hotros muchachos nos escondimos como dos horas mas homes escuchavamos los ajentes pero no Las personas que travajavan alli y estavamos muy asustados porque nunca en mi vida avia ho le avia faltado el respeto a la autoridad Pasaron las dos horas cuando unos ajentes nos encontraron y nos sacaron de donde estavamos escondido y yo pense que a las demas personas se avian escapado. Pero yo estava equivocado porque cuando bajamos en un lugar nuevo que era para el brek ya estava llenos por todas las personas que ya los avian agarrado meyevaron en medio la fila donde teniamos que pasar ante un hoficial para endenticarnos retomaron foto y firme y des pues me yevaron en hotro cuarto en medio de las de mas personas Pero en tre nosotros desiamos que solo una semana y nos deportava porque pensavamos que eramos imigrantes ho indocumentados no ladrones ni asesinos ni tampoco traficantes Sino eramos y somos trabajadores alli termino el suenyo american alli murio todo era como 2 o 3 de la tarde cuando mesacaron afuera en donde estavan los autobuses al salir y llege o llegamos con mis compañeros nos levantaron. Las manos como que fueros de dincuentes y ese fue la primera vez que me pusieron cadenas en los pies en las manos y en la sintura Yo tenia 37 años de edad jamas avia visto esto en mi vida nos metieron al autobús y ese dia dija adios a Pastlle y nos llevaron awuarilo alli

Fue una pesadia para mi y para todos Llegamos como las 6 de la tarde del mismo dia alli nos dejaron con un solo pantalon y una plallera hotraba dimos todo nuestro datos y esa noche nos llevaron en un lugar posiblemente se llama arena ho no se expesificamente como sellama el lugar pero loque se esque estaba llenos de escritorias ho mesas computadora alli pase 3 ho 4 horas sin poder tragarme mi propio saliva por la tristeza pensando en mi esposa mis tres ijos mi madre y mis ermanos y me isieron preguntas que nada queber en mi vida al fin como 11 ho 12 de medianoche me llevaron en donde poder recostar un poco pero en esas camillas abia mucho frio porque en bes de chamarra era una sabana esa noche no dormi para nada el hotro dia me asignaron un abogado y el medio las respuestas en cuando pasamos antel el Jues el mismo dia pasamos antel Jues y el Jues nos dijo que una semana despues ibamos arresibir nuestras sentensia salimos de grupo 20 ho 30 personas y ami metoco con el grupo que se fueron a Wuest Yunion y llegamos en ese contado muy tristes pero teniamos todavia la esperanza de ser deportado un poco mas de tiempo a los tres dia llego el abogado avisitarnos pero cual fuel la sorpresa que nos dijo que el gobierno tenia una hoferta para todos porque eramos bastante la hoferta que nos declararamos culpable de robo de indentidad sino queriamos entonses el gobierno ara todo la envistigacion y nos llevaria ante el gran jurado en ese pasaria 2 ho 3 meses y si perdemos una multa de 100 dolares ho 2500 mil dolares pero si nos declaramos culpables nos faboresia mas por que eran 5 meses nadamas de que podemos nosotros hopenernos si todo lo teniamos de perder no abia nada ni nanie por nosotros sin pensar en que me metia firme. Todo las ojas porque lo que queria es llegar ??? Pido con mi familia y asi fue que firmamos los documentos 8 dias despues nos llevaron awuari luu para resivir la sentensia de 5 meses que fue muy duro para aseptarlo porque consientemente no aviamos cometido algun delito segun. Para nosotros despues de resivir la sentensia nos regresaron a Wuest Yunion aun no podia aseptarlo y en peso el sufimiento para mi como tambien para mi familia espesialmente para mi esposa por muchas cosas y por lose studio de mis ijos nemodo tenia que aseptarlo puedo recordar minuto por minuto en la carsel nos levantaron 6 AM desaguno un poquito de confles una cajita de leche era el desaguno y en el almuerzo entreveses espagete revuelto con tomate que son comidas que uno no podia comer porque no tenia sabor para nada el almuerzo es alas onse de la mañana y la sena un pan saunch una mansana y una cajita de jugo de naranja y la hora era las cuatro de la tarde y nos dormiamos 9.45 PM. Nos dava mucho amber entre beses wuardabamos una mansana para comer esa hora pero unas beses que lo isimos los encontro el ofisial y los tiro alavasura y nosotros nos dormiamos con el estomago basia

y con muca amber era todos los dias y estube alli 75 dias y luego me llevaron a hotro contado que yo conosi como serro gordo y era la misma cosas una semana acansas y siembre awuantanto mucha hambre pero lo mas duro es que en medio de personas que si an echo algun mal a alguien pero nosotros estabamos trabajanto nada mas 15 dias des pues nos levantaron a la 1 de la mañana y nos dijeron que nos ivamos en las manos de imigracion 4 de la mañana ya estabamos en cadenados manos pies como 8 de la mañana nos sacaron a canses y nos llevaron a la europuerto para biaja donde nosaviamos como 10 de la mañana nos suvieron en el avion y caminamos casi 4 orar para llegar amayami florida hotra bes cofederales que nunca terminaba la pesadia para mi y nos llevaron en una pricion pero todos los viajes que isimos era encadenado las manos en la sintura que no podia rascarse ni la cara mucho mas pero la cavesa yellamos con personas que tenia 20 a 30 años de pricion pero nosotros nada que ber con esto ese tiempo fue muy duro para mi porque yo devia ho devo todavi como 5000 dolares en mi pais que si me afecto mucho que si ma iva a perder mi familia pero faltava una semana para terminar la sentecia cuando me dijeron que tenia que quedarme pero yo lla no queria quedarme porque ya era mucho tiempo de no ablar con mi familia en majinase solo able como 3 beses durante los 6 meses en serrado para mi y tambien para mi esposa era mucho tiempo y tambien para mis ijos al ponderme a pensar esto mevajan lagrimas porque no fue fasil pasar todo este tiempo pues a hora solo espero superar un poco de todo el tiempo de vida que me quitaron porque para mi como que me enterraron bivo porque enserrado sin poder aser nada por mi esposa mis ijos y todos los ijos de todos los compañ que estubimos enserrados juntos con ellos con mucho sufrimientos ay bese ho muchas beses nos pondemos a pensar el gobierno ho todos los que tomaron esa decision acaso no tienen esposas ho ijos pero algun dia mi Dios los ba acobrar pero sera muy caro porque su palabra dise que millo es la vengansa en esa palabra confio yo

Lo poco que e expresado en este escrito ay mas pero son muchas palabra

Si loque puese desire s que todo los biajes no fueron agradable porque biajabamos muchas horas pero atados las manos en la sintura y las pies tambien que es jamas me olvidare jamas en mi bida estos malos recuerdo ye mellevare muy dentro de mi corazon

Grasia porcomprenterme

Javier (gestured a lot during this section to show how they were in chains – physically demonstrated how he couldn't reach his ankles, etc.): they put us in chains. Two hours we were moored / landed on water.....(?)

We arrived in Miami. They were going to put us all in chains. Everyone separate – We felt

How so tired, when one says, you can't rest up against the wall and leave there, we would leave, we only wore a shirt and it was cold, frozen, we were trembling and wanted to have them put on the heat, but they didn't put it on. Shoes also in chains. We couldn't bend. Couldn't reach foot. Chains on our feet, on our hands, on our waist.

Juventino: I am going to give a summary of the 12th day of May. It was 10 in the morning on Monday. I arrived in the department where I put on my uniform. I had just finished putting on my uniform and it began. Someone yelled, “La Migra! La Migra!” and everyone was running. We all ran.

Between this I went with companions to the 2nd floor. Some had gone more inside, there to the door, put kicked (?)

We heard immigration passing, police. It wasn't only immigration, We heard that they passed almost 2 hours – We were hidden almost 2 hours. We left. They told us, take off the uniform, We threw them on the floor (double check). We didn't carry anything more. We were working. Everyone would have escaped, I said /thought , if we had been prepared (??). When I saw everything I was saying that only us, already taking fingerprints, photos, in order to send us in buses. I passed people who took photos, my dates, in order to go on the bus. When I arrived in the bus, they put me in chains, my feet, my hands, my waist, with chains, and we went in the bus. As my friend Luis, just said, “Adios Postville, Adios Los Estados Unidos”

We got to Waterloo, and had colocidas (?), sabritas (?) and water. It was the first time we had eaten and I couldn't.

We arrived in Waterloo. They had prepared a place for us, a place where cows stayed. It was divided with nets there, like the place we worked. It was very cold. They took all the clothes, all the pants, all the playera (?) that we carried. We arrived in a place where people play sports games – a stadium. They took us one by one in order to interview us. We were trembling with cold. A mountain of questions. The questioners drank coffee. The pain, the sadness, 2-3 hours we spent there in the stadium. They returned me behind where they had taken my pants and jacket. I had a sheet, nothing more, a military type bed. Each time they entered . . . ?? ? Waist, Barely –

molestradas (?) (Something about the chain on the waist bothering him every time he moved) All night...., another day, we passed the same way....Aballar (?) We were there two nights, maybe there was going to be another court meeting. We returned from West Union. They brought us in order to receive our sentence. This is only a summary.....Never did we think....two times in West Union, one week, they took me to Kansas, 15 days I was in Kansas, they took me to Miami City, 52 days and they took me to immigration center of detention. They got us they took us to Oklahoma. Two nights in Virginia, Descalamos (?) Later we returned to Kansas another time. They said 15 days in Kansas. We ended another time. They took us to Dubuque. We Were in Dubuque to Cedar Rapids – This is a summary, nothing more. Luis: I passed a week without working until I had the papers. I worked for 3 months in Postville. After someone found me a job in construction. I worked there for 8 months. After, I returned to Agriprocessors. When they told me that immigration was coming, I didn't believe it. My boss, he told me the truth. 10:30 am, immigration arrived. I felt sad, because I couldn't accomplish my dreams that I had. When I asked what would happen with us, the señor told me, "I don't know," When I was in the bus, I said Adios Postville y a los Estados Unidos. Algunos estaban amarados (????)

Javier: We were in chains for 2 hours in the bus. We had chains on our hands, feet, and waist.

Juventino: 12 de Mayo: They knocked at 10 a.m. where I worked. When we understood that the police, the immigration were there, we were running. I was hiding for almost 2 hours. Finally they found us 4. the others escaped. People were taking photos of us in the Bus When we arrived they put chains on our feet, our hands, and our waist We ate sabritas (?). We couldn't drink water because our hands were in chains. It was very cold. We were in a stadium and they interrogated us one by one, and we were (tromblando) – trembling? Shivering? Three hours and we were thinking about the penalty, the family, and sadness. They asked us many questions, about everything. 15 days Kansas and they sent me to Miami (52 dias) after immigration, after Oklahoma (2 nights, Virginia - - escolar (?)) and Kansas (15 dias) Dubuque (a week) Cedar Rapids

7- El Encarcelamiento

Victor (continued from life in Postville section): My life in the jail...First I was...They sent us to Waterloo...because we were immigrants, they told us that we would spend 5 months in jail. I was sad, I thought that it was not certain. There we left from Waterloo. We were there 3 days and ...

[when in jail...]

I didn't know what I was thinking, I was sad and I thought about my family and I couldn't talk [to them?] and I didn't have money, I didn't have anything. I couldn't talk. I was there 3 months. There was not heat. We ate a sandwich for all three meals and they took me to another locked up place in Mason City and I was there three weeks. The food changed there, they gave us a little more and so then I felt a little better. I didn't know anyone. We slept, all of us. We conformed [/accepted?] to what had happened. Then I went to Kansas and there I stayed for no more than 3 days. And only some others also went there. There I met some people from Postville .from there they took us in an airport and thought I was going to Guatemala and I was excited. And I asked an official where we were going and he told me 'I don't know, but it is to another jail' I felt very sad because it was not the news I had hoped for. We arrived in Miami at about 2 in the afternoon. They interviewed us, asked questions, took blood, so many things. We finished at 11 in the night. And they took us and we were unified (? Or in uniforms?)

A companion and I were together but we didn't know each other. As I don't know English and the official didn't know Spanish, and we entered to the jail and there were bunk beds and the official told me to go on the upper bunk. And it was only made of metal, there was no mattress. He only gave me a (cobilla – cover?) and I didn't sleep at all, I was so cold. The official arrived at 6 in the morning so we could eat breakfast. A man, another prisoner, asked me if I was new. I missed that jail because it was like a hotel with good tables and rich food and I said, "Well, yes, it is okay, it is fine" But I missed my family. I spoke with my wife. And she knew that I was in jail but she didn't know where. . . . There we spent 7 weeks. There were games (?), there they gave us jobs. There were very good people there. They gave us soup, so we did not stay hungry. Sometimes in the night I felt a little hungry. I was happy because I had already spent five months and I was going to go to see my wife. And after I received a call and they told me that I had received a work permit and I told them that I could not sign it because I did not know what it was for and my lawyer had told me not to

sign anything because if I did, it might be something that would require me to stay in jail longer. But here I did not follow that rule/law because I already had signed my papers regarding deportation. And other officials told me that I had to sign this work permit and I did not I could receive more time in jail. And already they had made a group to go to Guatemala. And they gave us three shirts and pants to dress ourselves and there arrived an official that told us that we were going to Guatemala and I felt very happy. They took us to go to Guatemala and they put 10 people in a van going to Guatemala and we went in a bus and we went walking 10 or 15 minutes and I realized that the bus returned to the jail and I felt sad, that I was there. Only 10 of us did not leave for Guatemala. We spent three days there in the center of detention. Ten of us were there for (2 weeks?) and we went to Oklahoma. They carried us in a plane to Virginia and there were only prisoners in the plane, some 180 people from different nationalities, dressed in jail clothes, with (esposas? - - - chains? Wives?) also we were in Kentucky. Nothing more happened. Finally in Kansas another time we flew almost one entire day and we didn't know the reason why. I also went to Kansas and we were also in Kansas for 2 weeks another time. And from there they got us from Kansas and took us to Des Moines to get our fingerprints and photos and we spent one hour and from there we went to Dubuque and we stayed there one week. And we went to Cedar Rapids and they took everything and they gave us the GPS (on our ankles) and phone cards for cell phones. They gave all this to me and took all this from me in Postville. And from there they brought us to Decorah. We didn't know anything, if we were given two weeks or maybe a year to be here, we didn't know. We didn't know.

Javier: I was in Benton and it was a closed room, I couldn't see the sun, Well, I didn't see anything. We only could see the time on the TV and we felt content because that is how the day passed. A friend made a calendar and put an X on each day. One could go crazy because one couldn't see the sun. And then entered a guard with more prisoners. One month passed and it was very hard and when the flood happened they took us and we went with sandals, 10 of us (?). At 10 in the morning and we had to go to another jail and we thought that they were going to send us to Guatemala. Because my friends said that they gave us five months but that we only had to do half. They put us in chains and they took us to Cedar Rapids (of Benton) When I went to a different jail, I changed friends. Another flood in Cedar Rapids also happened. We were put in trucks (change trucks?) in chains on our feet. On all our feet, like pure animals, like cows, for about one hour.

We got down and we went up in a bus and we went to another jail. It took two hours. We were three days. We were free in a big room, maybe 30 of us. Three days we were threr and after the federal from Kansas, we arrived at 3 in the afternoon. And there in Kansas I felt more liberty. We went out in the yard, we bought things, like good. There I was for three months. The Mexicans there gave us soups and sodas. I was fine and I thought that this was how all my time in jail was going to go. But they told me that I had to fly and I thought of Guatemala. They put us in chains and one stop we rested like 150 of us and everyone thought that we were going to Guatemala but we arrived at the airport and they registered us. WE arrived at Miam and there were 150 of us. The other half left for another prison. They gave us jail clothes another time. Only three of us went to a cell, a big cell. I couldn't keep anything because they found everything and I could be punished (if I was found keeping anything). I was in Miami for a month and a half. 15 (days?) before leaving they came down to me from the office and told me I had to sign something. I thought it was a lie, I didn't know anything. The paper said if I didn't sign I would spend more time in jail. I signed and Wednesday came and they told me that on Friday they were going to get me to arrive on Saturday in Guatemala. On Friday I got up at 5 am. I thought of going to Guatemala. I was alone in a cell, the only dark skinned one. And then Luis arrived. Friday they are going to get us. When we arrived in court they sent me to a lawyer. Luis, Elmer, and I had to stay in solitary confinement for 15 days. There I couldn't see the sun, there was nothing, They passed the food through a little window. I was alone and Luis and Elmer were together and the same time Luis passed and another with Elmer. I felt very sad because I was alone. We thought that our friends were going to arrive. Only the food that they gave us I ate (?). The last arrived at 2 and we drank water because we were hungry. There was nothing to eat. After 15 days they came down to punish the three of us. We were another week (in solitary confinement?). we went on a plane to Oklahoma – they took everyone – 13 – we plus 3 woman who worked in the plant Agriprocessors as well. Virginia, Kentucky, and a return to Kansas and in Kansas we only spent 2 weeks and after they took us to Des Moines. There they took our photos and fingerprints and they carried us in a van another time to Dubuque. In Dubuque we spent 2 weeks. After they took us to Cedar Rapids and we all saw lawyers and they took us to court. And they put this on us (points to GPS), el “cellular” (smiles), and after we arrived here in Decorah and we felt free. We were happy because we were outside.

Onofre: They took us in almost the same jails and the same planes. Well, I felt rather sad. The first week I was in Waterloo. I was with another friend that I didn't know. We were sitting on the bare floor, and it had changed to cold. There, one didn't wait for anything, just food. They closed us another time in the cell before eating, after we left in order to eat and they left us on the floor, sitting, until 10:30. We spent all day long, sitting on the floor, we couldn't sleep. We slept no more than between the hours of 11 in the night till 5 in the morning. They took us to another jail and it began to rain and I saw that my friends were outside and I was alone in the cell, I couldn't watch tv. When we arrived in Kansas, yes, I felt more free, because I could leave and go in the yard and there were microwaves and we could buy soup. One is accustomed to eating a lot, and we had to share something with the others. It is very hard to be in jail, sometimes 6 or 7 of us shared a little bit of soup, with one spoon, nothing more. If I ate in front of my friend, he also was hungry, so I had to give him a little bit. In Cerro Gordo we stay. No lawyers took me. They forgot about me. I worried a lot because I thought that I had more problems. Later they took me to another cell where there were more criminals (or prisoners who were more serious criminals?). We were three friends. They didn't let us watch TV. Sometimes we wanted to see the Spanish channel but they took control from us. We didn't understand anything. One day they took us to court and ... and (gave me?) 15 days and later I felt happier because we left from there. WE went to Kansas for the second time and already after 3 days they took us to Miami. And there the people were very nice. The prisoners got together to share/keep things, a big sack of food and clothes. They are Colombians, Cubans. They had other problems. They told us "you should not be here, you are workers, you didn't deserve to be here, so then don't worry, God will help you, they told us." They gave us a chingo of food. They helped us a lot. I was in the cell with one Colombian. He was a very good person because he shared food with me and washed my clothes and sometimes doubled me (?) He was a señor that had spent 20 years in jail. I couldn't call my family even one time. I did nothing more than I called my sisters here in order to ask them about my family. And because of that, I felt happy because I knew that my family was fine. We left to Virginia...etc....Until we arrived here. That was how life in jail went. We hope not to return there.

Luis: When it was the night that they were going to send us to Mason City, I remember that the officials that had lots of pizzas and pops and we were very hungry and we requested a piece of pizza and they told us no, that they

had already distributed our food. I was in a cell with 10 others. I was the only Mexican, the others were Guatemalans. They took us in the night because the water and the lights didn't work (?) when the flood happened. We spent a month and a half in Andorra. There my family, my aunt and a grandmother and grandfather - - they tried to communicate with me and wanted to know if I was okay because they didn't have any news from me. I spoke with my grandfather and told them "I am fine, I don't know when I'm leaving" and they told me that it would throw _____ and there was no reason to echar ganas ? ? ? ? . I told them if I didn't call my family it was because I didn't have money to call my family but tell them that I love them a lot. They took me to _____ and there I could communicate with my family. And they told me "echar ganas" ? ? and that we were waiting with open arms and I felt very sad to listen to my parents and my wife. I spoke with my aunt that is in Postville and she told me its okay. A guard told us that we were going to Miami. We arrived and there it was more difficult because I didn't know the people. There we had to work, in the kitchen, washing plates, making food. It was very hard. I had a sentence of deporation to Guatemala, not to Mexico. The consulate told me that you are going with a group from Guatemala and that from there I would go to where I was from. But I didn't know how it was going to happen because I didn't have money. They took us where they have courts and told us you're not going. They gave us a call. I couldn't communicate with my mom, I spoke with my aunt. I told her to call my parents and my wife and she said don't worry because from what we know they are going to give you a work permit. They arrived for us 2 and from there to Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Kansas. Already everything changed. They didn't treat us like criminals. They offered us a hamburger, and a pop. And they told us that we were going to Decorah. The supervisors offered a hamburger in McDonalds and I had never imagined that I would eat another time in McDonald's, or that I would be in Iowa another time. But we are here, and we'll see what happens.

8 – Epilogo – vida ahora, esperando