



Jorge's Story: A Readers' Theater Piece

A version by Maila Davenport

Cast:

- Jorge – Latino detainee at NORCOR
- Reverend Robert - A Visiting Clergy
- Universal Voice- a voice from our collective past (*please read the name of each author aloud after each quote*)
- Narrator - reads stage directions aloud, stands a bit off to one side of cast

Props: (optional, or discover ones for yourselves)

- Jorge – wearing blue vest/shirt
- Reverend Robert - spiral notebook and pen
- Universal Voice- hand held mirror or a flashlight (lift gently with each quote)

Narrator: *It is late afternoon in winter; Rev. Robert sits down at his kitchen table with his worn spiral notebook and pen; on the cover he has scrawled a quote. . .*

Universal Voice: "What is done cannot be undone, but one can prevent it happening again" – Anne Frank

Narrator: *He has just returned from his weekly visit to ICE detainees being held illegally at NORCOR, a public 4-county jail; he begins to write his weekly entry. . .*

Rev. Robert: Immigrants held at NORCOR are still denied any face-to-face visits with their families. I never thought I would see the Tacoma NW Detention Center as having any humanity, but at least they allow the people being held to visit with their children and spouses. I spoke with Jorge today. He is going on 2 years of incarceration. He spent many months at Tacoma then months at NORCOR, only to be sent back and forth between the prisons. I ask him how things are going at NORCOR.

Narrator: *Jorge sits at a bare metal table; he wears a blue prisoner uniform and flip-flops; immigrant detainees are not allowed full shoes in winter as is protocol for the criminal prisoners held at NORCOR.*

Jorge: They took my pillow.

Rev. Robert: They took your pillow?

Jorge: Yes. They replaced my old mattress with a new mattress with a built-in pillow. Then they took my pillow. It is uncomfortable and I am not sleeping well.

Rev. Robert: I feel frustration rising in me at the subtle dehumanization that Jorge and other detainees face every day. Jorge is father to 3 children. Thankfully, they are US Citizen's and do not risk incarceration. Jorge is grateful he does not have to worry about their safety. By now those kids are now 8, 11, and 14 years old. He has missed 2 years of their lives already.

Jorge: I cannot be deported because I cannot live apart from my family. They depend on me, I am the father and husband. They depend on the money I make to support the family working cherries, apples, and pears. I cannot make that kind of money in Mexico.

Universal Voice: "Without dignity, *identity* is erased. In its absence, men are defined not by themselves, but by their captors and the circumstances in which they are forced to live." – Laura Hillenbrand

Rev. Robert: Jorge told me something very poignant today. He said just before ICE got him he had a disagreement with his oldest daughter, Laura. He said it never has fully resolved.

Jorge: The argument with my oldest girl Laura has been eating at me, and I still think about it every day. Sure, we talk sometimes on the phone, but it is hard to feel like we can completely make up unless I can see her face-to-face--- and I can hug her.

Rev. Robert: And this was very different today. Jorge asked for help. He asked, only if it is possible, could he have some more money for his phone account because he is running low – imagine that place charges 25 cents a minute, that is three times the amount for a phone call at Tacoma! He was compelled to call his daughter and had a long conversation with her about a dream he had earlier this week.

Jorge: God gave me this dream – I am in our front yard playing soccer with all my children; Laura and I get tripped up, and both fall down. We look at each other and just start laughing and laughing together! I woke up laughing with a feeling of peace. I felt a real peace with my daughter. I decided to call her that day. I told her everything: how I was feeling— how uneasy I felt this whole time about our argument, and then I he told her my dream. We cried, together, over the phone.

Universal Voice: “Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.” – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rev. Robert: I assured Jorge about his phone account. I told him how people of faith from all around the state wanted to support him and his family. I explained the visiting clergy are coming up with a way to pool donated money, so we can put money on individual phone accounts at NORCOR easily. He was very happy that so many people care.

Universal Voice: “We must turn *to* each other, not *on* each other” – Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II

Narrator: *Both Jorge and Rev. Robert bow their heads together; they share a prayer of thanksgiving for Jorge and his daughter, Laura.*

“Jorge’s” story is one in a [series of stories](#) from immigrants who have been detained at NORCOR, a four-county public jail in The Dalles, OR. NORCOR has a contract to rent out beds to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - in violation of Oregon’s 30-year-old sanctuary law. Stories in the series have been written by either clergy or attorneys - the only people who are currently allowed to visit immigrants detained at NORCOR. Jorge’s story is a composite of multiple stories that shares the truth of the experiences of those detained and protects their identities.