

Interviewer: Alex Reinsch-Goldstein

Interviewee: Dr. Marcelle Maese

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Alex Reinsch-Goldstein: Thank you very much for talking to me again. I guess this is kinda not directly related to your work with detention resistance, but I know you're an English professor at USD—I'm a huge literature dork myself, so I wanted to start by asking about that. My question pertaining to that is how do you view literature's relationship to real world issues, you know—politics, human rights, things like that. And do you think that literature can be a tool for real world change, or should it be?

Marcelle Maese: Well, I think—this sounds like a corny cliché answer, but thank you so much for asking me about that—I wasn't expecting you to ask me about that at all. I think literature, first of all—I think for people who are imprisoned, the ability to read is super important for just their mental health, curiosity, and just keeping a world open that is bigger than just their cell. And so I—one of our goals, wishes, has always been to be able to create more of a digital library, or a—you know, more of a library and reading materials. Because it's a source of politicization I think. So that would be where I think literature and writing more generally, I think, for those that are imprisoned, and then I think for what I do as a professor as an academic I think is also, obviously I think it's important because I spend a lot of time getting the degrees that I need to be able to do this, and I've already been at USD for nine years, and I think for me it's not, there's the skills of reading, there's attentiveness—you need to be attentive to sift through these words, and I think the ability to, not necessarily—for me the way I'd like to teach is not necessarily to see yourself in someone else, because I think when people think about the politics of being able to read or teach literature it's this idea of teaching empathy for others. But I also think it's a way just to understand the way that things work. So the way I like to teach literature is thinking about, how does this thing work, what are the strategies that are being used, what is the world that is being built. And the hope is that through the development of this critical analysis, that you then think of—of the world in the same way, as a structure. There's a structure to the way that the world is operating, and you know, how does it run, what are the narratives that are being created, what are the logic that operates—and what is your place within that, how do you reproduce this narrative, how do you enter this text, what is your role within this structure. So I think that's something that is really important, and I think especially for the literatures that I teach, so you

know my speciality is um women of color feminisms and especially Chinanx literatures. I also teach black literatures and American Indian literatures, and kind of transnational, throughout-the-Americas literatures. And a lot of these literatures you can't, um, read them and then not come to a history that is often not taught in our K-through-12 or even through college. So literature is also a way of accessing history, I think, important history that we don't always get otherwise, and so that's the other importance of teaching literature.

ARG: That was a very interesting answer, I appreciate that. This kind of follows on from that, but, so, is there any—is there any relationship between your interest in literature and your work with detention Resistance? Did one kind of lead into the other, or were they—or were they more separate?

MM: Um, I don't know that they're separate, or leading together. I think I just see, um, I see what I do at university as one site of resistance, one site of political education, and then I see detention resistance as another site. And so, um, it's—for me it comes down to not only the kind of political education that we try to offer um our compas that are inside but also the conversations that we have with each other about how is it that we're gonna actually do this. It's very much, you know, there's a lot of research, there's a lot of reading involved, and so I think that, that is kind of along the same lines. So it's more of an interest in keeping myself, um, kind of intellectually growing and, um, I think also teaching at university isn't always easy—and, you know, especially if you teach liberation, if you teach resistance, it's not always the most popular or the most well-received topics.

ARG: Oh yeah, for sure.

MM: And I think for me, you know—so for me, talking to compas I always say that they're my teachers and they keep me grounded and they teach me how to keep questioning things, and they teach me how to look at things from different angles. So that's kinda how I see the relationship. I think, in a time—I've always just seen going to college as a politic, it's political for me to even get to go to school, so I see it all connected. I feel that In terms of literature in particular, it's just the topic that I liked, the specificity of literature I think is really interesting. I just like it, I like poetry, and I find myself being able to read for long, long periods of time—so that's why I picked that particular thing. But I think there are many other topics that could be thought of in terms of what to teach or, you know, what to focus in through that education.

ARG: Oh yeah, for sure. Um, and, uh, this is kinda just a more general question about your background, so did you grow up in San Diego, what's your background personally, you know, how did you end up here to speak.

MM: I definitely ended up here through the job market. My background is that my mom is Mexican, and she's from Juarez, which is on the border between Texas and Mexico, and so

Juarez is the border down to El Paso. And then my father's Tunisian, lived through the Tunisian revolution, and so, you know, my background is definitely one of—my parents migrated here, and also I grew up here, and traveling to the border. So that's kinda my, I don't know if you want to say, personal background. How I ended up here is just through work, you know. I got this job at University of San Diego and I really, I just appreciate living in San Diego, just because of my work with Detention Resistance but also because, you know, I'm Chicana, and so being able to be in such a community of *chicanidad* and such a strong history of of Chicana studies, and resistance, and community. It's just a wonderful place. And I grew up in Los Angeles, and I lived in the Bay Area for a long time, so this is hard to say but of all those areas I really enjoy being Chicana here. There's something very empowering about the history that is here and the different organizations that are here, so I'm so happy, you know, when you go to apply to an academic job you're just lucky that you get a job. So, you know, the fact that I could be here in San Diego is, uh—I feel really lucky. So that's how I came to San Diego, and I've been here for nine years, and I will always be the new person, cuz people—the organizations that I'm in it's generational, [laughs] so I'm new.

ARG: Yeah, uh, I also grew up here. You know, love this city to death and couldn't imagine living anywhere else—and I think there is a very wonderful sense of community here. So that's definitely something I feel about this place also. So, how did you first come to know about what is happening in the Otay Mesa Detention Facility?

MM: I think more, I mean, the idea of detention and imprisonment and deportation is something I grew up with understanding, just being a child of immigrants, living in immigrant communities, being in Los Angeles. So that idea of *La Migra*, and crossing borders and all of that, is just so much of who I am, what my family has been through. So that's sort of that. And I think very specifically with San Diego and Otay Mesa I think you know just being involved in different events different political education events different protests just following what was happening here especially and I think part of moving to San Diego that's different from my experiences in being in El Paso or Los Angeles is that, depending on where you are in San Diego, even though you're so close to the border you almost feel like you're not close to the border. So there's this very interesting—not interesting, kind of awful—feeling of... I thought, I thought we were near Mexico. So there's this real kind of anti-Mexicanness in San Diego that I haven't felt anywhere else, being from LA, being from El Paso—so that just aligned me with certain people, and I kept seeing the same people in the same places around the same political questions. Unlike, i feel in other places where i lived where i feel things are either more spread, out or maybe that specific anti immigrant sentiment isn't quite as palpable as it is that i feel that it is here in san diego being close to the border i think there's something more in just not the everyday violence but the way san diego forgets it's at the border. Because depending on where I am in San Diego it shifts so incredibly, whether we're close or we're not close to the border.

ARG: Oh yeah, I absolutely. So you mentioned being a part of protests and other kinds of movements before becoming a part of detention resistance, so did you work with other groups in the field of, you know, immigration justice things like that before detention resistance and if so, what was your experience like with those groups, if any.

MM: So I definitely as a student I was just always involved in almost in anything, in everything I saw on campus. So I think very specifically as a student in the bay area I was involved in the bay area immigrant rights coalition. And that was really cool because I got to spend time interviewing a lot of the different organizations, and what I liked about that particular organization was that it worked cross-racially, so you know I got to work with BAJI, which is you know for black immigrants and i just got to spend time with these local orgAnizers and their organizations as an interviewer, recollecting—almost like what you’re doing, collecting oral histories.

ARG: Oh, that’s very interesting.

MM: With them, and also I think when I got started, when I lived—I was a graduate student at UC Irvine but I was part of a UCLA internship/job, where I worked with SEIU and I worked with organizing janitors. And I for a long—was really considering becoming a labor organizer. After my work with them, and i really i learned a lot from them i learned a lot about just a lot, and they told me i should go to school they’re like no you’re gonna go to school you’re gonna get your PhD. Because we want our kids to go to school, we want professors who actually care about us, and know, you know, we don’t want them to go to school to become ashamed of where they came from. So I was almost ready not to finish my PhD and go straight into labor organizing, but they said no, and I’m glad, i think that was a good choice. So that was my direct organizing—you know, direct organizing with migrants before detention resistance but i also think being at university you need to be very strategic do i think it doesn't get as much understanding but if you are i one of the first or one of the few and you’re really looking out to create more faculty hires or you’re mentoring your students, you kidn of have to be an organizer as well.

ARG: Oh yeah.

MM: And so you know, I just think all of that is experience that came in before joining Detention Resistance. But I hadn't thought about that, you know, I felt when I first joined, and I still feel that, you know, all of this is very different than what I did before. So but—when I was forced to think about it I thought “oh no, I did do stuff before.” But I didn’t feel like that when I started, I really felt like it was all brand new to me and I still feel like I have a lot to learn.

ARG: Yeah, and I guess you sort of hinted at this earlier on, but how did you find out about Detention Resistance and how did you come to join it?

MM: I think, so—I'm sure that we've already, people have told you about the way that dr grew out of a different organization and grow out of Pueblos sin Fronteras and very specifically in response to the *caravanas*, so that was really, so I mean—I don't know how you could be in SD and not understand, and not understand the significance of the caravans and what was happening politically. So that's kind of really, I, looking, when I would hear that they were coming I was thinking, so “where are they—how are they gonna cross.” Because you know for a while—they've been crossing for a while, but especially those later, the more recent ones like 2017 and then that really big one in I think 2018, when it was more public, we didn't know where they were gonna cross and so i, just from talking to people and being on social media i learned that pueblos sin fronteras and a smaller group dr was very specifically talking about that in San Diego. So that's where I heard about Detention Resistance, really just from wondering, “what are we gonna do? What are we gonna do with all the thousands of people that are gonna be here, in Tijuana?”

ARG: Yeah I definitely remember, yeah, growing up here—that was a big story and it definitely did get a lot of people thinking about this type of thing, right, that all of a sudden there were thousands of people who were showing up, and I think a lot of people did have that moment being like “wow, what now?” I guess. So when you joined, what were your first impressions of the organization?

MM: I was really surprised by how young people were, to be honest with you. I think I'm the oldest person. You know, when I first joined and you look at the kind of events that are happening, and now I think that was really silly. Because if you look at what the youth have done for immigrant rights, it makes sense. And in fact we're an older kind of crew, now that I think about it. You know I just watched a documentary—well, when the Latino Film Festival was here about infiltrators, I don't know if you got to see that documentary, but it was very very good and just about how very young people, and I mean like 18, 16, you know maybe early 20s, organize to sneak in and break people out of a detention center and shut that detention center down. So i think theoretically I understood and I supported my students but that was my first thing, like “wow—they are getting things done that sound—you know, in—pretty young.” So that was my first impression. And then after that I'm always still kind of impressed or impressed by people's kind of—ability to give everything they can. You know, it's just people who really live their life for this, so I'm like “Oh, okay.” It's—you see people just negotiating and managing their whole life and detention resistance is a man part of their whole life, you know.

ARG: That's definitely an impression I've got too, you know, talking to all the people we've been working with this quarter—is that there's some really, uh, incredible commitment here. So just kind of going further into your—how you got into the organization, what was the first work you did once you became a part of Detention Resistance?

MM: I went immediate—so, I joined at a time right before it got really big, because you know it had a certain membership, and then I came in right before there was a total explosion of volunteers. I came in, and I don't think you could do this anymore because we know better now, but I went straight to the phone team. I went straight to the phone team. I went straight to answering phone calls. Um, you know, that's—and that's the work I mostly continue to do, is answering the phones, the hotline that we have. And you know, that was my first thing and I remember it was really wonderful—at first I was really worried you know “is this gonna be really hard and you know people warned me, like, you know, and you hear a lot of really painful stories, but it instantly gave me a lot of life. So that was a main thing. I went to the phone team and that's mostly what I still do now.

ARG: So you mentioned that there was kind of a big influx of people around the time that you joined. How did that change, if it did—how did that change the way that the organization operates? Did it change what you guys were able to do, and if so how did it do that?

MM: I think that the—well I think the pandemic, more people—we could do a lot of our work remotely so a lot of people—and then just like the politics during the pandemic with the George Floyd uprisings, people really wanted—people were really interested in abolitionism. And so I feel, that's my assessment of it anyway. There was covid, and having more time on your hands 'cause you're at home, and then really this political moment of abolitionism becoming momentarily more accessible. And I think what changed—and this is where a lot of my early work came in as well—is I think before people could just do their work, or at least there wasn't the pressure to document your own work. It was just people knew what they were doing but there wasn't a documentation or ways to onboard people. I actually got more training than the people on the phone team initially did, so the way they told me was—it's just so fast-paced, that you just come in and you go, and you learn by doing, and if you need to learn how to use Google Doc you learn it or put a flier together, or how to fill out a form, you're just on the go. And it's a real—you learn a lot really quickly. And so I think what changed was that we created a lot more training, a lot more of a process for onboarding people, I think that really changed. Also what changed is that we invited—we had our first group of students start to answer the phones. So that was very different, because if it's part of a class, as you know, there has to be structure and sort of all these things, whereas I think when you have volunteers it really is just on a volunteer basis. So we created—we did a lot of workshops, a lot of training. So I feel like we're a lot more organized now, you know, just our documents and how we can onboard people, I think that's what changed. But we also have to, I think—I think now that that rush is over we also have to, you know, at one point—we do our monthly general volunteer orientations, you know we get a hundred people signing up, you know. And now we're—we had had to do them—we could not keep up. Basically we did not have enough capacity to keep up with the number of volunteers, so people would be like “oh, I want to volunteer,” but we didn't have enough time or capacity to get to the volunteer. And now that I think things have slowed down, now I can see the shift again.

Now we get to focus more on our politics. Because we're—we do the same amount of work but because we don't have to onboard the same number of volunteers, we are afforded more time to think about, “okay what are our politics? Are we in line with our goals?” Kinda more time for self reflection on where we are and what we need to keep doing.

ARG: Yeah, and, I mean—you mentioned the caravan as being the sort of, you know, inciting incident for you joining DR, but just to, like, place this in time, roughly when was this? Like what year? 2018? 2019, or so?

MM: So the *caravanas* were 2018, that was for DR. I joined like two years ago, so that would be later. So I joined like in 2000, maybe 2—I'm not sure exactly, but I remember... I think in June it'll be two years. So I joined in 2000, probably around there.

ARG: Okay, yeah.

MM: So, mid... DR started late... I don't know exactly. The *caravanas* was 2018, they started as committee. I don't know when they broke off, but I joined in 2000.

ARG: Okay. Yeah, and this is kinda circling back to what we were talking about earlier with your career as a professor. How do you balance your work and also your work with Detention Resistance? How do you balance, you know, having a teaching job, and then being a part of, you know, this group of very, you know, committed people. It sounds like it would probably be a pretty busy lifestyle. But yeah, so, how do you balance that?

MM: It's actually helped me balance, because I think as a teacher your job never ends. It's not the kind of thing where it's a 9-to-5 thing. You can spend 25 hours a day teaching. And, the same with working with Detention Resistance. It's not the kind of thing where it ends. It's no 9-to-5. You can work nonstop. So having these two jobs of you never can stop working for either one, and it forced me, really forced me, and it's really hard, but I'm very—and this is what I appreciate about the collective, is we really honor this: you do what you can. Unlike my job, right. My job is always like, you do more, do as much as possible, and don't get paid for it. Even though it's my job, right, my employment. You know, teaching is just one of those things that's really hard to draw a line, because you always want to do more for your students. So I think it—doing them together has helped me with both. Just to say I want to do both, and if I want to do both I can't do both all the time. So I'm very intentional about my hours in the day. I literally look at every hour in the day and I'm like, okay, how many hours am I gonna do this, how many hours am I gonna do that. And it's probably annoying to some people, you know, but there's no other way I can—and still eat, and sleep, and do things that I used to take for granted. I'll just skip—in order to work around the clock. But now I'm very intentional about, okay, this is what I'll do for these hours, this is what I do for those hours. It's just a lot of planning, a lot of structure.

ARG: That's very interesting. Yeah, my mom is a teacher, so I can definitely—

MM: So you understand.

ARG: Yeah, from personal experience that the job never stops.

MM: Yeah.

ARG: Yeah, so—just a few questions about the kind of structure at Detention Resistance. I know it's, you know, very non-hierarchical, so how do you feel that the group's nonhierarchical structure kind of differentiates it from other organizations you might have been a part of. So how does that structure kind of set Detention Resistance apart?

MM: So I think most political groups that I'm interested are in this collective form, so I think it—what it—for me I can't see myself doing anything outside of work that wouldn't be collective. I'll just put it that way. Like why would I have my, you know—why would I choose my own time in a space that's gonna replicate hierarchies, you know, and some kind of oppressive structure of leadership, you know. I just can't imagine not being part of that collectivity. But I think, um—so for me, the comparison would be a regular CEO job, or a 9-to-5 job where you have a boss. I think it just—again it forces you to understand your own capacity. It really—it makes you feel like you are part of something that even if you don't get to do all the things you want to do, because of course the goal is to shut down prisons. That's our goal. We also get to create something that feels like we get to create it in a way that's respectful to everyone, in a way where people can think, and have the time to think. So that I think is the greatest difference, where when you have that kind of hierarchical structure, you have a structure based on productivity, you don't get time to think, you know. And so for us it's, we—by being in a horizontal non-hierarchical space you get to see who you are more. And the collective can only be as strong as you are and your relationship to other people. That's like the opposite of normative society where you are kind of asked to not be yourself, don't put too much time into analysis, just get it done. So I think that's the difference. You have to be creative, you have to know yourself, you have to know how to talk to people in an honest way—because if not, then things won't work.

ARG: Certainly. And how does the non-hierarchical structure change the kind of work you as a group do? Has it enabled you to do things you might not have been able to do otherwise?

MM: I think the—since our goal and our direction comes from our *compas*, we always try to prioritize what they ask for, you know. And some people—because I work on the phone team I can say this is true, because I'm talking to *compas*. Some *compas* just need a voice to listen to, some just want commissary, and some have very clear political ideas, you know, about

organizing, or about their own political case. And I think that already there that's a non-hierarchical relationship, and the fact that we're on the outside—we have the power to step away from this cause if we ever wanted to, where, this is their life and it's not a choice at the moment, right, they are imprisoned. So how do you do that? How do you listen in that way if you can't listen in that way to the people that you're working with? I think it enables us—I think it keeps us honest, you know, about why we're here. We're not here to save people, or to I don't know—there's really odd ways you can get caught up in working for people who don't have their rights, and so I think you have to practice—we do practice how we would want to be—how we would want our *compas* to have the main, a main voice which each other. I hope that makes sense.

ARG: Oh yeah, for sure. And yeah, I guess this sort of relates to the last question I asked, but what do you see as the main benefit of this kind of non hierarchical structure? Is it kind of a moral one, you know, in the sense that you're really, you know, living your values and putting that into practice in kind of the way that the organization is organized; or is it a practical one, that, you know, it changes the kind of work you do for the better; or is it kind of a mix of both?

MM: Hm.

ARG: I know that was a lot of words, so feel free to think about it.

MM: I think it's just—you just, you can't, I feel like you can't organize for something you don't want to be. You know? If you can't be that thing you're organizing for, how do you commit your life to it, you know? How do you do this day-in-day-out if you're not relating to other people in the way that you want the people you're working with to—you know, the way you want people who are imprisoned treated. If that makes sense. How else do you keep that energy if you're not in a collective space where everyone should have equal say—or not even equal, but everyone should have their say, and everyone should... The other thing to think about collectivity isn't just that there isn't levels of "Okay I'm in charge and you're at the bottom"—the other part of collectivity is people, you know, like for myself... I don't put in that many hours as I used to, so now I do maybe ten hours. You know, and there are people that are putting in twenty hours, sometimes thirty hours. And it's really this respect for "okay, you put in two hours, you put in twenty hours, but as long as you're consistently in communication, then you're still welcome here to make important decisions," if that makes sense. So it's that kind of collectivity is also really important where there isn't a sense of ownership, of "because I'm here thirty hours, and you're only here ten hours, then I get to make all the decisions." Because maybe those other twenty hours you're doing things that are educating you, or giving you something that when you come back you bring something with you as well. So I think that's the other part that I think is really helpful and allows you to stay and keep doing this work.

ARG: Yeah that's a really good point. And earlier you kinda touched on the idea of abolition—abolitionism. So I just wanted to ask what does that idea mean to you? And how does Detention Resistance kind of further that ideal?

MM: I think in kind of a, like a short direct way—it's the shutting down of prisons. I think that's one way to say it. All prisons. And I say prisons because one of—I think the —it's hard because people don't even consider detention centers prisons. That's why they're called "detention centers." But they're prisons. And they're part of the prison system, and I think in a very, kind of, short, simple maybe direct way it's to shut down prisons. But I think more importantly than that is to change the logic of criminalization, and that there are criminals, and non-criminals. And so especially for those of that come from communities are already criminals—we're criminals no matter what, because of our skin color, our ethnicity, our class, our subject, our gender, our sex, something about us is off. So that undoing of, there—there are criminals in the world, so we need prisons, is another way of thinking. And then I think that just the other element is really thinking about how, uh, to create—create safety and dignity for people without punishment. And that's the other part of abolitionism. So if we say we don't want prisons, what do we have to do if someone hurts someone. And so then that opens up a whole new way of thinking, in terms of the kinds of things you want to learn. So for me one thing I've wanting to learn for example—and this is related to abolitionism—is something like being able to care for someone medically, or something like this. It really for me goes hand in hand with we need to create our own systems of care and accountability. So I think that's the other part of abolitionism, that doesn't always—it's a little harder to explain than just shouting down the prison. It's more a different way of living, a different way of thinking of, what do we—what do we do to make ourselves healthier, and have—for me it's really tied to self determination. So what kind of economy do we create, so that we are healthy and have dignified labor, and what kind of healthcare do we want, and what kind of friendships do we want? You know all of these things, it's just a completely different life. So that's the longer—that's the longer, more complicated part of abolitionism. But one I think is very, very straightforward, shut down prisons, the prison system—and really start to ask, what do we do to make ourselves healthier and safer for ourselves in ways that feel good for us and are life-giving, and not just murderous.

ARG: Yeah, I definitely get what you're saying, that it's kind of a broader ethos and not just, you know, not just a single policy position. But, do you feel that within DR that there is, that everyone has their own conception of what this idea means, or is there a certain amount of, is there a certain amount of, kind of, agreement on what this idea means to people?

MM: I don't think there can be complete agreement because we're all still learning, we're always learning. I think for me it's—it's learning, and we have our own ideas, and we also have our own personalities and our own priorities. So if you're thinking about a whole new world there's so many parts of that, so what's the part that you are drawn to, or want to develop and commit to.

So you might just have a different priority, and it's not that you don't agree with this other person but that just not might be the urgent part that you want to work on. And so that goes back to why none-hierarchy is important, because once you—because if we all are allowed to contribute in the way we want to contribute and we feel is the best way there—or we're the most called to do, then we have to, kind of, invite all those different ways of thinking. And so, yeah it forces—it really forces you to understand yourself and others because now you're taking away hierarchies and now you're taking away our normative structures of how things are organized, so I think everybody has a different understanding. And for me it's always important—just coming out of *chicanidad* and my own experiences with a chicana political consciousness, is to understand that this is—this is part of the sixties and the seventies. I think when we look at the sixties and we look at civil rights, it's a very—you know, it's always sort of minimalized and sterilized and not really, abolitionism isn't part of that. But if you look all of those movements—if you look at the Chicano Movement, if you look at the Black Panthers, if you look at the American Indian Movement, you'll see—you'll see that abolitionism is key to those movements, and in fact particular incidents that happen with the police and with prisons that give birth and really empower people. So maybe one of my priorities is that historical view, or that long term view of when we think about defining abolitionism.

ARG: Yeah, I'm a history major at UCSD so I can definitely—

MM: Yes, so you understand, yes.

ARG: History is something that I'm very passionate about, and certainly—certainly how movements do get kind of sterilized and reduced to their most moderate, friendly aspects. I think that's something that absolutely happens. So yeah I agree that the perception of past movements is very important when it comes to building current ones. This is kind of, this question is kind of a little bit different—obviously it's hard to reduce these kinds of experiences down to a single, down to, like, a single moment—but if you can, what would you say is the most impactful experience that you've had at Detention Resistance?

MM: I think speaking with *compas*. It think especially those that—it's just amazing to me the lifetime of political organizing and education that they share you know with me and so i can a particular compa—i never give names, even if they're all over the news or whatever, I never give names so—a particular compa, just the convers—just the way that he would talk about just his life, the understanding that he has of himself, as a human being but also as a political organizer and so I have these, there are these very clear, clear moments in my life where i'm talking tok someone and they just blow my mind. They just absolutely blow my mind in terms of what it means to be politically committed, and so just, you know, those—that has been the most impactful thing to me, has been those conversations with people, and just their just their strength, and everything that they've gone through, and they're still—imagine how hard it is to call, you think of your own life,

for me anyway, I don't know about—I shouldn't generalize but it's not always easy to call, or to ask for your rights, demand your rights, especially when you're imprisoned where there's retaliation and there's so much. And yet they're still calling, and they're still saying, "I need this, I need that, this should be done." And those kinds of bigger lessons, but also the quieter funnier lessons. I actually laugh a lot when I'm on the hotline, just some people are—just have a sense of humor, and so those little—those moments always just stay with me too. Cuz it's just this, I don't know—just this sense of relief, you know, you're just talking about all these things, these awful things, and you find a way to be funny, you know. To me it's just empowering, and funny. It's—just really empowering that, that we could go through this medical history that just, if I had to tell you that, you know, no one should go through that, and then make a joke about it. You know, it's just those little things as well.

ARG: Oh yeah, and I—

MM: Just a lot of them.

ARG: Yeah, and I'm sure that's very helpful for the people on the other end of the phone, you know, being able to laugh in the midst of—in the midst of all this, you know, all this stuff that's going on. And just one last question, I guess. Where do you see Detention Resistance going in the future, if you can speak on that?

MM: I think that we are definitely, even though you know i haven't been there the whole time i feel like were just getting started i really feel like we're just getting started i nfl like i see us kind of going into a different phase, again, of self reflection and documentation which is part of you know what you're doing. I also hope—so that's kind of the more philosophical, I think as people, I think that enough of us have been talking to each other long enough to do that. Like very specific thing I hope we're in the process – we just put in for a fellowship to sponsor one of our *compas* that's released and i know one of the things that we've always wanted is have a kind of mutual aid network for *compas*. So I hope—we're just in the process of doing that. So I think that in these self-reflective conversations and kind of understanding the long-term and short-term goals. I think that, at least for what I want to—what I hope we'll work on is that kind of accompanying postp-release. Because what you find out is yes, you want people to get out, but once they get out it's just a whole other problem. No computer, nowhere to live, no idea even where they are sometimes when they get released—they'll just drop people off on a corner and be like “see ya—by the way don't get arrested and don't get in trouble, and, by the way how, can you not when you have no idea even where you are?” So I think there's kind of the more political education but I think very concretely I hope that we can help find resources and give structure to kind of post-release for *compas*. I haven't seen that anywhere yet. They have their own networks, but obviously it's because, you know, they don't have housing and they don't have a job—it's hard to,

you know, keep in touch. So I hope that will be more we haven't had a chance to do as much, so I hope that will be something specific that I see in the future.