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POR EL BARRIO
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FRONTLINE
BARRIO

Contents

Barrio Frontline is a grassroots publication—a zine—rooted in the radical imagination of working people, street-level politics, and ancestral memory. We exist to uplift resistance through storytelling, art, design, and direct action, and to share narratives shaped by lived experience in the barrios. We believe in reclaiming public space, defending democracy, and honoring the everyday object and idea as powerful, transformative tools.

Much of our vision comes through the lens of our editor—a Californian living in Tucson, a first-generation Mexican-American, and the daughter of immigrants and farmworkers, born x raised in the agricultural heartlands and urban edges of the West Coast.

Our publication is made possible by contributions from our brilliant creative & writing team and the broader community that surrounds us.

Find us online:
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APRIL 10, 1966: STRIKING FARMWORKERS MARCH FROM DELANO TO THE STATE CAPITOL IN SACRAMENTO.
PHOTO CREDIT: BARNEY PETERSON/THE CHRONICLE

CALIFORNIA & ARIZONA: A SHARED LEGACY OF RESISTANCE

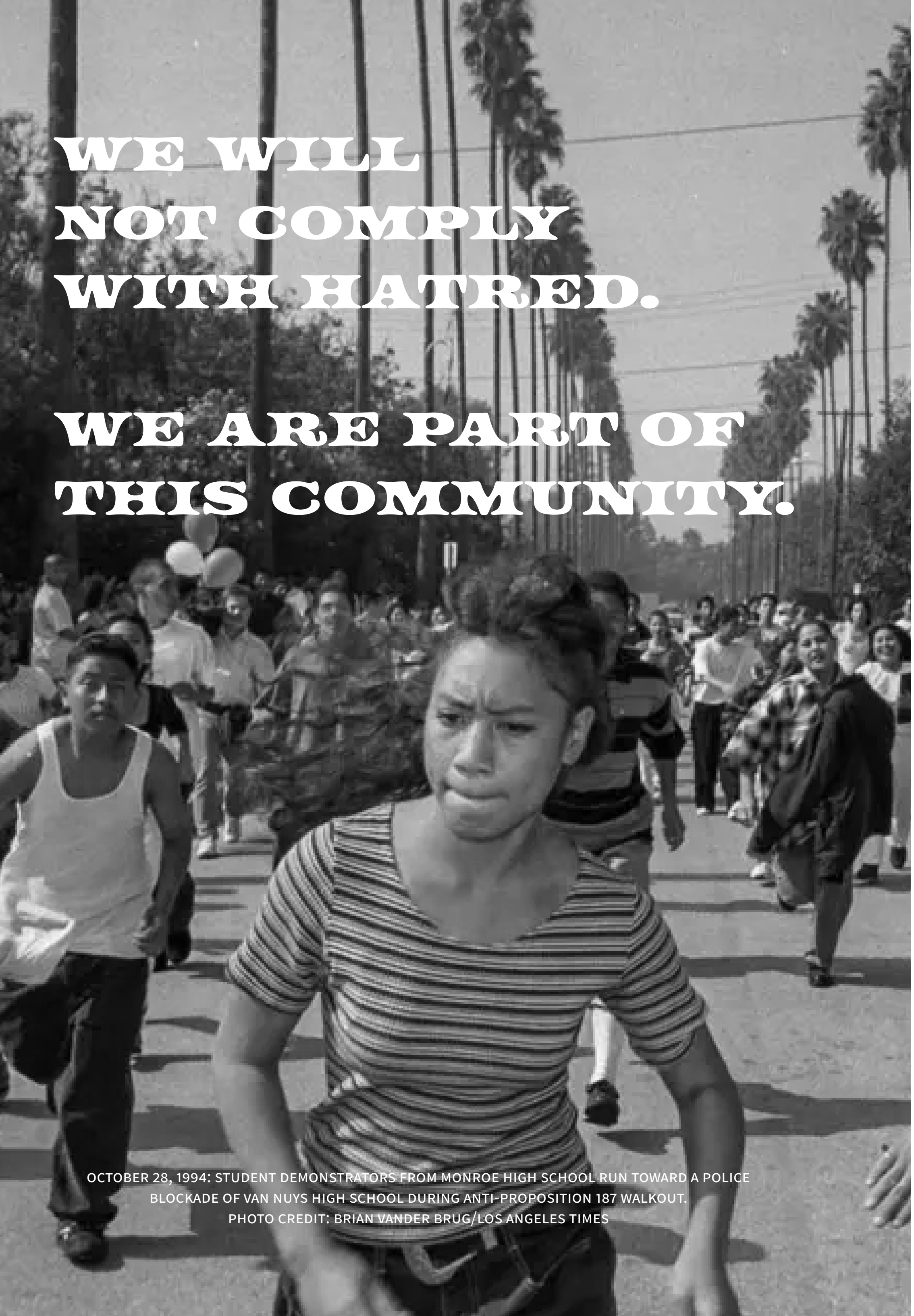
From the fields of Delano to the streets of Phoenix, California and Arizona have always shared more than a border—they share a spirit of resistance.

BY LINDSAY HEIMM

1960'S/70'S

In the 1960s and '70s, Californians and Arizonans stood together under La Causa. Inspired by the Delano Grape Strike (1965–1970), farmworkers—led by Filipino, Chicano, and Mexican laborers—organized boycotts and marches for dignity in labor, public education, and civil rights. César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and Larry Itliong helped lead a powerful movement from the fields to the streets. In Yuma and Coachella, Salinas and Nogales, brown hands linked in shared liberation. By 1972, activists from both states were already echoing one another. During a fast in Phoenix protesting anti-union laws, Huerta coined the now-iconic chant "¡Sí, se puede!" ("Yes, we can!"), born in Arizona and carried into future labor and immigrant rights movements. The roots of cross-state solidarity had taken hold.

¡SÍ, SE PUEDE!



OCTOBER 28, 1994: STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS FROM MONROE HIGH SCHOOL RUN TOWARD A POLICE BLOCKADE OF VAN NUYS HIGH SCHOOL DURING ANTI-PROPOSITION 187 WALKOUT.
PHOTO CREDIT: BRIAN VANDER BRUG/LOS ANGELES TIMES

¡EL PUEBLO UNIDO JAMÁS SERÁ VENCIDO!

1990'S

The 1990s brought new threats. California's Proposition 187, backed by Republican Governor Pete Wilson, sought to strip undocumented immigrants of public benefits and deputize schools and hospitals as immigration enforcers. Anti-immigrant ads portrayed Latinos as invaders. But students pushed back: on November 2, 1994, over 10,000 California teens walked out of class, chanting in defense of their families and classmates. These protests transformed the state's political landscape. Though Prop 187 passed, courts blocked its implementation—and the youth-led resistance sparked a movement. Many students became lifelong activists, elected leaders, and immigrant rights defenders. California ultimately reversed course, passing policies like in-state tuition for undocumented students and sanctuary laws—progress built on the 1994 walkouts.

2000'S

By the mid-2000s, harsh federal immigration proposals revived mass resistance. In spring 2006, proposed federal bill HR 4437 sparked protests that exploded across California, Arizona, and the nation. On March 25, over 500,000 marched in DTLA in "La Gran Marcha" ("The Great March") a massive pro-immigration march—the largest protest ever witnessed in California; the day before, 15,000 had taken to the streets in Phoenix. Students led again—over 40,000 walked out of Southern California schools, joined by hundreds in Arizona. Phoenix students marched over three miles to the Capitol. Tucson youth chanted, "Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos" ("Today we march, tomorrow we vote"). This was a generation's stand against hate, uniting across state lines through teach-ins, caravans, and chants. The movement peaked on May 1—"A Day Without Immigrants." Across the nation

LA GRAN MARCHA

MARCH 25, 2006: DEMONSTRATORS FLOOD THE STREETS OF DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES DURING "LA GRAN MARCHA"—ONE OF THE LARGEST PRO-IMMIGRANT RIGHTS DEMONSTRATIONS IN U.S. HISTORY. PHOTO CREDIT: EMILIO FLORES/LA OPINIÓN)

hundreds of thousands assembled, demonstrating a new level of national unity. The sense of empowerment and solidarity among young Latinos was electrifying.

2010'S

In 2010, Arizona faced its own flashpoint: SB 1070, the "Show Me Your Papers" law, mandated police to check immigration status based on "reasonable suspicion." Championed by Republican State Senator Russell Pearce and Sheriff Joe Arpaio, it ignited national outrage. But it also sparked fierce resistance. On May 29, tens of thousands rallied at the Capitol in 95°F heat. Undocumented Arizonans marched openly, unafraid. "Todos Somos Arizona" ("We are all Arizona") became the rallying cry. Busloads of supporters came from L.A. and the Bay and fundraisers supported Arizona's boycott. Solidarity was more than symbolic: it was strategic and deeply felt. The movement didn't stop in the streets. Activist groups in Arizona registered voters, built new coalitions, and took power. By 2011, Pearce had been recalled. Young activists became leaders, echoing the trajectory of California post-Prop 187. A new generation of Latinx Arizonans shaped a more inclusive state.

PRESENT

From the Chicano student walkouts of 1968 to "las marchas" of 2006 to the 2010 stand against SB 1070, California and Arizona have moved together—students, families, artists, and workers—lifting each other in times of crisis. Our chants—"¡Sí, se puede!" and "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!"—link generations. History repeats itself not in despair, but in commonality: Slogans born in church halls ring out decades later in streets. Students become senators. Protest becomes policy. And in every moment of threat, the response has always been our shared struggle.
The message is clear: Sí, se puede. Together, we overcome fear. We defend dignity. And we write our shared history—march by march, chant by chant, struggle by struggle.

My Rings Are My Armor

By Lindsay Heimm

A Radical Object:

I wear them when I attend protests and rallies, when I speak, when I walk into rooms where I'm not sure I belong.

Three handmade silver rings—each shaped by fire, stone, and intention. One came from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, the first time I visited Tucson. I didn't know then that one day I'd live here. That this place would become part of me. The other two were commissioned from a Chicano silversmith in California. He shaped them with care, and I asked him to make something strong, protective, ancestral. And he did. They feel powerful—like they hold stories older than mine, ancient energy.

Together, these rings have been with me through it all—marching to protect democracy, advocating for immigrant rights and healthcare as a human right, at organizing meetings, and this past May, as I stood in the rain at 1AM outside the U.S. Capitol with a delegation of domestic workers and activists demanding lawmakers protect Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security—and reject the "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act, which threatens to strip resources from the poor to subsidize the well-off.

They've traveled with me from California, to Tucson, to Washington, D.C., wrapped around my fingers like sacred talismans, whispering: you are not alone, you are not small—"adelante, sin miedo" ("go ahead without fear").

They are armor and altar all in one. When I feel uncertain, I turn them on my fingers like prayer beads. When I need courage, I sink into their weight. They carry the hands of the artisan who made them, the earth the stones were pulled from, and the forces of nature it took to shape them.

We often talk about the objects that get passed down. But what about the ones we choose?

These rings weren't heirlooms—I invited them into being. I charged them with meaning through use and intention.

They remind me that
radical love is not found.
It is forged.

THE CENTRAL HUB FOR PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIVISM IN THE OLD PUEBLO

Interview: Aileen of Take Action Tucson

Q: What sparked the idea behind Take Action Tucson?
Aileen: There were multiple factors. First was a need for a central list of events. I'm relatively new to activism, and when I started out, I had to sign up for tons of newsletters and create social media accounts just to follow what was happening. I figured if I was struggling and I'm decently internet savvy, it had to be even harder for someone who isn't. So I started consolidating the info I could find into one calendar.
Second, I saw a need to expand the reach of existing organizations. I found out about the first Tesla protest on Facebook, and folks came up to thank me for being there as a young person. It was clear that certain orgs were only reaching people on very specific platforms. I thought, okay, I can help by being on all of them.
And third, there was a need for a relatively neutral space that could bring more people in. Some orgs are very tied to a specific party or ideology. I saw fracturing happening in groups because of that. So I thought, the overarching goal of saving our democracy could be a shared rallying point, even across political lines.

Q: How did you turn that idea into action?
Aileen: The first thing I did was build a Discord server with a chronological list of events. It had a customizable channel list to avoid some of the infighting I'd seen elsewhere. But Discord can be hard to navigate, so I bought the domain takeactiontucson.org and set up a Linktree. That made it much more accessible.

Q: How did you start getting the word out?
Aileen: I walked down Fourth Avenue with a friend to see which local businesses would let us post flyers. Arlene, the owner of a local vintage thrift shop, invited us in, talked with us for an hour and a

half, and then offered to sponsor our flyer distribution. After that, it just spread. People would tell me, “I saw your flyer at Bisbee Breakfast Club,” and I hadn’t even put one there—so I knew it was working.

Q: What early moments told you this was really working?
Aileen: When I started printing physical copies of the calendar and handing them out at protests, I’d see people’s faces light up. That’s when I knew the time and effort was worth it.

Q: What does your day-to-day work look like now?
Aileen: I still manage the background: posting events on the site, maintaining relationships with orgs, printing calendars, distributing them, tabling, running the socials, and hosting weekly meetings. We’re also building out a volunteer network and coordinating with other groups to direct people where they can help.

Q: Would you say you’re the anchor of the group?
Aileen: I guess so. But I only started doing these things because I saw the need. The best part is we’ve built a community around it, and more of this work is now being shared.

Q: Can you tell us how your collaborator John got involved?
Aileen: Four months ago, John was a stranger. We met at the Saguaro East national parks protest. I was nervous to pass out flyers, and someone encouraged me to just go for it. That’s how I met John and his wife, Kiana. At the event, he said he had time and wanted to help, and like the next day, he started distributing flyers on campus. He’s been a huge part of this since then.

Q: What recent impact are you most proud of?
Aileen: Probably the weekly meetings. People have told me, “Thank you for this space.” There are folks who felt alone until they walked into that room. Just having a platform to connect makes a real difference.

Q: How do people get involved?
Aileen: Weekly meetings are the best entry point. About half the attendees are new each time, so there’s always someone to help you get connected. We also accept donations on our website through Venmo—it helps cover printing and web costs. Volunteers can help by flyering, tabling, or connecting with orgs we collaborate with. We don’t organize protests ourselves, but we stay in close contact with those who do.

Q: What keeps you going when the work gets tough?
Aileen: The direct feedback from people. Folks tell me they wouldn’t have known how to get involved without Take Action Tucson. When I feel tired, I just think—how many more people can we reach? If I stop, who’s going to fill that gap?

Q: Our zine theme is “The Radical Object.” Do you have one?
Aileen: I have a green hat with a tarantula on it. I got it at Mount Diablo State Park after an long hike with my family. I wasn’t a hat-wearer before, but I needed one for long hours in the sun at actions. People started recognizing me by it—it became a symbol, I guess.

Q: Anything else you want to share?
Aileen: We’ve been calling ourselves “the central hub for pro-democracy activism in Tucson.” That’s really what we aim to be.

To learn more and get connected, visit Take Action Tucson online: www.takeactiontucson.org

Veterans in Activism and Peacekeeping

Interview By Lindsay Heimm & Chris Yio

Alex of Veterans for Peace

IN CONVERSATION WITH A VETERAN ACTIVIST AND LOCAL PEACEKEEPER

Interview: Alex of Veterans for Peace, Tucson, Arizona – John Miles Chapter 13

Q: What first pulled you into activism?
Alex: It was during—I wanna say—2005 or 2007. I saw protests around ethnic studies and SB 1070. At first I was just watching, but suddenly I decided, I'm gonna get into the movement. I picked up photojournalism, did a little show on Access Tucson, and that was my start.

Q: You've been involved in demonstrations and activism for many years, and your path has taken a few turns since then. Can you walk us through it?
Alex: When Occupy came on, I was still filming. But when I joined Veterans for Peace, I really jumped into peacekeeping—and that changed me a lot. We had something happening every night in the beginning. COVID split everybody up, but then on January 20 of this year, we all came back together. It was weird—I just went straight into organizing. Never done that before.
I've had three good mentors: Joe Bernick taught me writing—I did some articles for People's Weekly World; Steve Valencia from Jobs with Justice showed me protest work; and John Miles (he's passed) showed me peacekeeping. When I came back into the movement, I realized, hey, now I can wear any of those hats. I've been doing this work about eighteen years now.

Q: You're also a vet. What's your service backstory?
Alex: U.S. Air Force, '78–'82, honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant. Civilian life was hard—everything out here felt unregimented. I had a lot of anger. One of the guys I grew up with, who also served, encouraged me to connect with the VA. So I did.
At the VA, they said, "Let's get you a hobby." The doc suggested knitting—I told him, "You don't want anything sharp in my hands

right now" (laughs). We settled on baking. Every Saturday I'd bake a bunch of cakes. To get the anger out—and it worked. These days I don't bake. After I retired, I just turned to eating (laughs). But I'm good now. I've mellowed out.

Q: Which issues keep you busiest?
Alex: Immigration, veterans, and ethnic studies. With ethnic studies, back then it was one person at the forefront here—Sean Arce, the director of TUSD—just showing kids who they are. Those kids were graduating at ninety percent rates. It gave them confidence and purpose—an identity. That's why it burned me when they attacked those programs and those who spoke out.

Q: First direct action you remember taking part in?
Alex: Somewhere between 2005 and '07—again, SB 1070 and the ethnic studies fight. Back then everything was linked. There were a lot of Latino causes, and if it was this, it was that too.

Q: How have protests changed since those earlier movements?
Alex: Oh man—night and day. The set of protesters I'm with now is the most mannered group I've ever met. We rally, it's 10:30—"Everybody go home!"—and they do!
Occupy was different. We started out nice and peaceful, but folks were just itching for civil disobedience. As peacekeepers, we'd ask, "Let us—and our legal team—know before you act." We had a decent rapport with the cops because of that. But it gave us a lot to manage.

Q: Most powerful moments you've witnessed during an action?
Alex: Well, Occupy brings up a lot of memories. A lot of people were taking action then.
There was a man who chained himself up—locked himself to a light pole and sat in a chair with his sign. After nightfall, the cops tried to remove him. He refused to sign a citation. They lifted him gently—but they only got about a foot when they realized he was chained by the foot (laughs). They had to go get the bolt cutters.
The final night at Armory Park—a protester crossed the police line. She climbed a rock and raised her fist. As soon as she did that, the cops swarmed her and put her in the squad car.
There was a deaf protester who refused to comply and sign a citation—an act of civil disobedience. The cops arrested her. I told her friend, "Stand here where she can see you from the squad car window, sign to her we're still here." We all stood there around her friend, so she knew she wasn't alone. That we'd be there the next morning to pick her up when she was released.

Q: Ever doubt your commitment?
Alex: I've never doubted what I was doing or had second thoughts. I've been all-in. Can't be halfway. Whatever happens, happens, but I don't second-guess showing up.

Q: Common misunderstandings you notice new protesters have?
Alex: Going rogue—eight or ten decide to do something without telling the rest. But nowadays we've got families and kids out there—we need communication. If you're planning civil disobedience, which of course will happen, let organizers know. That way peacekeepers and legal observers can cover you—so it can be organized and intentional. Otherwise it's unsafe and puts the rest of the group at risk. We're all a part of this, together.

Q: Advice for someone's very first protest?
Alex: Go and enjoy it. Fly your flag, raise your sign, be loud. Meet everybody around you. Protests can be social—you'll find new friends. Tucson's welcoming: south side is progressive, midtown's liberal—even the east side's shifting.

Q: What should the next generation carry forward?
Alex: The young folks are doing great. They're actually trying to see what's happening, and that makes me happy. I'm not trying to push my values—I just want to see them grow. I'm sixty-eight; I'm ready to sit on the porch and watch them move.
Just remember: learn about the movement you're part of. There's

history there. And though you may not think it, when you decide to participate, you're in it for life—the activism of it—even if you step away for a while. It'll call you back at some point. And don't go rogue—work with the group. There's a lot of power in unity.

Q: Our zine theme is "The Radical Object." Do you have one?

Alex: It's the people. Meeting friendly, happy people who are open to talk—that's what keeps me going. The crowd is my radical object—so to speak.

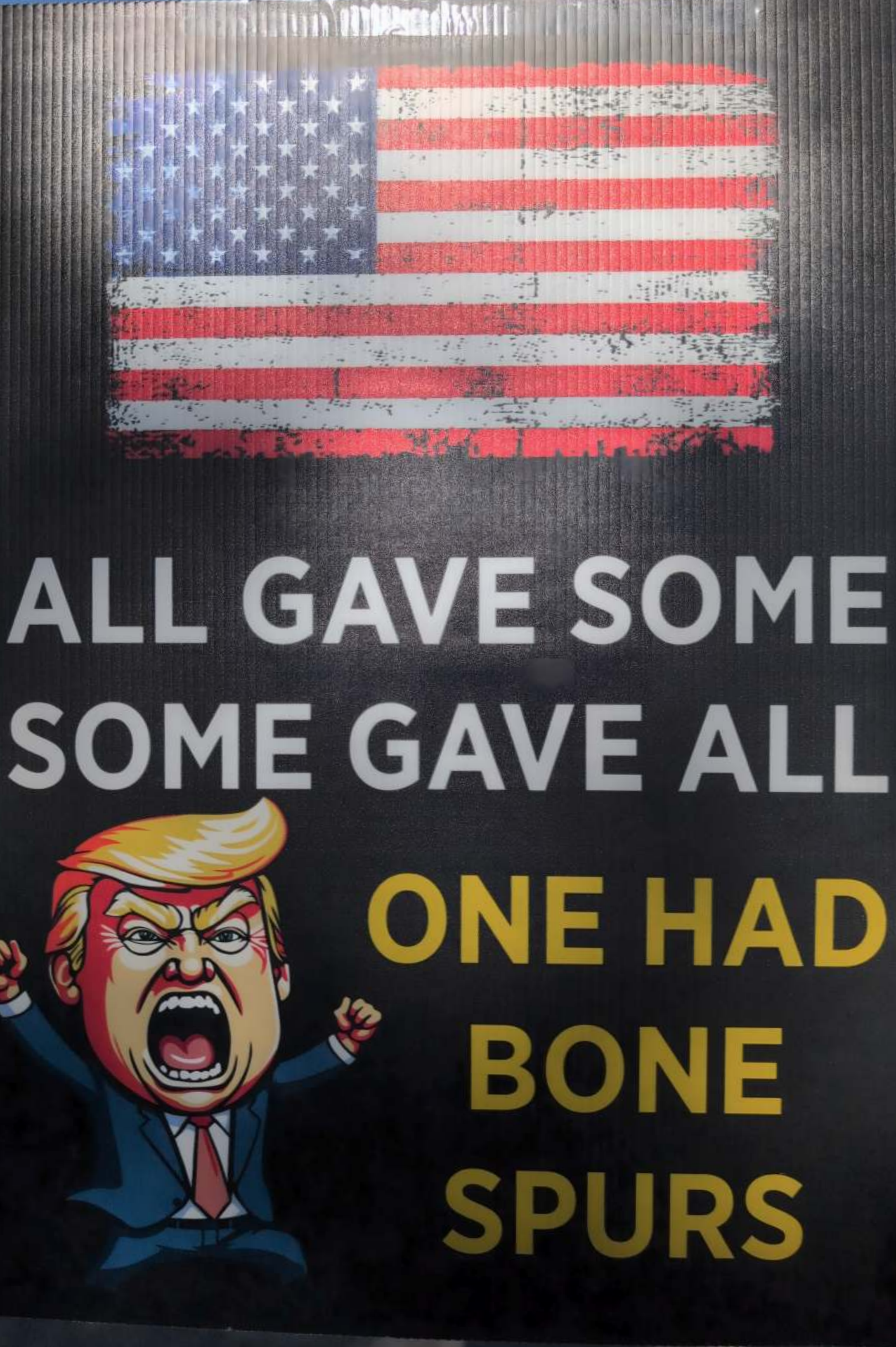
Q: How does someone join Veterans for Peace?

Alex: Go to the national site—Veterans for Peace is a national organization. You pay fifty bucks and they connect you with your local chapter based on your ZIP code. Come to a meeting, join whatever activism you're interested in—we're a very welcoming group.

To learn more or take action, visit Veterans for Peace online:

www.veteransforpeace.org

PHOTO ESSAY BY CHRIS YIO


ALL GAVE SOME
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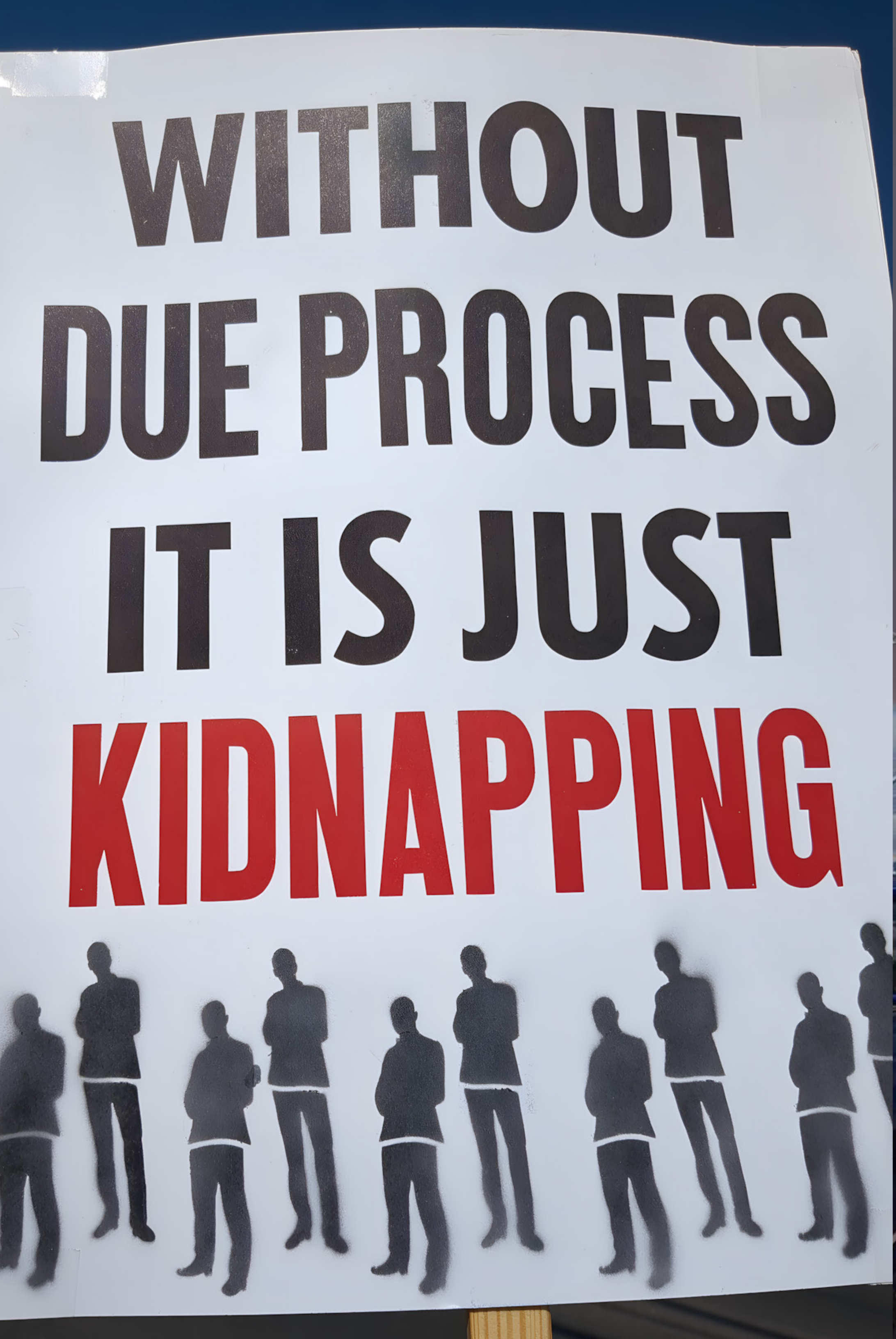
TOO MUCH
OUTRAGE
FOR ONE SIGN
DAMNED IF THAT'LL STOP ME!!
FIRE
THEY ROB OUR COMMUNITIES, WRECK THE PLANET.
FIRE THE BILLIONAIRE CLASS
MUSK
NO TRUMP!
NO KKK!
NO FASCIST USA!
WE STAND WITH UKRAINE
ICE
Immoral kidnappers
Cowards in masks
Enforcers of cruelty
FREE
PALESTINE
DON'T CUT MEDICAID
HANDS OFF
GREENLAND
SAVE SOCIAL SECURITY
WE STAND WITH
CANADA & MEXICO
HANDS OFF
PANAMA
FREE
KILMAR ABREGO GARCÍA
PRO CHOICE
PRO CHOICE
PRO CHOICE


KEEP THE
IMMIGRANTS
DEPORT THE
RACISTS


THIS
ISN'T even
about
POLITICS, it's
about
human
decency!


LOVE THY
NEIGHBOR,
ALL
NEIGHBORS


WITHOUT
DUE PROCESS
IT IS JUST
KIDNAPPING

"TODO POR EL BARRIO"

Why '520' on the cover?
We included '520' on the cover as a nod to our home base—Tucson, Arizona. More than just an area code; it's a symbol, a sense of place, a way to remind readers that this work is grounded in the borderlands, in community, and in resistance directo del desierto de Sonora (direct from the Sonoran desert).

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