



**BLUE & BLACK:
STORIES OF
POLICING AND
VIOLENCE**

BY RACHEL MARIE-GRAVE WILLIAMS

A Note from Project NIA

(www.project-nia.org):

As readers hopefully develop a critical consciousness about the roots of police violence, it is our hope that they are galvanized to take action to transform these injustices.

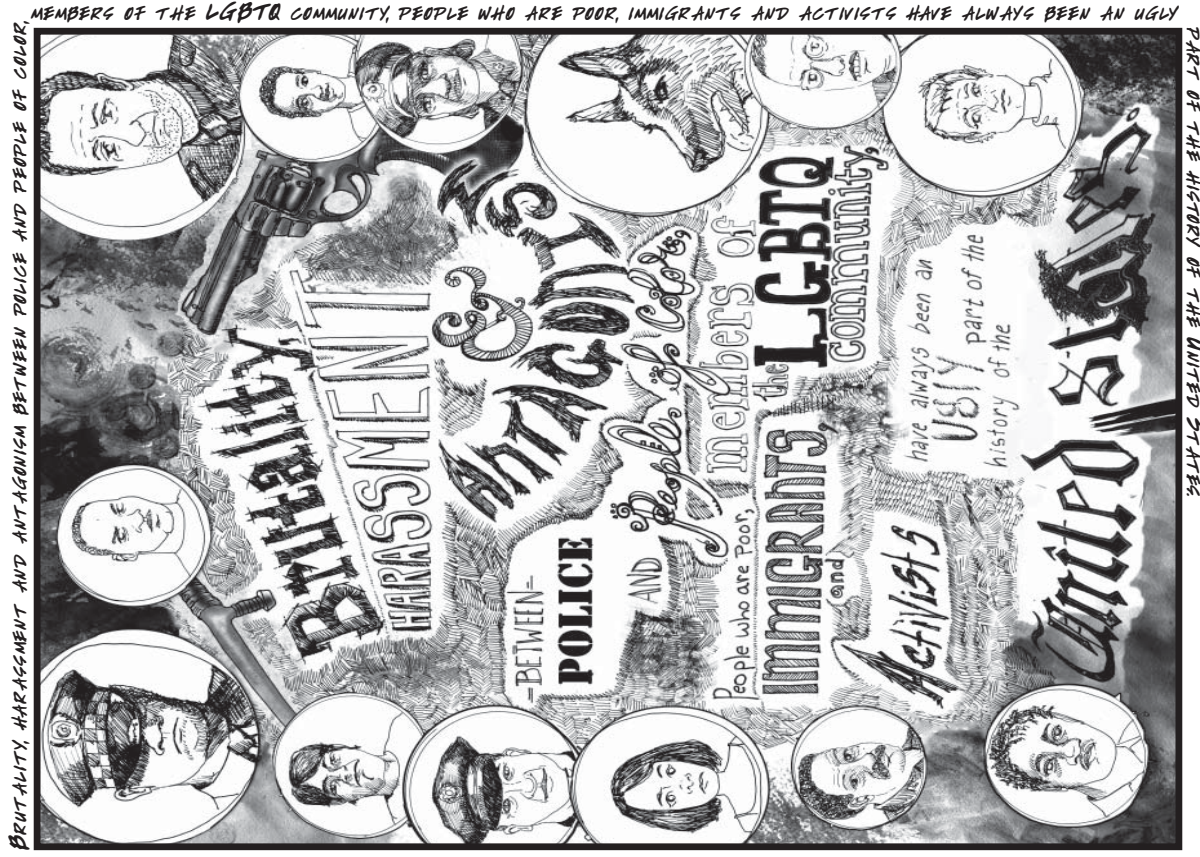
For many of the young people who we work with, the police symbolize fear rather than protection. The experience of being consistently harassed by law enforcement is deeply felt and can engender a great deal of anger. Much of that anger however is unexpressed and it is almost never analyzed or contextualized historically. Thus young people are sometimes left feeling powerless in the face of aggressive policing in their communities. The police are our most readily accessible symbol of the state's power over our daily existence. Their role in our society, in our communities, and in our lives deserves to be examined and discussed.

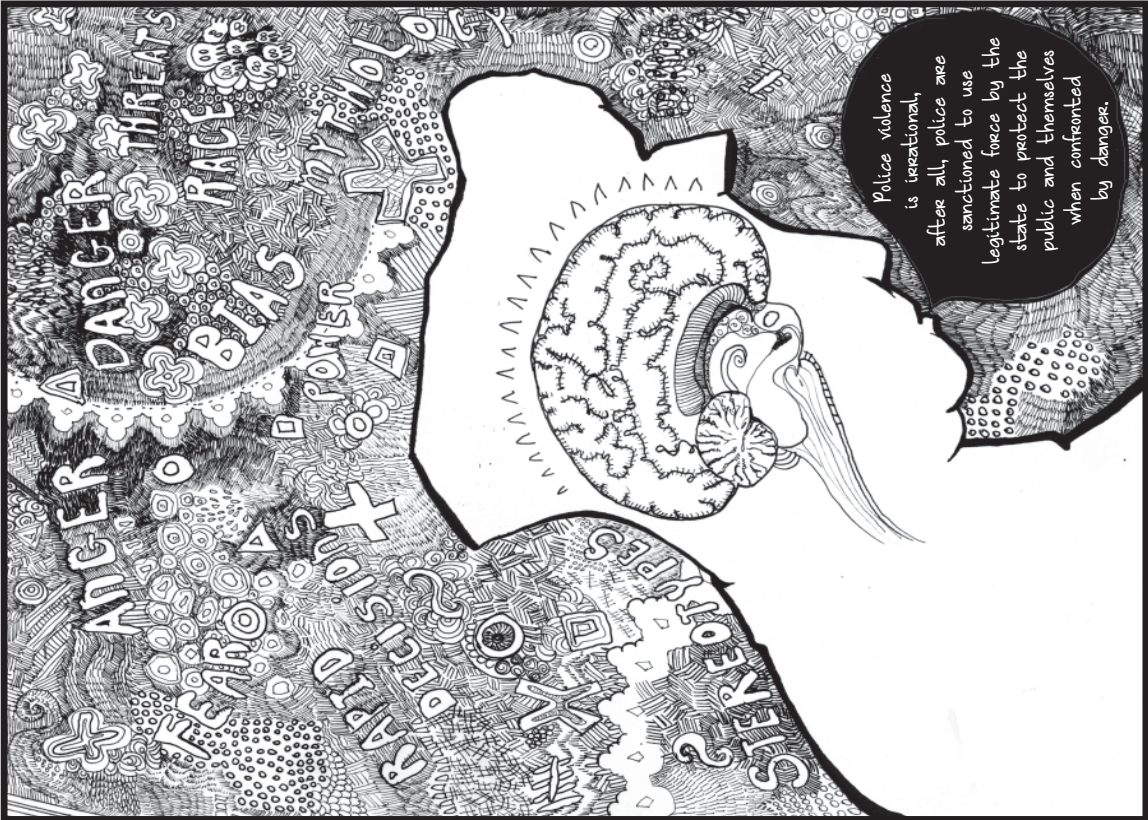
We hope that this comic contributes to catalyzing these discussions and we invite you to share it with everyone who you think would be receptive to its message and also with those who might find the information more challenging. This comic is part of a larger project titled "Policing, Violence, and Resistance." Our goal in the project is to answer the following question: how do we as adults engage young people around the history of policing in the United States and the manifestations of police violence?

You can find a set of resources including this comic online at <http://policeviolence.wordpress.com/>.

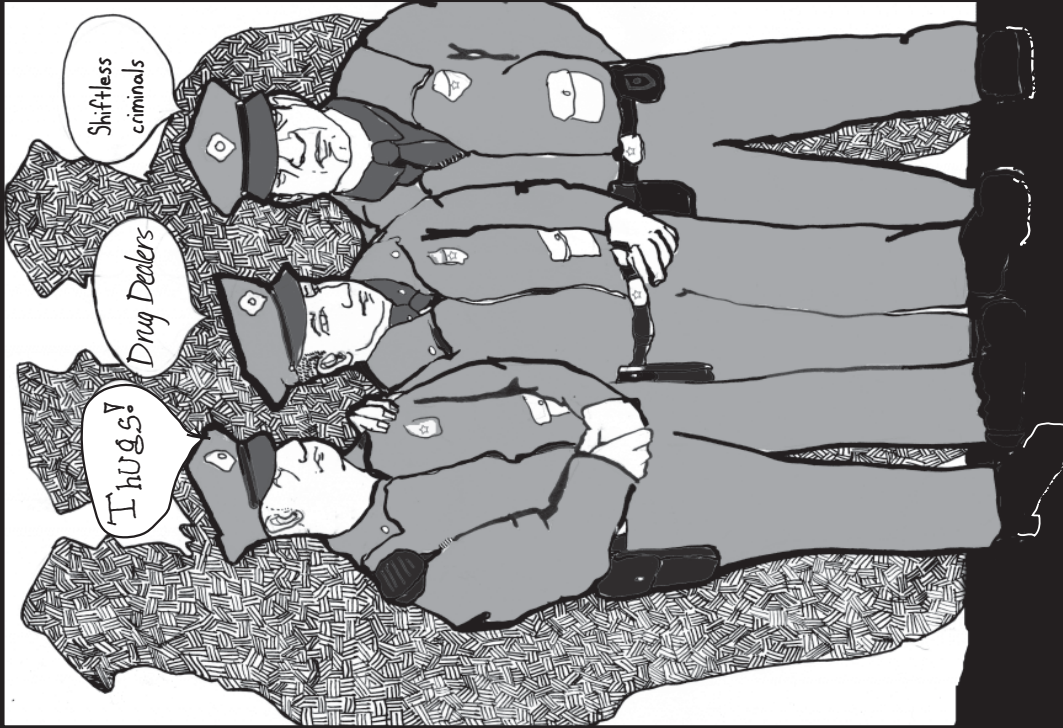
In Peace and In Solidarity,

Mariame Kaba
Founder and Director, Project NIA





One explanation for police violence is stereotypes based on the cultural, social, and emotional bias of police.



Often stereotypes are made up of exaggerated mythologies and perceived threats. Likewise citizens may harbor and react to stereotypes about police.

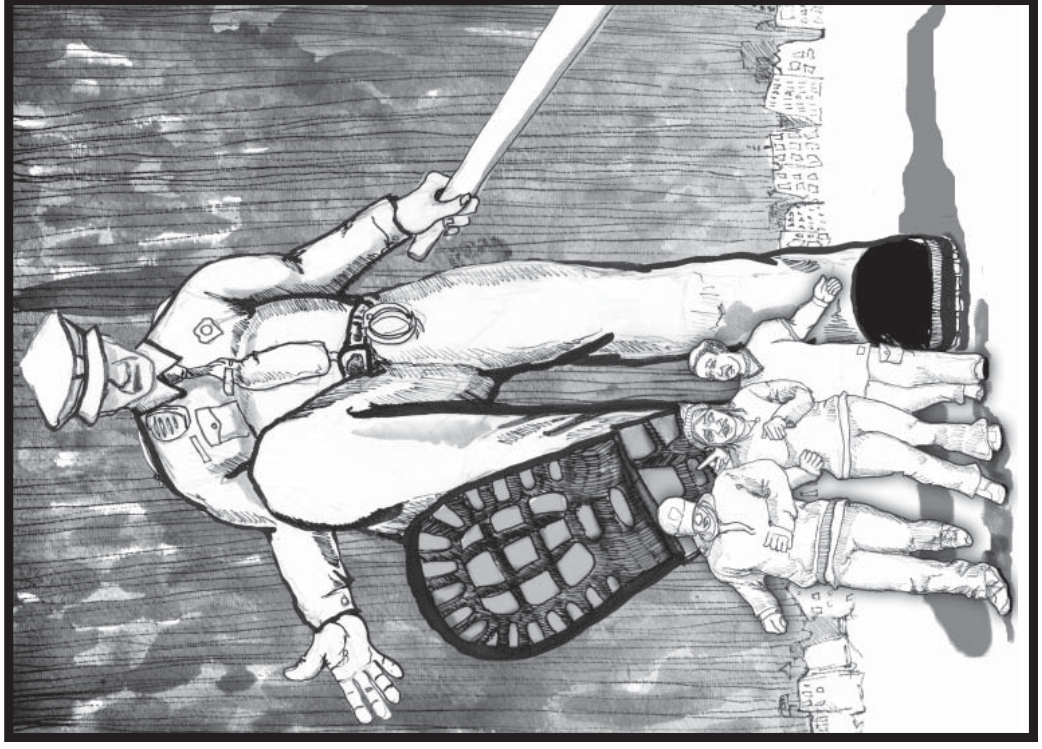


STEREOTYPES

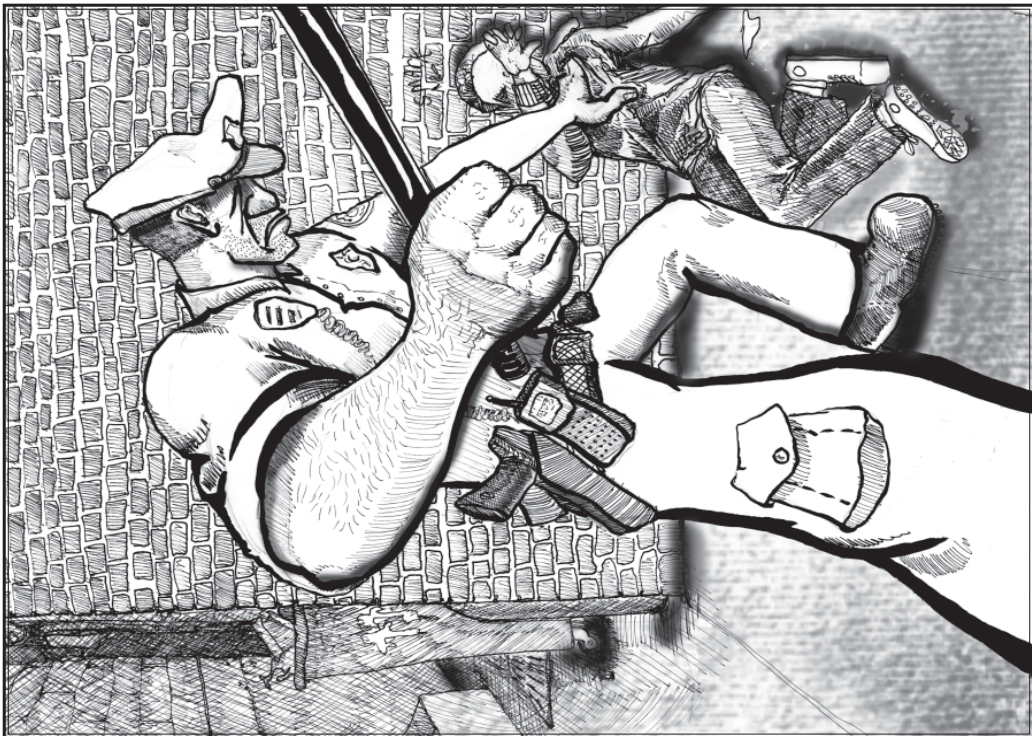
The fears of citizens are well grounded; especially if they are people of color or poor. Research has shown that police are more likely to use excessive force in neighborhoods with high concentrations of people of color and/or people who are poor.



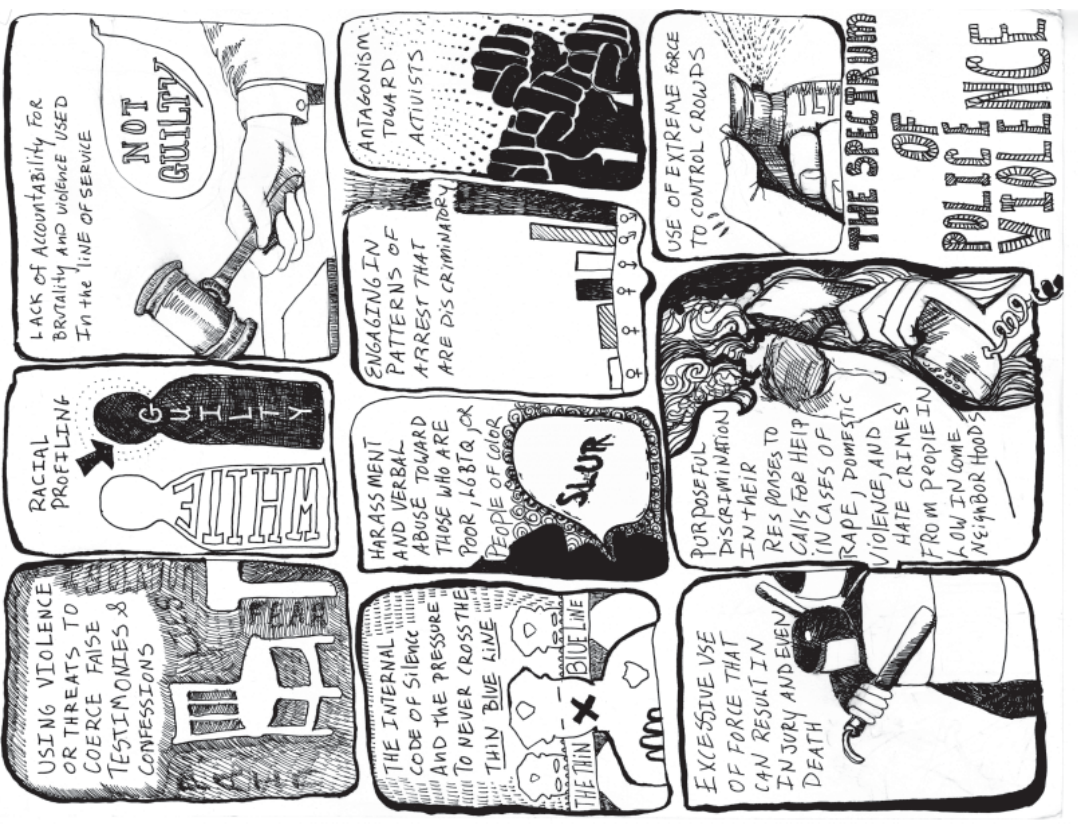
For over a century "dangerous classes", immigrants, people of color, those who transgress gender and heterosexual norms, and the poor have been defined and oppressed by those in power to maintain the status quo. Crime control has been one mechanism used to maintain the social hierarchy.



While this is important to consider when we think about the uses of police by the state, it is more likely that in cases of police brutality individual police or small groups of police personally feel "threatened" in some way by the victim.

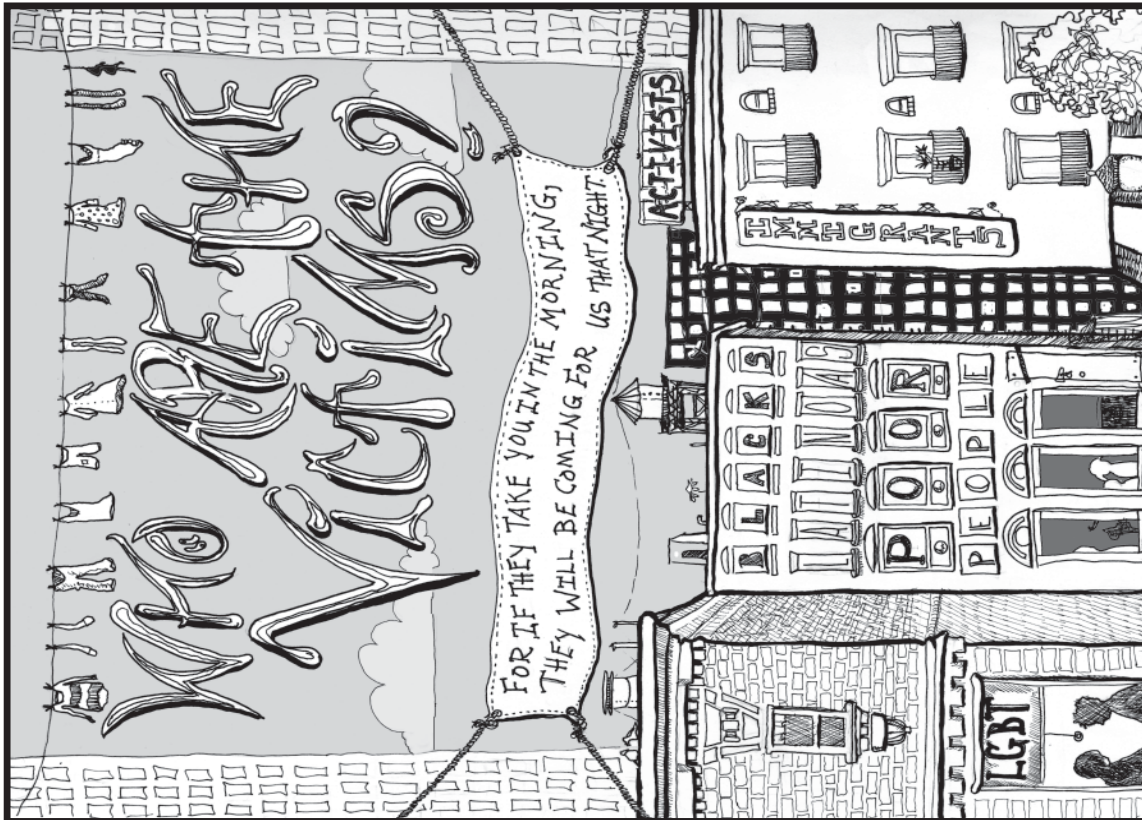


The spectrum of police violence includes a range of actions, policies, reactions, and ideology.





|S/MO/RN|E|S|



Stop AND FRISK:

WALKING WHILE BLACK

LAST WEEK I WAS WALKING HOME FROM School.com



IT HAPPENS PRETTY OFTEN...

HEY... YOU... SON... I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!



YES SIR



OF COURSE I STOPPED. I LEARNED, WHEN I TURNED FROM A BOY INTO A TEENAGER THAT I COULD NEVER TAKE MY STATUS FOR GRANTED. I MIGHT BE FEARED OR SEEN AS A

POSSIBLE TROUBLE MAKER OR WORSE, A PREDATORY CRIMINAL BECAUSE I AM A BLACK MALE.



IT'S ALMOST ALWAYS THE SAME. FROM SCHOOL SIR... IT'S JUST A PEN AND MY MP3 PLAYER.

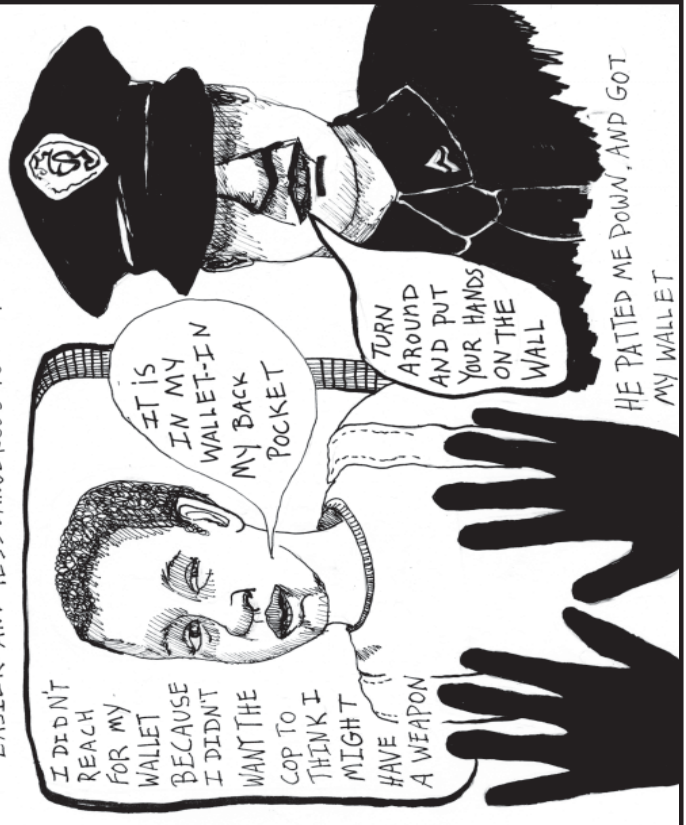
WHERE ARE YOU COMING FROM? WHAT IS IN YOUR POCKET?



I SLOWLY HANDED THE OFFICER MY PEN AND MP3 PLAYER AND TURNED MY POCKETS INSIDE OUT. IT WAS HUMILIATING BUT EASIER AND LESS DANGEROUS TO COOPERATE.



DO YOU LIVE AROUND HERE? GIVE ME YOUR I.D. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

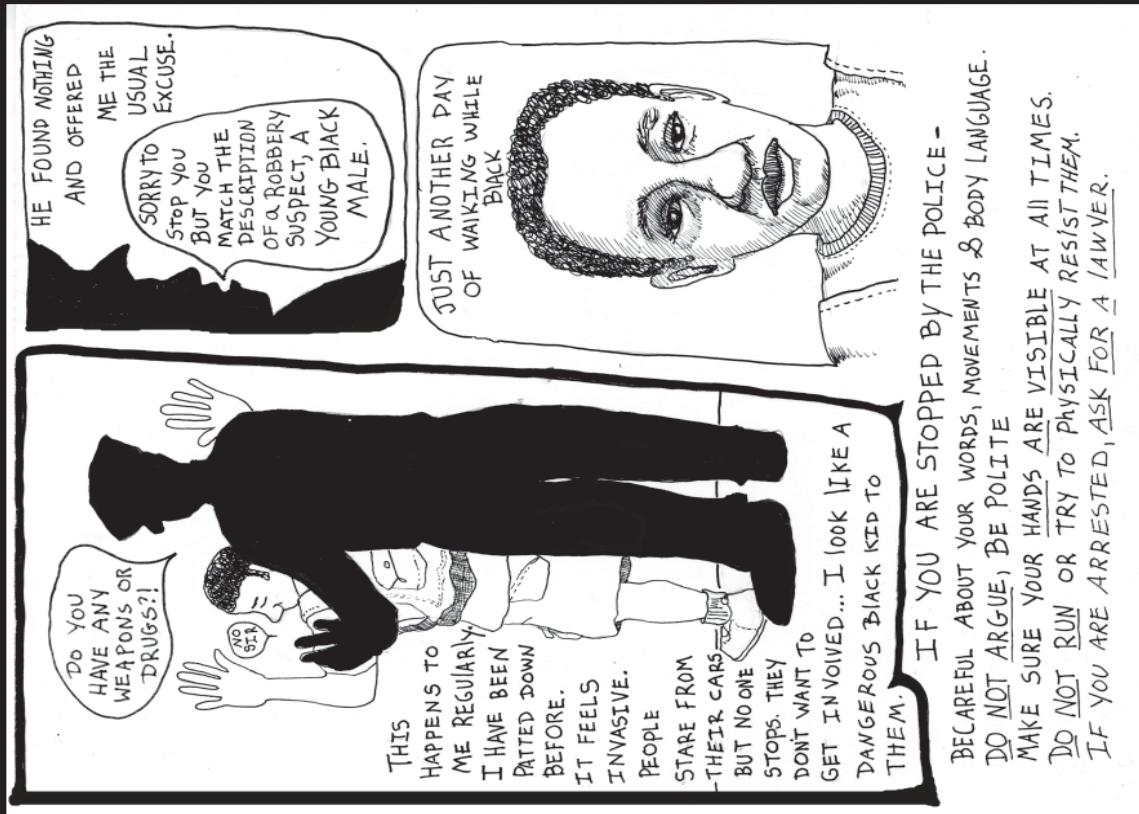


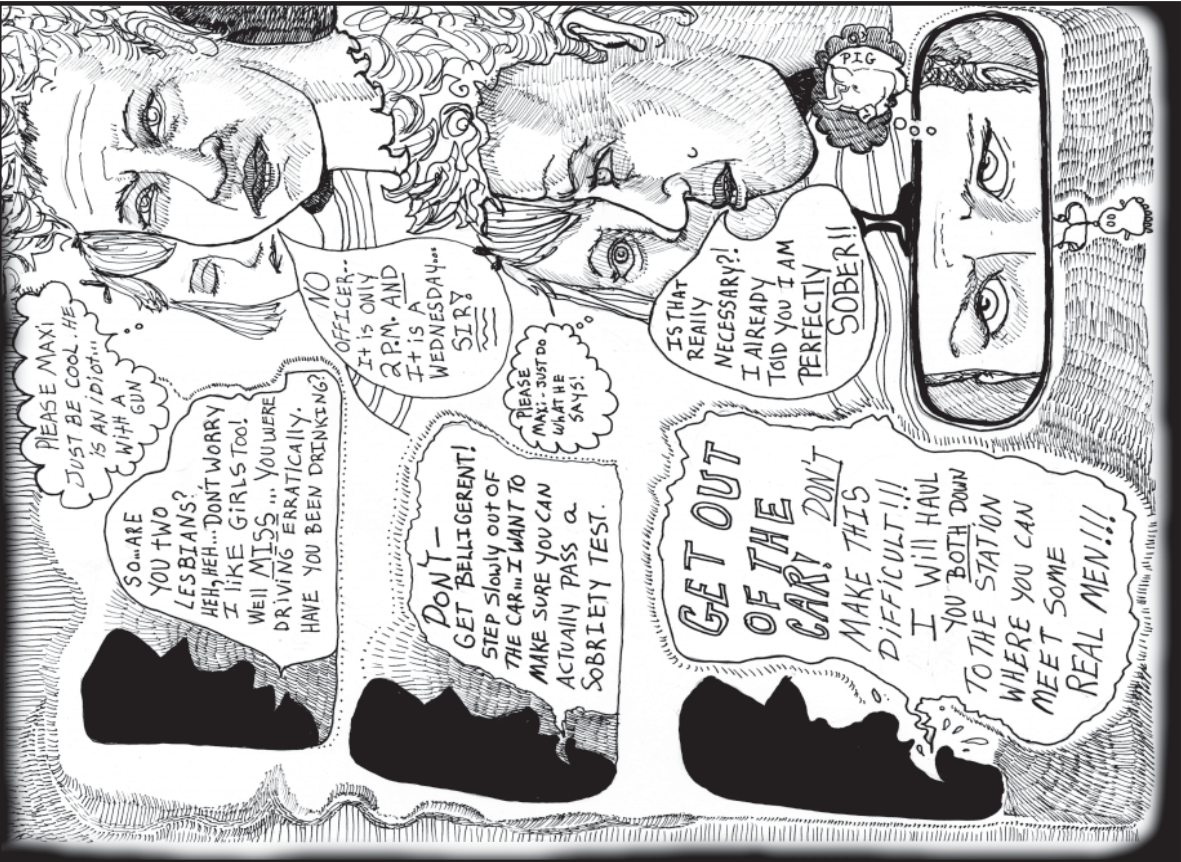
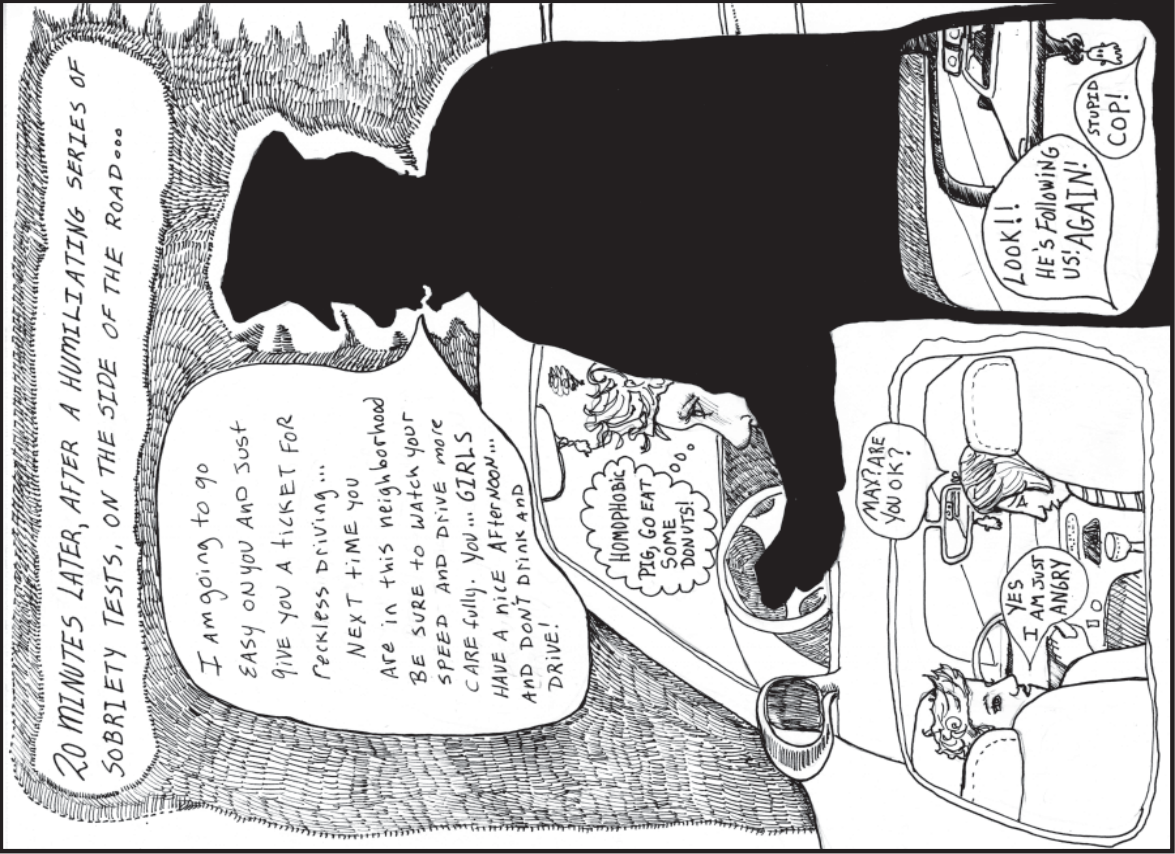
I DIDN'T REACH FOR MY WALLET BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT THE COP TO THINK I MIGHT HAVE A WEAPON

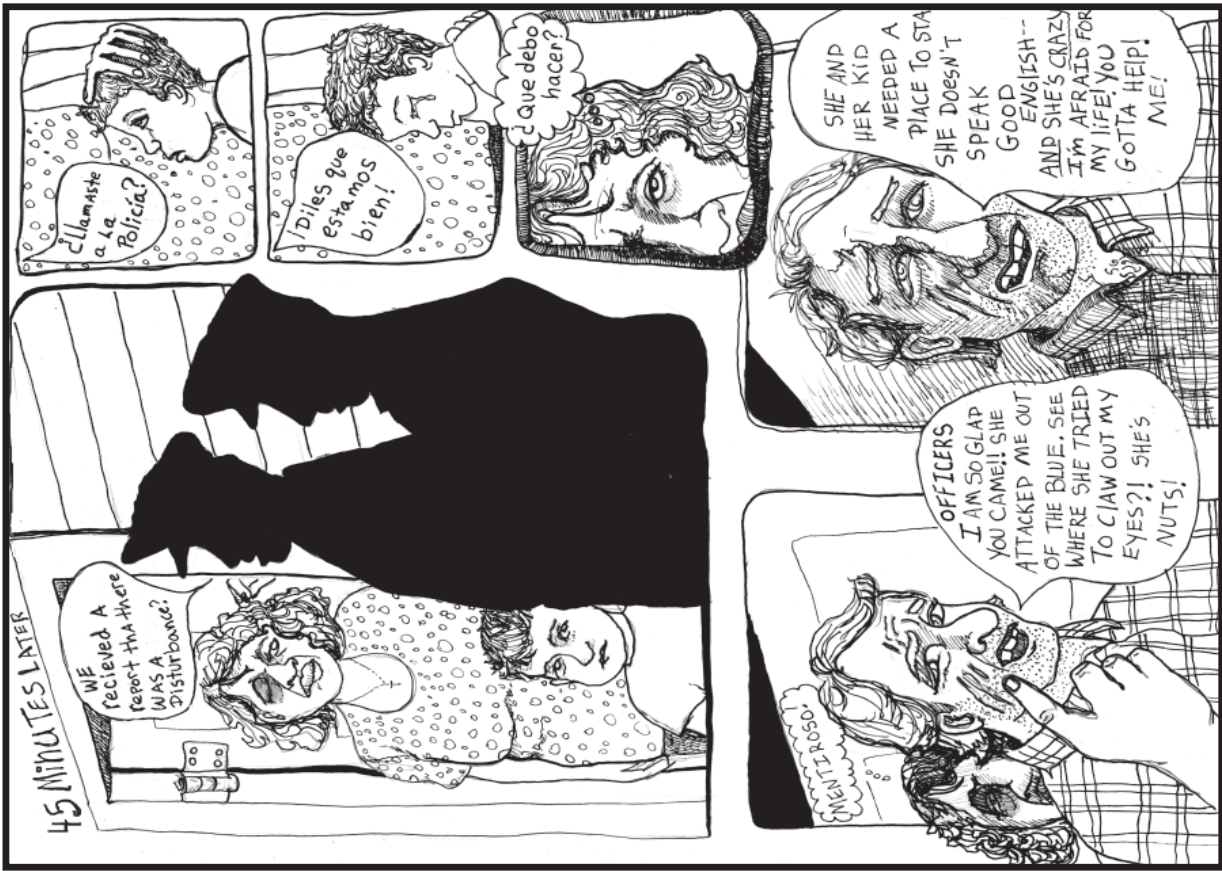
IT IS IN MY WALLET-IN MY BACK POCKET

TURN AROUND AND PUT YOUR HANDS ON THE WALL

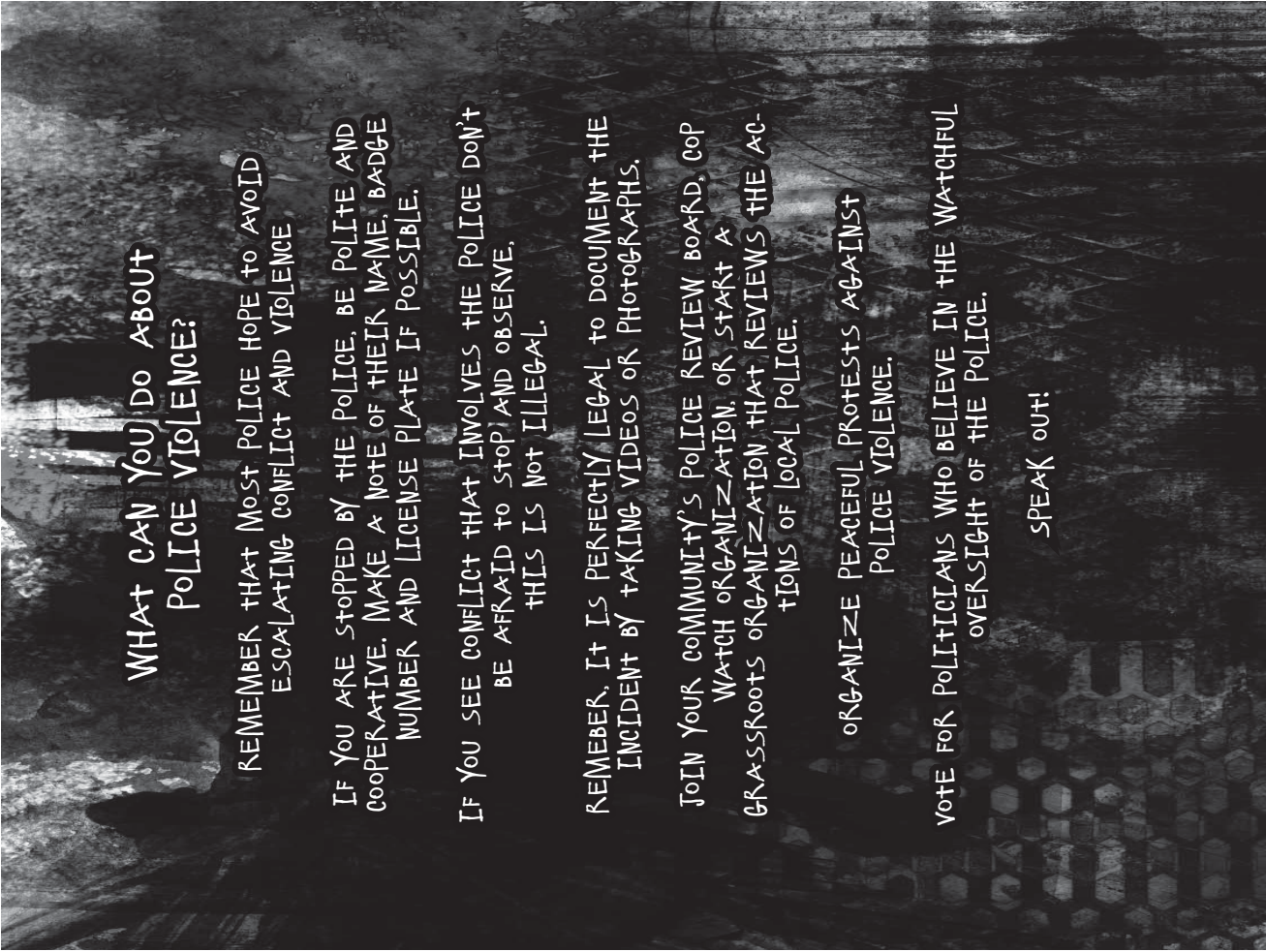
HE PATTED ME DOWN, AND GOT MY WALLET







*Special Thanks to Ana Merino and Ben Mackey for their Spanish translation skills



WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT POLICE VIOLENCE?

REMEMBER THAT MOST POLICE HOPE TO AVOID ESCALATING CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

IF YOU ARE STOPPED BY THE POLICE, BE POLITE AND COOPERATIVE. MAKE A NOTE OF THEIR NAME, BADGE NUMBER AND LICENSE PLATE IF POSSIBLE.

IF YOU SEE CONFLICT THAT INVOLVES THE POLICE DON'T BE AFRAID TO STOP AND OBSERVE. THIS IS NOT ILLEGAL.

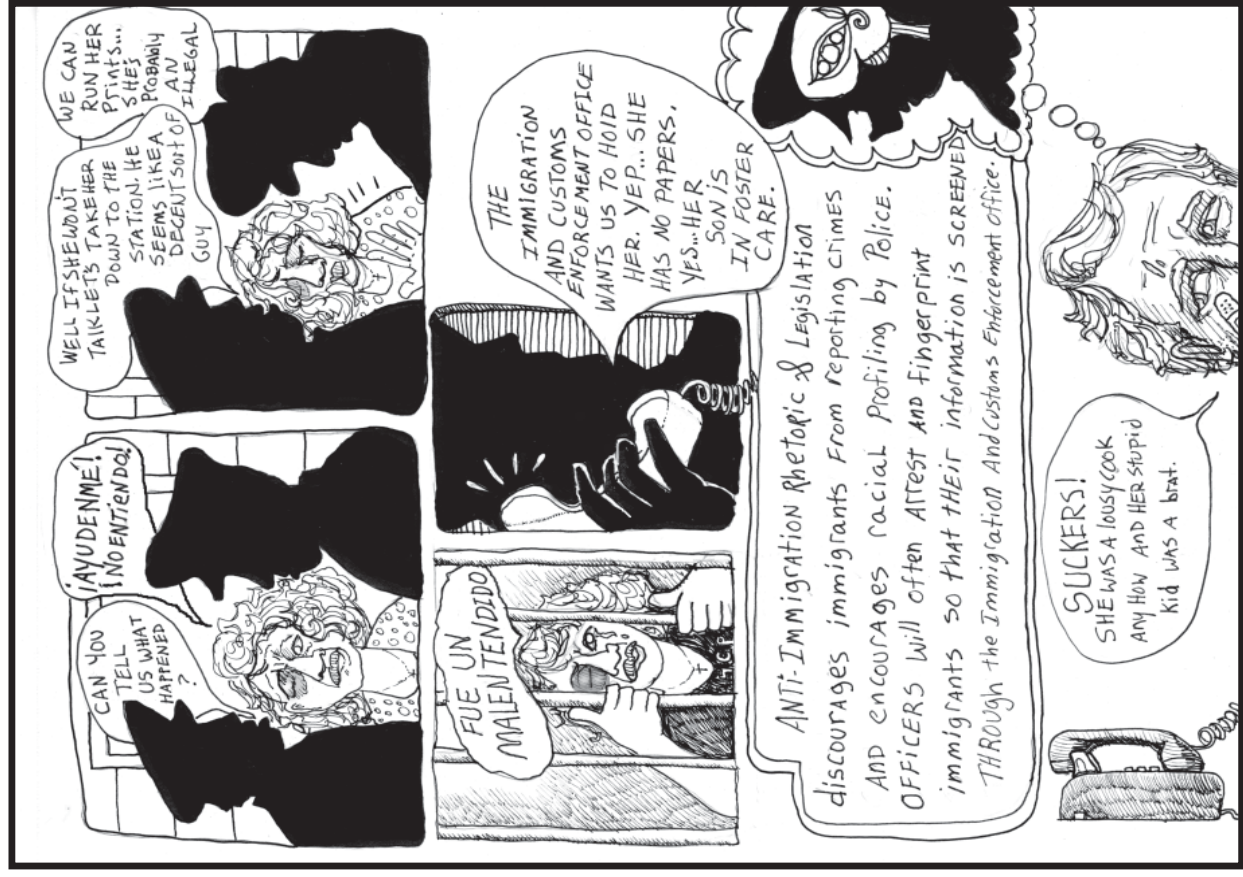
REMEMBER, IT IS PERFECTLY LEGAL TO DOCUMENT THE INCIDENT BY TAKING VIDEOS OR PHOTOGRAPHS.

JOIN YOUR COMMUNITY'S POLICE REVIEW BOARD, COP WATCH ORGANIZATION, OR START A GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION THAT REVIEWS THE ACTIONS OF LOCAL POLICE.

ORGANIZE PEACEFUL PROTESTS AGAINST POLICE VIOLENCE.

VOTE FOR POLITICIANS WHO BELIEVE IN THE WATCHFUL OVERSIGHT OF THE POLICE.

SPEAK OUT!



WE CAN RUN HER DOWN TO THE STATION. HE SEEMS LIKE A DECENT SORT OF GUY.

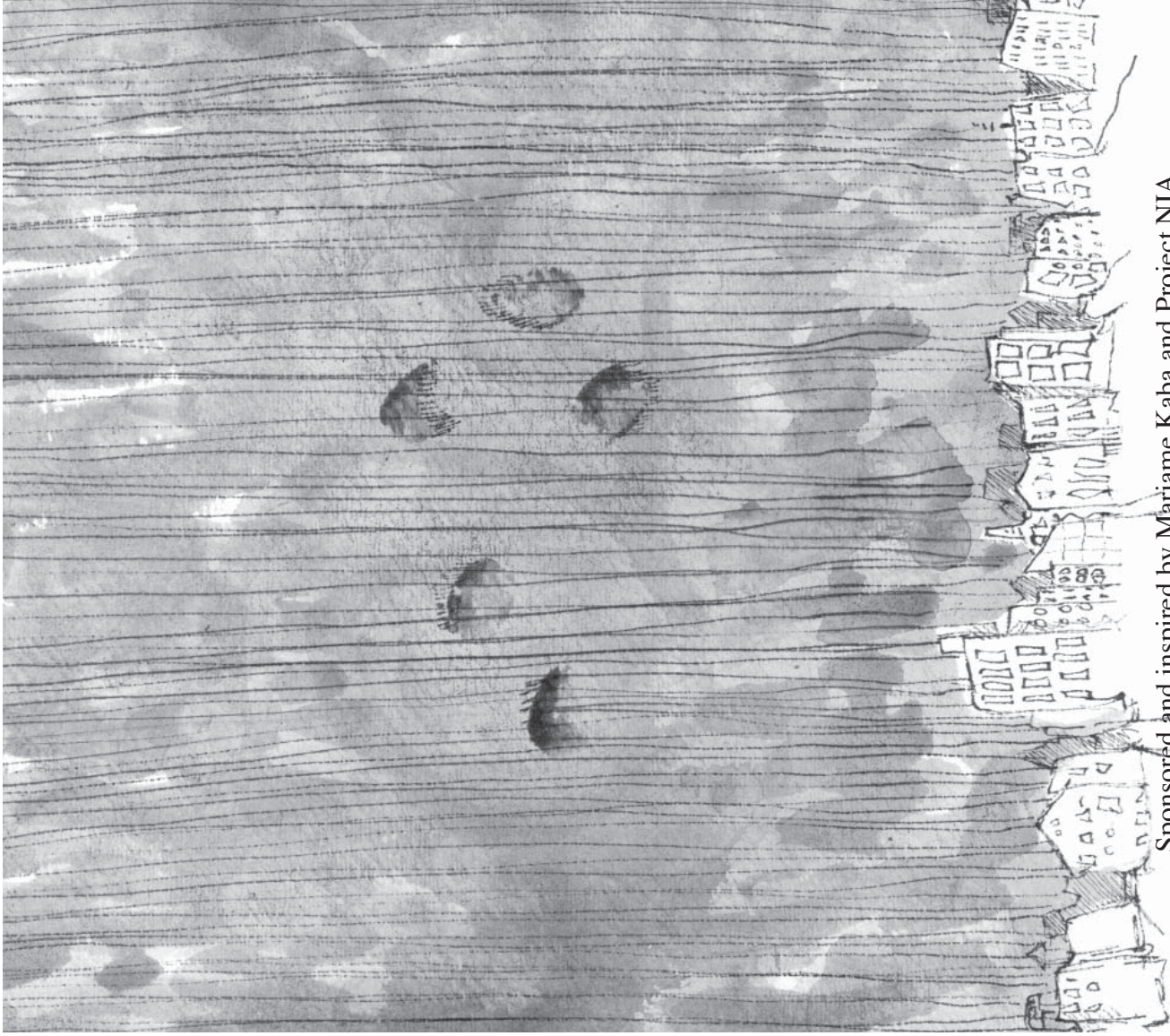
AYUDENME! INO ENTENDO!
CAN YOU TELL US WHAT HAPPENED?

THE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT OFFICE WANTS US TO HOLD HER. YEP... SHE HAS NO PAPERS. YES... HER SON IS IN FOSTER CARE.

FUE UN MALENTENDIDO

ANTI-Immigration Rhetoric & Legislation discourages immigrants from reporting crimes AND encourages racial Profiling by Police. OFFICERS will often ATTEST AND Fingerprint immigrants so that THEIR information is SCREENED THROUGH the Immigration And Customs Enforcement office.

SUCKERS! SHE WAS A LOUSY COOK ANYHOW AND HER STUPID KID WAS A BITCH.



Sponsored and inspired by Mariame Kaba and Project NIA

<http://www.project-nia.org/>

as part of the series

“Policing, Violence, and Resistance”

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