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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

So beautifully and powerfully written, Adriana. Thank you for sending this piece to us.

—All the best, Jeff



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 We cannot wait for another killing to wake us up

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Fear is not new. Oppression has always depended on  
3 silence. And organized, collective action, even by a small  
4 number of people, can bend history.

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 IF YOU ARE reading this and feeling grief, rage, fear, or a  
7 restless sense that something must be done, I want you to know  
8 there is a place to put that energy.

9 Through mutual aid, rapid response, accompaniment,  
10 and collective care, our Ready Response Team at The Root Social

11 Justice Center works to support immigrants and others most  
12 impacted by state violence.

13 We are in a moment charged in grief and sharpened by  
14 anger, a moment that asks more of us than words and refuses to  
15 let us look away.

16 Just days ago, Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care  
17 nurse, was shot and killed by federal immigration agents in  
18 Minneapolis while protesting the actions of federal agents from  
19 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S.  
20 Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

21 Alex spent his life caring for others. He cared for  
22 veterans. He showed up for his community. And in his final  
23 moments, witnesses say he was doing what he had always done:  
24 trying to protect a woman from harm.

25 His death has ignited protests across this country, but let  
26 us be honest: The outrage many feel right now is not because this  
27 is unprecedented. It is because it is undeniable.

28 \* \* \*

29 THIS MOMENT demands our attention.

30 But it also demands truth.

31 Because while this killing has shocked the nation, Black,  
32 Indigenous, Brown, Asian, and immigrant communities have  
33 lived under the threat of state violence for generations. This terror  
34 did not begin with ICE, and it did not begin with this  
35 administration.

36 It began with the genocide of Indigenous peoples.

37 With stolen land, nations erased, and survival  
38 criminalized.

39 It continued with slavery, bodies reduced to property,  
40 families torn apart by law, violence written into the foundation of  
41 this country.

42 It carried on through Jim Crow, lynching sanctioned by  
43 silence, terror enforced by policy, and a justice system that  
44 looked away.

45           It lived in segregated schools, redlined neighborhoods,  
46 and over-policed streets.

47           It lived in forced assimilation, in Indigenous children  
48 taken from their families and sent to Christian boarding schools,  
49 where language, culture, and identity were beaten out of them in  
50 the name of "civilization."

51           It lived in forced sterilization and medical  
52 experimentation on Puerto Rican women.

53           It lived in internment camps.

54           In broken treaties.

55           In borders drawn through living communities, walls  
56 meant to divide families, histories, and futures.

57           It lives here, in our poor communities starved of  
58 resources and flooded with surveillance.

59           For so many of us, this fear is not new.

60           It is inherited.

61           It is normalized.

62           It is something our bodies learn long before words do,  
63 long before headlines catch up.

64           This is not an isolated incident.

65           It is part of a long, brutal pattern, one rooted in histories  
66 we have refused to fully reckon with.

67           \* \* \*

68           AND STILL, even in moments this dark, history offers us  
69 something else.

70           History offers us courage.

71           It reminds us that ordinary people, when they choose  
72 action over comfort, solidarity over silence, can change the fate  
73 of all of us.

74           In Poland, during World War II, when terror was law and  
75 cruelty was policy, people like Irena Sendler made a choice. She  
76 smuggled food. She forged papers. She carried children out one  
77 by one, saving an estimated 2,500 lives, knowing every step  
78 could cost her her own.

79           There were couples like Johtje and Aart Vos, members of  
80 the Dutch Resistance, who opened their home and hid people  
81 hunted by the state, saving dozens of lives while knowing  
82 discovery meant death.

83           There were individuals who falsified documents,  
84 rerouted trains, forged identities, and said, again and again: *This*  
85 *ends with me.*

86           And there were countless others whose names we will  
87 never know, people who chose life when obedience would have  
88 been easier. People who said yes to humanity and no to brutality.

89           Here in this country, we know these stories, too.

90           We know Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, hunted by  
91 law, called “Moses” by those she led to freedom. After freeing  
92 herself, she went back, again and again, through danger and  
93 bloodshed, guiding people north through the Underground  
94 Railroad.

95           She never lost a single person. Not one.

96           \* \* \*

97           THESE STORIES are not distant history.

98           They are instructions.

99           They remind us that fear is not new, that oppression has  
100 always depended on silence, and that organized, collective  
101 action, even by a small number of people, can bend history.

102           Today, as people fill streets from Minneapolis to San  
103 Francisco, New York to Boston, we are watching that courage  
104 reappear. People are marching. Organizing. Demanding  
105 accountability. Refusing to accept policies that treat human  
106 beings as disposable.

107           We cannot wait for another killing to wake us up.

108           We cannot convince ourselves that someone else will do  
109 the work that is ours to do.

110           Alex Pretti reached for someone else even when it cost  
111 him everything. He did what had to be done: He showed up. He  
112 protected. He refused to look away.

113           May we carry that forward.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

114 **ADRIANA NEGRÓN** ([hip@therootsjc.org](mailto:hip@therootsjc.org)) is a  
115 community organizer with The Root Social Justice Center in  
116 Brattleboro, where she leads the Supporting Your Neurodiverse  
117 Child (SYNC) and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color  
118 Thriving Network (BTN) programs. “If you want to get involved,  
119 to show up for your neighbors in tangible ways during this  
120 moment, I invite you to reach out to us directly,” she writes.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

122

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

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####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

124

####END LOGLINE####

