



This is the **Ally Guide to *Immigration Nation***, the new Netflix series [ICE tried to shut down](#).

If you've never had ICE bang on your door, or seen a loved one deported, **you owe it to the millions of people who have** to watch *Immigration Nation*.

The filmmakers got inside access, following ICE as they raided homes and separated families. Crucially, they then followed the story of these families, **capturing what it looks and feels like** to be hunted down, caged, and taken from your home and your family by men with guns.

If you care about the safety and dignity of immigrants in the United States, you will find *Immigration Nation* powerful and heartbreaking. **But feelings are not what make us allies; only our actions can do that.** And it can be hard to know where to start.

So we made this guide for allies to watch the series with friends & family, discuss and process it together, and then **start taking steps to support the immigrant rights movement together.**

Get Started

1. Set it up

- Text or email a couple friends, asking them to watch the first 2 episodes with you.
- Schedule a time to watch, on your own or together (in-person or [Netflix Party](#)).
- Decide when and where you're going to get together to reflect on the episodes. Make sure to send everyone the Zoom link or whatever they need in advance!

2. Talk it through

- To start, we suggest going around so each person can talk for a minute or two about how the episodes affected them. It's a very emotional series.
- Then, take your friends through the questions in the guide as a starting point. Don't be afraid to let the conversation flow in other directions if it feels productive.

3. Make it count

- To finish, have everyone pick one item each from the 'Take Action' and 'Learn More' sections; commit to doing those things by your next discussion.
 - Choose episodes to watch next, and when you're going to watch & discuss them.
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Episode Guide

[Episode 1: Installing Fear](#) | [Episode 2: Maintaining Vigilance](#) | [Episode 3: The Power of the Vote](#)

Content Warning

Undocumented activists tell us that *Immigration Nation* is traumatic for those who have experienced ICE's reign of terror firsthand. Please be mindful when discussing it on social media, and include a note like "*Warning: Contains traumatizing footage of ICE violence.*"

We do not suggest inviting people you know who have reason to fear ICE, or have experienced ICE violence, to watch or discuss the series with you. **This guide is intended to help allies process with each other**; for us to better understand ICE and the harm they cause, without asking directly affected people to relive traumatizing experiences they've had.

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Episode 1: Installing Fear

Discussion Questions

1. At 22:55, [an unnamed man describes why he came to the United States](#): *"I left my country because my father was murdered. I don't know what the problem was, but they told me if I didn't leave the country, they would kill me also. And this is still the case. I know that they will kill me as soon as I arrive."*

Under what circumstances did your non-Native ancestors come to the United States? How bad would the conditions need to be where you live, before you would flee to another country undocumented? What added obligations does America have to immigrants fleeing from the many countries where our government has supported coups, dictatorships, or violent and exploitative corporations?

2. At 27:50 [we hear from Arturo, an ICE Deportation Officer](#). He describes the experience of being confronted for deporting someone's mother, and explains how he views his role in making decisions: *"I'm a soldier, I was in the military before, I do what I'm told. I do what I'm told."*

At 42:48 [we hear from an ICE agent named Judy](#): *"When you first start this job, it is kind of hard. You do let your emotions become part of what you do, in the beginning, just because you're a human being...And you just have to kinda learn how to separate your personal feelings and your personal emotions from doing your work."*

What associations do you have with the concept of "just following orders"? What do you think of the way Judy describes her emotions and her work? What are the dangers of her approach? In American workplaces, when is emotion acceptable or unacceptable? How does that change depending on the race, gender, or class of the worker?

3. At 41:45 [we see ICE take a father away from his crying child](#), in order to deport him. Usually the term 'family separation' is applied specifically to the Trump administration's border policy, but clearly other ICE deportations are also family separations.

How does family separation at the border differ from family separation in our cities? To what extent is family separation a new problem, when people were actually being deported at a much higher rate under the Obama/Biden administration? What is different about the way the Trump administration separates families, and what is the same?

4. A large majority of Americans agree that it is wrong to be cruel to immigrant children, to take them from their families and inflict suffering on them.

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Why are these practices more accepted when they are done to immigrant adults? When immigrant advocates focus on the treatment of children because it resonates with more people, what does that mean for immigrant adults? How can we balance the need to frame our work in ways that will be popular with the public, **and** the need to challenge the widespread beliefs and biases about immigrants that created ICE and our immigration system in the first place?

5. In the documentary, ICE agents, politicians, and sometimes immigrants themselves use language that sorts immigrants into two categories: “good person” or “bad criminal.”

How do ICE, Trump, and others use the idea of “bad criminal” immigrants? Who has been targeted by rhetoric about “bad criminals” in American policing, and what have been the consequences? Can you think of other examples where governments have used the label of “criminal” to justify abuse?

Take Action

- ❑ **Find out** where the nearest detention centers are using the [Freedom for Immigrants map tool](#). Once you have the names of nearby facilities, use that information to find and get connected to a local group organizing in connection with those detention centers.
- ❑ **Watch and share** [this quick video on how to film ICE](#) effectively and safely, featuring Fiona Apple and created by Brooklyn Defender Services & WITNESS.
- ❑ **Join** [this phone zap](#) to make calls for groups advancing demands to free immigrants and others incarcerated right now.

Learn More

- ❑ **Get up-to-date** on the national fight against detention. Join Detention Watch Network’s [email list](#) to stay informed about local & national fights against immigrant detention.
- ❑ **Read** ["The Deportation Machine Obama Built for President Trump"](#), a 2016 warning.
- ❑ **Study up on** ICE raids: Learn about the ways that groups are organizing to counter ICE raids, with the [ICE Raids Toolkit](#) from the Immigrant Defense Project and the Center for Constitutional Rights. Find a group doing that training and organizing near you.

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Episode 2: Maintaining Vigilance

Discussion Questions

1. At 28:30, [Johana speaks](#) about the emotional scars she sees in her three-year-old son after he's released from 40 days in Border Patrol detention.

What kind of long-term impacts do you think these policies will have on children like Johana's son? What about for the thousands of children who the U.S. has lost track of, and will never reunite with their families? How does the adopting out of immigrant children compare to experiences of family separation like the [Kindertransport](#) that helped Jewish children escape Nazi-controlled areas, or the [forced relocation](#) of Native children to boarding schools in the U.S. in the 19th and 20th centuries?

2. Like many people we met in episode 1, Carlos came to the U.S. fleeing gang violence in El Salvador. At 35:40, [an undercover NYPD detective suggests](#) that Carlos should be chosen to stay legally in the U.S. because he was a police officer in El Salvador.

Does Carlos being a police officer make him more deserving of safety than others facing violence in El Salvador? What, if anything, makes someone deserving or undeserving of safety?

3. [At 39:06, ICE supervisor Christian says](#): *"There's an inherent kind of, I won't say joy, but satisfaction, in moving some of the people that I know, regardless of what public sentiment is, don't belong in this country."*

What associations do you have with someone saying certain people don't belong in this country? Historically, what have been the consequences of this kind of thinking? Do you think there could be a moral and ethical way to define a group of people as not belonging and remove them, or is it an inherently dangerous way of thinking?

4. [At 39:24, ICE supervisor Christian says](#): *"I don't remove anybody. The judge does. I'm just the taxi driver that takes them from point A to point B."*

In the first two episodes, how have you seen ICE agents take responsibility for the impact of their actions, or place the responsibility on others? In what ways does the American immigration system make it easy for its workers to distance themselves? How does American culture encourage or discourage taking this kind of responsibility?

5. Were you surprised by anything you learned in the episode about immigration judges and the legal process surrounding immigration? Would you say the system is designed to produce justice? If not, what do you think it *is* designed to produce?

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Take Action

- ❑ **Share [this episode](#)**. Of all the episodes, we think episode 2 does the best job of connecting the immigration policy debate with the impact it has on real human beings.
- ❑ **Talk** about immigration with your family and friends. As a starting point for figuring out how to do it in an empathetic, age-appropriate way, check out the [RAICES Family Guide](#).
- ❑ **Contact your member of Congress** and ask them to investigate ICE's secret detention of children in hotels. You can read more about this practice in this [Texas Tribune article](#).

Learn More

- ❑ **Read [this article](#)** about how American immigration policy led to the creation of gangs like MS-13 in El Salvador, and how current immigration policy is making things worse there.
- ❑ **Watch** Warshan Shire's poem '[Home](#)'.
- ❑ **See the numbers** on deportations under Obama and Trump--and what Americans think about it.

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Episode 3: The Power of the Vote

1. At 6:43, [an ICE agent explains that](#) *“even under the Obama administration, when we had the priorities, that really didn’t limit anything. What people didn’t realize is, there was this little fine print at the bottom that said ‘you can arrest anybody you basically want to.’”*

The Obama/Biden administration actually deported people at a much faster rate than the Trump administration, but sparked far less outrage and activism among non-immigrants. Why do you think so many people only became aware and involved after Trump’s election? What do we need to do to ensure that we, and the people we know, don’t leave the fight and abandon immigrants whenever Trump leaves office?

2. At 15:37, [Mauricio says](#) *“I got over 160 combat missions. I got blood on my shoes, how about you? People enjoy those freedoms because I got blood on my shoes, on my boots, on my desert camo.”*

Whose blood is Mauricio talking about? What do you think about the idea of killing on behalf of the U.S. military as a way to ‘earn’ citizenship or legal status? In the American understanding of the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, how much attention is paid to the millions of refugees? In what ways do you think immigration and war are connected?

3. At 21:31, [Cesar lists some of the things that aren’t safe for him](#) to do now that he’s undocumented, and Fabiola describes how being undocumented has changed Cesar.

Which things on Cesar’s list had you thought about already, and which ones were a surprise? What dangers and pressures do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has added for undocumented families? What do you see as the role of imagination, of trying to picture what it’s like to be someone else, when ultimately undocumented people are the only ones who can truly know what their experience is like?

4. At 12:04, Sheriff candidate Gary McFadden [connects the terror that ICE causes in immigrant communities with the terror that police cause in Black communities](#). One thing he doesn’t mention is the growing number of Black undocumented immigrants, who face racist policing *and* are disproportionately targeted by ICE for detention and deportation.

What similarities do you see between “immigration enforcement” (ICE) and “law enforcement” (police)? What links do you see between #AbolishICE and #DefundPolice? In what ways do you think this episode succeeded or failed to critically examine policing?

5. If you had the opportunity to say something to [Bryan Cox, the ICE spokesperson](#) in the episode, what would it be? What seems to be motivating him? As allies, how can we

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prevent people in our communities from working for or with organizations like ICE? How should we treat people in our communities who choose to do this kind of work?

Take Action

- ❑ **Divest** from companies that profit from immigration detention. You may own stocks or have a retirement fund invested in the private prison and border industries profiting from the ICE enforcement. [Use this tool to find out](#)--then move to divest from groups like CoreCivic (CXW) & GEO Group (GEO) seen in this episode.
- ❑ [Donate to the UndocuBlack Relief Fund](#), to support their work to provide emergency resources to Black undocumented immigrant communities facing COVID-19.
- ❑ [Check to see](#) if a city or county near you has a 287(g) agreement with ICE, using the map created by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center.

Learn More

- ❑ **Read** [If You Said #AbolishICE, Demand #DefundPolice](#), a short but key call to action.
- ❑ **Visit** the infographic page [Black Immigrant Lives Are Under Attack](#), created by RAICES.
- ❑ **Read** [What Isolation Does to Undocumented Immigrants](#) about the mental health toll of the system.

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