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Ser Feliz Es Mi Identidad

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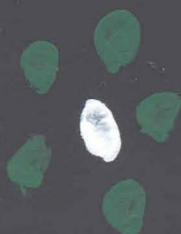
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SER

FELIZ

ES MI

IDENTIDAD



Race: _____

Identity: _____

Identidad. Identity. As a daughter of undocumented immigrants, I never knew what I was for a long time. Mexican? Mexican-American? I identify as happy. I identify as a first generation. I identify as the proud daughter of undocumented immigrants.

Anchor Baby. Freeloader. La Que Nació en El Norte.

"Nosotros no tenemos numero de seguro social," those are the exact words that my mother told me when I was 8. These words directly translate to "We don't have a social security number." Little did I know that this simple statement would not only dictate how a lot of my life would be, but also my life being sculpted around always having to be careful not so much for me, but for my parents and siblings.

April 2012.

- Flashing lights, red and blue to be exact.
- License and Registration?
- *Hands over expired license*

- Ticket for driving with invalid license, and appearance within 10 days to the police station
- Goes next day to police station, gets questioned on why the license is invalid, signs form stating if they get caught driving again, it will be an immediate arrest
- No more driving for either of my parents, and Uber Jocelyn starts with no end in sight

"Can you come to practice? Are you attending the meeting? Can you hang out after school?"

NO

THE ANSWER WAS ALWAYS NO

I was the one in charge of getting my siblings from school, I was always on call if my mom didn't have a ride home from work, I was (and still am) the one who drives us around for errands and appointments. It was hard in the beginning because I didn't want to be that responsible, but quickly learned that my parents' safety was at risk if I wasn't willing to drive them just for that grocery run or to that medical appointment.

NO SB 1070

This was my first protest, ever. My parents took me and my siblings out from school to make sure we were marching down the streets with everyone else. My parents skipped work, which if you know Mexican parents that's a surprise. As a child in elementary school I quickly learned that having protest was one of the ways that we as the undocumented community were going to get things done, or at least be seen by those around us.

October 2014.

- Flashing lights, AGAIN. Red and Blue
- This time it wasn't a warning it was actual, with handcuffs included
- Pulling up and seeing the look of worry and the unknown under streams of tears
- "Im not allowed to give you information" as the officer takes down all of the information
- Driving to the county jail
- Being yelled at for coming in too early
- "It will take a couple hours"
- Watching night turn into day, with minutes feeling like hours
- A plastic bag that holds your belongings, and your shoes being thrown out

- "In this packet is your court date, failure to appear will cause a warrant out for your arrest; In your case I wouldn't recommend not showing up"
- Silence. Car ride so still, feeling as if the past 12 hours time stood still

2018.

"Sign here, and initial there." I was signing away the affidavit form, stating that I would become my brother's legal guardian. No one knew what the next day would hold, so my parents made the decision to give me custody of my brother. With Trump being in office and holding so much power over all of our undocumented community, the unknown was at an all time high. I may have never got "the talk" growing up but I did know how to translate government papers, make all medical appointments, had my siblings and my parents birthdates memorized, and knew the chain of command if my parents were to ever be detained by ICE.

La primera en graduarse.

The fear of getting that phone call that my parents have been detained haunts me daily, but it's a part of life. You learn to manage "normal" life and be aware of what may happen all while juggling everything else. You can't let the unknown consume you, but you also can't live life "freely." How free are we?

I am here not for me, but for those who came before me.

For my parents leaving everything behind as teenagers and moving to a foreign country not knowing the language

For those who made the brave decision of choosing a better life for their families and themselves, and did not make it

For those who live in the shadows, all because they don't have access to a social security number

For those who the are voiceless
and need to be heard

HUMAN
GRY

