

Symposium Speaker Bios

“Elizabeth Detention Center: Past, Present and Future”

Abdulai Bah is a journalist who was previously detained at the Elizabeth Detention Center. He is based in NYC and works for Al Jazeera's Fault Lines program. Before his return to Al Jazeera, Abdulai worked for The Weekly, a New York Times TV documentary show. Prior to that, Abdulai was a program associate at People's Production House (PPH). There, he produced content for major media outlets such as Pacifica Radio, PBS NewsHour, Public Radio International, ABC Radio Australia, WNYC, and The Nation. In 2012, Abdulai's media work was showcased at venues such as MIT, IDEO New York, and The White House Office of Technology and Science. Abdulai volunteers with the Pan-African Community Development Initiative, assisting newly arrived asylum seekers. He also works with the US-Africa Children's Fellowship, a non-profit that provides supplies to rural African schools.

Ulla D. Berg is an anthropologist and Associate Professor of Anthropology and Latino and Caribbean Studies at Rutgers-New Brunswick. Her research focuses on historical and contemporary processes and experiences of migration, (im)mobility, confinement, and deportation in and between the Andean region of Latin America and the United States. She is the author *Mobile Selves: Race, Migration, and Belonging in Peru and the U.S.* (NYU Press, 2015). Other recent publications include "Remote Ethnography in Carceral Settings: Local Configurations of Migrant Detention during the Coronavirus Pandemic" (with S. Tosh and K.S. León, *Ethnography*, 2022) and "Transnational Families and Return in the Age of Deportation" (w. Gioconda Herrera, *Global Networks*, 2022). She is a co-convenor with Carolina Sánchez Boe of EASA's Anthropology of Confinement Network and a board member with First Friends of NJ and NY.

Carolina Sánchez Boe is a sociologist and anthropologist and Adjunct Lecturer in French and Francophone Studies at Brown University in Paris, with affiliations to IMC, Aarhus University and CERLIS, Université de Paris Cité. Her research centers on the anthropology of confinement, deportation, illegalisation, and bordering practices in urban spaces, primarily in France and the USA. She has worked with non-profit organizations in these fields, including American Friends' Service Committee, Cette France-là, Cimade, and the Prison Litigation Network. She is a co-convenor with Ulla D. Berg of EASA's Anthropology of Confinement Network. Recent publications include "Fighting border control in three sites of confinement: The uses and experiences of prison, detention, and electronic monitoring for foreign-nationals in New York" in *Champ Pénal* 2020/21; "Detained through a smartphone. Deploying experimental collaborative visual methods to study the socio-technical landscape of digital confinement", in *Digital*

Culture & Society 2/2021 with H. Mainsah, and “Expanding Penal Landscapes into Immigrant Communities: Digital ‘Alternatives’ to Detention in the USA” in *Border Criminologies (online)* 2022 and 2023.

Pina Cirillo is a Supervising Attorney with the Rutgers Immigrant Rights Clinic's Detention and Deportation Defense Initiative (DDDI), a state-funded program to provide pro bono representation to detained and non-detained New Jersey residents in their immigration proceedings. In addition to appearing in immigration court, she litigates cases before the Board of Immigration Appeals, Circuit Courts of Appeals, and District Courts. Pina is also an Adjunct Professor in the Rutgers Immigrant Rights Clinic, where she co-teaches the seminar class and advises clinical students on their representation of active client cases. She is also an Adjunct Professor for the Villanova Interdisciplinary Immigration Studies Training for Advocates (VIISTA), an online educational program that trains students to become immigrant advocates and Department of Justice Accredited Representatives.

Will Coley (Aquifer Media) is an independent radio producer and “communications problem solver” based in Harlem, NY. In the late 1990s/early 2000s, under the auspices of Jesuit Refugee Service and then American Friends Service Committee, Will created and coordinated programs to support people in the Elizabeth Detention Center including the volunteer visitation program, English classes and post-release social services. For this work, Will received the Reebok Human Rights Award. To help refugees and immigrants share their stories, Will then created digital storytelling and narrative change projects for nonprofit organizations (including The Opportunity Agenda) and philanthropic organizations. Since attending the Transom Story Workshop, Will has produced audio stories for NPR News, *99% Invisible*, and the BBC World Service, among others. As a producer now at Condé Nast, Will has been working on podcasts for *The New Yorker* and *Vanity Fair*. He’s also a proud member of the Association of Independents in Radio and Detention Watch Network.

Deirdre Conlon is an academic/researcher and Associate Professor in Critical Human Geography, currently based at University of Leeds, in the UK. Previously, she taught at Saint Peter’s University, Jersey City. Her work investigates the multiple reverberations of privatization, subcontracting, financialization, and politics in U.S. immigration detention and immigration control systems broadly. Deirdre is a member of *Detention Watch Network*, she also contributes to the UK’s *Detention Forum*. Together with Nancy Hiemstra, Deirdre has published numerous academic journal articles as well as op-eds about ‘detention economies’; they are currently collaborating on a book project that interrogates the sick and sickening business of detention with a focus on New York and New Jersey.

Jenny Garcia is a Communications Associate at Detention Watch Network (DWN). Jenny provides press support for DWN members and helps to execute the Network's media strategy. In this role, she values the responsibility to strategically advance stories of resistance and community. Prior to joining DWN, Jenny worked with UNICEF's child migration team.

Amy Gottlieb has been involved in the struggle to abolish immigration detention for over 20 years. She is currently the US Migration Director for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Prior to that she was the Associate Regional Director for the Northeast Region of the AFSC, where she was responsible for supporting programs in the Northeast Region that focus on Immigrant Rights, Healing Justice, and Youth Organizing. Amy worked from 2001 – 2014 as Program Director of the AFSC Immigrant Rights Program in Newark, and prior to that as staff attorney there from 1996 - 2001. Amy also worked in the spring 2012 as a Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor in the Cardozo Immigration Justice Clinic. She graduated from Rutgers Law School - Newark in 1996, where she taught immigration law as an adjunct professor. She is past chair of the Steering Committee of the Detention Watch Network and is Vice-Chair of the Board of Houses on the Moon Theater Company.

Nancy Hiemstra is a political geographer and Associate Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Stony Brook University (State University of New York). Her research focuses on consequences of U.S. immigration policies within and south of U.S. borders, processes of migrant illegalization, and the financial incentives and dependencies entangled in detention. She is the author of *Detain and Deport: The Chaotic U.S. Immigration Enforcement Regime* (University of Georgia Press, 2019). With Deirdre Conlon, Nancy co-edited *Intimate Economies of Immigration Detention: Critical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2016). Nancy and Deirdre have published numerous academic journal articles as well as op-eds about 'detention economies'; they are currently collaborating on a book project that interrogates the sick and sickening business of detention with a focus on New York and New Jersey.

Rev. Seth Kaper-Dale has co-pastored the Highland Park Reformed Church (RCHP) since 2001. He is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, and spent formative time in Ecuador and India before coming to RCHP. Seth and wife/co-pastor Stephanie Kaper-Dale have three daughters. Seth co-founded Who Is My Neighbor? Inc. (HP Community Development Agency), started RCHP-Affordable Housing Corporation and is its CEO. Interfaith-RISE, Accompany Now and Still Waters Anti Trafficking are all subsidiary companies of RCHP-AHC. Seth spearheads much of the Immigration work of the church.

Kenneth Sebastián León is an Assistant Professor of Latino and Caribbean Studies and Criminal Justice at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. He specializes in crimes of the powerful and racialized social control, with emphasis on three related topics: a) food and drug regulatory regimes; b) civic & socio-legal (im)mobilities; and c) the colonial-carceral functions of contemporary justice systems. León is a former research contractor at the U.S. Department of Justice – National Institute of Justice, and has extensive experience studying localized public safety challenges. These include medium and large-scale collaborative studies of the Colombian National Police, the Honduran National Police, U.S. jails, and the transnational capacity of MS-13 in the United States and El Salvador. From 2020-2021, he was the co-PI of a study of the COVID-19 response in New Jersey immigration detention centers.

Elizabeth Llorente is an award-winning journalist with experience in reporting and editing across multiple media platforms. She covered immigration for The Bergen Record for 16 years, earning national recognition for coverage of immigrants, ethnic communities and race relations that influenced changes in the way many newsrooms across the country covered those topics. She won the George Polk Award, one of the top honors in journalism, and was named New Jersey Journalist of the Year, for an expose about inhumane conditions in the Elizabeth Detention Center and currently serves on the George Polk Awards board. Her work on immigration and race relations was featured in “The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity,” published by Columbia University Press. She has written stories for The New York Times, AARP Magazine, New Jersey Monthly Magazine, ReVista: the Harvard (University) Review of Latin America, and numerous other publications.

Lauren Major is the managing attorney for the Immigrant Rights Program Detention Project at the American Friends Service Committee in Newark, New Jersey.

Selvin Martinez is an immigrant from Honduras detained in EDC in 2016-17. He currently lives and works in Jersey City.

Lori A. Nessel is a Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrants' Rights/International Human Rights Clinic at Seton Hall University. Her teaching and scholarship focuses largely on the areas of immigration and refugee law and policy, international human rights, rule of law, and access to justice. In her Immigrants' Rights/International Human Rights Clinic, Professor Nessel supervises live cases and human rights fact-finding and advocacy projects, including claims under the Refugee and Torture Conventions, as well as cases involving human trafficking, family reunification and other forms of relief from deportation. The clinic is now home to Seton Hall Law School's component of the state-wide Detention and Deportation Defense

Initiative (DDDI). As part of this Initiative, law students join forces with a large in-house legal team to represent detained immigrants facing deportation and family separation, with a goal of ensuring that no detained immigrant in New Jersey faces consequences as severe as deportation without a lawyer by their side.

Kathy O'Leary has been a member of Pax Christi USA, which represents the international Catholic peace movement in the United States, since the early 2000's. She has served as the coordinator for the New Jersey region for nearly 15 years. In 2022 she was named an "ambassador of peace" and in 2023 she was elected to Pax Christi USA's National Council. She has been focusing on the issue of immigration detention since 2007. She has written and contributed to reports, articles, and op-eds on ICE detention, organized local, state-wide and regional protests and vigils and worked on deportation defense campaigns. She has represented Pax Christi in a number of coalitions including NJ Advocates for Immigrant Detainees, NJ Prison Justice Watch and the Interfaith Campaign for Just Closures. She was previously a member of the board of First Friends of NJ & NY, where she served as its vice president.

Sally Pillay is a MSW graduate of Kean University. She is passionate about social justice and advocating for the dignity and worth of immigrants being held in detention. Sally first began her work at First Friends as a volunteer and intern and, after obtaining her MSW, went on to become the organization's Program Director. Originally from South Africa, she herself is an immigrant to this country and has worked tirelessly for Immigration Reform and for the ethical treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers. Sally now serves on the Board of First Friends of NJ & NY.

Mary Rizzo is an Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University-Newark. She works at the intersection of inclusive public history, digital humanities, urban studies, and 20th century U.S. cultural history. Since curating a panel about the 1995 "riot" at what was then called Esmor for the traveling exhibition States of Incarceration, she has been an activist and scholar on immigration detention in New Jersey. She has published on these issues in *Museums and Social Issues*, *Washington Post*, and *The Star-Ledger*. She is also the author of *Come and Be Shocked: Baltimore Beyond John Waters and The Wire* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020) and *Class Acts: Young Men and the Rise of Lifestyle* (University of Nevada Press).

Katy Sastre (she/her) is the Executive Director of First Friends of New Jersey and New York, an organization dedicated to providing supportive services to immigrants who are impacted by the immigration enforcement system. She is also on the steering committee of Latino Action Network, and was previously the Campaign Strategist for the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, responsible for coordinating statewide

campaign priorities. She has worked in the non-profit sector for over a decade, including at the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the International Rescue Committee, and the International Center for Transitional Justice. Katy is a graduate of Cornell University (BA, Sociology & Government) and SOAS, University of London (MA, Gender Studies).

Whitney Strub is an associate professor of history at Rutgers University-Newark, where he co-directs the Queer Newark Oral History Project. He is the author of *Perversion for Profit: The Politics of Pornography and the Rise of the New Right* (2011) and editor of several books including the forthcoming *Queer Newark: Stories of Resistance, Love, and Community* (2024). A longtime member of the Democratic Socialists of America and the Abolish ICE-New York/New Jersey coalition, his work has also appeared in *Radical History Review*, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *Jacobin*, *The Nation*, and elsewhere.

Amy Torres (they/them) is Executive Director for the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice (NJAIJ). NJAIJ is the state's largest immigration coalition, bringing together over 50 organizations to fight for policies that empower and protect immigrants. Under Torres's leadership, NJAIJ fought for the East Coast's first ban on immigration detention contracts, advocated for the expansion of state Medicaid to cover undocumented children, won a first-of-its-kind direct assistance program for families excluded from federal pandemic aid, and has served as a watchdog for New Jersey's Drivers Licenses for All expansion. Firmly rooted in Torres's identity is their experience as a Filipinx American and the core belief that human rights and liberties should not be subject to change because of something as arbitrary as border, birthplace, or paperwork. Prior to joining NJAIJ, Torres led immigrants rights and policy advocacy in NYC, with a focus on Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

Sarah Tosh (Criminal Justice, Rutgers-Camden) Sarah Tosh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice at Rutgers University-Camden, and a critical researcher with a focus on the punitive intersections between drug, crime, and immigration policy in the United States. Her book, *The Immigration Law Death Penalty: Aggravated Felonies, Deportation, and Legal Resistance* was published in 2023 by New York University Press. From 2021-2023, Dr. Tosh was the co-PI of a National Science Foundation-funded study of "The Criminal Deportation Pipeline in New York City." From 2020-2021, she was the co-PI of a Rutgers-funded study of the COVID-19 response in New Jersey immigration detention centers.

Penny M. Venetis is the Dickinson R. Devoise Scholar at Rutgers Law School, where she is a Distinguished Clinical Professor of Law and the Director of the International Human Rights Clinic. She has taught at Rutgers since 1993. Professor Venetis is an expert in both civil rights law and international human rights law, and pioneered efforts to integrate international law into U.S. law. She has litigated landmark human rights and civil rights lawsuits in the U.S. and internationally. Her scholarship focuses on the intersection of human rights law and constitutional law. Professor Penny Venetis argued for Jama Plaintiffs in the first case to apply international human rights standards to a U.S. corporation for events that took place on U.S. soil. (*Jama et al. v. Esmor Correctional Services*). She also pioneered the argument that placing immigrants in detention for criticizing U.S. immigration policy violates the First Amendment. This argument has been used successfully in many *habeas corpus* proceedings challenging immigrants' detention on constitutional grounds.

Gabriela Viera is the Advocacy Manager at Detention Watch Network (DWN). She supports the organization's mission to end immigration detention through federal advocacy work and coalition building, while serving as a policy resource for the network. Prior to joining DWN, Gaby was a student of Caribbean history and served as a fellow for the Immigration and Refugee Policy portfolio at the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

William Westerman is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work and Coordinator of the Program in Ethnic and Immigration Studies at New Jersey City University. He is a co-founder of First Friends of New Jersey and New York and a long time board member. Beginning his detention activism with the detained refugees from the Chinese ship, the *Golden Venture*, he curated the exhibit of their artwork at the Museum of Chinese in the Americas. Prior to that he worked for nine years at the International Institute of New Jersey where he created the Program for Immigrant Traditional Artists, and later served as initial director of the Cambodian American Heritage Museum and Killing Fields Memorial in Chicago. He has worked with refugee communities since the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s. He earned his Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania and also taught at Princeton University, Goucher College, and CUNY.