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The Lettuce Monster: A History of State Violence, Carceral Geography and Industrial Agriculture in the Salinas Valley

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The Lettuce Monster: A History of State Violence, Carceral Geography and Industrial Agriculture in the Salinas Valley

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For Clementina Alvarado Ruiz, Jesus Ruiz Ruvalcaba, Luis Castro Topete, and Teresa Zepeda Fausto.

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Abstract

The Lettuce Monster: A History of State Violence, Carceral Geography and Industrial Agriculture in the Salinas Valley

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This dissertation is a descriptive account of state violence in the Salinas Valley, a rural agricultural area on California's Central Coast, from the 1930s to the 2010s. Chapter 1 recounts the 1934 Filipino lettuce strike and the 1936 Dust Bowl migrant strike to track how valley law enforcement departments expanded in man- and fire-power, and instituted surveillance tactics that were advanced for their time. It also examines how agribusiness leaders funded and directed strike suppression activities, and facilitated law enforcement's acquisition of tear gas and long-range guns. These events contributed to making Salinas Valley law enforcement one of the most armed and organized forces in the nation by the end of the 1930s. Chapter 2 highlights valley law enforcement's partnerships with federal and military agencies during World War II, as well as agribusiness's use of Bracero and Prisoner of War labor. This chapter argues that the Salinas Valley developed a carceral geography that enabled high levels of agricultural production during the war. Chapter 3 follows the transformation of the carceral geography to include field and factory worksites, as undocumented immigrants were housed in labor camps resembling prison camps and were surveilled by growers' private

security guards, regional Border Patrol agents, and United Farm Workers strikers. Undocumented immigrants constituted a marginalized workforce that was exploited and faced dangerous work and living conditions into the 1980s. Formerly incarcerated people also form part of this workforce, and are subject to hyper-surveillance inside agricultural packing factories, and in public spaces subject to city ordinances and state probation laws. Chapter 4 examines Salinas Valley law enforcement's increased militarization post-9/11, which was facilitated by the expansion of the Department of Defense's 1033 Program and state and federal funding. A culture of impunity in the valley enabled law enforcement to engage in a series of unethical policing practices and financial scams, ultimately escalating to a spate of police shootings from 2014 to 2019. This dissertation ends considering how current pandemic-related measures affect policing and surveillance in the valley.

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INTRODUCTION

When I was eleven-years-old, I responded to a call in a Salinas, California newspaper for questions to President Bill Clinton. He was in the area to attend the National Ocean Conference in Monterey. I jumped at the chance to submit; as a migrant student who'd just returned to Salinas after following seasonal agricultural work south to Imperial Valley with my family, I knew the chances of meeting him were slim. I had an urgent question based on all the road signs I'd read on the many drives up and down California's rural highways: "Why is taxpayer money going to prisons instead of colleges and scholarships?"[1] I didn't get a full, honest answer to that question until I read Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Golden Gulag* in graduate school.

I mention this history, at the risk of sounding too precious, to make two points. First, research interests based on lived experience—disparagingly called "me-search"—are valid and fruitful. This dissertation is a case in point. Second, although I didn't get an answer from the president, I did get a range of answers from teachers, community members, friends and family for years afterward. Many of them were racist and classist; some were diatribes against neighborhood "cholos," and others were cautionary tales from adults who believed they could keep me on the straight and narrow.

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[1] "Dear President Clinton: Salinas Area Residents Pose Questions, Concerns," *The Californian*, June 12, 1998, Newspapers.com. My older brother, Isaac, also submitted a question: "Now that bilingual education and affirmative action have been ruled out in California, have you thought about creating programs or incentives to help us make our dream of a college education true?" Isaac was referring to Proposition 227 (a Republican-sponsored measure that eliminated bilingual education in California until 2016) and Proposition 209 (which prohibits public institutions from considering race, sex, or ethnicity in employment and education—effectively banning affirmative action in the University of California system to this day.) We clearly had some pressing concerns as migrant children.

It took me a long time to unlearn some of these answers because they were reinforced by the messages conveyed in local news, public history projects, and various murals or art installations that praised the white grower-shipper pioneers who'd made Salinas Valley so prosperous. Male cousins guided me in reexamining my assumptions by sharing about their own experiences with labor insecurity, substance abuse, and arrest. Their perspectives were not only important for my own growth, but also because those ideas were outliers in a valley deeply invested in promoting law and order to the benefit of agribusiness.

Those ideas continued to develop due to police brutality and shootings. In 2014, white Salinas Police officers shot and killed four Latinxs.[2] The impact of those deaths was exacerbated by the fact that they happened within the span of only five months. They shot Ángel Ruiz on March 20th; then, Osmar Hernández on May 9th. Three weeks later, they shot Carlos Mejía and Frank Alvarado Jr. a month after that. There were protests, town halls, and a number of national media stories. Two years after that spate of shootings, the Department of Justice released a report with 110 recommendations for Salinas police to rebuild trust with the community. New youth groups, art collectives, and organizations led by formerly incarcerated people also emerged throughout Salinas Valley. But I was hard pressed to find people outside of Salinas Valley who knew that all of this had happened. I initially envisioned this dissertation as an answer to the following question: why have anti-police brutality movements in Salinas Valley not been as

[2] I use the term "Latinx" as a gender neutral identifier that is inclusive of trans and nonbinary gender identities. I use the gendered "Latino" or "Latina" only when directly quoting other sources, or if cisgender identity is a specific factor in analysis.

successful as other national movements? Of course, "successful" is a subjective term, and a project based on that formulation would have begged the question, given the implicit assumption that *any* anti-police brutality movement has been successful in a police state.

As I was given the space to work out my ideas in seminar papers and my master's report, I then imagined this dissertation with a scaled-back central question. Now, I would examine *why* this level of violence was happening in a rural agricultural community. Here still was a central question built on faulty assumptions. The first is nested in the question's structure; "why" denotes an incredulity at violence happening in rural agricultural communities. Consequently, it limits the parameters of inquiry to a prescriptive account of how to get things to how they *ought* to be. The "why" also impinges on methodology, marking discourse analysis or cultural studies as second to social scientific or qualitative research that can more easily translate to policy changes or reform. With this question, I was also doing something that makes me—a lifelong rural dweller—bristle when others do it: this question assumes that rural spaces are not complex enough for extended theorizing, specifically by externalizing violence as a "big city problem."

Another obvious fault is the use of the broad term "violence." Local and national media accounts do examine violence in Salinas Valley, but focus exclusively on *gang* violence. VICE, for example, published a widely shared article calling the area the "youth murder capital of California."[3] Nuestra Familia, a Mexican-American prison gang

[3] Johnny Magdaleno, "Welcome to the Youth Murder Capital of California," *VICE News*, July 27, 2016, https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/qv55pp/salinas-the-youth-murder-capital-of-california.

established at Soledad State Prison, and Norteño street gangs have made the valley especially dangerous for Latinx boys and teens since the early 1970s. But focusing only on gang violence obscures the prevalence of *state* violence, which has a much longer history in the Salinas Valley. It also does not engage with the valley media's use of "gang-related" as a catch-all term for any violence without making any distinction between perpetrator(s) and victim.[4]

I thought making this distinction would be sufficient for exposing how Latinx youth are dehumanized in Salinas Valley. But reinforcing a gang member-victim binary would only continue in the vein of gang scholarship that eschews an earnest analysis of ideology and identity formation, in favor of theorizing a pathological Latinx masculinity and underclass.[5] It also keeps the focus on Latinx residents instead of on Salinas Valley law enforcement. Consequently, this dissertation deliberately focuses on *state* violence, within the particular socio-historical context of agricultural labor movements, policing, and incarceration in the valley. I interject an analysis of Nuestra Familia and Norteños only to understand how their ideology was developed as a response to these circumstances.

Recounting the evolution of my research question serves three purposes. First, as a first-generation graduate student, I used to believe research was a mystical process that

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[4] This happens despite surviving family and friends publicly stating that their loved one was not in a gang.
[5] See Joan W. Moore, *Homeboys: Gangs, Drugs, and Prison in the Barrios of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978); James Diego Vigil, *Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988); James Diego Vigil, "Group Processes and Street Identity: Adolescent Chicano Gang Members," *Ethos* 16, no. 14 (1988); Joan W. Moore and James Diego Vigil, "Chicano Gangs: Group Norms and Individual Factors Related to Adult Criminality," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 18, no. 2 (1989); and, James Diego Vigil, *The Projects: Gang and Non-Gang Families in East Los Angeles* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).

others just immediately knew how to do the right way. In keeping with an ethical commitment to educational equity, I want to lay bare my trials and errors in order to naturalize them as good and necessary components of critical research.[6] Second, tracking how and why my questions changed preemptively addresses counter-arguments or questions as to why I didn't do things in *x* way. Finally, this process is an excavation of the ways my thinking was still closely tied to the discourses of the Salinas Valley that I mentioned earlier—and which I'll define as part of a "culture of impunity" later.

Through this excavation, I whittled my dissertation's central question to the following: *what* state violence has happened and is happening in the Salinas Valley? A descriptive account might lack the luster of a prescriptive or abstract one. But that does not preclude it from engaging inter-disciplinary methods or being theoretically rich. Before I describe my methods and theoretical framework, it's important to give delineate why I use "Salinas Valley" instead of "Monterey County."

The Salinas Valley is on the central coast of California, within Monterey County, which is currently the third largest agricultural county in California. The Salinas Valley is specifically known as the "Salad Bowl of the World" for producing the vast majority of lettuce for the nation, as well as 150 other crops that are also exported to Asian markets. The valley is bordered by the Santa Lucia and El Gabilan mountains, and runs the length of 90 miles from Salinas in the north to King City in the south. Salinas is the largest city,

[6] More first-generation students need to hear scholars openly say that they too have messed up—and that that is okay and normal.

with a population of 157,596; the rest of the valley is composed of small towns ranging in populations between 1,000 to 25,000 people.

Every city and town in the valley reported a poverty rate above the 11.8% national average. For example, 17% of people in Salinas and 24% of people in King City are living in poverty. This is to underscore that a significant portion of the population is struggling financially, despite being steadily employed in the valley's $4.2 billion a year agricultural industry. The valley is also a minority-majority space, with Latinxs making up between 78% to 91% of each town's population. The cities on the peninsula, like Monterey, Carmel, Pacific Grove, and Pebble Beach are majority white and upper-middle to upper-class, with home values in the multi-millions. Unincorporated communities on the edge of the valley, like San Benancio, Corral de Tierra and Las Palmas Ranch have similar demographics and home values. These are areas that were populated during white flight from Salinas during the 1980s. Salinas Valley, then, is largely working-class Latinxs, while the peninsula and outer valley is largely white and wealthy. Using "Monterey County" instead of "Salinas Valley" would collapse these two very different populations.

The other reason I want to distinguish between Monterey County and Salinas Valley is because the county's eponymous city is having a moment in pop culture lexicon, due to the success of the HBO drama *Big Little Lies*. The show accurately portrays Monterey's affluence and racial makeup, while never mentioning it's poor Latinx neighbors; it projects a luxurious lifestyle, inaccessible to the majority of county residents. The characters' plights are apparently so engrossing to a national audience that

online magazine *Slate* interviewed the Monterey County deputy DA to explore how they'd be prosecuted in real life, and what defense strategies they may employ.[7] I have no personal issue with the show itself. What's disconcerting is that the DA's office was in the process of deliberating whether to bring charges on Salinas Police officers for killing 20-year-old Brenda Rodriguez Mendoza.

Rodriguez Mendoza was struggling with substance abuse and mental health issues after losing custody of her newborn daughter. Police shot her in the middle of the day on March 1, 2019, as she sat distressed and hallucinating in her car. Community members organized vigils and marches, calling for the DA to charge all the officers involved. But their demands were tinged with some doubt since they remembered that the DA had rejected charging officers in 2014, and did the same for cases in 2015 and 2017. Thus, a widely-read, national publication skipped on the opportunity to examine real-life police brutality and DA complicity in Salinas Valley, in favor of contemplating the fate of the fictional "Monterey 5." This is an example of the epistemic danger of collapsing Monterey County and Salinas Valley.

METHODOLOGY & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation recounts a history of state violence in Salinas Valley from the 1930s to the present using archival research, discourse analysis and argument reconstructions, and film theory. My sources include Salinas Valley newspapers, and my first chapter

[7] Matthew Dessem, "What Charges Would the Monterey Five from *Big Little Lies* Face? We Asked the Monterey County D.A.'s Office," *Slate*, July 24, 2019. https://slate.com/culture/2019/07/big-little-lies-charges-monterey-five-nana-knight-deputy-district-attorney.html.

extensively cites *The Phillipines Mail* – a Filipino-written and led newspaper that began in Salinas and at one point was distributed across California and the Pacific Northwest. Despite its wide reach and the important role it played in Filipino community formation during the 1930s, *The Phillipines Mail* is underutilized in labor histories of diasporic Filipinos, especially in relation to agricultural labor movements.[8] The newspaper is especially useful for understanding Filipino farmworkers' responses to state violence in 1930s Salinas Valley; it also provides information that allows me to correct several key points in the historical record in Chapter 1.

This dissertation is not strictly an institutional history, nor is it a celebratory account of large-scale resistance. I weave instances of both throughout each chapter, and take care to account for the lived experiences of people who survived through violence and repression. But I'm wary of thinking of agency as an absolute that either is or isn't exercised. Thinking along a binary leaves little room for the complexity of people's circumstances and responses—and, like I detailed above, deeming a movement to be a success or failure can be unproductive. Moreover, granting primacy to an account of agency and resistance can obscure how ubiquitous intimidation and state violence are in Salinas Valley. People's survival strategies can, after all, be best appreciated when we understand the full scope of *what* they are surviving. Furthermore, thinking of resistance

[8] Jean Vengua's masterful dissertation of Filipino-American publications and public history work in Salinas Valley are the exception. Vengua has constructed a genealogy of Filipino literary advocacy and activism that, along with Dawn Bohulano Mabalon's work, rightfully weaves Pinxy social, cultural, and political history into the tapestry of West Coast Ethnic Studies. For further reading, see: Jean Vengua, "Migrant Scribes and Poet-Advocates: U.S. Filipino Literary History in West Coast Periodicals, 1905 to 1941." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010. And, Jean Vengua, "Stories of Chinatown: Old Newspaper Opens Portal to a Different Era," *Voices of Monterey Bay*, May 2, 2019, https://voicesofmontereybay.org/2019/05/02/stories-of-chinatown/.

and oppression as absolutes is not actually all that radical. It assents to presumptions put forward in modern Western theory, relying specifically on a Marxist master-slave dialectic that only recognizes revolution. If I were to construct this type of resistance narrative, I would miss all the range of strategies, actions, and coping mechanisms that don't fit neatly into that category. How, exactly, would this be in the service of respecting the full personhood of marginalized folks?

My thinking about these concepts is based on the work of several authors across the fields of critical theory, political philosophy and philosophy of language, and Chicana and African-American cultural theory. Saidiya Hartman's work in *Scenes of Subjection* challenges ideas about absolute agential power, which stem from liberal notions of the self-possessed individual. She examines forms of redress in the face of pervasive terror in U.S. chattel slavery, instead of large-scale rebellions. Hartman argues that redress—or, "small-scale and everyday forms of resistance"—were always incomplete since "redressing the pained body encompasses operating in and against the demands of the system."[9] The choices available to enslaved people were overdetermined by the various violences and structures that colluded to support the system of slavery. Here, Hartman signals the incongruity of liberal concepts of individuality and agency with the lived experiences of enslaved people. Thinking of agency as an absolute flattens the pervasive presence of terror and domination in slavery, and the ways the concept of autonomy and free will were employed as a tool for discipline and domination after emancipation.

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[9] Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subje* Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 51.

Agency, then, was always already constrained. It's imperative to not equate constrained agency with a totalizing domination. Her concept of constrained agency helps us understand that power structures and state violence are not totalizing, but that they can be so pervasive as to limit the choice available to laborers in Salinas Valley.

This idea of agency can be uncomfortable on an affective level when one feels a moral imperative to center the humanity and dignity of marginalized people in historical accounts. Mining this discomfort is key to constructing accounts that do not obscure redresses. It clarifies what we *do* to histories of violence when we assume agency is an absolute: we create legible, linear histories out of much messier truths. Thinking about agency as constrained also helps us reflect on our approach to archives. When we look for large-scale rebellion as the only legible evidence of resistance in the archives, we may inadvertently efface the subjectivity of the very people we sought to center.

I use Michel Foucault's account of docile bodies and Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics to analyze the discipline and punishment enacted on racialized bodies, which have been and continue to be marked as a threat to the valley's prosperity. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* tracks the ideological shifts in punishment from corporal spectacles to detainment, surveillance, and discipline. In his concept of the docile body, Foucault argues that the utility of a body is increased, and its propensity for political disobedience diminished, by discipline enacted on a micro-level of control. Policing the movements and comportment of the body at the site of action, produces "an

infinitesimal power over the active body."[10] Discipline in this sense is "that technique by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different, but always graduated,"—like the extensive, almost mechanical training of a soldier's arm to bring down a rifle in a manner prescribed by military protocol.[11]

There is, of course, punishment for the soldier who does not handle the rifle appropriately. The soldier has not broken the law, or harmed another; instead, the soldier has not *conformed* to military protocol. It is here that Foucault makes clear the object of disciplinary punishment: that which is in nonconformance to institutional norms.[12] Since discipline is always graduated, and perfection is positioned as the end goal, then it "does not culminate in a beyond, but toward a subjection that has never reached its limit."[13] Thus, disciplinary punishment is perpetually corrective, especially as the needs and interests of institutions shift.

I employ this concept of disciplinary punishment to analyze surveillance, policing, and incarceration of agricultural laborers in Salinas Valley. The tumultuous 1934 and 1936 lettuce strikes marked all laborers—not just strikers—as nonconforming elements in a space ordered around the labor demands and business interests of industrial agriculture. Surveillance, policing and incarceration produced a historically continuous corps of docile bodies measured in their utility to industrial agriculture—a process

[10] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, Inc. 1995), 136-137.
[11] Ibid., 153, 160.
[12] Ibid., 178.
[13] Ibid., 162.

exemplifying Foucault's concept of docility-utility.[14] While Foucault's account is useful in conceptualizing the enactment of state power on the body, it does not fully address how racialized bodies are marked for discipline irrespective of behavior or action in the body.

Following Foucault's account of state power in and over bodies, Achille Mbembé argues that state power is a function of "control over mortality [that defines] life as the deployment and manifestation of power."[15] Certain bodies are marked for death by perpetual reference to a state of exception and "a fictionalized notion of the enemy."[16] Mbembé argues that these fictions of the Other have their root in colonialism, since "[t]he writing of new spatial relations…[was] tantamount to the production of boundaries and hierarchies."[17] Hierarchical, racialized power relations play out not only in direct conflict, then, but also in the ordering and policing of space. Life for racialized bodies in these spaces is "to experience a permanent condition of 'being in pain'."[18] Thus, what is punished is not nonconforming behavior, but nonconforming bodies—bodies that are racialized as Other to a white norm. This dissertation is guided by Mbembé's phenomenological theory of "being" in pain to understand how laborers of color experience carceral mechanisms of control and violence even outside of carceral spaces.

My analysis of identity formation and social hailing in Salinas Valley is shaped by Louis Althusser's theory of interpellation and Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of self-making in

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[14] Ibid., 242.
[15] J.-A. Mbembé, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 12.
[16] Ibid., 16.
[17] Ibid., 25-26.
[18] Ibid., 39.

the conceptual borderlands. Louis Althusser's theory of ideology accounts for the process by which concepts and cultural norms shape one's understanding of the world and their role in it. Althusser identifies two types of apparatuses through which norms are communicated: Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), like the police or prison; or Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), like the family or community. When an individual is successfully hailed by, or recognizes themselves in these norms, they are "interpellated," or formed as subjects.[19] I examine the symbiotic relationship between RSAs and ISAs in Salinas Valley, and analyze how this relationship produces a culture that interpellate laborers as threats and white grower-shippers as benevolent patriarchs.[20] Althusser's theory, though, is decidedly wary of individual agency, since he believes the discursive field of norms is already populated and there's little to no space for subjects to resist interpellation.

Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of self-making provides an account of agency in response to ideology. In her resistance to being interpellated into predetermined categories like heterosexuality, Anzaldúa asserts an ability to *choose* her identity.[21] Anzaldúa's account not only describes choosing an identity, but choosing to make new meaning of a previously denigrated identity, thus resisting both the norm's hail and the ideology that undergirds the norm. However, Anzaldúa's choices are still constrained within an already populated discursive field, as Althusser argued. As a subject capable of being hailed and

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[19] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, ed. Louis Althusser (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186.
[20] In Chapter 1, I discuss how "white/whiteness" was a much more flexible category in Salinas Valley and California in general, and came to include ethnic whites that would not have had that label in other regions.
[21] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007), 41.

hailing others, Anzaldúa is a member of the discursive community. Though her marginalization limits her ability to decide which norms populate the discursive field, Anzaldúa is still capable of being interpellated and hailing others in an attempt to interpellate them.

Thus, even though one exercises agency in an already populated discursive field, one is still capable of reproducing norms mediated through systems of oppression. Identity formation, then, is necessarily fraught with contradictions because making the self cannot be done outside of the constraints of one's body, or the web of ideologies that make meaning of that body. Nor can it be done in a space that is not already infused with meaning. This understanding of messy self-making shapes my analysis of interracial and inter- and intra-ethnic relations in Salinas Valley. Most notably, I parse out the ways in which Mexican-Americans, Mexican temporary laborers, and undocumented Mexican immigrants have variously recognized or disavowed an affinity with one another.

My understanding of Althusser and Anzaldúa is formed by a pragmatic analysis of language based on the work of Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance. They argue that a "discursive community" is the space in which norms are reproduced via speech acts; these acts must cause some shift in the normative status in one or more members.[22] A shift in normative status refers to a change in a person's entitlement to certain speech acts. To be a member of the discursive community, one must be hailable and capable of giving and asking for reasons. Kukla and Lance hold that all vocatives (like, "yo!" or

[22] Rebecca Kukla and Mark N. Lance, 'Yo!' and 'Lo!': The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 191.

"lo!") cause a shift in normative status, leading to an acknowledgement—unless the speech act fails.

The only way a speech act fails is if it calls out one who is not a member of the discursive community whose normative status cannot be affected by the hail. For example, I can attempt to hail my niece's Elsa doll—but that doll's normative status won't shift.[23] Understanding what the discursive community is, and the criteria for being a member, helps us see that speech acts don't fail if they're ignored or rejected.[24] Rather, these negative acknowledgements still serve as evidence of a shift in the hailer's normative status.

This point is key because it helps us understand that laborer's responses to marginalization are complex, and often immeasurable by traditional standards of "successful" resistance. Marginalized people are not submissive and they are much less *voiceless*. They are capable of hailing and acknowledging the hails of others. Those hails have historically been ignored or rejected in Salinas Valley. Those who negatively acknowledge their hails then see said hails as evidence of nonconformance.[25] Nonconformance is corrected through institutional, interpersonal, or state violence, which can be physical or economic. But, importantly, marginalized people's agency is not determined by the type of acknowledgement their hails receive. As hailable subjects, they always already have personhood in the discursive community. This understanding of

[23] Ibid., 150.
[24] Ibid., 151.
[25] Ibid., 23. Kukla and Lance term this concept a "discursive deficiency."

agency helps reevaluate the 1934 Filipino lettuce strike by contesting the oft-repeated idea that Filipinos failed or were largely inconsequential in Salinas Valley labor history.

While my dissertation necessarily recounts many instances of violence upon racialized bodies, I am ethically committed to not reproducing that violence as a spectacle. Again I'm guided by Hartman in this respect, who theorizes that witnessing shocking, or extreme moments of violence is "[entangled] with the wielding of power and the extraction of enjoyment."[26] The sources I work with center power and pleasure in violence by framing the actions of Salinas Valley police officers as a service to the community. Salinas residents also demonstrate a public investment in necropolitics, celebrating death as a march forward to a better community. However, Salinas Valley law enforcement and media have largely used vague descriptions and euphemisms to paint officers as heroic underdogs in the fight against scary brown men. Therefore, I chose to describe violent encounters as a form of counter-narrative, while doing my best to not erase people's subjectivity or displace it with my own.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Salinas Valley, a fertile area of nearly a quarter of a million acres of farmland, is a historically significant site of agricultural innovation that has created a multi-billion dollar a year industry since the 1920s. Celebratory accounts focus on the valley's booming agribusiness, while more probing accounts highlight the area's history of labor activism. Recent scholarship on the Salinas Valley, like Lori A. Flores's *Grounds for*

[26] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 22.

Dreaming, examines the period between World War II and the 1970s to highlight how the Bracero Program and the weakening of labor unions altered Mexican American political organizing. Flores contrasts accounts of Mexican American political and community formation in urban areas by arguing that "Mexican Americans in agriculture-centered communities struggled longer to form other kinds of political organizations that could help them achieve their goals."[27] She demonstrates how tensions between Mexican Americans, Braceros, and undocumented immigrants stymied coalition-building and protests against substandard working conditions in valley agriculture.

For example, the Bracero Program and undocumented labor were used by valley grower-shippers to depress wages.[28] During the peak of the Bracero era in the mid-1950s, when some Mexican Americans who had moved up into foreman positions actively differentiated themselves from braceros by refusing to speak Spanish and enacting strict work regimens on them.[29] However, Flores also notes moments of intra-ethnic solidarity, like the establishment of a "Mexican" Catholic church, Cristo Rey, which was constructed through the combined efforts of Mexican American residents, Tejano migrants, and Braceros.[30] The church served as a cultural center for Mexican-descended people in Salinas, who were largely unwelcome in the valley's white churches; however, this intra-ethnic solidarity was most obviously a cultural one, and not a political or economic one. The now famous 1963 Chular accident, in which 32 Mexican laborers

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[27] Lori A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the California Farmworker Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 5.
[28] Ibid., 5.
[29] Ibid., 93.
[30] Ibid., 95.

died in a makeshift bus after it collided with a train, created a temporary political solidarity. Mexican American activists advocated locally after local churches refused to hold funeral services for the laborers, and raised national attention to the Bracero Program, which was largely forgotten in American's cultural imagination at that point.[31] Here, Flores intervenes in labor and Mexican-American history by reorienting the account toward the historical periods before the United Farm Workers-led lettuce strike of 1970. I expand on this account to show that intra-ethnic tensions were not the only reason that political organizing looked different in Salinas Valley. Specifically, I demonstrate how organizers and regular laborers were subject to intense surveillance, and arbitrary arrests and beatings since the 1930s. Furthermore, I show how law enforcement astutely used interracial and intra-ethnic tensions to whittle down coalitional organizing.

As Flores notes, labor gains made in the 1970s UFW lettuce strikes also dwindled when UFW in-fighting decreased the union's authority in the fields. She specifically points to tensions between César Chávez and Salinas leaders as signs of the UFW's decline.[32] My dissertation contends that these tensions were not just a product of Chávez's increasing paranoia in the later years of his life. Rather, they were part of the UFW's longer history of disavowing undocumented laborers as brethren. In Chapter 3, I detail the UFW's direct collaboration with Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and Salinas's Border Patrol agents. These actions resulted in deportation rates

[31] Ibid., 6.
[32] Ibid., 210.

tripling in Salinas Valley in 1976, damaging the ability of Salinas rank-and-file members to recruit undocumented laborers to the pickets.

Linda and Theo Majka's *Farmworkers, Agribusiness, and the State* is a sociological analysis of "militancy in the agricultural working class" in rural California from 1870 to the 1980s.[33] The Majkas provide an explicit account of the violent suppression of agricultural labor movements in California, and argue that agricultural labor has largely failed to mobilize external support because of its historically nonwhite workforce. Moreover, labor segmentation—or, a "dual labor market"—which makes urban, industrial labor more visible.[34] The Majkas trace the coalescing of racism and labor segmentation to anti-Chinese sentiment and "Labor's decision to campaign for the exclusion of the Chinese," which set precedent for future relations between urban industrial labor and agricultural labor.[35] The Chinese Exclusion Act, Alien Lands Act of CA, and Repatriation are also examples of a pattern in which the state aided growers in excluding and replacing an ethnic/racial group once it was no longer an "uninterrupted source of inexpensive labor."[36] The Majkas contend that immigration legislation, land dispossession, and deportation regimes were enacted when Chinese, Japanese and Filipino laborers had made significant gains in labor organizing, thus making them less vulnerable to exploitation.

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[33] Linda Majka and Theo Majka, *Farmworkers, Agribusiness, and the State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 276.
[34] Ibid., 8.
[35] Ibid., 35.
[36] Ibid., 46.

The 1930s was a period of significant anti-union and anti-labor pushback, carried out by grower-sponsored guards, vigilantes, and law enforcement agencies. This coordinated assault on labor activities throughout the California marked the period as exceptionally repressive, with many large growers operating under fascist ideology. This assault also went unchecked by the local and federal government until the Dust Bowl migration significantly shifted the agricultural labor demographic to white. Ironically, the protections that Filipino and Mexican laborers had fought for weren't instituted until the workforce was white—a workforce that "generally reported beliefs consistent with the position of the [fascist organization] Associated Farmers."[37] Any concessions or reforms fought for in the 30s were made moot by the Bracero Program, which created an assured oversupply of labor, whose "status, work contracts, and the limitations on their mobility were fixed by law."[38] The Majkas claim it also pushed out domestic workers, starting the Mexican-American migration trend to urban areas.[39] After the end of the Bracero Program in 1964, agricultural labor organizing was mainly carried out the United Farm Workers, under the leadership of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. The UFW was successful at mobilizing internal resources, like using Mexican, Chicano and Filipino religious and cultural beliefs to relate to farmworkers. They were also adept at mobilizing external resources, like garnering sympathetic national coverage of their grape boycott.[40]

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[37] Ibid., 132.
[38] Ibid., 136.
[39] Ibid., 137.
[40] Ibid., 168.

By focusing on Salinas Valley, I expand on the Majkas' work and provide some exceptions to their theory on Mexican-American flight to urban areas. First, I take policing and incarceration to be central to the sustainability of industrial agriculture—rather than a secondary function that pops up only when there's an active labor strike. In Chapter 2, I also examine how the Bracero Program did not cause a large-scale exodus of Mexican Americans from the valley. In fact, I recount the use of sprawling labor camps where thousands of Mexican-American families and Braceros lived alongside each other. The Bracero program also provided an opportunity for a Mexican American middle class to consolidate its power in the ruling class in opposition to Mexican nationals and poor Mexican-Americans.[41]

In addition, the Majkas fail to see undocumented workers as anything but strikebreakers. This does little to take the UFW and Chávez to task for their role in perpetuating anti-immigrant rhetoric and supporting immigration raids. For example, in response to UFW criticism at a national hearing, the INS "increased its staff in Central California an established a command post in Salinas," and subsequent raids "tripled the number of arrests of undocumented aliens normally made during the lettuce harvest in Salinas."[42] The Majkas refuse to analyze these occurrences outside of a state-grower-UFW framework, and thus view undocumented immigrants as collateral damage in the fight against growers, rather than as a highly vulnerable population in need of allies that was scapegoated by the UFW. Rather than pass a moral judgment on Chávez or the UFW

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[41] Nicole Guidotti-Hernández. *Archiving Mexican Masculinities in Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.
[42] Majka and Majka, *Farmworkers*, 261.

as people, I examine their institutional impact: the surge in immigration raids and installment of new INS facilities expanded the Salinas Valley's carceral geography. This carceral geography already included immigration and deportation mechanisms since, as Don Mitchell notes, the vast majority of farmworkers in the valley were Mexican immigrants by the early 1950s.

Mitchell's *They Saved the Crops* is a historical-geographical account of the Bracero Program in California from 1942 to 1964, which contends that the program was "pivotal in the development of the agribusiness landscape."[43] Using a variety of U.S. Department of Labor, California agency, and activist archives, as well as some oral histories, Mitchell analyzes how "the California landscape changed (or not) – [and] why and to what end."[44] As a geographer, Mitchell is concerned with land, place, and power. He demonstrates how state and federal government acquiesced in several ways to the demands of California agribusiness, like transferring control of labor camps and housing to local entities or growers associations, resulting in substandard housing and abuses. Mitchell's Marxist geography lens highlights how individual Braceros were shaped by the camps into aggregate units of labor power to be distributed among growers.

Technology was also employed to remake the land exclusively for Bracero labor. For example, a "monster" lettuce machine invented in Salinas in the late 1940s, which was essentially "a series of conveyor belts on wheels," allowed for "dry packing" lettuce

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[43] Don Mitchell, *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle Over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 2. Ebook edition.
[44] Ibid., 4.

heads, thus reducing the need for packinghouses.[45] This enabled the unfettered growth of exploitative capitalist industrial agriculture because these packinghouses were largely unionized and exclusively staffed by American citizens. With the advent of the lettuce machine, Bracero labor in the fields rose from 4% in 1950 in Monterey County, to 75% by 1955. Ultimately, Mitchell reiterates that there was never a true agricultural labor shortage, and that the Bracero Program enabled the survival of an exploitative industrial agriculture that perpetuates to this day.[46]

Mitchell provides an extensive account of the power dynamics at play over the land during the Bracero era. But by arguing that the program was "decisive in cementing into place a particularly large-scale, industrialized form of agriculture dependent on highly exploitable labor," he doesn't account for the anti-union violence of the 1930s. While this form of agriculture may indeed have been "cemented" by the Bracero Program in Tulare Basin, for example, it was already firmly rooted at least two decades earlier in Salinas Valley. The impact of Mitchell's account of land and space on my dissertation is most evident in the second chapter on carceral geography in the 1940s and postwar period. It examines labor camps designed like prisons and prison farm camps as a continuum of sites that were meant to surveil and control labor.

The works reviewed thus far are outgrowths of foundational texts that revealed the exploitation and violence behind agriculture's pastoral ideal. Camille Guerin-Gonzáles's *Mexican Workers and American Dreams* examines Mexican and Mexican-

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[45] Ibid., 204.
[46] Ibid., 419, 422.

American farmworkers in California from 1900-1939 and uses the "American Dream" as a framework to examine political, social, and cultural contestations over legitimate belonging in the imagined community of America.[47] Guerin-Gonzáles upends the pastoral ideal that large-scale growers "repeatedly invoked…in describing their place in society and in establishing hegemony in the fields."[48] In response to Leo Marx's *Machine in the Garden*, she argues that rather than produce an irreconcilable clash with industrialization, the pastoral ideal was employed by large-scale growers to mask industrial agriculture as a collection of family farms. In tandem with the myth of the family farm, a popular understanding of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans as always already foreign de-incentivized efforts to implement labor protections for this population.[49] Indeed, it was their liminal status that enabled the repeated exploitation of their labor and violations of their civil liberties. For example, in the 1930s, growers used the federal government's repatriation program to intimidate workers, deport union leads-agitators, and suppress strikes.[50]

While Guerin-Gonzáles aims to demonstrate contestations to a white ideal of the "American Dream," the book includes only limited accounts of resistance, aid societies, community formation, and labor organizing by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. Guerin-Gonzáles's excavation of the pastoral ideal, and her analysis of deportation as a collaboration between growers and law enforcement are helpful; but I move from a

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[47] Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 6.
[48] Ibid., 13.
[49] Ibid., 47, 78.
[50] Ibid., 74.

strictly institutional history, to one that pays careful attention to people's responses and survival strategies. In order to not obscure the inordinate amount of control and repression in the valley, I don't focus only on obvious moments of outright resistance or rebellion.

Matt García's *A World of Its Own* uses oral histories to examine Mexican-American community formation in the citrus-growing area of San Gabriel Valley from 1900 to 1970. In the vein of Edward Soja, his focus on geography and historical and social context maps the extent to which "the social and cultural geography of the San Gabriel-San Bernardino Valley [mitigated] worker activism."[51] He also reorients Mexican American Studies from traditional urban centers like Los Angeles, to a suburban area. While citrus-picking marked a white-Mexican labor division, García's book is not focused on labor strikes or worker activism, as he finds that the labor history of the San Gabriel Valley was relatively quiet, compared to other areas like the Imperial Valley.

Instead, he looks at cultural productions, which he reads as sites of "infrapolitics" as informed by the theoretical framework of Robin D.G. Kelley.[52] Through this framework, he argues that urban centers were not the sole site from which important cultural negotiations and contestations emerged, highlighting the dancehalls, radio DJs, and teatros of suburban Greater Los Angeles. I follow García's work to position the Salinas Valley as an essential site of study for Latinx Studies and consequently argue that rural areas also provide special cases of community formation. This is not an additive

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[51] Matt García, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 5.
[52] Ibid., 7-8.

component to the dissertation, but rather central in building the argument that rural areas are not passive places that things, like prisons, *happen to*, and are instead are spaces where people negotiate and contest policing and state violence.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Golden Gulag* examines the rapid expansion of California's rural prison-industrial complex since 1982. Although violent crime rates have decreased nationwide since 1980, "[t]he California state prisoner population grew nearly 500 percent between 1982 and 2000."[53] Rather than viewing this as a paradox produced by an illogic of bad governance or corruption, Gilmore posits it as an outgrowth of racial capitalism. By tracking the political and economic factors that made the rural Central Valley an attractive site for new prisons, Gilmore argues that a crisis of four surpluses (finance capital, land, population, and state capacity) was produced by capital's inherent "imperative to accumulate [and] an equal necessity to disaccumulate."[54] This is a key component of Gilmore's wider argument: while the expansion of prisons is a response to a crisis rooted in capitalism's necessary mechanisms, which then mark certain populations for "disaccumulation," this phenomena is "grounded in history, not *conspiracy* or *mechanical certainty*."[55]

By arguing against California's prison-industrial complex as a conspiracy, Gilmore does not deny the criminalization of activism in the 1960s-70s, or other efforts to target poor people of color. Instead, she highlights the political and economic structures that perpetuate a "class" of people's vulnerability to the state's power to

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[53] Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 7.
[54] Ibid., 55.
[55] Ibid., 80. Emphasis added.

incapacitate.[56] Moreover, in denying the growth of prisons as a "mechanical certainty," Gilmore unseats the assumption that prisons are the only possible solution to crime, instead conceptualizing them as historically contingent projects that "accelerate the mortality of modestly educated working people."[57] This is where Gilmore's work intervenes in prison scholarship, by laying the groundwork for an argument against reform and for prison abolition.

Gilmore's other intervention reframes the relationship between private capital and prison expansion. She notes that arguments that focus on private prison lobbying are undermined by the fact that "95 percent of all prisons and jails are publicly owned and operated."[58] Prison scholarship, then, must reorient where it locates the power of private capital. Astutely recognizing how rural spaces are operationalized as sites of punishment, Gilmore tracks the political power of California's $30 billion dollar a year rural agribusiness, especially in its boons to politicians who advocate for sentence enhancements written into law.[59] The relationship between agribusiness and California prisons not only helps "fill the beds," as Gilmore argues, but also perpetuates agriculture oligopolies in rural areas. For agribusiness, the lure of siting public prisons in the towns in which they operate hinges on viewing prisons as noncompeting industries that provide "some relief from the crises arising from unproductive [i.e., surplus] land and potentially politically active surplus labor."[60] With a prison offering the (largely unfulfilled) promise

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[56] Ibid., 7.
[57] Ibid., 247.
[58] Ibid., 21.
[59] Ibid., 104-107.
[60] Ibid., 166.

of new, better-paying jobs without educational advancement, agricultural labor activism is defused, as well as any threat of dismantling the consolidation of power and capital among select agriculturist families.

Neutralizing the power of rural residents to challenge the political and economic structures that negatively affect them marks this population not as beneficiaries of a new "industry," but as a population also meant to be disciplined by the prison. For example, prison jobs in Corcoran are used as motivation to keep Chicano youth in school, in addition to hiring law enforcement officers as school personnel, thus mobilizing schools as sites of "crime control" rather than learning.[61] The prisons, then, exemplify both a promise and a threat to rural residents. Gilmore's critical account agricultural oligopoly complicity in the expansion of the California carceral system informs my work. Chapter 3 covers Salinas Valley's increasing wealth gap from the 1980s to the 2000s, and the relationship between agribusiness interests and "tough on crime" legislation that propels mass incarceration. Importantly, my dissertation is not invested in extending Gilmore's argument before the 1980s, or in proposing a radical challenge to her account. Rather, the work provides an opportunity to ask different historically-entrenched questions that somewhat overlap with the contemporary. While Gilmore is interested in framing California's rural prison boom in the 1980s as a product of industrial and agricultural capital, I am invested in historicizing Salinas Valley's carceral geography.

My work is also indebted to theories of racial formation and contemporary scholarship on the afterlives of trauma. Natalia Molina's *How Race is Made in America*

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[61] Ibid., 171.

examines how racial attitudes and policies are co-constitutive among all racialized groups, and uses this framework to historicize the construction of Mexicans as "illegal." Importantly, Molina is not examining Mexican migration in isolation, instead grappling with this history in a "relational" framework that understand that "the racial construction of one group affects others, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes at a much later date."[62] This is not a comparative approach because such a framework compares racial groups as rigidly distinct units. Molina's concept of "racial scripts" refers to "attitudes, practices, customs, policies, and laws" that highlight "the ways in which the lives of racialized groups are linked across time and space."[63] Racial scripts help us see how different racialized groups are impacted by institutions and individuals in significantly similar ways. I use this concept in chapters 1, 2, and 3 to describe how Filipino, Mexican American, and Mexican immigrant laborers were variably theorized as naturally suited for stoop labor, and then later criminalized in Salinas Valley.

Monica Muñoz Martinez's *The Injustice Never Leaves You* examines anti-Mexican violence by vigilante mobs and Texas Rangers from 1910-1918. Muñoz Martinez counters the reconstruction of this period of violence as a "time of progress" in public commemorations and official history.[64] She also argues that we should also consider surviving family and friends as victims of state violence, since they must contend with their losses across generations. Muñoz Martinez frames their "mourning

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[62] Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 20.
[63] Ibid., 22, 21.
[64] Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 8. Ebook edition.

[as] a practice of resistance."[65] In Chapter 1, I closely detail the 1934 Filipino lettuce strike, which is glossed over in labor histories because it supposedly failed. By recounting the full history of that strike from Filipino sources, I trace the aftereffects of trauma in several Filipino families, viewing them as victims of state violence also. In Chapter 4, I also examine the cultural and political work that 100 Mothers does by publicly reclaiming the children they lost to gang violence as worthy of mourning.

The literature I reviewed has been useful in understanding the systems of power that collide to create economic and physical state violence in rural agricultural communities. Flores, the Majkas, Mitchell, and Guerin-González disrupt the pastoral ideal, revealing highly mechanized and exploitative industrial agriculture. They challenge the idea that the U.S. is a post-agriculturalist society. Gilmore and Muñoz Martinez denaturalize the incapacitation and death of Black and Mexican people as inevitable consequences of a supposedly more lawful nation. Both also demonstrate the power of community bonds, and why state actors are invested in breaking them. García and Molina locate spaces for contestations and relational racial formations that emerge from non-traditional sites of research. These works enable my examination of state violence in Salinas Valley from the 1930s to the 2010s, as well as consequent redresses and counter-scripts that various agricultural laborers have sought.

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[65] Ibid., 9.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 closely examines the collaborative efforts of Salinas Valley agribusiness, city and county officials, and law enforcement to suppress labor strikes. It necessarily details labor conditions, union origins and coalitions, and strike activities in 1934 and 1936. However, this chapter is not a strict labor history. The 1934 and 1936 lettuce strikes were just two of the many strikes that shook California agriculture during the Depression, and they are at least briefly mentioned in a number of agricultural labor histories. But I zero in on the details of both strikes, as well as the years after, to demonstrate how labor suppression activities established a symbiotic relationship between agribusiness and valley law enforcement—a relationship that persisted for decades afterward, even in the absence of strikes.

After the strikes, Salinas Valley law enforcement emerged as a highly trained, militarized force that was regarded as a paragon of effective policing by agribusiness leaders across the state. This high regard gave them credibility with federal agencies, who they would start training and collaborating with just two years after the strikes. By providing this account, I demonstrate that what happened in Salinas Valley in the 1930s was not *vigilante* violence, but *state* violence. No one was held accountable, despite two federal investigations and mountains of evidence proving the trail of money from growers to police. Rhetoric in the valley also absolved all actors—not by refuting any of the evidence, but by insisting that each action as just and necessary to protect the prosperity of the valley in the midst of the Depression. This created what I term a culture of impunity. I use "culture" to denote a set of practices and beliefs that justify surveillance

and policing of agricultural laborers. Importantly, these are good faith beliefs, and not a conscious intention to mislead or cover up facts. Rather, those in the in-group of this culture use those beliefs to mark who is in the out-group. The latter are, unsurprisingly, labor activists and valley residents who criticize agribusiness or law enforcement. The out-group is marked as suspect and is also subject to surveillance and policing. This culture pervades Salinas Valley to this day.

Chapter 2 examines how the culture of impunity developed during World War II and in the postwar period, bolstering valley law enforcement's militarization and partnerships with the FBI and U.S. Army. A carceral geography also emerged in this period. "Carceral Geography" has meaning on two levels. First, it is an emerging sub-discipline of Human Geography that holds that "the notion of the 'carceral' is reflexively and recursively useful not just for studies of incarceration *per se*, but also for understanding the restriction of autonomy in a much broader context."[66] Carceral geography is a form of inquiry in this chapter. I also use the term as a concept to describe a space organized by practices and structures that enable surveillance and control movement throughout Salinas Valley, not only restricting autonomy but increasing agricultural laborers' docility-utility. Space and place were deployed to surveil and contain different agricultural labor groups, including Mexican-Americans, Braceros, undocumented immigrants, county jail inmates, and German and Italian prisoners of war.

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[66] Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 72.

At several points during this era, these groups were housed in the same camps—blurring the distinction between "farmworker," "criminal," and "enemy alien."

Chapter 3 spans the 1970s to the early 2000s to examine how narratives of citizenship and illegality marginalized undocumented laborers and made them vulnerable to increased policing and detention. Similar to Chapter 1, this chapter is set during two important lettuce strikes, but is not a labor history. Instead, I de-center César Chávez and the UFW's strike activities to focus on the conditions undocumented laborers faced. I show how they were surveilled and policed by a triad made up of growers' private guards, regional Border Patrol agents, and UFW strikers. The first group was often comprised of neo-Nazi and Ku Klux Klan members. The other two groups were differentially invested in deporting undocumented laborers. Valley police and deputies, meanwhile, were aware of agribusiness's reliance on this class of laborers; they consequently focused on UFW strikers.

This chapter implores readers to sit with the uncomfortable history of the UFW's collaboration with INS and the Border Patrol. This does not equate with a disavowal of the union's incredibly important advocacy, gains, or legacy. Instead, I argue that recounting this history centers the lived experiences of undocumented laborers in Salinas Valley. Reorienting the history of these three decades toward the margins also helps us understand the experiences of previously incarcerated people. They are a source of surplus labor that is locked out of permanent employment by discriminatory hiring practices. Enhanced probation laws and prohibitive city ordinances also mark them as unwanted in the valley's public spaces and, puzzlingly, in their own homes. The work

that is readily available to them is temporary heavy labor inside valley packing sheds. With the advent of "ready to eat" salads—a distinctly Salinas Valley invention—these sheds implemented hyper-surveillance measures including biometrics and practices that controlled laborers' movements on a micro-level. This chapter, then, follows the evolution of the valley's carceral geography from labor and prison camps, to city streets and packing sheds.

Chapter 4 focuses on the financial scandals and extrajudicial killings carried out by Salinas Valley law enforcement from 2011 to 2019. In keeping with their historical legacy, valley officers continued to benefit from federal partnerships, training, militarization, and impunity. The freedom with which they mete out violence is most evident in their shootings of four Latinxs in 2014. This chapter is hard to read for its descriptions of each of these shootings, which are necessary to counter officer and media narratives that painted each of these men as consciously criminal, rather than as men struggling with addiction and mental illness. Indeed, I argue that in each of these shootings, Salinas Police acted as a disposal force for the county's underfunded and insufficient public health department. I then track how the culture of impunity turned national media scrutiny and Department of Justice recommendations back onto the community, thus shifting the responsibility for peace onto policed subjects. I also analyze *Live PD* episodes and the social media following of two white Salinas Police officers who were "breakout stars" of the show. *Live PD*, I argue, made policing Latinxs in Salinas a spectacle for a national audience.

In my conclusion, I recount recent awards that Salinas Police have received and how those accolades are bound up with "community policing," which is an outgrowth of the "broken windows" theory—a method touted as effective despite no empirical support. I highlight that state violence happening in Salinas Valley did not come out of nowhere; it took eight previous decades of hyper-surveillance, containment, and force to get to the spate of killings from 2014 to 2019. I also account for current pandemic-related developments. This is especially important because agricultural laborers—the group historically policed in the valley—are exempt from California's stay-at-home orders. This means that they are still going out every day, facing not only the dangers of COVID-19, but also the dangers of valley law enforcement. They are doing this with less public presence; if there is another incidence of police brutality, there will be hardly any witnesses or bystander videos.

Chapter 1: "Brandishing Guns & Clubs": State Violence and Green Gold

The first bullet grazed the left side of Margarita Vitación's head as she sat in her bunkhouse room at the Green Gold Valley labor camp on the night of September 21, 1934. As she brought up her hand toward the hot stinging on her scalp, a second bullet exploded through the bunkhouse wall and—mercifully—through her hair. Before losing consciousness, she was pulled from the room by her husband Roman who, along with nearly seventy other Filipino farm laborers living at the camp, ran out to escape the sudden barrage of bullets. Those who stayed indoors crawled toward their phones to call police, only to hear nothing on the other end; the camp's phone lines were cut. Outside, those fleeing were met with a hail of gunfire coming from cars parked on the north, south, and east side of the camp. Nearly surrounded by what survivors would later claim was upwards of forty white men, they ran west toward the camp's chicken coop. They outran each bullet that followed their feet, arriving at the chicken coop just as it burst into flames. It burned with such intensity that the camp-turned-firing range suddenly seemed a safer option.[67]

The residents hid wherever they could find cover and watched the labor camp almost entirely burn. Salinas firefighters arrived an hour later; the entire department was called to a fire at a house of "ill repute" several miles away in Chinatown. The Chinatown fire began at the same time as the gunfire at the camp.[68] The gunmen had left by the time the firefighters arrived at the camp. With nowhere to go, the survivors

[67] "Victims of Vigilante Attack upon Filipino Labor Camp Tell Harrowing Experiences," *Philippines Mail*, October 1, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[68] "Two Fires Set in Filipino Labor War," *Salinas Morning Post*, September 22, 1934, Newspapers.com.

gathered at the camp's volleyball court—some sleeping in cars and others in open air, while a few took stock of the missing. Their tenuous hold on calm was ripped by a drive-by shooting that injured a resident at around two in the morning. The shots made the survivors scatter from the court, and some stayed crouched in ditches well into the next morning.

"I thought I was already dead," Vitación wrote in her testimony to the *Philippines Mail* two weeks later.[69] Her keen sense of her own mortality ironically mirrored a sort of archival death: initial reports of the attack in the *San Francisco Examiner*, *Boston Globe*, and *New York Times* erroneously listed her as missing and feared dead. These accounts were granted such credibility that they were used as sources in subsequent histories to claim that Vitación (often unnamed, or mis-named as "Marguerite") had burned to death at the camp.[70] She was probably counted among the missing because she and Roman had spent the whole night hiding in a ditch. They pressed their bodies close to the dirt, and worried about their only son, twenty-four year old Proceso.

Proceso had not been in his room when the attack began, and with the majority of the camp reduced to ash and phone lines still out of service, his parents had no way of ascertaining his location or condition. To her immense relief, Margarita learned the next morning that Proceso was alive. In fact, he'd not been in the camp at all during the attack; he'd been arrested during a police raid of the Filipino Labor Union hall in the city. The raid—similarly to the fire that tied up first responders—happened at the same time as the

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[69] "Victims of Vigilante Attack."

[70] See Vivian McGuikin Raineri's *The Red Angel: The Life and Times of Elaine Black Yoneda, 1906-1988* (1991, 94) and Rick Baldoz's *The Third Asiatic Invastion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (2011, 185).

camp attack. Proceso was among forty-seven men arrested that night, many of whom were mercilessly clubbed by members of "a combined force of city police, deputy sheriffs and constables."[71]

Proceso left his hometown of Lapog, Ilocos Sur at the age of sixteen to search for work in mainland United States. He was affectionately known in Filipino labor camps as "Ubing" (Ilocano for "young child" or "little man") because he'd ventured out so young and on his own.[72] Five years later, Margarita resigned from her job as a schoolteacher to look for her only son. She followed his trail first to Honolulu, and not finding him there, crossed the Pacific to search for him Salinas. She recounted their reunion to the *Philippines Mail*: "I was very, very happy when I met him," and, noting her resolve, "I had decided to spend the rest of my life looking for him." Proceso remained in the Monterey County jail on riot charges for nearly a month.

"Ubing is very obedient, respectful and polite to everyone," Vitación wrote in her testimony, continuing "He is very fond of me as well as I am of him. He is an ideal boy." [73] Proceso took his own life the year after the camp attack. He allegedly shot Velma Canete, labor leader Rufo Canete's wife. Fellow labor camp residents were at a loss to explain why "Ubing" had done such a thing.[74] Just a month later, Proceso's father Roman suffered a mental breakdown, and attacked Margarita and fellow laborers with a

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[71] "Last of Lettuce Strike Cases Set," *Philippines Mail*, October 15, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[72] "Filipino Shoots Woman, Suicides," *Salinas Index-Journal*, December 16, 1935, Newspapers.com.
[73] "Victims of Vigilante Attack."
[74] "Filipino Shoots Woman, Suicides."

cauliflower trimming knife.[75] He was committed to the Agnew State Hospital for the Insane, where he died in 1939. Only a year and a half after the labor camp attack, Margarita Vitación had lost her entire family.

The attack on the Green Gold Valley labor camp often acts as a punctuation on a laundry list of Depression-era white vigilante violence, or is mentioned with a grateful awe that no one (or in some accounts, only one person) lost their life. But, the events that follow the raid challenge us to reimagine what violence does afterward. I recount Margarita Vitación's experiences to demonstrate her role as a historical actor and highlight anti-union violence as something that didn't just happen to laboring men. The far-reaching tentacles of violence and trauma affected entire family units in Salinas Valley. They also often wiped out a community's capital and assets, positioning future generations to continue in poverty.

Agricultural labor histories include the 1934 lettuce strike in Salinas to varying degrees. Lengthier examinations frame the strike and labor repression that followed as just one example of the widespread hostility and vigilantism against union efforts in California's Depression-era agricultural industry. The 1934 Filipino strike is also used to contextualize the much more publicized 1936 strike of Salinas Valley white packing shed laborers, and the warzone state of affairs that prompted a U.S. Senate Civil Liberties Committee hearing in 1938. I contend that, in addition to serving these purposes, a study of the 1934 lettuce strike—and the decidedly anti-Filipino sentiment it engendered in Salinas Valley—demonstrates how racialized labor divisions in the valley's agricultural

[75] "Filipino Runs Amok on Farm," *The Californian*, January 30, 1936, Newspapers.com.

industry were entrenched over time. This analysis is also important for understanding how racial scripts about criminality were then cast on agricultural laborers, marking Filipinos, Dust Bowl migrants, and then Mexicans as always already a threat to Salinas Valley's agricultural prosperity.[76] Lettuce growers, shippers, and industry suppliers under the umbrella of the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association worked with, and often directed, Salinas Valley law enforcement to surveil, arrest, and attack agricultural laborers.

Furthermore, examining the 1934 strike through the coverage in the *Philippines Mail*—a local, pro-union Filipino-American newspaper—foregrounds a Filipino point of view, rather than from the vantage point of local white-owned newspapers that routinely filtered their reports to national outlets. The *Philippines Mail* tracks how the Salinas police raided union meetings, organized their surveillance efforts through confiscated union meeting roll calls, and carried out a valley-wide disarmament campaign that exclusively targeted Filipinos—all *before* the 1934 strike officially began. Not only were these tactics employed and amplified in the 1936 strike—they also lay the groundwork for preemptive policing and suppression networks between valley law enforcement and lettuce growers and shippers. Law enforcement especially benefitted from this relationship, as they emerged from the strikes with one of the nation's largest arsenal of gas munitions and a groundbreaking partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in California.

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[76] Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 6.

Careful attention to the Salinas Valley in the 1930s maps a much longer history of police militarization here. I define police militarization as an ongoing and intentional development of tactical responses and use of technology or weaponry that is advanced for the time. It also includes police forces implementing intelligence training and surveillance units. The actions of valley law enforcement and growers in the 1934 and 1936 strikes entrenched what I call a culture of impunity. I use this term to refer to a set of shared values and customs of policing that foreground police and grower interactions with agricultural laborers. A culture of impunity does not necessarily require cover-ups or conspiracies to evade punishment. As we'll see at the end of this chapter, both the National Labor Relations Board and the LaFollette Committee were unable to hold any actors responsible, despite mountains of evidence compiled in multiple volumes totaling nearly 1,000 pages each.

However, a culture of impunity does entail a set of discursive and legal practices that mark agricultural laborers as always already a threat to Salinas Valley order. It also involves historical memory, in the way that valley law enforcement and growers imagine their actions will be remembered; these are good faith beliefs, meaning they truly believe their actions are necessary for the prosperity of the valley, and thus merit residents' gratitude. Co-signing or rejecting these beliefs then marks who is in the in-group and who is in the out-group, and the latter were vulnerable to disciplinary punishment.

REVISITING THE 1934 FILIPINO LETTUCE STRIKE

Salinas Valley's agricultural abundance attracted Anglo American and European migrants throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They and their children would go on to form the majority of farm and packing shed owners. Importantly, whiteness was a much more flexible category in California due to the region's Spanish colonial and Mexican national legacy. The Spanish had a plethora of racial castes, rather than a black-white binary. In their castes, "whiteness" was interpreted through social standing and wealth.[77] This does not mean the Spanish were somehow more racially progressive; they simply had more categories in their racial pseudoscience. Racial castes were also inherently eugenicist, in that they presumed Spanish heritage would eventually wipe out Indigenous or African ancestry in future generations.

Whiteness in Spanish and Mexican California was also historically bound up with land ownership and European heritage. For example at the California state constitution convention, elite Mexican rancheros argued that darker skinned mestizos or Californios should be considered white due to their social status, their long history of voting during the Mexican era, and their Spanish ancestry.[78] These factors allowed Swiss, Italian, and German immigrants an avenue to whiteness in California that was not open to them on the East Coast or in the South. In the Salinas Valley, their European ancestry and their early success in dairy and sugar beet farming marked these immigrants and their offspring as white.

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[77] Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 55.
[78] Louise Pubols, *The Father of All: The de la Guerra Family, Power, and Patriarchy in Mexican California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 286.

White agriculturists secured more land through the passage of California's Alien Land Acts of 1913 and 1920, which explicitly barred Japanese immigrants—who had experienced significant gains in farmland ownership—"from purchasing, owning, selling, or leasing property in the state."[79] Salinas Valley's agriculturalist elite was, therefore, almost entirely white and had mostly eliminated other competitors. By the mid-1920s, valley grower-shippers enjoyed an accumulation of capital in the multi-millions, which made the valley's eponymous city "'the wealthiest community per capita in the United States.'"[80] Our historical vantage point would discount these early gains, since the Great Depression was right around the corner. But, as I show later, Salinas Valley remained disproportionately prosperous in relation to the rest of the nation even during the economic crisis.

The U.S.'s imperial legacy also benefited agriculturalists by ensuring a labor pool even through large-scale immigration restriction. The 1908 Gentleman's Agreement curbed Japanese migration to the United States, while the 1917 Asiatic Barred Zone prohibited immigration for those deemed ineligible for citizenship; the latter included Chinese and Punjabi immigrants who had labored in California fields in the early 1900s.[81] But, the Philippines were exempt from these immigration prohibitions since the islands were a U.S. territory after the Spanish-American War. The Hawai'ian Sugar Planters Association first recruited Filipinos from the northernmost provinces of Visayas

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[79] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 13-18.
[80] Min S. Yee, *The Melancholy History of Soledad Prison: In Which a Utopian Scheme Turns Bedlam* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 87.
[81] Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18. Ebook edition.

and Ilocos in the 1910s.[82] In the 1920s, Filipinos either left Hawai'i for California or opted to migrate directly there from the Philippines due to "favorable immigration policies, colonial culture [i.e., valuing emigration, education, and labor that would result in eventual land ownership]," and the increasing ease of trans-Pacific travel on steamships.[83]

While the valley's moderate, stable temperature supported a wide variety of crops, industrial agriculture boomed through high-profit crops like lettuce. In response to the East coast market's growing demand for crisp head lettuce, Salinas Valley agriculturists started mobilizing existing infrastructure to facilitate their entrance into the lettuce boom. Since they built lettuce packing sheds alongside existing Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, "[shippers] needed little capital investment from the railroads."[84] Profits from growing lettuce were also maximized through the Grower-Shippers Vegetable Association (GSVA). The GSVA was founded in 1930 and recruited wealthy agricultural families to start growing lettuce either exclusively, or as a primary crop.[85] Growing lettuce, a crop that requires higher levels of irrigation and faster harvesting to prevent spoil, was too costly and risky for the majority of small farmers who typically did not have access to the same financial and social resources that GSVA members had. Thus, the GSVA laid the groundwork for unequal socioeconomic distribution by consolidating

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[82] Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 40.
[83] Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 54.
[84] Gabriella M. Petrick, "'Like Ribbons of Green and Gold': Industrializing Lettuce and the Quest for Quality in the Salinas Valley, 1920-1965," *Agricultural History* 80, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 274.
[85] Ibid., 275.

control over the booming lettuce industry in a select, small number of families that formed the valley's lettuce oligopoly.

The wealthy, white figureheads of the GSVA included Bruce Church, E.E. Hardin, W.B. Grainger, and H.P. Garin.[86] With disciplined collaboration, these men "exerted tremendous power in setting wages" in their negotiations with labor contractors.[87] Those that deviated from GSVA wages quickly found themselves shunned by the organization and shut out of purchasing necessary supplies like ice from suppliers as far away as Los Angeles, driving the few growers willing to pay living wages out of business. Wages in fieldwork were race-based; in 1933, H.P. Garin created a wage schedule for his farm of "35 cents per hour for American labor, 25 cents per hour for Japanese and only 15 cents an hour for Filipinos."[88] Garin and others claimed the slash from twenty cents to fifteen cents an hour was necessary to keep their farms profitable and continue providing jobs, despite the fact that growers valley-wide produced a greater lettuce yield that year and were on pace to boost "the gross value of crops…[at] more than $700,000 greater" than the year before.[89]

The pay differential based on race de-incentivized inter-racial organizing. Filipinos were increasingly viewed with suspicion by California growers because they

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[86] Each of these men had firms valued in the millions, and kept that wealth in the family by passing their firms down to their children. They should thus not be considered individuals, but groups whose social standing is widely known in Salinas Valley. This is facilitated by the many streets, facilities, and institutions that bear those family names.
[87] Petrick, "'Like Ribbons of Green and Gold'," 276.
[88] "Editorial: Discriminating Against Filipinos," *Philippines Mail*, March 13, 1933, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[89] "Lettuce Output of 1933 Brings Greater Returns," *Philippines Mail*, January 29, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.

forged united, militant organizing through smaller strikes in San Joaquin County farms in the 1920s, marking their unions as "highly organized, efficient, and close-knit."[90] The population of Filipino laborers also skewed significantly toward young, single men who fully expected to return to the Philippines, and were more willing to physically defend themselves without worrying about putting families in danger.[91] However, in the Salinas Valley, Filipino laborers had limited options for disputing the series of wage cuts that had slashed their earnings from 40 cents an hour in 1930. Their only organized representation at that time was the Filipino Labor Supply Association (FLSA), a group of Filipino labor contractors who largely acquiesced to GSVA proposals.

Philippines Mail editors supported and had community ties to the FLSA. In the face of dramatically decreasing wages for Filipino field laborers, were more preoccupied with arguing against the use of Mexican labor and expressly repudiating communism. They also ignored laborers' demand for a thirty cent per hour wage, claiming instead that the FLSA was committed to fighting for a twenty cent wage that would benefit laborers without negatively affecting the valley's lettuce industry. To advocate for Filipino laborers, *Philippines Mail* editors warned against importing Mexican laborers since, "Filipinos, it should be remembered, are born under the American flag, and there is not one place in the United States or in the islands a class of people who are more proud of that flag and more loyal to it than are the Filipinos."[92] Filipino editors paradoxically positioned Filipinos as patriotic citizens—a status granted through the U.S.'s territorial

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[90] Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 97.
[91] Ibid., 97.
[92] "Editorial: Discriminating Against Filipinos."

ownership of the Philippines, an imperial history which they then criticized in other editorials weighing the possibility of Filipino independence.

From this contradiction, it is evident that Filipino laborers' economic and social status in Salinas Valley was not imagined as an outgrowth of their being imperial subjects, but instead from their undervaluation in comparison with other racialized groups. For example, when GSVA members threatened "to flood the valley with Mexican and Negro labor, rather than give in and pay 20 cents an hour to Filipinos," Filipino leaders warned that these "transient laborers [would] take away the livings of permanent residents" and that "Filipinos are peaceful and law-abiding. Past experience shows that transient laborers are often the contrary."[93] Filipino labor leaders highlighted their status as U.S. subjects and evoked an anti-black narrative of criminality to argue that their wage demands were not disruptive, but instead would protect the peace and stability of Salinas Valley.

Despite efforts to differentiate Filipino laborers from other racialized groups, Salinas Valley growers saw and treated Filipinos in the same way as any other group of striking laborers: as a threat. In early March of 1933, David (Bud) Storm, Garin Ranch manager and future GSVA member, forcibly evicted thirty Filipino field laborers from their camp after they refused to work for the new fifteen cent wage. Storm threatened the men with a shotgun and called for backup from Monterey County sheriff deputy Duncan McKinnon to arrest one laborer, Silvestre Arce. Storm claimed Arce had threatened him

[93] "Contractors Wage Winning Fight for Workers," *Philippines Mail*, March 27, 1933, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.

with a pistol, which was never found. Instead, all that Arce had on him was a metal cigarette case, which other laborers had told the arresting deputy sheriff about, trying in vain to prevent Arce's arrest.[94] Arce remained in the Monterey County jail for two weeks on a charge of assault with a deadly weapon, and was only released when his lawyer argued that a pistol found in the Filipino bunkhouse—which Arce continually denied was his—was unloaded, and thus the pistol could not be legally considered a deadly weapon.[95]

The facts of the case are cause for speculation, given that deputy sheriff McKinnon transported Arce to the county jail first and *then* came back to the labor camp to process the scene and look for evidence. But, speculating on whether the pistol was actually Arce's or not misses what is a more troubling point: McKinnon's quick acceptance of Storm's version of events, and his willingness to leave the scene without another deputy there to ensure that the scene wasn't tampered with. Moreover, McKinnon did not challenge the eviction of the Filipino laborers and instead focused on apprehending a suspected "agitator" despite several witnesses on-scene testifying against Storm's accusations. The eviction of Filipino laborers from Garin Ranch and Arce's arrest are stark examples of the cozy and convenient relationship between valley law enforcement and agricultural leaders.

After the Garin Ranch episode, *Philippines Mail* editors went on the defensive—but not by explicitly critiquing the actions of Storm and McKinnon. Instead, they

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[94] "Grower Commits First Violence in Wage War," *Philippines Mail*, March 17, 1933, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[95] "Man Freed on Habeas Corpus," *The Californian*, March 31, 1933, Newspapers.com.

dedicated substantial space to describing how, despite their valid and urgent demands for a wage increase, Filipinos were not susceptible to "Communistic agitation." For example, about a month after Arce's arrest, the paper reported on a surprise raid of a labor organizing meeting in Castroville, an unincorporated town northwest of Salinas. Monterey County sheriff Carl Abbott and district attorney Harry Noland claimed they meant to catch outside agitators in the act of attempting to radicalize Filipino laborers. They were accompanied by four immigration officers, so they also clearly meant to use detention and deportation as a union-busting technique, as was the popular method of the 1930s.

During the raid, deputy sheriffs and immigration officers seized "a considerable quantity of seditious literature…as well as the membership roll and minutes of the previous meeting."[96] The report highlighted that among the attendees were Mexican laborers that had come to the valley when Filipinos refused to work for fifteen cents, while rejoicing that no Filipinos were in attendance at this "Red Meeting."[97] Mexican migrant laborers were positioned as undermining Filipino wage demands, and as susceptible to communist organizing, marking them suspect. Beyond the ways in which Filipinos were imagining themselves in contrast to Mexican migrants, this report provides the first sign of valley law enforcement and county officials' openness to creating networks of surveillance and policing. As a result of this one coordinated raid, the names

[96] "Red Meet Raided, Seditious Matter Seized by Posse," *Philippines Mail*, April 10, 1933, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[97] Ibid.

and plans of laborers were available to the sheriff, the district attorney, and immigration officials.

The FLSA was invested in finding a middle ground between Filipino laborers and growers. As contractors, FLSA members stood to benefit from a valley-wide, five cent wage increase for all of their laborers; on the flip side, they sought to protect their relationship with growers, so as to not be blacklisted from providing laborers in the future. Growers relied on these investments to their advantage, by refusing to hear or consider any demand from Filipino laborers that was not brought forward by the FLSA. Thus, Filipino laborers lacked a true union in because whatever demands the FLSA brought forward were first and foremost guided by their social and economic interests as contractors, and not by laborers' needs. Despite not having union representation Filipino laborers were able to coordinate amongst themselves, using joint strikes with Mexican residents of Salinas Valley to pressure growers to grant a wage increase to twenty-five cents by September of 1933.[98] The ten cent increase, unsanctioned by the FLSA, was a tremendous show of strength that signaled that Filipino laborers were going around contractors, willing and able to work effectively with other racialized groups, and disrupting the social order of the agricultural industry.

This disruption was met with intimidation and violence. On the morning of October 4th, 1933, dynamite exploded part of a Gilroy bunkhouse where thirty Filipino field laborers were fast asleep. No injuries were reported, and ranch owners found

[98] "80 Per Cent of Growers Boost Field Laborer's Pay to 25 Cents Per Hour," *Philippines Mail*, September 11, 1933. It's important to note here that Filipinos were collaborating with Mexican laborers *from* Salinas Valley, and not with Mexican migrants.

themselves at a loss to explain the event, noting that there had been no labor issues there. While Gilroy is about thirty miles north of Salinas, and in a different county, I include this event because the lettuce season in Salinas Valley is over by October, while garlic packing season in Gilroy is just starting; thus, it is within reason to conclude that the Filipino field laborers in Gilroy at this time were most likely coming into town from Salinas Valley. Gilroy residents would have also been privy to labor efforts in the Salinas area in the months prior through local newspaper accounts. The *Philippines Mail* noted these circumstances, explaining that the event should be "attributed to an anti-Filipino agitation which [had] been brewing in this district since the opening of the season of work."[99] If the ten cent wage increase for lettuce field laborers in 1933 signaled big changes in labor organizing, the Gilroy bunkhouse explosion was an omen of the anti-Filipino backlash to come in 1934. Targeting field laborers specifically also highlighted a racial labor division in industrial agriculture.

Technological advancements in refrigeration created new spaces and forms of labor, specifically in the form of refrigerated lettuce packing sheds. The division between "unskilled" labor in the fields and "skilled" labor in packing sheds tracked alongside racial and class differences. Those who worked as lettuce field laborers were paid significantly less than those who worked packing in the sheds, and had no job security given the industry's practice of classifying field work as seasonal employment.[100] After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the legal exclusion of Japanese immigrants from land

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[99] "Explosion Wrecks Gilroy Bunkhouse," *Philippines Mail*, October 9, 1933, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[100] Philip Martin, Michael Fix and J. Edward Taylor, *The New Rural Poverty: Agriculture & Immigration in California* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 2006), 52.

ownership in the early 1900s, and the Immigration Act of 1917 that stymied the growth of the Punjabi immigrant community, the majority of field laborers in the Salinas Valley in the 1930s were Filipino.

Filipinos' predominant presence in the fields was due to their being prohibited from working in sheds, which were labor spaces reserved for white men and women.[101] The majority of packers in Salinas Valley sheds in the 1930s were Dust Bowl migrants, referred to pejoratively as "Okies." Their phenotypical whiteness and Anglo-American heritage enabled them to secure employment in better-paying, year-round positions in packing sheds. But Okies' destitution and proximity to racialized bodies in working-class neighborhoods marked them as inferior to Salinas's white growers.[102] Thus, the racial hierarchy of Salinas Valley corresponded to agricultural labor divisions: Filipinos and some Mexicans at the bottom, working in the fields; Okies, whose proximity to whiteness granted them access to shed jobs; and, white growers and shippers, whose racial and class position enabled their power over those beneath them.

From the start of 1934, the GSVA was keyed into persistent rumors that Filipino field laborers were planning to strike in September of that year. In response, the GSVA met frequently with the FLSA to negotiate convenient terms for grower-shippers and labor contractors. September strikes were potent threats to both parties because during that month "Salinas [supplied] 90 per cent of the nation's entire lettuce needs."[103] Though

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[101] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 22.
[102] Ibid., 29.
[103] "Poison Gas in America's Salad Bowl," *The Literary Digest*, October 10, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.

the GSVA and FLSA both discouraged the types of interracial strikes of the previous year, they could not prevent interracial organizing.

At the end of August, Dust Bowl migrants with the Vegetable Packers Union (VPA) and Filipino field laborers with the Filipino Labor Union (FLU) agreed to halt all work in Salinas Valley fields and sheds.[104] The FLU was chartered on December 10, 1933, explicitly prioritizing laborers' needs in response to the FLSA's inaction and lack of support in the twenty-five cent wage fight. Rufo Canete, a former member of the FLSA, was named president. Despite being a labor contractor, Canete was committed to seeking living wages and better working conditions for laborers—a dedication perhaps informed by his own many years of laboring in Hawaiian sugar plantations and Salinas Valley lettuce fields.[105] After collaborating with Mexican laborers, Canete was also enthusiastic about the potential for interracial labor efforts. The fact that Dust Bowl migrants worked in packing sheds meant that a successful strike in the fields and sheds would halt the lettuce industry at every stage of production.

On August 27th, the FLU and VPA announced their joint strike among laborers in the field and packing sheds. Around seven thousand people walked out of their shifts and submitted their demands to the GSVA the following day. According to the *Philippines Mail*, the joint strike was made up of 3,500 Filipinos, 2,300 Dust Bowl migrants and

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[104] Howard A. Dewitt, "The Filipino Labor Union: The Salinas Lettuce Strike of 1934," *Amerasia* 5, no. 2 (1978), 6, https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.5.2.65n03n2ru0x63026.
[105] "Organization of Filipino Labor Union Perfected," *Philippines Mail*, January 8, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.

other poor whites, and about 800 Mexican laborers.[106] The FLU's principal demand was a return to pre-Depression wages of forty cents an hour for field laborers. The VPA primarily sought a "closed-shop" policy in packing sheds as well as a five cent wage increase. On August 31st, the GSVA offered a new proposal to arbitrate the unions' separate demands through the Monterey County Industrial Relations Board. This was touted as an effort to negotiate through a neutral party, but in practice it strategically divided the unions in negotiation rooms.

Indeed, FLU-VPA solidarity quickly evaporated just seven days into the strike. On September 1st, VPA members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the proposition, while the FLU voted unanimously to reject it.[107] Warning that "public opinion would be against [the FLU] and that state militia would be sent [to Salinas]," VPA representative George Pollack persuaded prominent FLU member D.L. Marcuelo to revoke the no-vote. The next day, FLU members accused union representatives of "selling the men out," and noted that the revocation did not constitute an acceptance of the GSVA proposal; they held a new vote and again voted it down.[108] The VPA then moved quickly to publicly separate themselves from the FLU, with representatives agreeing with reports that Filipino laborers' demands were too radical.[109] This was not indicative of a total rejection of collaboration with Filipinos though, as some VPA members "attempted to resume the strike [but] they were forced to return to work when [an American Federation

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[106] "Tie-up Complete as 7000 Men Walk Out to Force Demands for Closed Shop Conditions," *Philippines Mail*, September 3, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[107] "Employers and Workers Deadlocked on Question of Granting Wage Boost," *Philippines Mail*, September 10, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Dewitt, "The Filipino Labor Union," 7.

of Labor representative] threatened to revoke their charter."[110] The VPA protected itself from disciplinary punishment by deserting the FLU and publicly stoking anti-Filipino sentiment.

The FLU continued the strike, but their lack of allies and increasing public backlash played to the GSVA's benefit. The association's meeting minutes revealed the much higher stakes of bargaining with the FLU: "our recognizing [a union] of agricultural field hands would set an extremely dangerous precedent not only for California but for the Nation."[111] New Deal legislation did not guarantee bargaining rights for "unskilled" agricultural labor, a term referring to field laborers. Thus, recognizing the VPA, and not the FLU, went beyond racial antagonism. The GSVA was fighting to secure the designation of field laborers as unskilled, and as outside of federal protections, for decades to come.

On September 5, 1934, "thirty farmers and Salinas business men" raided Filipino labor camps and fields, forcing Filipino laborers to leave the area while "brandishing guns and clubs," arguing that Filipinos "were under the domination of Communist agitators."[112] Local media was particularly antagonistic toward FLU president Canete. They relied on fears over miscegenation by repeatedly referring to his wife Velma as "the 'white wife.'"[113] Growers and shippers used the predominant narrative of Filipinos as

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[110] Stuart Marshall Jamieson, *Labor Unionism in American Agriculture* (Washington D.C.: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1945).
[111] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 76th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27070.
[112] "Armed Vigilantes Drive Filipinos Out of Fields," *Los Angeles Times*, September 6, 1934, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[113] Dewitt, "The Filipino Labor Union," 8.

dangerous agitators who were after Salinas white women, to justify hiring armed enforcers. These enforcers patrolled Filipino labor camps to snoop out any potential activists.[114] The patrols were armed, but most Filipino laborers had nothing on hand to protect themselves.

This is because at the start of the year, Salinas police enacted a city-wide disarmament campaign after a fight between Filipinos in Chinatown. Citing concerns over San Francisco's Tong War bleeding into the valley, officers also disarmed Chinese residents. However, they largely targeted Filipinos. Hundreds of Filipinos had their weapons confiscated, and some received up to sixty-day jail sentences. In conjunction with Salinas's campaign, California Highway Patrol carried out light and brake tests throughout the valley, searching and seizing weapons from pulled over vehicles. Filipinos did not usually own or carry guns; the weapons confiscated were mostly daggers or small knives. Importantly, the police and CHP were careful not to confiscate vegetable cutting tools used for harvesting sugar beets, cauliflower, or lettuce.[115] Filipinos, then, were left with tools to work but none for self-defense. It is in these vulnerable circumstances that the raid on Canete's Green Gold Valley Labor camp played out.

On September 21, 1934, at around nine at night, a group of armed white men launched a coordinated attacked on Canete's camp. They shot first into the bunkhouses, where they knew laborers and their families would be settling in for the night. By shooting at oil tanks around the camp's chicken coop, the vigilantes set a powerful blaze

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[114] Dewitt, "The Filipino Labor Union," 9.
[115] "Disarmament Affects Filipinos," *Philippines Mail*, January 8, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.

on the west end that very quickly spread to other buildings.[116] The details of the attack and the sequence of the events lend to the conclusion that it was carefully planned to devastate the community, if not cause the most mass casualties. Telephone lines at the camp were cut, and the armed white men also remained in position even as the flames grew higher, in order to shoot at those fleeing the fire.[117]

Simultaneously, the fire in Chinatown tied up the entire Salinas Fire Department. An inspection the following day found "oil soaked rags in the [Chinatown] fire," indicating that it was set deliberately.[118] Despite several witness accounts that described the vigilantes as white men, the GSVA "declared the camp was destroyed by Filipinos who were angry at Canete," claiming that Canete's radical leadership and rigid control over laborers had kept Filipinos who *wanted* to work out of the fields.[119] The all-white GSVA displaced blame from white men onto the labor camp attack survivors, who they saw as having brought this devastation onto themselves through their labor organizing. The message carried in this blame was that Filipinos were in need of disciplinary punishment in order to conform to agribusiness interests.

This message was enforced literally that night when Salinas police officers, deputy sheriffs and county constables raided the FLU headquarters in Salinas at the same time the camp attack and Chinatown fire began. They arrested forty-eight men that night, twenty-four of whom would remain in custody on riot charges for over three weeks. The

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[116] "Filipino Labor Camp Burned in California," *The New York Times*, September 23, 1934, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[117] "Poison Gas in America's Salad Bowl."
[118] "Two Fires Set in Filipino Labor War."
[119] "Filipino Labor Camp Burned in California."

riot charges stemmed from a supposed altercation between Filipino pickets and law enforcement outside a farm in neighboring Spreckels earlier that day. According to the sheriff's department, C. Manay and C. Retuta were agitating on the side of a beet farm, and when deputies and a California Highway patrol captain arrived at the scene, Manay "picked up a vagrant sugar beet from the roadside and shied it at Deputy Sheriff Guy Abbott. It missed Abbott, and struck [CHP captain] Earl Griffin." A third Filipino laborer, F. Murillo, was "charged with stabbing Deputy Sheriff Duncan McKinnon [of the Garin Ranch incident] on the underside of his left arm."[120] Whatever may have transpired in Spreckels that day between Manay, Retuta, Murillo, and law enforcement, it seems like an excessive use of force to raid a union's headquarters and arrest nearly fifty men, all the while clubbing them despite their being unarmed.

One man, Liborio Satorre was "severely clubbed" and arrested after officers claimed he tackled an officer during the raid; witnesses later testified that Satorre had accidentally fallen on an officer after attempting to free his thumb from a door jamb that he'd been pushed into by other officers. He was beat so relentlessly that doctors feared his skull had been fractured and initially thought he'd likely die. Thankfully, Satorre survived; unfortunately, he was discharged from the hospital straight to the county jail, where he would remain in custody until his charges were dropped in mid-November.[121] In the days following the FLU headquarters raid and the Canete camp attack, twenty-one

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[120] "Manay and Retuta Given Freedom," *Philippines Mail*, October 15, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[121] "Satorre Case Dropped," *Philippines Mail*, October 22, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.

additional Filipino men were arrested around the city on riot charges—bringing the total number of arrests stemming from the events on September 21st to sixty-nine.[122]

Among that number was Canete, who was charged with "aiding and abetting a riot"; white-owned newspapers claimed he was responsible for the burning of his own camp. This claim is clearly outrageous, given that: the camp was not covered by fire insurance; and, he had poured an immense amount of resources into making the camp the most "modern" labor camp in the valley and the hub of Filipino laborers' social life.[123] Canete remained in custody until mid-October.[124] VGA members, meanwhile, agreed to a two-year contract with the GSVA. Importantly, they signed under a newly formed union named the Fruit and Vegetable Workers Union (FVWU)—a new name without a history to connect them to Filipino laborers.[125]

Previous accounts of the 1934 Filipino lettuce strike, and of the Canete camp burning specifically, have not linked the attack to the FLU raid and subsequent mass arrests of Filipinos; some accounts do not include the FLU police raid at all. In fairness, the historical record makes it difficult to make explicit connections between the three events. Furthermore, while it's easier to describe the *camp attack* as "vigilante" violence, it's hard to directly call the *collection of events* "state" violence. However, the facts of all three events merit at least a tentative judgment that on September 21st, 1934, white men

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[122] "State Charged with Liability for Mob's Act," *Philippines Mail*, October 1, 1934.
[123] "Canete's Camp Will be Scene of Great Festivity on Thursday, November 30," *Philippines Mail*, November 27, 1933, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[124] "Complaint Against Incendiary Victim Dropped by Court," *Philippines Mail*, October 15, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[125] Ibid.

in Salinas Valley—both civilians and law enforcement—exclusively targeted Filipinos associated with the FLU for beatings, shootings, and arrest.

If we grant that premise, we can then reevaluate the details of the camp attack. The cut phone lines, the strategic positioning of shooters at the camp, the simultaneous fires that were deliberately set, and the complete unavailability of Salinas police and firefighters at the exact same time as the camp attack began—these all point to events that were planned. Events on this scale had to have involved a number of people, over some concerted period of time. Or, maybe the fact that the deliberately-set Chinatown fire and the FLU headquarters raid happened simultaneously was a coincidence. And, perhaps the fact that only FLU members and the FLU president were arrested on riot charges really was a knee-jerk reaction to the alleged altercation in Spreckels earlier that day.

Pointed speculation serves to talk back to the strategic silences I continually find in the historical record. The speculation is not new. In local history interviews during the 1970s, Filipino laborers also questioned why "city police and sheriff's department seemed to be missing during [the] burning labor camp incident."[126] In case these points are not persuasive, it is at least important to consider the key moments in which city and county officials limited or obstructed ensuing investigations of the camp attack and raid. They also recast blame onto Filipinos just as the GSVA had done. For example, the District Attorney assigned a special investigator to reexamine the camp attack—but only

[126] George Montero, interview by Pauline Pearson, March 30, 1981, Local History Collection, Salinas Public Library.

after heavy, public pressure from the Board of Fire Underwriters of the Pacific and the American Civil Liberties Union in San Francisco.[127] The special investigator's report was inconclusive, and dismissed Filipinos' testimony about the attackers being white.

Canete also filed a lawsuit against Monterey County in January of 1935 "seeking the recovery of $15,828 for the partial destruction of the camp."[128] It was a last resort after the county Board of Supervisors had dismissed his previous claim for damages the month before. He eventually settled out of court for about half of his original claim. Although he was able to get redress, it was woefully less than the earning potential of his labor camp. The settlement also precluded further investigation into the attack. And so it is that, to this day, the only named suspects in the archives are Filipinos themselves.

Through incarceration and violent intimidation, an estimated eight hundred Filipino laborers were pushed out of Salinas Valley from 1934 to 1935.[129] Staying would have meant living daily with the stark knowledge that no law enforcement or government protection would ever come. In fact, early on in the strike, FLU representative D.L. Marcuelo sent a telegram to Secretary of War George Dern asking for protection: "Virtual reign of terror prevails strike torn area Salinas valley (sic). Filipinos violently beaten and clubbed by patrolmen and forcibly ejected from private camps…Conditions very serious. Appeal for protection." Receiving no reply, Marcuelo then telegrammed California governor Frank Merriam two days later, pleading for the state militia:

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[127] "Complaint Against Incendiary Victim Dropped by Court."
[128] "Canete Sues County for Incendiary Fire," *Philippines Mail*, January 21, 1935, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.
[129] "Poison Gas in America's Salad Bowl."

> We have been advised by both the sheriff and the district attorney of Monterey county (sic) and also by the chief of police and the city attorney of the city of Salinas…that we are in grave danger of the mass mob attack by the lettuce growers and shippers of the county. We have been advised by those officials above mentioned that in case of such an attack is made upon us *they will be powerless to protect or defend us from violence and death*.[130]

Valley law enforcement made it clear they would not stand in the way of an attack on Filipinos. As a last resort, Marcuelo also telegrammed Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, asking him to send a mediator. But these appeals were also ignored.[131] Marcuelo's appeals were a challenge to racial scripts that depicted Filipinos and uneducated and violent. He clearly displayed a knowledge of U.S. democracy and governance, as well as the history of U.S. labor organizing. For example, Marcuelo specifically requested General Pelham D. Glassford as a mediator; Glassford was the Washington D.C. police chief who had tried to stop President Hoover from forcibly removing World War I veterans during the Bonus Army protests of 1932. Marcuelo's appeals also distinguished him from Salinas Valley growers because in the face of impending violence, he chose diplomacy. But, in the end, nobody came to protect the Filipino laborers.

Beaten, jailed, and terrorized, Filipino labororers stopped expecting protection, and asked instead for alternatives to escape Salinas Valley. In early October of 1934, FLU representatives wrote a petition to President Roosevelt, recounting the intimidation and violence targeting Filipino laborers in Salinas Valley. It included a line requesting

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[130] "Employers and Workers Deadlocked on Question of Granting Wage Boost."
[131] Ibid.

protection so brief that it felt more like a formality required of a petition, rather than a genuine expectation. The bulk of the petition focused on a request for immediate repatriation, with all costs covered by the government. They explained this request, saying "we hope and trust that even though [the Philippines] may not afford all the seeming advantages of Western Civilization, it may be more conducive to our future happiness."[132] Here, Filipino labor leaders provided a sardonic critique of Salinas Valley masked in imperialist rhetoric. They also reevaluated their relationship to the U.S., no longer trusting democratic ideals or that their status as U.S. nationals made them truly American.

It's unclear how many of the Filipinos that fled Salinas Valley actually returned to the Philippines. Those who stayed contended with the valley's culture of impunity. No criminal charges in the camp attack were ever brought forward. And, outside of a few reports, the incident was deliberately mischaracterized and forgotten in the valley. The effect on historical memory is evident even now, in labor histories that give brief accounts of the camp attack and incorrectly claim Margarita Vitación died. Filipino laborers who lost all of their belongings and savings in the camp attack also never received financial justice. Canete was the only one to successfully recoup some losses, while other laborers' suits were dismissed. In simple terms, this meant that nearly sixty laborers would have to start from zero again, ensuring that at least some descendants of this generation would have to contend with poverty.

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[132] "Petition Circulated Asking President to Provide Protection," *Philippines Mail*, October 8, 1934, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library.

In a 1977 ethnography of Filipinos in Salinas Valley, Edwin B. Almirol described the life of "old timers" – or, Filipinos who had been field laborers in the valley since the 1930s. He found nearly thirty bachelors living in two hotels in Chinatown, surviving on social security or government assistance. They self-identified as "the forgotten" because they had long ago severed ties with their family in the Philippines since they could not send them money. Almirol explained that Filipino culture places a high value on familial obligations and heavily shames those who do not financially support their families. These "old timers" also faced judgment from middle-class Filipinos who had migrated to Salinas post-WWII, worked in white-collar jobs, lived in separate neighborhoods, and largely avoided social interaction with poor former field laborers. These men were seen as "not having made it," and "rather than bear the stigma of being 'ungrateful' or 'shameless' [for not sending remittances] these men would refuse to accept letters by returning them to the senders with a note: moved, no forwarding address, or addressee unknown."[133] In essence, these men disappeared themselves from their own families. They understood their financial circumstances as a sign of failed masculinity rather than the aftereffects of being pillaged by state actors.

Here, we must challenge the capitalist logic that deflected blame back onto these men for "not making it" and led them to punish themselves with isolation. From 1930 to 1936, Filipino field laborers were paid an average of thirty-two cents an hour. Total work hours varied according to a number of factors beyond their control, like the time in the

[133] Edwin Boado Almirol, "Ethnic Identity and Social Negotiation: A Study of a Filipino Community in California," (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 60-61.

season, the quality of the crop, and managerial decisions from both the grower and the field foreman. Monthly wages thus could range from seventy-seven to one hundred and fifty dollars. Room and board in the labor camps was seventy-five cents a day, and were due monthly – meaning that, in good times laborers' room and board was half their monthly salary, and in lean times with less work hours, room and board ate all of their salary.[134] Furthermore, we should remember that only Canete was successful in regaining some of his labor camp losses through the court, while other suits from laborers at the camp were dismissed. In total, laborers' losses were estimated at twelve thousand dollars – the equivalent of two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars today.

From those Filipinos who survived the camp attack, to those that had their property burnt to the ground, generational trauma was also a legacy of the 1934 strike. Although laborers were exclusively men, the aftereffects of humiliating arrests and severe beatings produced collateral damage in inter-personal and community relationships. Moreover, the camp attack did not distinguish between genders or age—entire families were there. They survived an event that sounds eerily close in its description to modern mass shootings without injury. But that did not preclude severe, negative emotional distress. So, even though it is with happiness that we know that Margarita Vitación did not actually die in the fire, we are now tasked with understanding the complex connection between the camp attack and her immense losses only a year later.

No one could testify with certainty to Proceso's motivation in allegedly shooting Velma Canete. "Ubing" had close community ties for nearly a decade with his fellow

[134] Montero, interview.

laborers, and was reported to have had a long-running relationship with Rufo Canete; the two had lived together as laborers in 1930. The only consensus about his state of mind was that he was "enraged."[135] Whatever his motivation, his desperation afterward drove him to take his own life in a violent way. Velma also clearly suffered through the trauma of gun violence, and endured nearly a month in intensive care after being shot point-blank in the heart.[136] She and Rufo are not mentioned together in reports or census records after 1935, supporting the theory that the shooting also marked a rupture in their marriage. Velma is also difficult to find in the historical record after 1936, marking an astonishing turn to anonymity after four years of intense visibility as the FLU president's wife.

Rufo remained single the rest of his life, and was routinely pursued by Salinas Police and Sheriff's deputies on alleged cock-fighting charges. After going on the run from 1937 to 1939, Canete returned to Salinas and turned himself in, stating "I couldn't make a living in the other states and I decided to come back and surrender."[137] He had tried living in Arizona, but by then Salinas Valley growers had established a seasonal lettuce circuit between the two places. His inability to find work most likely came from being on a grower-shipper blacklist. Canete's punishment, then, was not only being forced to flee from the valley where he had once held a high social and economic status,

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135 "Filipino Shoots Woman, Suicides."
136 "Velma Canete Recovers from Bullet Wound," *The Californian*, December 30, 1935, Newspapers.com.
137 "Canete, Broke, Returns to Salinas; Takes Cell in Jail," *Salinas Morning Post*, August 2, 1939, Newspapers.com.

but also being shut out from labor. He served time in prison and died in 1970, nowhere near his prominence in the 1930s.[138]

Roman's attack a month after Proceso's death was reported as "running amok"—a phrase that in that historical period would have implied a psychological break.[139] Roman's attack on Margarita, and their subsequent divorce, are also aftereffects of the camp attack. At the very least, I contend that his death in the confinement of a state hospital is an unforeseen consequence that nonetheless served the intentions of the camp attack: drive out of the valley, confine, or kill Filipino laborers. Similarly to Velma, Margarita is hard to find after her divorce was granted in May of 1936. Did she remain in Salinas Valley, move somewhere else in California, or return to the Philippines, alone? Did she know people thought she'd died? So far, the archive obfuscates her voice. All we know are the domino-effect events that completely upended her life in a year and a half.

Salinas Valley was also deeply transformed by the events of the 1934 strike and national immigration changes. The Filipino population in California was significantly reduced by the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which re-classified Filipinos from U.S. national to "alien," as well as the 1935 Filipino Repatriation Act.[140] By the end of the decade, California agriculture shifted overwhelmingly to Mexican laborers. The California Farm Bureau Federation consistently lobbied to exclude Mexico from quotas established in the Immigration Act of 1924. The group also pushed to continue the Bracero Program until 1964. Their argument for both hinged on framing Mexicans as a

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[138] "Rufo Canete," *U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014*, Social Security Administration, 2014, Ancestry.com.
[139] "Filipino Runs Amok on Farm."
[140] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 37.

"flexible and controllable" labor force that was also easily deportable in times of economic crisis.[141] This narrative fit nicely into Salinas Valley's cultural imaginary, which associated brown bodies with low-wage stoop labor and naturalized state violence against these bodies.

A closer look at the events of the 1934 strike benefits Labor Studies and agricultural labor histories. Thinking of resistance as an absolute would mark this strike as a failure because it didn't produce any labor gains. But that obscures the myriad ways Filipinos coped and survived—from fleeing the valley to seeking financial redress. They were also not silenced by valley law enforcement's intimidation and violence. They testified to the horrors of the Green Gold camp attack, and they named white men as the attackers, countering accusations against Filipinos over and over again. They wrote to state and federal officials, and the President of the U.S., to tell the truth about what was happening in Salinas Valley. That their multiple hails were ignored or rejected did not mean they had no personhood in the discursive community. It didn't mean their efforts had no significance either, as recent histories of Salinas Valley claim.[142] They tried, and were actively shut down. Knowing this also helps us see the difference between "vigilante" and "state" violence.

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[141] Joon K. Kim, "California's Agribusiness and the Farm Labor Question: The Transition from Asian to Mexican Labor, 1919-1939," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 44.
[142] Carol Lynne McKibben, *In Common Purpose: Urban Restoration and Regional Realignment in Twenty-First Century Salinas, California and the Central Coast Region*, Salinas History Project, Salinas Public Library, 20, https://salinaspubliclibrary.org/sites/default/files/media_browser/external_documents/chapter_three_struggle_final.pdf.

"Vigilante" connotes an unorganized mob or force that is driven mainly by personal attitudes and interests. This obscures the careful strategizing of agribusiness and law enforcement to suppress strike activity within the bounds of the law, and the complicity of the district attorney's office in burying investigations when that activity was extralegal. It also ignores law enforcement's own direct admissions.

In response to a *San Francisco Chronicle* report that derisively referred to special deputies as "vigilantes," Sheriff Abbott angrily reminded readers: "I commanded those deputy sheriffs to follow me."[143] He did not dispute claims that these special deputies were using their newfound policing power to intimidate merchants and other residents, stating instead that they had not done anything illegal to his knowledge. And, importantly, he publicly claimed them as legitimate enforcers of the law. So, what we have in Salinas Valley in the 1930s is not a cluster of semi-related vigilante activities. What we have is a sophisticated network of surveillance and policing, with careful and intentional collaboration between a large number of law enforcement agencies and agribusiness. This is important because it clearly exposes the 1930s not simply as a period of strike-specific policing, but as the beginning of valley law enforcement's growth and militarization.

THE LETTUCE STRIKE OF 1936

As I shift forward two years to focus on a strike by Dust Bowl migrants and other poor whites, I necessarily rely on accounts from white-owned local newspapers. After the

[143] "Sheriff Resents Chronicle Story," *Salinas Morning Post*, September 17, 1936, Newspapers.com.

tremendous violence and ensuing exodus of hundreds of Filipinos from Salinas Valley, the *Philippines Mail* became more and more conservative, and strategically reported very little on the 1936 strikes. For example, the only report available in the archives is from a sideline note in the September 7th, 1936 issue. The report is neutral in tone, and only takes a definitive stance when warning Filipinos *not* to participate in any strike activity. Citing the purported death of a Filipino laborer on the first day of the strike, editor Venerando C. Gonzales writes: "Filipinos, therefore, are warned to be thoughtful and vigilant in their relation with the employers, and also avoid misunderstanding or conflict with the strikers."[144] Given the racial makeup of both growers and strikers in 1936, this is thinly-veiled advice to be careful of white men in general. Unfortunately, this issue is the last one in the microfilm collection for 1936. Other primary sources require reading against the grain so as to not reproduce the sources' race and class ideologies. Local news was filtered through an office of consolidated law enforcement agencies in Salinas before going to publication.[145] Such news accounts reflected the interests of white grower-shippers in the GSVA.

Following a relatively quiet 1935, 1936 saw renewed labor activism from the FVWU. After failed attempts at bargaining for higher wages and preferential hiring with GSVA, over three thousand white lettuce packers walked out of sheds across the valley

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[144] Venerando C. Gonzales, "Salinas Lettuce Industry Crippled by Strike," *Philippines Mail*, September 7, 1936, Historical Newspapers, Salinas Public Library. I was unable to verify the laborer's name or find the incident in which the laborer is claimed to have died.
[145] John V. Young, *Hot Type & Pony Wire: My Life as a California Reporter from Prohibition to Pearl Harbor* (Santa Cruz: Western Tanager Press, 1980), 78.

on September 6.[146] This time, the white packers in the FVWU refused to coordinate a strike with Filipino field pickers from the outset.[147] Disciplinary punishment is not only a corrective to those being punished; it is also instructive to those who witness it. The violence visited upon Filipino laborers two years earlier was surely still a fresh memory to white packers, and the FVWU concluded that interracial coalition building would hinder their ability to make more substantial gains this time around.

After suffering losses of $100,000 a day during the 1934 strike, growers and shippers planned production and security measures in preparation for future strikes. As soon as the FVWU announced its walkout, lettuce packing sheds locked out all workers, even those merely suspected of being part of the union. They also quickly transported nonunion labor from the Imperial Valley to work, supervised throughout their shift by armed guards.[148] While shed owners justified having armed guards inside the shed as protection for strikebreakers from retaliatory violence, this measure also rooted out infiltrators and intimidated the new laborers. Increased surveillance measures were also deployed in the exterior of lettuce packing sheds. For example, Salinas Ice Company more closely resembled a high-security compound rather than an industrial work site, as it was promptly encircled by "a ten-foot metal wire fence…[behind which] tear gas bombs and other riot equipment [were] collected."[149] By the second week of September,

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[146] "Riot-Spiced Salads: A California Sheriff Calms Lettuce Fields with Gas Threats," *The Literary Digest*, October 31, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[147] Carleton Williams, "Union Leaders at Salinas Seek Sympathetic Strike," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[148] Young, *Hot Type & Pony Wire*, 76.
[149] "Lettuce Crop Strike Test Looms Today," *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Salinas Ice Company could count on frequent assistance from California State Highway patrolmen (CHP) out of three separate counties: Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. The CHP not only patrolled around the compound but also escorted produce trucks entering and leaving the shed.[150] The obvious purpose of CHP patrol was to provide a police presence that might deter violent confrontations—but escorting produce trucks also directly enabled the lettuce industry to continue operating close to normal.[151]

Salinas Ice Company's stash of tear gas was also put to use early in the strike. On September 15th, hundreds of strikers gathered to picket around the compound, and they did not interfere with workers nor did they block the coming and going of produce trucks. But they did refuse Salinas police chief George Griffin's order to disperse after all produce trucks had entered the compound, and at around ten in the morning, Chief Griffin gave the order to release "a barrage of tear gas," which rained over a significant portion of the strikers.[152] Several more were injured in the ensuing panic as the huge crowd attempted to run from the fumes, and fifteen men were arrested during the chaotic scene. Despite having the clear tactical advantage against unarmed strikers, valley law enforcement was still unnerved by the sheer number of people picketing that day. And so, sheriff Carl Abbott decided to balance out the numbers by declaring a state of emergency

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[150] Ibid.

[151] Governor Frank Merriam approved the CHP to aid Salinas Valley grower-shippers throughout the strike. This is important to note since it demonstrates that valley agribusiness was highly valued by the state.

[152] "38 Carloads of Lettuce are Shipped," *Salinas Morning Post*, September 16, 1936, Newspapers.com.

the following day and issuing a proclamation of county-wide "compulsory conscription" for a special deputy force:[153]

> I command all able-bodied male citizens of [Monterey] County between the ages of 18 and 45 to report to my office to assist me in overcoming the resistance and put down riot and assist me in seizing, arresting and confining the persons resisting, their aiders and abettors. It is pointed out to such citizens who may refuse to report that *such refusal constitutes a misdemeanor*, and I am obliged by my oath of office and to my bondsmen to see that the provisions of the law are carried out.[154]

The threat of arrest and detainment may have acted as the only motivating factor for some, but by and large there wasn't a significant portion of male citizens refusing the call. In fact, excitement at the proclamation was so high that on that same day students at Salinas High School were reportedly fast at work in their woodshop class cutting axe handles for the special deputies.[155] Nearly two thousand deputized men, aged eighteen to forty-five, were armed with "wagon spokes and guns," and supported police in "hurling tear-gas bombs," at groups of strikers.[156]

The mandatory draft of Monterey County male citizens would have excluded Filipinos, since by 1934 the Tydings-McDuffie Act had made them "aliens," and also largely excluded Mexican migrant laborers. The special deputy force, then, would have been overwhelmingly white. Here it may seem as though the violence visited on Filipino

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[153] Edward Robbin, "The General Staff Takes Charge," *The Nation*, October 31, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[154] "Proclamation by Sheriff," *Salinas Morning Post*, September 17, 1936, Newspapers.com. Emphasis added.
[155] "Cutting of Axe Handles in High School Shop Explained," *The Californian*, September 18, 1936, Newspapers.com.
[156] "Citizens Arm, Rout Pickets in California," *The Washington Post*, September 17, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. For the number of deputized men, see "Strike Situation Continues Peaceful; Sanborn Declares Communists in Local Area," *Salinas Morning Post*, September 19, 1936, Newspapers.com.

strikers two years before was simply transferred to white FVWU strikers, despite race. But it's important to reiterate that, while FVWU strikers were white, their background as low-wage, migrant agricultural laborers (or, "Okies") would have placed them in a lower social status. Their proximity to other racialized groups in labor camps also marked them as "others." Furthermore, their previous participation in the 1934 strike positioned them as potential threats to the valley's agribusiness, which was increasingly framed in media narratives as more than an industry, but a way of life for true Salinas locals. For example, county Judge James Bardin, himself the son of a successful farmer, expressed his distress over the strike asserting:

> This is an agricultural community. It always has been…and it is the inherited right of free men not to be molested in the following of their vocation…I am not representing any special interests here—only the farmers who want to protect their rights, their highways and their farms.[157]

Bardin framed industrial agriculturists like yeoman farmers who needed the power of the state to defend their property rights against outsiders keen on changing the nature of the community. In reality, multi-million dollar agribusiness would be well-protected by Salinas Valley law enforcement that was well on its way to militarization.

In a 1977 oral history interview, Everall Adcock, a retired Salinas Police motorcycle patrol officer and local legend for his "tough guy" persona, detailed the department's development in the 1930s from small and slow to respond, to a

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[157] "Anti-Picketing Law to be Considered by County Supervisors," *Salinas Index Journal*, October 1, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.

"mechanized" force that doubled in officers by the end of the decade. Adcock claimed that officers at first received "no training whatsoever" and learned from "practical experience." He also described a shift in culture, since older officers at the start of the decade "wore their guns then underneath their coats;" some officers allegedly allowed their guns to rust from lack of use since "nothing ever happened and they didn't pay any attention to the guns." But, with the enlargement of the police force and a boom in weaponry also came a shift to open-carry procedures. Officers were, by the mid-30s, more heavily and visibly armed.

Salinas Valley was also a noted buyer of gas munitions from 1933 to 1937, listing among the top five buyers after the Ohio and Rhode Island National Guard and the substantially larger city of Boston.[158] The sparsely populated valley racked up weaponry on par with metropoles and entire states. California had a statute requiring that a person or organization have a permit from the state's Criminal Identification and Investigation division before purchasing and possessing gas munitions, but officials and agribusiness leaders exploited a loophole in the statute to run tear gas from individual buyers to law enforcement officers.[159] For example, during the 1934 strike, a representative of Lake Erie Chemical Company delivered nearly $300 worth of gas equipment to California Highway Patrol officers stationed in Salinas Valley. In an internal company note, McCarty described the purchase as "a present to the highway patrol from the growers'

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[158] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report, Part 3*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, 45-47.
[159] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report, Part 3*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, 139.

secret fund."[160] This description sounds like the kind of smoking gun found in a mystery novel, with all the nefarious connotations of the phrase "secret fund." But, it was a matter of fact line in an otherwise mundane memo, reproduced in the exhibits of the congressional hearing on labor rights in 1939. Growers learned to straddle the line of California law to provide valley law enforcement with advanced weaponry.

For the 1936 strike, Salinas Police officers and Monterey County Sheriff deputies also had at their disposal newly developed long-range gas guns. These guns were touted as measures to protect officers, since they could be shot at a distance of one hundred and fifty feet, as opposed to the gas grenades that required officers to be in closer range to crowds. Valley law enforcement were quick fans of the long-range guns, which could shoot both "tear and even nauseating gas" across "a city block."[161] They were not hesitant about using gas munitions, and were readily stocked through the whole of the 1936 strike. The congressional Committee on Education and Labor found that "Federal Laboratories sold to [SPD and MoCo Sheriff] 156 long-range Sped-heat projectiles of tear gas, 144 long-range Sped-heat projectiles of sickening gas, and 17 long-range Flite-Rite projectiles of tear gas."[162] This was over three hundred long-range gas munitions for a three month-long strike.

Officers and deputies used these weapons to enact military-style bombardment and advancement strategies. On September 16, 1936, the most active day strike-

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[160] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report, Part 3*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, 141.
[161] Everall Adcock, interview by George Robinson, January 26, 1977, Local History Collection, Salinas Public Library.
[162] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report, Part 3*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, 33.

suppression activities, a crowd of around one hundred strikers marched toward a packing plant on Gabilan Street. Officers and deputies were ready: "without any warning to the crowd, when its nearest members were still about 75 feet away, the officers suddenly opened fire with their gas riot guns."[163] As people fled the gas, law enforcement blocked Gabilan Street and continued gassing from both ends of the street. Later reports detailed that gas squads were stationed and gassing for around a five block radius. With nowhere else to shelter, a group of strikers ran into the union labor temple on Pajaro Street. Officers then used the long-range gas guns to bombard the temple, allowing them to use the barrage as cover and advance closer to the temple and throw in more gas grenades.[164] Local and national newspapers would later dub the events of September 16th as the "Battle of Salinas."[165]

The moniker was criticized by law enforcement and city officials as a gross exaggeration of the events, meant to incite undue outrage and antagonism. But it's hard to buy that claim when law enforcement invited attention to their tactics of their own accord. In their decision filing, the National Labor Relations Board noted that law enforcement was stationed in front of the packing plant that day with "a motion-picture-

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[163] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report on Employers' Associations and Collective Bargaining in California, Part 4*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, 1359.
[164] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report on Employers' Associations and Collective Bargaining in California, Part 4*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, 1360.
[165] Richard Steven Street, "Salinas on Strike – News Photographers and the Salinas Lettuce Packer's Strike of 1936: The First Photo Essay on a California Farm Labour Dispute," *History of Photography* 12, no. 2 (April 1988): 168.

camera crew and their apparatus, evidently waiting for some action shots."[166] Salinas Valley law enforcement willingly documented their policing activities long before the advent of documentary television shows like *COPS* and *Live PD*.

Advanced weaponry like long-range gas guns furthered the militarization of valley law enforcement in two ways. First, the technology for long-range gas guns was developed during wartime. Second, these weapons lessened law enforcement's dependence on state and federal troops. As law enforcement agencies began stocking up on gas munitions, there was also "an abrupt drop in requests by local authorities for federal troops or National Guard forces."[167] Valley law enforcement, then, was the GSVA's standing army. Law enforcement also deployed military intelligence practices, with the top floor of the Jeffrey Hotel as a "war room" housing the chief of police, the inspector of the State Highway Patrol, GSVA representatives—and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Sanborn.[168]

The GSVA hired Lt. Col. Henry Sanborn, a retired reserve officer, to direct the joint policing efforts of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz county law enforcement.[169] Despite being a private organization meant to uphold agribusiness interests, the GSVA acted in a public capacity by hiring an official to oversee the strike area's expanded policing force. Although Sanborn was also an outsider to Salinas Valley,

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[166] As quoted in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Report on Employers' Associations and Collective Bargaining in California, Part 4*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, 1359.
[167] Daniel P. Jones, "From Military to Civilian Technology: The Introduction of Tear Gas for Civil Riot Control," *Technology and Culture* 19, no. 2 (1978): 168, https:doi.org/10.2307/3103718.
[168] Edward Robbin, "The General Staff Takes Charge," *Nation* 143, no. 18 (1936): 520, The Nation Archive Premium Edition, EBSCOhost.
[169] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 34.

he was a particularly attractive candidate for this position due to his experience self-publishing "a militant anti-Communist newspaper [*American Citizen*]."[170] Sanborn quickly consolidated the anti-strike efforts of local law enforcement agencies. With funding from the GSVA, Sanborn secured the top floor of a downtown Salinas hotel to use as a headquarters for top city police officers, sheriff's deputies, and California highway patrolmen.[171] The force of local and state law enforcement was concentrated in one place, under the direction of a man who rarely hesitated to resort to tear-gassing assembled strikers, and with the full financial support of the GSVA.

The power on this hotel floor was not only physical, but ideological and epistemic also. By October, "all news about the strike and any related activity in the city was being filtered through the office [of consolidated law enforcement]," and Salinas Valley residents had difficulty buying national newspapers from local merchants.[172] The most widely available news source for the majority of valley residents was the *Salinas Index Journal*, which not only had to get their content pre-approved by Sanborn's office, but was also subject to unannounced visits from law enforcement officers attempting to catch journalists in the act of leaking to national newspapers. Visiting reporters were also subject to violent threats from vigilantes; a "San Francisco newspapermen [had] a posse on his trail with some discourtesy in mind," and had to be snuck out of town "on a chartered plane minutes ahead of the posse."[173] Control over media unsurprisingly

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[170] Don Branning, "Violent 1936 Salinas Valley Strike Recalled," *S.F. Examiner*, August 27, 1970, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[171] Young, *Hot Type & Pony Wire,* 78.
[172] Ibid., 79.
[173] Ibid., 80.

created an unsympathetic depiction of strikers in Salinas Valley. They also became a platform for endorsing state violence against them in a way that naturalized disciplinary punishment on agricultural laborers.

FVWU leaders quickly recognized that they were vastly outnumbered and over-powered by the valley's expanded policing force. GSVA and law enforcement control over media also perpetuated unsympathetic depictions of their strike. Under these conditions, FVWU leaders reneged on their previous commitment to avoid alliances with Filipino laborers. In a large-scale recruiting campaign, FVWU strikers visited lettuce fields throughout the valley to outreach to nearly three thousand Filipino pickers.[174] They found very little interest from Filipino laborers; only twenty-five laborers showed up to a special FVWU meeting to discuss coalition building. This disinterest reflected Filipino laborer's vivid memories of being abandoned by white workers two years earlier, a betrayal that made Filipinos even more vulnerable to state violence.

It is also a reflection of Salinas Valley agribusiness's astute planning and law enforcement's uncanny ability to stomp out FVWU's efforts at their root. Two days into their recruitment campaign, FVWU strikers were met by Salinas police and more than two dozen special deputies in a field.[175] Unprepared for a conflict, FVWU strikers were forced to leave the field without having spoken to any of the Filipino laborers. Salinas police chief George Griffin celebrated the event, stating "[officers and deputies] saw to it

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[174] Carleton Williams, "Two Beaten as Lettuce Riots Spread," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[175] Carleton Williams, "Salinas Police Balk Raid on Filipinos," *Los Angeles Times*, September 29, 1936, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

that none of the Filipinos was hurt."[176] In positioning law enforcement officers as Filipino laborers' protectors, Griffin further demonized white FVWU strikers, while also characterizing Filipino laborers as law enforcement's burden—reviving imperialist discourse that infantilized Filipinos.

In fact, Filipinos were increasingly seen as passive witnesses to the 1936 strike, content to work in the fields as their white counterparts in the sheds continued to agitate. One account claimed: "As the strike progressed it developed that the Filipino, because of his small stature and particular adaptability to the stoop labor required in the lettuce fields, really is more important to the industry than the white labor employed in the lettuce sheds."[177] These accounts used scientific racism to naturalize Filipinos' subjection to low-wage labor in the fields, saving them from culpability for the strike by imagining their inferiority. They also cultivated a cultural imaginary in the valley that associated brown bodies with low-wage stoop labor—a racial script that would later be applied to Mexican laborers.[178] Accounts also displaced the violence of the strike from the enlarged policing force onto the strikers, perpetuating a narrative about the strike as a communist infiltration.

By disavowing local law enforcement's role in the strike's violence, city officials justified extreme measures like curfews and prohibitive city ordinances. For example, an anti-picketing ordinance was passed unanimously by the Monterey County board of

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[176] Ibid.
[177] Williams, "Union Leaders at Salinas."
[178] Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 6. Racial scripts "highlight the ways in which the lives of racialized groups are linked across time and space and thereby affect one another, even when they do not directly cross paths."

supervisors in early October, prohibiting "the obstruction of public highways, alleys and sidewalks…picketing…derogatory, indecent and opprobrious language and gestures for a certain purpose" [179] The wide application of the ordinance prompted criticisms of authoritarianism, which charged that the ordinance was unconstitutional for its prohibition of free speech. When board members asked the district attorney to verify the ordinance's constitutionality, Judge Bardin interrupted the proceedings, yelling that district attorney Anthony Brazil had already given his opinion on the ordinance.[180]

Judge Bardin's standing in the valley enabled his outburst to go unchecked, but more likely the county board meeting was infused with a sense of urgency after three days of disturbing incidents. Truck drivers reported encountering sharpshooters on more desolate valley roads;[181] three separate bombings outside of Salinas Valley Ice Company injured two women and destroyed a produce truck.[182] Police swiftly arrested Lillian Monroe in connection with the bombings, citing no other evidence than her "police record in Los Angeles for rioting and agitation," and local law enforcement's surveillance on her "as a suspected member of the Communist Party."[183] Concerns over communist infiltration affected the FVWU, too: "At one point during the strike, the union leadership raided a Communist member's house and seized a stack of printed propaganda."[184] Despite increased paranoia within the union, FVWU leaders attempted to counter local

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[179] "Anti-Picketing Law."
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] "Three Local Bombings Increase Tension; Peace Proposal Studied," *Salinas Index Journal*, October 2, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Branning, "Violent 1936."

media's portrayal of the strike, especially since selective enforcement of laws and targeted arrests continued after the anti-picketing ordinance passed.

When an estimated one hundred strikers and strikebreakers brawled on Main Street on October 3rd, police only arrested strikers even though the strikebreakers were also in violation of the new city ordinance.[185] FVWU leader A.S. Doss claimed that strikers were goaded into the fight by strikebreakers, whom he claimed followed strikers from one establishment to the next. He also argued that the three bombings earlier in the week were too close to the ordinance vote to be coincidental, intimating that they were police plants to discredit the FVWU.[186] Other first-hand accounts of the strike also note that some confrontations were planned by law enforcement:

> One day the trucks and their armed escort were confronted by…a mass of several hundred lettuce workers who jammed the street in the heart of the city…they had been lured into the city under some pretext of negotiations and then were herded into the center of town by state police.[187]

These claims help us understand the epistemic danger of using "vigilante" to describe labor suppression violence. The term obscures what was more accurately *state* violence in both the 1934 and 1936 strikes. It also allows the specter of criminality to pervade our understanding of the strikes. Vigilantism easily becomes an umbrella term for anti-labor *and* labor activities. This impinges on our ability to see the ways in which valley law enforcement induced strikers into violence in order to then justify use-of-force and continue vilifying them in the media.

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[185] "Many Arrested in Salinas During Week-End Fighting," *Salinas Index Journal*, October 5, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Young, *Hot Type & Pony Wire,* 81.

By October, strikes had held up "some 40,000,000 heads [of lettuce], stymieing a $12,000,000 industry."[188] Despite their capacity to suppress the strike, growers and shippers grew tired of losing money and agreed to mediate a settlement with FVWU. On orders from the Secretary of Labor, federal conciliator Walter Mathewson visited Salinas to oversee the settlement proposal.[189] Although the proposal took shape quickly and neared a vote from FVWU and GSVA, valley law enforcement still enacted disciplinary force on strikers. The night before the vote, Sheriff Abbott summoned two hundred of his special deputies to disperse strikers outside of the Salinas Valley Ice company barricade with fifteen gas shells and six hand gas grenades, eventually arresting forty-three men.[190] The FVWU and GSVA agreed on the proposal, which had no significant gains for the FVWU except for a promise from growers and shippers to not blacklist those who had participated in the strike.

Despite daily losses in the hundreds of thousands during the 1936 strike, major growers and shippers laid the groundwork for consolidating control over the industry in the coming years. By preparing for the strike with increased security measures and with nonunion labor, lettuce packing sheds reaped profits boosted by the crop's massive price hike during the strike.[191] Lettuce oligopolies also reinforced their power by pushing out smaller companies and independent farmers who had renewed the FVWU contract before the strike. Any company that had agreed to the renewal soon found that "the strong anti-

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[188] "Poison Gas in America's Salad Bowl."
[189] "First Steps Taken by Mathewson for Settlement of Local Lettuce Strike," *Salinas Index Journal*, October 14, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[190] "Police Quell Strike Disorders," *Salinas Index Journal*, October 15, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[191] Young, *Hot Type & Pony Wire*, 76.

labor ice companies would not furnish ice for the lettuce, and the railroads wouldn't ship lettuce without ice," effectively leaving their crops to rot.[192] Agribusiness and law enforcement also solidified a mutually beneficial relationship through the 1934 and 1936 strikes. After hiring Sanborn to lead the special deputies and the consolidated law enforcement agencies, the GSVA continued oversight of policing efforts through a sister organization, Associated Farmers of California.[193]

Associated Farmers was a nonprofit organization focused on "mount[ing] a counteroffensive against labor militancy by issuing publicity warning of communist influence in labor unions and by directly breaking up strikes." [194] Associated Farmers was also notoriously authoritarian and had established relationships with law enforcement agencies across California. They also acted on their own to "simply [preempt] the repressive functions of the local sheriff, [policed] strikes themselves, and [made] mass arrests."[195] They sponsored Nazi-sympathizers to speak at anti-union meetings across the state and created a paramilitary group, "California Cavaliers."[196] The Associated Farmers also counted with the full support of the California Chamber of Commerce, and financial backing from a variety of sources ranging from statewide corporations like Bank of America and Pacific Gas and Electric Company, to the Spreckels Investment Company. This latter organization was headed by descendants of Claus Spreckels, an industrialist who began his vast accumulation of wealth in 1896 when he built the world's largest

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[192] Jack Tracy, "Strikebreaker!," *The Stanford Daily*, October 5, 1936, Agricultural Labor Relations in Monterey County Volume 2, Salinas Public Library.
[193] Young, *Hot Type & Pony Wire*, 78.
[194] Kim, "California's Agribusiness," 64.
[195] Majka and Majka, *Farmworkers*, 88.
[196] Ibid., 90.

sugar beet refinery in Salinas.[197] Labor repression was a well-funded effort in the valley that was then bolstered by the Associated Farmers and their lobbying for anti-picketing ordinances and pro-police legislation, as well as the funneling of funds to law enforcement agencies for direct intervention into labor strikes. The all-white GSVA was supported by a state-wide network of authoritarian-minded funders and lobbyists who also had enforcers at their disposal.

THE CULTURE OF IMPUNITY BEYOND THE STRIKES

A culture of impunity also pervaded the valley after the 1934 and 1936 strikes. For example, Anthony Brazil became District Attorney in 1935, and had a central role in abetting the activities of the GSVA and consolidated law enforcement. In an oral history interview conducted in 1977, Brazil admitted knowing about strike suppression activities and the strategizing that took place on the top floor of the Jeffrey Hotel, which he visited a number of times in 1936. When asked about what he witnessed on his visits, Brazil began to answer, but then seemingly thought better of it: "I had an idea that a number of the people in business, no—*I'm not making any comment on it* because I was District Attorney and *only had to see that they shouldn't have too much trouble*."[198] Brazil was the top prosecutor in the valley, saw his role as protecting the GSVA from charges on labor rights restrictions, as well as ensuring that their strike-breaking efforts continued unimpeded.

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[197] S. E. Moffett, "Claus Spreckels," *The Cosmopolitan: A Monthly Illustrated Magazine*, June 1902, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[198] Judge Anthony Brazil, interview by George Robinson, May 9, 1977, Local History Collection, Salinas Public Library.

In 1937, the National Labor Relations Board investigated various actors in the strike and its suppression. Sanborn was charged with "deliberately sending lettuce trucks over routes where violent confrontations would occur," but he refused to answer any questions and faced no official sanction.[199] It's important that we understand Brazil and Sanborn's actions as part of a *culture* of impunity, rather than as two separate failures of accountability since rhetoric after the strikes served to delineate the shared beliefs and customs of an in-group. For example, in response to New York City's *Literary Digest*, the Salinas Chamber of Commerce defiantly re-appropriated the term fascist to defend valley law enforcement: "If immediate action to quell defiance of law and order and to support rights of American citizens under the Constitution is 'Fascist psychology,' then such was present here."[200] And at the semi-annual meeting of the Citizens' Association in 1938, Henry Strobel—himself a key figure under both NLRB and Congressional investigation—stated: "I do not believe that there is any group in the community, with the exception of those who are communists or *otherwise alien in thought and action*, that can justly criticize our activities as being against them."[201] Those who held grievances toward the GSVA or valley law enforcement, then, were not truly members of the community. They were others, *aliens* with no legitimate claims to redress, even if their hands were the ones that tilled the valley's soil, and cut and packed the crops that made the valley incredibly prosperous.

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[199] Branning, "Violent 1936."
[200] "Riot-Spiced Salads."
[201] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 75*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27461. Emphasis added.

Although I highlight the sometimes unbelievable collaborations between agribusiness, law enforcement, and the district attorney's office in Salinas Valley during the 1930s, I admit that there were a number of unsubstantiated and somewhat scandalous national reports. For example, the claim that eight hundred Filipinos were marched out of Salinas at gunpoint in just one night in 1934 has no basis in historical fact. Hundreds of Filipinos did indeed flee under ongoing threats of violence from 1934 to 1935, but not all together. Another seemingly shocking claim is tucked away in a larger overview of labor unrest in California from *The Nation*. It read:

> About ten miles from Salinas, conveniently removed from the main highway, an enclosure has recently been built. A stout and unbroken wall of planks a dozen feet high forms a rectangular stockade…A water tower rises in solitary grandeur in the midst of the camp. Surrounding the tank is a platform, splendidly adapted for observation, night illumination, and marksmanship. Flood lights are located at the four corners of the stockade…When local workers became curious…they were referred to Mr. Sterling of the Sterling-Harden Packing Company, and to Mr. Church of the firm of Church and Knowlton…These gentleman informed the workers that the stockade was being built 'to hold strikers, but of course we won't put white men in it, just Filipinos.'[202]

George Montero, a Filipino man who was a prominent labor contractor in Salinas in the 1930s, insisted that no such thing existed and explained that his circle of Filipino contractors regularly shared updates with each other. This supposed prison labor camp for Filipinos was considered among the many other "highly exaggerated" reports of the time.[203] It is, indeed, difficult to verify that such a camp ever existed. The layout of Salinas has also transformed significantly in the past eighty-five years, so that the vague

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[202] Herbert Klein and Carey McWilliams, "Cold Terror in California," *Nation* 141, no. 3655 (1935): 98, The Nation Archive Premium Edition, EBSCOhost (13528368).
[203] Montero, interview.

description of "conveniently removed from the highway" can mean any number of locations that may have already been built over by the expansion of highway 101, which cuts through the city.

Furthermore, there was no publicity in local newspapers about a new labor camp in 1935 that would match the description of the camp in the original report, much less any confirmation of the alleged statement from Sterling and Church that the camp was not meant for white men. Following this line of logic, it's also difficult to verify that Sterling and Church were involved in anything like this interaction. Adding these factors up with the almost melodramatically nefarious statement allegedly given by Sterling and Harden, we might conclude that the original news report was an unfortunate example of sensationalist journalism.

But, buried amongst the nearly one thousand pages of exhibits brought forward by the LaFollete congressional committee in 1939, are three separate GSVA meeting minutes detailing the association's decision to fund and construct a new labor camp "within a radius of about two miles from Salinas."[204] Plans for the camp, meant to aid in having "the nucleus of the labor supply [be] other than Filipino," were agreed upon in early September 1934, as the FLU was still fighting for recognition as a union.[205] Lester Stirling, of the Sterling-Harden Packing Company, was appointed to lead the sub-committee in charge of securing a location and drawing up plans; Sidney Church, a

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[204] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27051.
[205] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27052.

member of the Church growers family, was in charge of securing supplies.[206] Construction began in March of 1935, when lumber arrived to build a tall fence and soon more arrived for "the tank and frame."[207]

Here we should remember Montero's explanation that he would have heard about this camp, especially if it affected Filipino laborers. His explanation for not hearing about it holds given that the camp, from its first mention, was envisioned as exclusively for Mexican laborers. In fact, the new camp was considered an improvement from a temporary Mexican labor camp in Gonzales, which was too far south of Salinas for growers' liking. The new camp's design would also keep in mind that the "quantity of work rendered by the Mexicans came in for a good bit of criticism" from growers and shippers. The GSVA sub-committee claimed that Mexican laborers understood "that they were strike breakers and had the shippers on the hip, [and] in some cases had unquestionably taken advantage of it," through intentional work slowing or laborers skipping out of the camp before paying their room and board dues.[208] The new camp, then, would have to be designed for surveillance and control of movement in and out.

Again, the seemingly disparate threads tie together, even in the face of denials or gaps in the historical record. Whether the labor camp described in the *Nation*'s report actually existed, and whether it is the Mexican labor camp the GSVA constructed in 1935, still needs to be verified through land deeds and GSVA minutes. But, the

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[206] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27053-27055.
[207] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27055.
[208] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27052.

surveillance and control-like camp features described in both the report and the GSVA meeting minutes were signals of a very real change to come in the next decade: agricultural labor camps designed more like prisons than residential communities

CONCLUSION

Through continued disciplinary punishment, valley law enforcement pushed Filipino and Dust Bowl migrants to conform to agribusiness's interests. The solidarity forged between the valley's lettuce oligopoly and law enforcement impeded Filipino involvement in the 1936 strike, clamping down on possibilities for interracial coalition building in the valley. Indeed, an agricultural labor movement on the scale of the 1934 and 1936 strikes would not arise in the valley until the lettuce strikes carried out by United Farm Workers in the 1970s.

After the 1934 and 1936 strikes, valley law enforcement did not simply discard large weapons stashes they had acquired. They continued developing their tactical responses and amassing intelligence information. As, I discuss in the next chapter, valley law enforcement sought and procured ongoing training from and collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and Immigration and Naturalization Services. Moreover, during WWII the Salinas Police Department was such a leader in policing that the Army contracted the department to train the newly formed Military Police at Fort Ord and the Monterey Presidio. Valley law enforcement used the arsenal they amassed and the inter-agency policing forces they created in the 1930s to surveil and control agricultural laborers in agricultural labor camps built like prisons.

Chapter 2: Salinas Valley at War: Coerced Agricultural Labor in a Carceral Geography

Quirino Sarmiento had been so diligent about his attendance in his night classes that he now received a special certificate from Mexican Consul Eugenio Aza at his cohort's graduation ceremony.[209] The twenty-year-old Bracero's achievement was no small feat. After working around ten hours a day harvesting guayule at Camp McCallum, Sarmiento attended courses three nights a week to learn "related English and agricultural field operation words," and view educational slides on agricultural production.[210] How he found the drive to excel in evening courses, knowing no English and surely tending to the pain and fatigue from his labor, is a marvel. Perhaps he felt engaged by the material or enthused by the prospect of federally funded education—or some other motivation lost to history since he does not speak for himself the historical record. Perhaps he found in the Rural War Production Training program an opportunity to break through the isolation of Camp McCallum.

Camp McCallum was located about eight miles south of Salinas's Alisal district, with only one main road leading in and out of the complex. As part of an emergency federal project, the camp's distance from the city center and limited access served well for surveillance and control over movement in and out of the camp. That infrastructure had already been in place, as the complex was originally a guayule plantation and mill

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[209] "Mexican Consul Visits Group at Camp McCallum," *The Californian*, March 13, 1943, Newspapers.com.
[210] "Rural War Production Has 8 Classes Operating Here," *The Californian*, March 12, 1943, Newspapers.com.

operated by the Intercontinental Rubber Company from 1926 to 1942.[211] Nearly two thousand local farmworkers were employed at Intercontinental throughout that period, and some continued working at the site when the federal government took over operations in March of 1942 through the Emergency Rubber Project Act. Following shifts in early twentieth-century immigration patterns, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans comprised the bulk of those laborers.

Laborers of Mexican descent were portrayed as having a special relationship to guayule, since the plant was native to southwestern United States and northern Mexico, and had been used in pre-Columbian societies. In a full-page spread on the guayule project, *The Californian* published a photo of Juan Montero – a boy around six years old, dressed in a coat and broad hat, clutching a guayule plant by its roots, with the caption:

> Juan Montero's ancestors gathered guayule in Mexico when it was first discovered there. His grandfather came to the United States when guayule was domesticated here in 1912 and has worked in the Salinas guayule fields ever since.[212]

Tracing Juan and his family's cultivation of guayule across Mexico and the U.S.'s history naturalized the use of Mexican labor during the federal rubber project. It was part of a pastoral narrative that made Mexicans seem like an extension of the environment: where there is guayule, there are Mexicans tending to it. This romanticized the labor and masked the exploitation that pervaded wartime agricultural labor.

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[211] Katherine Ruiz, "Guayule Rubber Industry in Salinas, California, ca. 1942," Online Archive of California, last modified December 12, 2013, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf9x0nb7p6/entire_text/.
[212] "Brought Up on Guayule," *The Californian*, July 4, 1942, Newspapers.com.

Only two months after the federal takeover of guayule production, Salinas Valley growers claimed an imminent labor shortage in the valley and requested Braceros.[213] Unlike other agricultural areas, this move did not immediately displace local laborers. In fact, Camp McCallum employed and lodged nearly one thousand Mexican-American men and women from the valley well past the federal guayule project.[214] By early 1943, Camp McCallum was named "one of the largest posts [in a] recent listing in military posts in the United States."[215]

In 1944, Mexican-American laborers and Braceros were joined by Italian Prisoners of War at the camp.[216] By 1945, nearby Camp Soledad housed Braceros and German POWs. Surveillance and labor practices at these camps blurred the line between measures taken to secure allied war production, and imprisonment and compelled labor of enemy combatants. Both labor camps-cum-penal farms were structured as such and managed by valley agribusiness leaders in the Monterey County Farm Production Committee—a temporary public body comprised of members of the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association (GSVA). This was the same organization that funded and directed anti-labor policing and incarceration initiatives in the 1934 and 1936 lettuce strikes.

It is striking that Mexican-Americans, Braceros, and POWs worked and lived together at Camp McCallum and Camp Soledad, but these camps are just two points in what I call the valley's carceral geography. The term "carceral geography" has meaning

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[213] "C.C. Reports On Issues in District," *Salinas Morning Post*, May 9, 1942, Newspapers.com.
[214] "Nearly 3,000 Now at Work In Guayule," *Salinas Morning Post*, June 12, 1942, Newspapers.com. See also "Camp McCallum, Nationals Aided," *The Californian*, June 9, 1947, Newspapers.com.
[215] "Salinas Gets Credit for New 'Military Post'," *The Californian*, April 26, 1943, Newspapers.com.
[216] "Dec, 1 Freezing Date Advanced On Farm Wages," *The Californian*, February 9, 1944, Newspapers.com.

on two levels. First, it refers to an emerging sub-discipline of Human Geography that holds that "the notion of the 'carceral' is reflexively and recursively useful not just for studies of incarceration *per se*, but also for understanding the restriction of autonomy in a much broader context."[217] I practice carceral geography as a form of inquiry in this chapter to examine the various ways agricultural laborers were contained, controlled and surveilled throughout Salinas Valley. I also use the term as a concept to describe the historic ways space is organized by practices and structures that enable surveillance and control movement throughout Salinas Valley, not only restricting autonomy but increasing agricultural laborers' docility-utility.

The structures deployed in a carceral geography operate without an actual jail or prison. It is important to recall from the previous chapter that the GSVA designed a new labor camp for Mexican laborers in 1935, which featured high fences along all of the perimeter, guarded entries, a watch tower, and flood lights that illuminated all areas of the camp. Elements of this design were then incorporated into labor camps in the 1940s. Thus, in this chapter, I show how the continuum of agricultural labor camps designed like prison camps, and prison camps used for agricultural labor, facilitated the symbiotic relationship between valley law enforcement and agribusiness.

We should also remember that Salinas Valley law enforcement emerged from the 1934 and 1936 strikes as a highly coordinated network with a stockpile of gas munitions, as well as dedicated intelligence units. This chapter highlights valley law enforcement's developing militarization through their collaborations with the FBI and U.S. Army. Such

[217] Moran, *Carceral Geography*, 72.

collaborations also included the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association (GSVA), whose members were beneficiaries of contract and coerced labor. Through this account, I demonstrate the sophistication and prominence of Salinas Valley law enforcement on a national level, and how this standing directly aided agribusiness. By reorienting agricultural labor histories toward policing, the chapter shows law enforcement's central role in upholding the financial and political power of industrial agriculture—and not just in the context of labor strikes.

Beginning in the late 1930s and early 40s to document valley law enforcement's development and federal agency training, I then move to the WWII period to track the use of labor camps and prison camps that housed different combinations of county jail inmates, Mexican-American laborers, Braceros, and Axis POWs. I also show how valley agribusiness interests eliminated of competition when Japanese farmers were interned during the war. This was not a happy coincidence born of wartime conditions. Instead, the GSVA sent representatives to Washington, where they actively lobbied for Japanese detention just days after Pearl Harbor. I then move to the 1950s to show how valley penal farms aided national deportation schemes by detaining hundreds of undocumented immigrants during Operation Wetback in the 1950s. In tracking Camp Soledad's post-war evolution into both Soledad State Prison and a migrant labor camp, I focus on the growth of Soledad State Prison and how it used the valley's topography to create spaces that enabled isolation and containment in the 1960s. The chapter ends in the 1970s by revisiting Camp McCallum, and its troubled return to migrant labor housing.

The number of detained and incarcerated people in the valley from the 1940s through the 1960s was obviously lower than it is now, in what we term an era of mass incarceration. This is to say, I am not challenging Ruth Wilson Gilmore's work on the contemporary prison boom in rural California. Because "mass incarceration" was not already in effect in Salinas Valley, I don't consider how rural prisons serve to disrupt urban community ties. Instead, I build upon Gilmore's arguments about agribusiness's role in advocating for new prison sites in rural spaces. I am specifically focused on the Salinas Valley because it has a longer history of direct connections between agribusiness and the development of carceral spaces, especially those that extend beyond the traditional prison. Furthermore, the purpose of these spaces was to control the movement of local residents and migrant laborers in the valley. The Salinas Valley did not become a carceral geography to incarcerate people from far-flung metropoles; it needed a collaborative network to surveil, control, and detain bodies laboring throughout its ninety-mile length.

FORESHADOWING WAR-TIME PRODUCTION AND CARCERAL SPACES: THE LATE 1930S AND EARLY 1940S

Nearly fifty officers and deputies with the Salinas Police (SPD) and the Monterey County sheriff departments posed with terse smiles on the steps of the county jail in late 1938. They'd just completed a trial run of an FBI training program, an initiative proposed originally by Salinas Police Chief Marcel Lapierre.[218] Chief Lapierre first approached FBI regional director Nat J.L. Pieper in San Francisco at the start of the year, asking

[218] Gary S. Breschini, Mona Gudgel, and Trudy Haversat, *Images of America: Early Salinas* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 97.

about the possibility of collaborating with the agency to teach his officers advanced policing techniques.[219] After the success of the first short program, an expanded version of it ran again in early February, 1939. Officers from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties attended 3 hour classes held bi-monthly, for the duration of 6 months, in what was purported to be "the first police school to be instructed by F.B.I. agents in the state of California."[220] They learned new filing and search and seizure methods, went over powers of arrest, and received firearms and explosives training.

Regional California Highway patrolmen were also brought in to create spot maps of previous years' criminal activity, in order to coordinate with law enforcement of all 3 counties. Thus, an idea originating in Salinas ended up expanding surveillance efforts throughout California's central coast. A portion of the training also immersed agencies in public relations rhetoric. Valley law enforcement and agribusiness successfully controlled the narrative in local accounts of lettuce strikes the previous decade by actively censoring reporters. But, with this training they could uphold the rhetoric of the valley's culture of impunity more subtly by doing the messaging via the very individuals making the arrests. By the following year, the FBI had requests to hold similar programs with 11 other law enforcement agencies, including the cities of San Jose, Berkeley, Modesto, Stockton, and Sacramento. The Salinas-based initiative had spread to large parts of northern and central California, in cities with industrial agriculture or forestry economies.

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[219] "F.B.I. Starts First State Police Class," *Salinas Index-Journal*, January 28, 1938, Newspapers.com.
[220] "Local Police School Will Start Today," *Salinas Morning Post*, February 9, 1939, Newspapers.com.

Training also took place outside the state. In 1941, Salinas Police sent its first officer to the FBI's National Academy at Quantico. The 10-week academy accepts high ranking officers with "demonstrated leadership qualities" by invitation only.[221] This makes the Salinas Valley's overrepresentation in the program especially notable. In 1942, 3 law enforcement officers from the area were chosen to participate, including Deputy Sheriff Victor Tibbs and Salinas Police Sargent George Weight; Weight would become Chief the following year and serve in that role until the end of the decade. FBI training didn't just stay with participants. The National Academy was meant for management-level officers, implying that training was meant to shape entire departments through their leadership by locally institutionalizing federal policing tactics.

After the FBI training, the sheriff's department started keeping "complete file[s] on San Quentin prisoners," and earned the distinction of being one of the first in the U.S. to receive all FBI reports.[222] Intelligence networks also expanded locally, with the advent of broadcast technology. Radio station KQCO was first launched by Sheriff Abbott in 1939, and it linked "the sheriff's office, California highway patrol, Salinas police department and the Salinas fire department into one-fast-working unit."[223] A concrete example of how militarization is relative to historically available technology, even though a valley-wide radio station may seem rather insignificant, at the time it was advanced technology for a small community with sparse population. 1940 and 1941 saw a

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[221] "National Academy," Federal Bureau of Investigation, last updated November 2, 2016, https://www.fbi.gov/services/training-academy/national-academy.
[222] "A Sheriff Dies," *The Californian*, August 7, 1940, Newspapers.com.
[223] "Peace Officers of Monterey County Aided by Shortwave Broadcast," *The Californian*, June 16, 1939, Newspapers.com.

significant rise in arrests and detainment. Two records were set in just one weekend in March 1941: the county jail saw "the largest number ever booked in jail on one day," and marked an all-time record in jail population.[224] This was a predictable result of increased surveillance (with the spot map created in the FBI training) and the ease of communication and inter-agency collaboration (with KQCO.)

The stark rise in arrests also supported the sheriff department's campaign for a new jail. On May 1st, 1940, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors approved Sheriff Abbott's plan for Slack's Canyon Prison Camp, to be built near Bradley, an unincorporated community in the far south of Monterey County. The camp began operations on June 6, 1940 with four prisoners and an undisclosed number of officers.[225] It was built "at a former state forestry service camp site," and was meant to alleviate overcrowding at the Monterey County Jail by assigning eligible inmates to wildfire-prevention labor.[226] A previous plan to site the camp outside Salinas was opposed by Abbott, who claimed it was "too close to the environment that first put the men in jail."[227] Abbott imagined a rehabilitative quality to the new camp's open space—a notion in step with a contemporary shift toward incorporating nature and outdoor labor in prison construction. He also made an association between Salinas and criminality, claiming there was something about the space itself that landed men in trouble.

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[224] "197 in County Jail," *Salinas Morning Post*, March 26, 1941, Newspapers.com. For reference, the 1940 census reported a population of 73,032 in Monterey County.
[225] "Name Prison Camp Director," *Salinas Morning Post*, June 6, 1940, Newspapers.com.
[226] "Jail Camp," *Salinas Morning Post*, June 2, 1940, Newspapers.com.
[227] "Supervisors Approve County Prison Camp," *Salinas Morning Post*, May 2, 1940, Newspapers.com.

Although Abbott claimed Slack's Canyon provided an isolation that would protect inmates' rehabilitation, the camp's secluded location created new dangers. Only a month and a half into its opening, Slack's Canyon had its first prisoner injury: Arthur Ray was shot through the back by a deer hunter, who allegedly mistook Ray "for a raccoon in the top of a tree where [Ray] was gathering pine cones."[228] The hunter was arrested, but not charged, and fortunately Ray recovered by September. But the incident brings two possibilities to mind. Either the sheriff's department or county planners did not foresee the risks of siting Slack's Canyon near hunting grounds. Or, planners were aware of the risks and went ahead to leave prisoners like Ray vulnerable to this type of accidental shooting. Both possibilities underscore that inmate safety was not the primary objective of the camp's remote location. In fact, as I show later in this chapter, isolation and rurality were used to enhance punishment despite prison reformists' insisting they were progressive elements for inmates' moral rehabilitation.

A year after opening, Slack's Canyon already held 42 prisoners.[229] The camp thus held nearly a quarter of the jail population. Seclusion disrupted community ties, while making incarcerated people's labor useful for county wildfire prevention. The Monterey County grand jury later recommended that a camp be constructed closer to Salinas city limits, but Slack's Canyon was not shuttered nor did the labor done there stop being useful to state authorities. Instead, Salinas Valley law enforcement came up with an option to address both local agricultural labor demands and California state correctional

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[228] "Bulletin," *The Californian*, August 24, 1940, Newspapers.com. See also "Man, Shot in Back, Reported Recovering," *Salinas Morning Post*, September 8, 1940, Newspapers.com.
[229] "Prisoners Moved to Slack's Canyon," *Salinas Morning Post*, October 10, 1940, Newspapers.com.

needs. They also supplemented the fire prevention work of the California Conservation Corps.

In 1944, the Monterey County grand jury recommended that the jail camp be moved from Slack's Canyon to an area closer to Salinas city limits. The sheriff's department transferred the camp to the state of California; it was first run by the forestry department from 1951 to 1953. County jail inmates routinely supported California forestry firefighters in putting out large wildfires in south Monterey County, and carried out "fire prevention projects such as building roads, telephone lines, fire breaks, and instruction."[230] Prisoners from Soledad State were are also used in firefighting efforts, and by 1954 Slack's Canyon was an official division of Soledad State Prison.[231] Described as an "honor road camp," Slack's Canyon housed prisoners with exemplary disciplinary records. The camp had two barracks, a mess hall, and a recreation hall. But it was most unique for what it was missing: there were "no walls or barbed wire fences, and there [wasn't] a gun on the place."[232] The inmates' wages were also extraordinary, not only for the time but for now. They earned $15 a month on a schedule of 8 hours a day, six-days a week, which divides down to about $0.62 cents a day. With inflation, this is the equivalent of $5.95 a day now—but, present-day inmate firefighters earn $2 a day in California. This decrease in wages tracks alongside a demographic shift in California

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[230] "Fire Blackens 3,500 Acres Near King City," *The Californian*, July 31, 1951, Newspapers.com. See also "Fire Occurrence Greatly Reduced in County by Intensive Forest Service Prevention Program," *The Californian*, August 5, 1952, Newspapers.com.
[231] "Soledad Inmates Give $2,000 to Polio Drive," *The Californian*, February 3, 1954, Newspapers.com.
[232] "Fire Control Demonstration Becomes Real," *The Californian*, June 11, 1959, Newspapers.com.

prisons, from majority white from the 1940s to the mid-1960s, to majority African-American and Latinx from the late 1960s forward.

It's important to detail the history of Slack's Canyon because its creation, use, and transfer demonstrate Salinas Valley law enforcement's role in expanding a carceral geography. Although the camp was absorbed by the state, it was a valley-grown initiative. In fact, Sheriff Abbott had so doggedly pursued the establishment of Slack's Canyon that after his death, the *Salinas Morning Post* and the *Salinas Index-Journal* published a joint editorial advocating for the board of supervisors to rename Slack's Canyon to Camp Abbott.[233] The name-change never happened, but it's clear from this memorialization attempt that the vision for the camp originated from the valley's own developing policing and incarceration methods. This vision was so innovative in theory and successful in practice that California state corrections benefitted from it for nearly three decades.[234] Thus, histories of the carceral state in rural California should recognize the two-way street of expansion: the state hasn't always been the initiating force, nor rural communities the passive recipients of new prisons. Rather, Salinas Valley law enforcement created a pedagogy of rurality and prison labor for punishment that the state modeled after Slack's Canyon.

The transfer of Slack's Canyon and relocation of the jail camp also benefitted county institutions. The sheriff's department negotiated with the county hospital to acquire the latter's farm plots and "land adjacent to [it] so that prisoners may be

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[233] "Why Not 'Camp Abbott'?," *Salinas Morning Post*, August 9, 1940, Newspapers.com.
[234] By 1988, it's referred to as "old Slack's Conservation camp" in news reports, meaning the camp closed sometime in the late 70s or early 80s.

employed in the farming of food stuffs for use at the hospital."[235] For the first 4 years, the farm was run by hospital administration "with the cooperation of the sheriff's office, which provided field labor from the ranks of prisoners."[236] But in 1948, the farm was transferred to the sheriff's authority and was made a prison camp, which I'll refer to as the Natividad camp from here on out due to its location on Natividad road.[237] The transfer was described as a novel way to address three issues: inmate rehabilitation, jail overcrowding, and ensuring the hospital and jail's food supply.[238]

The Natividad camp was a massively successful venture for the county from early on. It covered 300 acres, and from 1948 to 1950 produced an output totaling $14,347.93 (the equivalent of over $140,000 today.) The farm included a herd of hogs, cattle, and chickens, and eight different crops. The sheriff's department improved on the farm's previous structure, adding a grain storage warehouse, a new barn, and a freezer. The farm is referred to as "one of the first [of its kind] to have been established" in California.[239] This designation is important because Natividad camp's triple purpose preceded Soledad State Prison's function as a farming prison. The location of this innovative jail camp also hasn't changed much. Corrections officials still park next to the hospital, on the vast dirt lot below the county jail and juvenile detention center. A dilapidated barn barely stands at the end of the lot; it's the darkest ink on a carceral palimpsest.

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[235] "Annual Report is Filed Today by Grand Jury," *The Californian*, February 17, 1943, Newspapers.com.
[236] "Monterey County Sheriff's Camp and Farm," *The Californian*, August 31, 1957, Newspapers.com.
[237] The county hospital would also later be named "Natividad Hospital."
[238] "Sheriff's Office Now Operates Farm on County Hospital Site," *The Californian*, February 28, 1948, Newspapers.com.
[239] "County Sheriff's Farming Operation is Unique Project," *The Californian*, May 12, 1951, Newspapers.com.

WWII Prisons and Prison Camps in the Salinas Valley

Prison camps and labor camps designed as prisons represented a continuum of carceral geography in Salinas Valley during World War II. In practice, they also helped valley agribusiness continue without significant disruption during the war. The Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association (GSVA) continued controlling the lettuce market and labor force by strategically positioning members to requesting labor from county jail inmates, German and Italian prisoners of War, and Braceros. By housing all three populations in the same prison and labor camps, valley growers marked agricultural work sites as punitive spaces and the laborers within them as inherently suspect—a layer of meaning that was not erased with the physical transformation of those sites in the following decades. The GSVA was also instrumental in lobbying for Japanese detention. This not only removed Japanese farmers as competition and transferred vast swaths of land to white farmers—it also sustained valley law enforcement's collaboration with the FBI, in raids on Japanese residents. The prominent reputation of the Salinas Police department, specifically, also enabled new partnerships with the U.S. Army, which requested training and support from the department for its newly established Military Police Corps.

Policing and militarization of the area coincided with World War II, as Salinas Valley agriculture figured prominently in the war effort since the start of the federal Emergency Rubber Project in 1942. The project sought to solve the nation's rubber

shortage, "as Japan controlled 90% of the world's rubber supply."[240] Seeking an alternative to synthetic rubber, the War Department evaluated Intercontinental Rubber Company (IRC), which cultivated 8,000 acres of guayule in the Salinas, Coachella, and San Joaquin Valleys since 1926. After building a mill outside of Salinas in 1931, IRC produced over 3 million pounds of rubber throughout the decade.[241] It was the biggest agricultural employer outside of the lettuce industry in Salinas Valley, and the only guayule rubber producer in the United States before the war.

The War Department saw IRC's production capacity and readily available labor pool as an essential asset and purchased all of its holdings in California in 1942. IRC's mill and housing complex outside of Salinas was renamed Camp McCallum, after IRB manager and lead researcher Dr. William B. McCallum. The name change marked the site's transition from private industry to military installation. But the labor force at both Camp McCallum and a satellite camp at Soledad (a small town to the south of Salinas) remained the same: Mexican-American residents of the valley worked and lived there. They were the main labor force for an emergency federal project and could thus be understood as vital to the war effort. But their labor was instead taken as a given, due to the naturalization of Mexicans in guayule production. They, along with the Braceros who would join them a year later, faced exploitation and surveillance, and had their movements controlled in and out of Camp McCallum.

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[240] "Background," Guayule Rubber Industry in Salinas, California, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, last updated December 12, 2013, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf9x0nb7p6/entire_text/.
[241] William G. McGinnies and Jean L. Mills, *Guayule Rubber Production. The World War II Emergency Rubber Project: A Guide to Future Development* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1980), 6.

The Bracero Program was a wartime initiative in collaboration with the Mexican government to supply temporary laborers to the agricultural and railroad industry in the U.S. The program recruited over 4.5 million Mexican men to worksites across the west and southwest. Braceros were distinguished from Mexican-Americans and undocumented Mexican immigrants by their contracts.[242] Contract labor ensured Braceros' rights to employer-provided housing and set wages. But contracts also marked Braceros as a class apart: on paper and in practice, contracts framed people primarily as temporary laborers and not as community members.[243] Contracts had also historically been used to legally coerce and exploit African-American sharecroppers and Asian "coolie" laborers in the late 19th and early 20th century South.[244] Braceros' contracts similarly served to control their movements and their ability to contest wages or working conditions. In some cases, Braceros were prohibited from visiting neighboring towns, except for grocery trips that had to be approved by employers. In Salinas Valley, the control facilitated by contract labor was exacerbated by a carceral geography.

The first group of Braceros arrived in Salinas Valley in early October 1942 and were assigned to sugar beet fields in Spreckels.[245] A photo in the local newspaper shows the group standing in formation, with one member holding an American flag. It is staged so that Braceros look like a military unit with one man standing at the head of the group,

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[242] Mireya Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, and Political Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 8.
[243] Kathleen Mapes, *Sweet Tyranny: Migrant Labor, Industrial Agriculture, and Imperial Politics* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 79.
[244] Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 76.
[245] "'Good Neighbors' Arrive," *The Californian*, October 5, 1942, Newspapers.com.

"[lining] up his men," as the caption reads. The photo and caption reassure hesitant valley residents that the laborers are a part of the war effort. The caption also claims that "many college graduates and athletes of note are included in this 'Good Neighbor' group."[246] The phrase was a nod to the "Good Neighbor" foreign policy enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. It was proposed as a way to better U.S.-Latin American relations by moving U.S. policy away from intervention and toward diplomacy.[247] However, the policy also "[facilitated] continued U.S. economic and political domination of the hemisphere."[248] Thus, despite the veneer of equal partnership between the U.S. and Mexico, the Bracero Program was ultimately in the best interests of propping up the former country as the next world leader.

Furthermore, the caption sets this group of Braceros apart from Mexican-Americans in Salinas Valley. The claim that the group was largely composed of college-educated men or famous athletes is dubious, given the deliberate recruitment of experienced laborers from agrarian regions. Although an influential middle-class would emerge in the 1950s and 60s, at the time Mexican-Americans in the valley were mostly poor agricultural laborers. The patriotism and respectability painted onto these Braceros aligned with the valley's regard for agribusiness as a way of life. To act against it by protesting the use of Braceros would be to attack the livelihood and the character of valley residents.

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[246] Ibid.
[247] "Good Neigbhor Policy, 1933," Milestones, Office of the Historian, United States Department of State, last updated May 10, 2020, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/good-neighbor.
[248] Amy Spellacy, "Mapping the Metaphor of the Good Neighbor: Geography, Globalism, and Pan-Americanism during the 1940s," *American Studies* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 40.

This type of discourse was meant to discipline Mexican-Americans, and to set the rhetorical parameters with which they would be judged if they were to protest being pushed out of agricultural labor by Braceros (i.e., only unpatriotic misfits would upend a wartime initiative that supports the valley's way of life.) However, the positive valuation of Braceros did not last long. By December of that same year, local papers were reporting claims that the program had been infiltrated by "former denizens of Mexican City pool halls."[249] This rhetorical about-face may have been in response to Bracero walkouts from Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Fresno fields. Whatever the cause, the newly cast suspicion on Braceros would serve pathologize them like Mexican-Americans in the valley. This is most clear in the surveilled work sites and lodging that both Braceros and Mexican-Americans would come to share.

The summer after the first group of Braceros arrived in Salinas, the Monterey County farm labor committee (MFLC) announced that the military had transferred ownership of its guayule camp in Soledad to them. There, they would house around 700 Braceros, in addition to an unspecified number of Mexican-American laborers and their families.[250] I refer to this version of the camp as Soledad Guayule Project (SGP) to distinguish what would later become Camp Soledad for German POWs. Two additional distinctions are important: First, under the terms of their contracts, Braceros were not allowed to bring spouses or other family with them during their term in the U.S. As scholars like Mireya Loza have shown, this did not mean that Braceros didn't create

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[249] John W. Dunlap, "Farming Problems," *The Californian*, December 2, 1942, Newspapers.com.
[250] "Committee Will Seek 1700 More Field Workers," *The Californian*, June 9, 1943, Newspapers.com.

intimate bonds or sustain familial networks on either side of the border. By accounting for the presence of Mexican-Americans in the same camps, we can see how poor living conditions and surveillance mechanisms also shaped the experience of Mexican-American family units simultaneously.

This leads to the second distinction, which is to explain what we mean by "labor camps." As shown in Chapter 1, and reiterated here, these labor camps incorporated elements like: limited and/or guarded entrances; surveillance by military personnel or growers' private guards; and towers or high fences, which enabled surveillance and limited movement in and out of the camp. Although Camp McCallum, for example, was not a prison camp in name or theory, it operated similar to one in practice. This made it hard to distinguish which laborers were considered criminal or enemy aliens: Mexican-Americans, Braceros, or POWs. The fact that Mexican-American youth and elders were also in these camps means that presumed criminality was not mitigated by age. These camps blurred the distinction between literal Nazis, Fascists (verified and presumed), and people of Mexican descent. When these sites were transferred and used for other purposes, the blanket criminality ascribed to Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the valley did not automatically dissipate.

Mexican-Americans, Braceros and POWs met in the context of agricultural labor and surveilled camps for the first time in February 1944, at SGP. The Army's Ninth Service Command assigned 100 Italian POWs to SGP and 400 to Camp McCallum.[251]

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[251] "Dec, 1 Freezing Date Advanced On Farm Wages," *The Californian*, February 9, 1944, Newspapers.com.

Italian POWs had a significantly different experience at SGP and Camp McCallum than at their previous location, Fort Ord. The latter was located on the Monterey Bay, where two generations of Sicilians had established a vibrant fishing community since 1915. By fusing their ethnic identity with their labor experiences in their old fishing villages and labor in Monterey's canneries, Sicilians on the bay forged a "communal identity…beyond village loyalties, personal animosities, and socioeconomic differences."[252] The strength of the Sicilian community in the area affected POW policy at Fort Ord. Although it's difficult to ascertain their exact ethnic and political background, it's clear that a significant portion of Italian POWs had Sicilian heritage. This is because Fort Ord records show that Italian POWs were allowed weekend passes to visit extended family in Monterey.

At SGP and Camp McCallum, they were confined in much more rural locations, far from the bay's Sicilian community and closer to Swiss Italian landowners like the LaMaccia, Radevero, Vosti, Maestri, and Guidotti families. For Italian POWs, these families were not kin in the sense that Sicilians in Monterey were. As explained in Chapter 1, these Swiss Italians were considered white, due to their success in cattle ranching and agriculture. Several members of these families were also part of the GSVA and related organizations; some had also been deputized under Sheriff Abbott to police strikers in 1936. Their affiliations and activities point to an antagonistic view of

[252] Carol Lynn McKibben, *Beyond Cannery Row: Sicilian Women, Immigration, and Community in Monterey, California, 1915-99* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 3.

agricultural laborers. Italian heritage, then, did not guarantee an affinity between POWs and Salinas Valley grower-shippers.

Valley growers were enthused by the use of Italian POWs for the federal guayule project, and soon lobbied for the use of prison labor for private industries in California—a recommendation echoed by the Monterey County grand jury. Relaxing regulations would enable the use of county jail inmates and POWs for valley agribusiness. It was a move with federal precedent. The Ashurst-Sumners Act of 1935 prohibited the interstate distribution of prison-made goods, but a 1940 amendment made exceptions for agricultural commodities and prison sites used by the federal government.[253] Both of these conditions were fortuitous for Salinas Valley agriculture, given the contemporaneous boom in county, state, and federal prison sites.

The federal government required one, central organization to handle POW labor requests. So, on June 27, 1944, Salinas Valley growers and Monterey County Board supervisors met to plan the association and elect a board of directors.[254] By June 29th, the Monterey Bay Area Farm Procurement Association (MBAF) was incorporated, with bylaws written by GSVA attorney Sidney Church—the same person that had overseen the construction of the labor camp-cum-prison camp for Mexican laborers in 1935. In addition to Church, the board of directors included: Oliver P. Bardin Jr., part of a prominent pioneer family in Salinas and a lettuce grower-shipper; Edward M. Seifert, GSVA president; Clarence and Lewis Nielsen, vegetable grower-shippers; George

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[253] Kristi M. McKinnon, "Ashurst-Sumners Act 1935," in *Encyclopedia of Prisons & Correctional Facilities*, ed. Mary Bosworth (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2005), 44, SAGE Knowledge.
[254] "Farmers Will Make Plan to Use Prisoners," *The Californian*, June 26, 1944, Newspapers.com.

Fiscalini, a lettuce shipper; and William Paulsen, a superintendent with the Spreckels Sugar Company.[255]

All but Seifert had also been members of the Associated Farmers, the fascist leaning agribusiness interest group that funded the secret patrol California Cavaliers and neo-Nazi speakers during the 1930s; Bardin had served as vice-president in 1938, and Fiscalini was a chairman. Furthermore, Bardin, Fiscalini, and the Nielsen brothers had also joined Sheriff Abbott's special deputy force—the heavily armed group that patrolled the streets of Salinas, intimidating residents and beating strikers.[256] The men on the MBAF board had considerable wealth from cornering the lettuce market through violence in the 1930s, carried out either by their organization, the Associated Farmers, or by their own hands. They were now in charge of managing POW labor requests and assigning Braceros to valley farmers.

The MBAF held their first meeting on July 27, 1944, inviting all growers interested in contracting German POWs and/or Braceros to attend.[257] Farmers considering the use of German POWs were asked to report to MBAF offices in either Salinas, Soledad, or King City with their projected labor needs in hand. The MBAF required growers to "place their estimates for the use of German prisoners of war on the assumption that they will receive the Mexican nationals."[258] The Bracero Program had been running for about a year and a half, and Mexican labor was more accessible than

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[255] "Farm Organization Will Handle Use of Prisoners," *The Californian*, June 29, 1944, Newspapers.com.
[256] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Education and Labor, *Violations of Free Speech and Rights of Labor: Supplementary Exhibits, Part 73*, 74th Cong., 3rd sess., 1941, 27114, 27286, 27298, 27445.
[257] "Thursday Date of labor Meet," *The Californian*, July 24, 1944, Newspapers.com.
[258] "Plan Early for P/W's," *The Californian*, January 25, 1945, Newspapers.com.

POWs. There was also the issue of anti-German sentiment during WWII. Although the valley's racial politics granted whiteness to the Italian, Swiss and Danish families that succeeded in agriculture, residents were not immediately keen on seeing German POWs as white. The promise of cheap, coerced labor was not quite enough to sell valley growers on the idea.

Army Major Karl Biehler was tasked with speaking to hesitant valley growers. In a talk to the Rotary club on September 19th, 1944, Major Biehler "insisted that German prisoners of war are Nazis and will remain Nazis." But he then went on to describe them, based on his day-to-day observations:

> As far as this camp [Fort Ord] is concerned there are no illiterates. Instead, they are of more than ordinary intelligence, truly Rommel soldiers and with an eye to beautification of premises and social activities among themselves.[259]

Their service in a genocidal army seemed to not have weighed too heavily in Major Biehler's estimation of their moral character. They were, according to his own claims, staunchly Nazi—but coupled with his later comments, he seemed to have considered this a political identity rather than an assertion of racial ideology. These comments also mirror the sort of comparison between laborers seen before in the claim that newly arrived Braceros were college graduates and sports stars. Here, Major Biehler is not only assuaging concerns about contracting German POWs, but also outlining the criteria with which to contrast them with Mexicans, the other available agricultural labor pool: German POWs are literate, have

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[259] "Rotarians Hear of Nazi Prisoners at Ford Ord," *The Californian*, September 20, 1944, Newspapers.com.

above-average intelligence, and have a keen sense of discipline that drives them to add aesthetic and cultural value to their new surroundings.

These claims were made despite an escape attempt by German POWs the previous month: a number of them had dug a tunnel reaching from a recreation hall at Fort Ord to an undisclosed location beyond the site. They'd dug a little over the length of a football field before they were discovered.[260] And yet, local newspapers made very little mention of the incident past initial reports; no calls for increased security measures, and no anti-German editorials, just a seeming understanding that prisoners of war would be prone to escape. Contrast this lack of reporting with, for example, the sensationalized reporting on "Filipino crime" and the disarmament of Filipino farmworkers in the previous decade. In fact, Major Biehler would go on to repeat many of the same positive talking points at a meeting of the Salinas Kiwanis Club in October 1944. There, he was careful to reiterate: "German prisoners still are fanatically pro-Nazi." Taken in context with his previous statements, this statement seems to work more to establish Major Biehler's dedication to the war effort: he knows, despite his proximity to him, that these are enemy combatants.

However, he appreciated their individual tastes, and offered up that "the German prisoners enjoy classical music and also sweet music but do not like 'this modern boogie-woogie'."[261] Boogie-woogie was a musical genre popularized by African-American piano players during the 1920s. The genre had roots in blues and ragtime, and was

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[260] "Nazi Escape Plot Foiled at Fort Ord," *The Californian*, August 8, 1944, Newspapers.com.
[261] "Biehler Tells Kiwanis About War Prisoners," *The Californian*, October 20, 1944, Newspapers.com.

characterized by a focus on rhythm and call-and-response song structures. Before becoming popular during WWII, boogie-woogie was most associated with working-class African-American communities in the South and Midwest.[262] All of this context on boogie-woogie to demonstrate how Major Biehler was serving up an anti-black dog whistle in order to showcase German POWs in a favorable light. Nazis held at Fort Ord were presented to valley growers as smarter and more disciplined than Mexican laborers, and having more sophisticated tastes—with all the race class connotations that claim carries—than African-Americans. Biehler's comment also demonstrates Salinas Valley's curious reliance on anti-black rhetoric, despite historically having a very, very small African-American population, even during periods of vast domestic migration from the South and the plains.

Of course, it's not a prerequisite to have a sizable African-American population in order to be anti-black; the Salinas Valley adopted anti-blackness, even by Mexican Americans, as a cultural practice in the absence of African-Americans since the foundation of Confederate Corners on the outskirts of Salinas. I stress the undercurrent of anti-blackness in Salinas Valley for three reasons. First, it framed enemy combatants as a good option for agricultural labor during WWII. Second, it reappears in the valley's discourse throughout the following decades, and up to now. And third, it serves as a counterexample to previous histories of racial politics in California that implied that the absence of a large African-American community (in the north of the state especially)

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[262] Peter J. Silvester, *The Story of Boogie-Woogie: A Left Hand Like God* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), 2-6.

meant that it was primarily ordered on an anti-Mexican racial logic, or that somehow Mexicans "had it worse" than African-Americans in the west. Anti-black practices also came to the fore when valley law enforcement worked in tandem with the Army to quell demonstrations by African-American GIs at Fort Ord, as we'll see later.

In the meantime, Major Biehler's comments had their intended effect, and by September of 1944 the Soledad Chamber of Commerce reported that German POWs would be used to alleviate labor shortage and would be housed at Camp Soledad.[263] Earlier in the year, Camp Soledad had been transferred from the Department of Agriculture, which oversaw the labor and housing of Braceros, to the War Department. It was officially activated as a Prisoner of War side-camp of Fort Ord on October 7th, 1944.[264] 350 German POWs arrived there around October 18th from a detention center in Arizona.[265] They joined the estimated 700 Braceros who arrived in the spring of that year. The camp's location was described as south of "old Peverini ranch," on what is now San Benito Street in Soledad.[266] During their simultaneous stay at Camp Soledad, Braceros and German POWs were overseen by the War Department. Thus, Mexican allies were contained and surveilled in the same space as enemy combatants.

POWs' work and living conditions had to adhere to the standards of the 1929 Geneva Convention. As such, they were paid for their labor. Their wages were 80 cents a

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[263] "Soledad Man Returns with Seabee Group," *The Californian*, September 25, 1944, Newspapers.com.
[264] "Prisoner of War Camp Labor Report," October 7, 1944, Camp Labor Reports – 9th Service Command: California – [Camp] Soledad, Box 2529, Folder "Soledad, California," Subject Files, 1942-1946, Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1920-1975, Record Group 389, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[265] "Road Project is Started in Mission Area," *The Californian*, October 18, 1944, Newspapers.com.
[266] Ibid.

day, which growers paid directly to the federal government. Braceros living in the same camp, doing the same work earned $3.00 a day. This seemingly large gap in pay did not translate to immediate benefits. Braceros worked up to 10 hours, 6 days a week while POWs worked up to 8 hours. The hourly pay rate is not so different: Braceros earned 10 cents an hour, and POWs earned 8. Furthermore, a percentage of Braceros' wages was held in trust by the Mexican government—a condition both the U.S. and Mexico agreed to in order to ensure the Braceros would not waste their wages and would be incentivized to return to Mexico.

Living conditions for both groups also varied. Upon arriving to U.S. camps, many German POWs were surprised to find that the horror stories they'd heard from their government about being kept captive by Americans were far from true; this was a re-education component that the U.S. was actively invested in. A photo taken inside a Camp Soledad barracks show two German POWs in crisp, clean tops sitting at a square table in the middle of the room. They sit cross-legged, with easy smiles. To their left and behind them are two sets of bunk beds, with fitted sheets, pillowcases, and large blankets. The floors look swept, and there are large windows on the back wall, meaning that the room got natural light throughout the day.[267] In their off-time, POWs could choose from

[267] "Untitled photo," California Military History, last updated April 24, 2015, https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p40ei08skekbljg/AADJP8p5JMPZj4xub2WrnVvwa/ARMY%2C%20CNG%20Posts/Soledad%20PW%20Branch%20Camp?dl=0&preview=linearize_egwTpxjW1cWwyhHF0TPIEEm6IknmRvBxNMENDisv9bkkVnAsXgG_dS_yE_BC54cD816JM2rsdDk_.jpg&subfolder_nav_tracking=1.

thirteen courses—including English, History, Mathematics, and Civics—as well as join the camp's orchestra, or a sports program.[268]

In contrast, the standards for Bracero housing varied wildly, a result of subjective language in the contract they signed; with a requirement only to provide "adequate housing," some growers converted old stables or barns into bunk rooms. There were only three classes for Braceros, and all were limited to topics that would support their agricultural labor, like the classes Quirino Sarmiento participated in. Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact condition of Camp Soledad when Braceros arrived in mid-1943, there are clues that the camp's structures were subpar and that it offered little other than a few barracks. In contrast, significant improvements for quality of life that the camp underwent a few months after the German POWs arrived:

> The improvements on the site included 10 barracks (one of which was for the guard force), three latrines, mess hall, administration building, automotive shop, and various other structures and utilities.[269]

The camp's improvements could be easily explained by the transfer to the War Department; its new purpose and rise in population necessitated these changes. But this explanation glosses over important details. There were already 700 Braceros living there for nearly a year and a half. As participants in a wartime program supporting American food supplies, Braceros were part of the Allied war effort. And yet, improving the quality of life at Camp Soledad seems was a

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[268] "Report of Visit to Prisoner of War Camp, Fort Ord, California," January 21, 1945, Camp Labor Reports – 9th Service Command: California – Fort Ord, Box 1618, Folder "(Fort Ord) General," Subject Files, 1942-1946, Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1920-1975, Record Group 389, National Archives at College Park, MD.

[269] "Road Project is Started in Mission Area," *The Californian*, October 18, 1944, Newspapers.com.

priority only when Axis POWs arrived. The one structure that remained the same for both POWs and Braceros were the wire fences and guard towers that surrounded the camp.

Although the military was meeting the conditions of the 1929 Geneva Convention at Camp Soledad, and invested in reeducating German POWs through humane treatment and course offerings, Salinas Valley growers were less than impressed with their labor. The California Farm Bureau petitioned Congress to extend the Bracero Program through 1945. The Bureau claimed that Braceros were "particularly suited to the various types of farm work in California, including stoop labor." This racial script had been applied to Filipino laborers in the 1930s and was then used to claim there was something about Mexican bodies that made them fit for stoop labor. Mexican-Americans' bilingualism was also employed to serve labor demands, as the bureau claimed that there was a greater availability of Spanish-English speakers who could manage the Braceros.

The MBAF in Salinas Valley agreed with the Bureau's resolution, and added "not only will the supply of German prisoners of war be inadequate, but throughout the fall season of 1944 in Monterey county (sic) have proved themselves unsuitable for most tasks in field crops."[270] Here we make two observations about valley growers' racial ideologies and their expectations for wielding power over laborers. First, we should recall Major Biehler's comments at the start of POW labor in private agriculture: these POWs were enemy combatants, but they were *literate* and *disciplined*, with *sophisticated tastes*.

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[270] "County Farm Committee Urges Continuation of Mexican Labor Program," *The Californian*, November 29, 1944, Newspapers.com.

In short, they were different than laborers of Mexican descent. The MBAF agreed with the Bureau's claims that Mexicans had an affinity for stoop labor. With this context, we can understand that their claim that German POWs were "unsuitable" in the field is less a critique of their abilities and more a reflection of the idea that Germans did not belong in the fields.

The MBAF's claim that there would not be enough of a supply of German POWs leads to the second point: valley growers were largely frustrated by the federal regulations on POW labor, and unaccustomed to justifying their labor demands to a higher authority. A 1943 federal report on agricultural labor found that an agricultural labor "shortage" was manufactured by California growers in order to create surplus labor and depress wages—essentially, the same practices that the federal government had not intervened during the previous decade, but were now wary of. The Ninth Service Command was so skeptical about new requests for POW labor that they instituted a new deposit and penalty provision for any POW contracted but not employed. This incensed the GSVA, whose then-secretary Jack Bias wrote to Representative George Outland to complain about the new provision, and demand that the Office of the Provost Marshal General reprimand the leaders of the Ninth Service Command.[271] The War Department sent back a form response supporting the new provisions—a response the GSVA was not expecting given its history of successful lobbying in Washington.

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[271] Jack E. Bias to Congressman George Outland, April 23, 1945, IX Service Command, Correspondence, Box 1578, Folder "IX Command: Correspondence Transcripts," Subject Correspondence Files, 1942-1946, Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1920-1975, Record Group 389, National Archives at College Park, MD.

As the end of the war in Europe approached, nearly 3,000 Braceros and just 300 German POWs were employed in valley agriculture.[272] By early 1946, Fort Ord and Camp Soledad were the only camps still running and were projected to hold POWs—now termed "detainees"—for the foreseeable future. All work outside of the camps ceased, but the educational program continued, with over 170 German detainees continued classes in three languages, as well as History, Civics, and Mathematics.[273] Camp Soledad held 200 POWs, a comfortable number for a camp that could accommodate up to 500 of them. It was reported that "slightly larger number of Mexican nationals and other local laborers are housed in Camp McCallum barracks suitable for 1,000 single men." People of Mexican descent, then, continued to comprise the bulk of the agricultural labor force in Salinas Valley. Consequently, this population was disproportionately subject to surveillance and control in labor camps that had been modified for enemy combatants—even after the latter were released.

In mid-1946, Camp McCallum was transferred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Labor, which expanded housing at the camp for Braceros and migrant families. The federal guayule project was renewed as a postwar research project from 1947 to 1953.[274] Over 800 Mexican-American laborers and their families, as well as over 1,400 Braceros were housed at the camp.[275] The camp also housed single men and

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[272] "Farm News: Farm Labor," *The Californian*, April 19, 1945, Newspapers.com.
[273] "Report of Visit to Prisoner of War Camp, Fort Ord, California," January 26, 1946, Camp Labor Reports – 9th Service Command: California – Fort Ord, Box 1618, Folder "(Fort Ord) General," Subject Files, 1942-1946, Records of the Office of the Provost Marshal General, 1920-1975, Record Group 389, National Archives at College Park, MD.
[274] McGinnies and Mills, *Guayule Rubber Production*, 6-7.
[275] "Camp McCallum, Nationals Aided," *The Californian*, June 9, 1947, Newspapers.com

women. The agency managed to speed up the expansion by adding partitions to existing barracks. They also constructed a K-8 school by converting an old mess hall into a set of classrooms.[276] Camp McCallum was in essence an unincorporated community of agricultural laborers, mostly of Mexican descent, working in the vestiges of a war production machine and living in structures designed to contain enemy combatants. The Bracero Program didn't end until 1964; they lived there, uninterrupted, nearly two decades after the war.

At a June 1950 meeting, the GSVA and the county Public Housing Authority discussed taking over Camp Soledad and Camp McCallum from the federal government "cost-free."[277] The Public Housing Authority took over ownership of both camps on a "lease basis" by September of that same year.[278] The agency put the GSVA in charge of the labor camp's day-to-day operations.[279] They estimated that Camp Soledad could accommodate 101 families. This former POW camp would thus also house different generations of Mexican laborers. Officials believed repurposing an existing structure was a practical response to rapidly shifting historical circumstances and labor needs.

However, space and place do not have distinct boundaries of meaning, nor do their meanings simply expire through the passage of time. Rather, "places emerge out of complex systems of articulation… [so that] they exist as simultaneous, not successive,

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[276] "Alisal Branch to Open Classes Tomorrow for Camp McCallum Children," *The Californian*, September 9, 1946, Newspapers.com.
[277] "County May Take Over Labor Camps," *The Californian*, June 12, 1950, Newspapers.com.
[278] "County Housing Group Opens Camp Operation," *The Californian*, October 28, 1950, Newspapers.com.
[279] "County Housing Group Opens Camp Operation," *The Californian*, October 28, 1950, Newspapers.com.

topographies."[280] Thus, the *literal* repurposing of POWs camp to housing for Braceros and Mexican-American families did not necessarily entail a transformation of the site's *figurative* meaning. The camp was a site of punishment that—despite the relatively good treatment of Italian and German POWs—marked its inhabitants as outsiders to the local community, and threats to the nation at large. In this way, laborers of Mexican descent were figured in the valley's cultural imaginary as threats to be surveilled in agricultural labor and controlled living spaces.

After the Bracero Program ended in 1964, the site and structures continued as dilapidated migrant labor housing, with obvious financial disinvestment. The transfer of its management from federal to local officials is to blame, but it also tracks along racial lines, enacting the site's original demarcation of non-belonging on brown bodies, which are imagined as always already outside the community. To this day, those spaces are still populated by agricultural laborers of Mexican descent. Camp Soledad became San Benito Housing, a low-income apartment complex for migrant laborers. Camp McCallum became San Jerardo, a community of second and third generation Mexican-American laborers.

MID-1940S VALLEY LAW ENFORCEMENT & FEDERAL AGENCIES IN THE WAR EFFORT

In addition to benefitting from contract and prison labor during WWII, Salinas Valley agribusiness gained several acres of farmland that the Farm Security Administration (FSA) confiscated from Japanese farmers. This was not an unexpected

[280] Mary Pat Brady, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 127.

outcome of the U.S. declaring war on Japan. Indeed, days after Pearl Harbor, the GSVA sent then-secretary Austin Anson to Washington to lobby for removing people of Japanese descent from the West Coast. Anson claimed to have scared officials in War and Navy Departments with supposedly plausible options for a Japanese attack in the valley. He described "an invading army coming ashore in Monterey Bay and advancing into the Salinas Valley while Japanese residents blew up bridges, disrupting traffic and sabotaging local defenses."[281] Although Anson's lobbying was cited in news reports at the time, and in subsequent histories, there's some important context missing: the Salinas Valley was not some Podunk place jumping onto the bandwagon of anti-Japanese sentiment. Nor was Anson a random alarmist speaking for an insignificant organization. Anson was the secretary for the GSVA, which controlled a billion-dollar agricultural industry, in collaboration with one of the most sophisticated and highly trained law enforcement networks in the nation. The history of Japanese detention must follow the thread of money and naked violence to Salinas Valley agribusiness and law enforcement.

While Major Biehler was laying the groundwork for seeing Nazis as respectable options for agricultural labor, the GSVA was on a campaign to paint all people of Japanese descent as inherently disloyal. They published a brochure, *No Japs Needed*.[282] Anson also granted an interview to *Saturday Evening Post*, a national magazine. In that oft-cited interview, Anson was forthcoming with the racial politics and financial interests of the GSVA:

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[281] A.V. Krebs, "Bitter Harvest," *The Washington Post*, February 2, 1992, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1992/02/02/bitter-harvest/c8389b23-884d-43bd-ad34-bf7b11077135/.

[282] Frank J. Taylor, "The People Nobody Wants," *Saturday Evening Post*, May 9, 1942, Ebsco Host.

> We're charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons…We might as well be honest. We do. It's a question of whether the white man lives on the Pacific Coast or the brown men…If all the Japs were removed tomorrow, we'd never miss them in two weeks, because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows. And we don't want them back when the war ends, either.[283]

This feeling was echoed by the nearly 10,000 Salinas residents surveyed by the Salinas Chamber of Commerce in 1943. The survey was not anonymous, and among the respondents were listed several prominent grower-shippers like E.E. Harden. They were asked about their attitudes toward the return of Japanese-Americans to Salinas Valley, specifically in relation to agriculture. Out of all the responses, only 1 person responded "yes" to the question: "Do you believe it desirable that Japanese who are considered loyal to the United States be permitted to return to Pacific Coast states during the war?"[284] This person was George Pollack—former representative of the Vegetable Packers Union, whose members had originally gone on strike with Filipino field hands in 1934. Pollack, unsurprisingly, faced intense backlash in the valley when the survey was published. This was part of the function of the culture of impunity: to mark members as part of the in- or out-group, and to discipline those in the latter.

As growers weighed the use of POW labor, every participant in the survey answered "no" to the question: "Is it desired that Japanese be permitted to return so that their labor may be utilized for: (a) Agriculture or (b) Industry?"[285] This resulted from a longer history of the valley's racial politics and suspicion toward Japanese farmers,

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[283] Ibid.
[284] Salinas Chamber of Commerce, "Survey of Attitudes of Salinas Citizens Toward Japanese-Americans During World War II," Local History Collection, Salinas Public Library.
[285] Ibid.

especially because they were successful in moving from manual labor to landownership in the early 1900s and were competing contractors of Mexican and Filipino labor.[286] The resentment toward Japanese success in farming had already fueled white growers' calls for a Japanese immigration ban (resulting in the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907) and barring Japanese from owning land (creating the California Alien Land Act of 1913.) Anti-Japanese sentiment in California, and specifically in Salinas Valley, was thus informed by agricultural interests.

Valley law enforcement received federal agency training and found new ways to uphold agribusiness interests through national campaigns. Eight days before Executive Order 9066 was issued, the FBI conducted a series of raids on Japanese communities in Salinas Valley. The raids were carried out by over 130 FBI agents, valley law enforcement officers and regional California Highway patrolmen. They were described as the largest raids of "aliens" in U.S. history to that point. Over seventy sites from the very north to very south of valley were raided, including private homes and Buddhist temples. The network of collaboration expanded when military and navy intelligence officers at Fort Ord and the Monterey Presidio helped question those arrested and provided translation. Twelve Japanese men were held in custody in Salinas; three were Buddhist priests from the temple on the outer edge of Chinatown, and one was supposedly—and much to the scandal of readers—a former Tokyo police chief.[287] The irony was probably

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[286] Kim, "California's Agribusiness," 48.
[287] "Largest Alien Roundup in U.S. History Nets Many Arrests, Contraband in Salinas Area," *Salinas Morning Post*, February 11, 1942, Newspapers.com.

missed by these readers: concern and outrage at a retired police chief, celebration and awe at the massive deployment of law enforcement on valley residents.

As part of the raids that day, fifty FBI agents and valley law enforcement officers surrounded Spiegel Ranch, a 2,300-acre farm near the middle of the valley in Chualar. Twenty-six structures, including the farm's labor camp, were raided simultaneously.[288] This might sound like a recipe for violence, as one can imagine surprised or frightened laborers clamoring to escape in the confusion. But there was no one inside the camp bunkhouses. Instead, the laborers at Spiegel Ranch were directed to continue working in the fields while the raiding party searched their bunks. Nationwide fears of Japanese sabotage apparently came second to the agricultural labor demands of one of the largest lettuce grower-shippers in the valley.

The FBI and valley law enforcement carried out two more raids in March, while the FSA began confiscating Japanese farms and offering white growers mortgages on them.[289] Salinas and Pajaro Valley residents of Japanese descent were ordered to appear at the California Rodeo Grounds outside of Salinas. The grounds were transformed into a temporary detention center, with "Over 165 buildings…barracks to the north and east of the fairgrounds proper, six buildings within the racetrack infield, and perimeter guard towers."[290] The detention center operated for about three and a half months under the name "Salinas Assembly Center." Over 3,500 people were detained there before being transferred to a permanent camp in Arizona. This is a huge number of people processed

[288] Ibid.
[289] Krebs, "Bitter Harvest."
[290] "Salinas Garrison (Salinas Assembly Center)," California State Military Museums, last updated February 8, 2016, http://www.militarymuseum.org/Salinas.html.

and detained in such a short amount of time, and in such a sparsely populated valley. Salinas was clearly a strategic point in Japanese detention.

There is significant debate in Asian-American Studies over whether what happened to the Japanese was *internment*, *detention*, or *incarceration*. I won't speak authoritatively to that field, but I will say that my use of *detention* is informed by the larger carceral geography deployed in the valley during WWII. To call it incarceration would be to collapse the unique circumstances of Japanese detainees with expanding state correctional facilities. Moreover, internment could be and was imagined as temporary for Italians and Germans on the West Coast; by July of 1942, the ban on these two groups from the West Coast was lifted, and other restrictions were eased to allow them back to work. This was in part because of their proximity to whiteness, but it was more so a response to supposed agricultural labor shortages. Neither group was seen as a threat to agribusiness interests; Germans and Italians formed part of powerful families of valley grower-shippers and dairy farmers. The Japanese, though, were viewed as a threat to that established order on the local scale, and as saboteurs on the national scale. These are the conditions which characterized Japanese people as politically suspect and racially alien—regardless of citizenship status. Their rights were also literally *detained*, or frozen and contained as a supposed measure of national security.

Salinas Valley agribusiness did its best to keep the Japanese frozen out of rights and the community. As the war winded down, a new organization was created in Salinas "to discourage the return to the Pacific Coast of any person of Japanese ancestry, except those in the uniform of the Armed Services," and "To insist upon the deportation after the

War of all alien Japanese whose beliefs make impossible their loyalty to the United States."[291] The organization, called Monterey Bay Council on Japanese Relations, was headed by Edward M. Seifert, then-GSVA president.[292] The name was strategically deceptive, as the majority of residents on the Monterey Bay opposed efforts to intimidate or harass returned Japanese residents. It also elided that its base of support came from the agricultural towns of Salinas Valley. The GSVA was still marking certain people as unwanted in agricultural regions and attempting to police their movement. Furthermore, stating their intention to dissuade Japanese people from returning in large advertisements in all of the local newspapers could be read as a threat. Given the GSVA's history of endorsing and directing violence, this threat had real weight.

Valley law enforcement also found new ways to control racial minorities. The WWII draft had cut the Salinas Police force by about half. In order to maintain the same level of policing, Salinas Police started a mutually beneficial relationship with the newly created branch of Military Police (MP) at Fort Ord. Night patrols in Salinas were boosted when the Army allowed MPs to ride along with city officers, hoping that they would learn on the job. This was simply practical: Salinas was the nearest police department in need of officers, and the MPs could learn a lot from actually patrolling a city. But it was also a recognition of Salinas Police's experience and federal agency training. This is most

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[291] Monterey Bay Council on Japanese Relations, "Organization to Discourage Return of Japanese to the Pacific Coast," *The Californian*, April 19, 1945, Newspapers.com.
[292] "Forgotten Documents Reveal Views on Return of Japanese Internees to Monterey Peninsula," *Mercury News*, November 9, 2013, https://www.mercurynews.com/2013/11/09/forgotten-documents-reveal-views-on-return-of-japanese-internees-to-monterey-peninsula/.

obvious in the personal invitation that MP leadership at Fort Ord extended to Captain Everall Adcock, who was asked to teach courses to about 350 MPs over five weeks.

Everall Adcock was known for his "tough cop" persona, and for being especially proud of the department's shift toward open-carry gun practices. In fact, that is how he claimed to have gotten the MPs' attention at the first class:

> I grabbed the gun and I…[drew fast] and put it up to them and said, 'The only difference between military police and civilian police is…that you have to keep your gun in a holster with a strap down; we in the police business have the gun right now.[293]

Adcock's comment seems to imply that having a holstered gun, and thus being slower to draw it at a suspect and shoot, is a bad thing. Here, we should remember that a higher-level officer's philosophy and training do not remain contained within that one officer, and instead can shape an entire department's practices. Given this reminder, the Salinas Police department was encouraged to use their service firearm more often. And, as Adcock began his training of MPs at Fort Ord with this stunt, he may have also inculcated drawing a weapon as standard practice.

We can't know the contents of his lessons for sure, as he only describes them as retelling past cases. Since the strikes in which he shot gas munitions at civilians were less than a decade before, he may have also used those policing practices as material to train MPs. Adcock's tendency toward tough posturing and firearm use unsurprisingly led to violence. One night while on patrol in downtown

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[293] Adcock, interview.

Salinas, an MP tried to detain a drunk GI at the bus station restaurant. The GI made a run for it—at no point threatening or assaulting the MP. The MP shot the GI in the back as he ran. The GI died. While Adcock did detain the MP for a few hours, DA Anthony Brazil negotiated with Fort Ord command and released him to military custody. Adcock recalled this incident over forty years later with a melancholic tone—for the MP—remarking that he "*had* to lock the boy up."[294] Adcock's comment reflects his concern for police officers' well-being over the lives of the people they killed.

The Salinas police's relationship with Fort Ord MPs also added to the carceral geography of the valley. The MP jail was constructed across from Salinas city hall, and several sites in and around the city were highly surveilled. Salinas's Chinatown, long deemed a crime-ridden district for its population and for its supposed gambling dens and brothels, was strictly off-limits to white soldiers. During one patrol, MPs discovered an African-American soldier in the neighborhood. The soldier attempted to escape, but the MPs raced toward him and cornered him in their car. The soldier managed to climb atop of the vehicle, and kept the MPs from coming out by kicking at them as they tried to open the doors. This went on until the MPs radioed Adcock to provide backup. It's telling that in a situation like this, the MPs called for Adcock and Salinas Police, rather than backup from their own force. It points to their understanding of Adcock as a superior officer, despite him being a civilian officer. It also demonstrates their knowledge of Adcock's and Salinas Police's ability to clamp down on people of color.

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[294] Ibid.

By the time Adcock and another officer arrived, he reported seeing upwards of fifty African-American soldiers surrounding the MPs car. As they approached, "every bar down there started vomiting these soldiers and soon there were 200 or 300 colored troops in this area trying to interfere with the officers."[295] Adcock's comments paint African-American soldiers as a horde, spilling out on the streets of Chinatown to antagonize police. This plays into stereotypes of African-American men as mindlessly aggressive. It also portrays them as hedonistic, since he asserts all of these several hundred men were in bars and gambling halls. This is another example of the way anti-black rhetoric shaped attitudes in Salinas Valley, despite there not being a sizeable African-American population. Adcock's account elides several key details. The soldier found in Chinatown was African-American, and thus the area was not technically off-limits to him. This means that the MPs attempted to detain him without cause. Moreover, it's just as easy to believe that the African-American soldiers that came out onto the street were trying to protect a fellow soldier, given the Salinas Police's reputation for violence against people of color.

Sure enough, Adcock radioed for all available units to respond, including sheriff's deputies and California Highway patrolmen. That triad of agencies had honed its skills engaging large crowds in street fights during the previous decade's strikes, and were not easily deterred from the scene. In an odd moment of measure and reflection, Adcock looked at the armed officers ready to shoot and felt responsible for avoiding "an awful lot of bloodshed." He addressed an African-American Master Sergeant in the crowd, and

[295] Ibid.

demanded that he order all African-American soldiers onto Greyhound buses back to Fort Ord. Adcock recounted this moment as a gesture of goodwill, but from the perspective of the Master Sergeant, it could have also been read as a warning: "get on the bus, or else." The night ended without injuries or death. When he recounted this night in an oral history interview, Adcock described his measured response as an effort to avoid "a Congressional investigation or something to that effect," and referred to Mare Island mutiny. At Mare Island in the San Francisco bay, fifty African-American sailors refused to board munitions after unsafe working conditions had caused a massive explosion at Port Chicago weeks earlier, killing mostly African-American servicemen. The sailors' mutiny was covered in national news outlets, and the attention forced the Navy to retry their court martial.[296] Adcock wasn't worried so much about the lives of African-American soldiers, then. He wanted to protect Salinas Valley law enforcement from national scrutiny.

Adcock's work with the Fort Ord MPs was well-received, and soon the Army repaid the favor by investing in training for Salinas Police. The Army sponsored their course participation at the University of California, University of Santa Clara, and University of Southern California. At these prestigious schools, Salinas Police were trained in traffic control and evacuations for civilian defense, as well as learning about new theories in juvenile delinquency, and spending five days in a military school.[297] During WWII, the Salinas Police department was regarded highly enough to train

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[296] Charles Wollenberg, "Blacks vs. Navy Blue," *California History* 58, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 62-75.
[297] Adcock, interview.

military officers. They could also count the Army among the federal agencies that had sponsored their training. They used this training to intensely police low-income areas of the city, and subsequently justified Salinas's rezoning which pushed agricultural labor camps outside of the city limits.

SPATIAL AND POLICING SHIFTS IN THE 1950S

After WWII, spatial segregation within the city of Salinas was marked by a booming agricultural economy that required high levels of production with little overhead. For this reason, farmworker housing was geographically situated on fields or among packing factories, spatially linking farmworkers with "other factors of production, resulting in their social segregation and dehumanization."[298] The relationship between housing and factory placement here is best understood not as the result of simple visual association, but instead as a spatial enactment of uneven power relations. These are spaces defined by their production capacity, and not by ownership or management.

By the late 1950s, Salinas city officials looked for ways to push farmworkers outside of city limits, justifying their plans with concerns over blight and mixed zoning.[299] Plans were made to remodel a one hundred-man labor camp near the city's downtown, repurposing its function from labor housing to luxury apartments with "the appearance of a tourist court."[300] The planned remodel and design upgrade sought to transform the camp's aesthetic, erasing the visibility of laboring brown bodies. While the

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[298] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 200.
[299] "The Problem Facing Salinas," *Salinas Californian*, January 28, 1957, Salinas Urban Renewal 1957, Salinas Public Library.
[300] "'Urban Renewal' at Labor Camp," *Salinas Californian*, February 6, 1957, Salinas Urban Renewal 1957, Salinas Public Library. The term "tourist court" refers to what we would now term "motel."

city's promotional materials do not explicitly address where the displaced laborers should go, discourses of disease and criminality make clear that they are outsiders to the community.

A county public health report asserted "the overcrowding that exists in many poor housing units in Salinas and the accompanying lack of privacy tends to cause a lowering of moral standards and a consequent increase in venereal diseases."[301] Their presupposed susceptibility to sexually-transmitted diseases marks these residents not as people with less socioeconomic or structural access to healthcare, but as morally deficient threats to the city's order. They are such a threat, in fact, that discipline and surveillance seems a natural response to blight: "It is to these areas that Salinas police are most frequently called to quell disturbances…[involving those that] have a belligerent attitude toward society that can be traced to their environment."[302] Here, city officials and reporters are not only imagining the city's poor farmworkers as inherently criminal, but also constructing a landscape that "in concert with policies, laws, and institutions, physically *makes* the land…and sustains it ideologically."[303] Space, then, is not a static, objective reality, but a materially enacted social construction that undergirds conceptual categories like race and class. In order to "renew" Salinas—that is, restore the space materially and conceptually according to the imaginaries of the city's white, upper class—brown farmworkers must be excised from it.

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[301] "Blight Impairs Public Health," *Salinas Californian*, January 28, 1957, Salinas Urban Renewal 1957, Salinas Public Library.
[302] "Crime Breeds in Blighted Areas," *Salinas Californian*, January 28, 1957, Salinas Urban Renewal 1957, Salinas Public Library.
[303] Brady, *Extinct Lands*, 17.

However, industrial agriculture required that this labor force not be completely expelled from the valley. The happy medium was pushing farmworkers into more rural areas, producing in Salinas a "charming landscape that erases labor and minimizes capitalist exploitation."[304] This also mobilized rurality as a punishment. Imagined as a nonconforming—and thus, threatening—population, poor farmworkers were castigated via banishment to more isolated areas of the valley through the rezoning of Salinas and the removal of labor camps inside the city.

Remembering the lessons of Slack's Canyon, California state corrections also incorporated isolation in rurality as a form of punishment at Soledad State Prison. Using leftover materials from the demolished Camp Soledad, the prison started as a set of quickly constructed barracks surrounded by eucalyptus trees and fertile fields, ready for tilling. Although its initial structure was mostly bare, the state of California soon allocated ten million dollars to add more facilities to the prison.[305] Riding a trend toward rehabilitation in the American prison system, Soledad State was designed to incorporate the surrounding environment, rather than shut inmates away in cells. The prison was designed like a camp where "fences and gun towers substituted for granite walls, and the internal structure made communal life more encouraging…and a broad selection of vocational training and group counseling programs created a relatively friendly

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[304] Ibid., 41.
[305] *Westward*, February, 1950, Folder 1, Prisons: Soledad, Local History Clipping Files, Salinas Public Library.

atmosphere more prone to rehabilitative treatment."[306] Similar to Natividad jail camp, Soledad State had the triple purpose of alleviating overcrowding at San Quentin, providing food products for inmates, and providing labor that was considered rehabilitative.

By 1950, prisoners were laboring to produce six different crops "to help fill the nearly 5,000 dinner plates in the San Quentin mess hall."[307] Two decades later, prisoners assigned to the prison's hog ranch "furnished the prison about six tons of pork a month," while those assigned to the prison's fields produced "sixteen tons of alfalfa and corn" a year.[308] Following Foucault's account of docility-utility, it is evident here that Soledad State officials efficiently enacted disciplinary measures to make prisoner's bodies conform to the production demanded by coerced agricultural labor. Furthermore, by constructing a site of farm work as punishment and isolation, California criminal justice officials not only secured the food supply at San Quentin, but also added to the idea that agricultural labor was inherently related to criminality.

With increased funding from the state of California, Soledad State Prison's new Central facilities were built according to a "telephone pole design" popular in American prisons from the late 1800s to early 1900s. This design is characterized by "several wings or buildings constructed parallel to one another that are connected by a central corridor or

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[306] Edgardo Rotman, "The Failure of Reform: United States, 1865-1965," in *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society*, ed. Norval Morris and David J. Rothman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 170.
[307] *Westward*.
[308] Yee, *The Melancholy History of Soledad Prison*, 9.

passageway that divides the institution into two halves."[309] The telephone pole design was not especially suited for surveillance, especially in comparison to Panopticon-style layouts. Instead, the telephone pole was desirable for its enabling of rigid control over the movement of all prisoners through all areas of the prison, since "[a]all traffic from one area of the prison to another must pass through the central corridor…[and] areas within the institution are usually separated from one another by gates that staff members must lock and unlock."[310] Soledad's maximum security "O" wing was "cut off from the farmlands outside by a series of nine lock-and-key, electronically controlled doors and gates."[311] In the "O" wing, inmates were held in single-occupancy cells and only allowed out for physical activity one hour a day. Thus, the wing that administrators euphemistically called the "Adjustment Center" was de facto solitary confinement. While prison reformists upheld the seemingly idyllic setting of Soledad State Prison among the rolling farmland of Salinas Valley, the landscape granted the prison's interior structure an imposing claustrophobia:

> Soledad Central was built along the contours of the gently sloping green fields of the Salinas Valley. The main corridor thus drops in long graduated stairsteps and from the east end literally looks like an endless tunnel with only a pinpoint of light showing from the low end where the corridor opens into the big yard.[312]

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[309] "Telephone Pole Design," in *Encyclopedia of Prisons & Correctional Facilities*, ed. Mary Bosworth (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 2005), 949. Volume 2. The layout of this design resembles the top of a telephone pole—hence the name.
[310] Ibid., 949.
[311] Yee, *The Melancholy History of Soledad Prison*, 1.
[312] Tom Findley, "The Deadly Tunnel," *S.F. Chronicle*, February 23, 1971, box 44, folder 9, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.

Thus, the topography of the valley was deployed to make the space feel constricted, and to distort inmates' visual perception. What may have seemed like a charming landscape to drivers along the highway, was a sort of mental punishment for inmates. A carceral geography, then, can refer to a particular space, but can also include the actual land the space is sited on.

The telephone pole design also facilitated inmate classification, allowing officials to control the space racialized bodies inhabited.[313] While prison classification schemes are justified as functions for the orderly, day-to-day functions of the prison, they are also "a technological ensemble that forms and fragments the object to which it applies its instruments."[314] That is, inmate classification is not a neutral signifier, but instead produces the "delinquent"; it is one thing to term a structure "maximum security," and another to use that signifier for a person. The latter marks that person in a precarious relationship to the state's use of classification as a disciplinary measure, since "[a] quick telephone call to Sacramento is the only barrier separating the uncooperative guy from the 'close' security of Folsom and San Quentin."[315] The threat of reclassification, then, functioned as a perpetually corrective tool with which to discipline all imprisoned bodies—not just those not conforming to behavioral norms.

The arbitrariness of inmate classification was evident in Soledad State's segregation procedures: "D4205: Inmates shall be segregated from others when it becomes evident that they are a menace to themselves or others, or to property, or to *the*

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[313] "Telephone Pole Design," 950.
[314] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 255.
[315] Bob Crabbe, "Soledad: Aim of $10,000,000 Prison is to Fit Inmates for Jobs after Release," *Salinas Californian*, June 1950, Folder 1, Prisons: Soledad, Local History Clipping Files, Salinas Public Library.

morale of the general population."[316] Although framed as a measure to control potentially violent behavior, segregation into O wing is also mobilized as a punishment for nonconforming behavior, and is thus a practice which upholds institutional norms. This is evident in the rules pamphlet distributed to prisoners entering Soledad State, especially in provision D1206, which prohibits "any sexual or immoral act."[317] The onus for avoiding "immorality" is placed on the prisoner himself, in keeping with the prison's general policy on the purpose of discipline:

> The ultimate hope of inmate discipline is to develop in the inmate self-reliance, self-control, self-respect, self-discipline; not merely the ability to conform to the rules, but the ability and the desire to conform to accepted standards for individual and community life in a free society.[318]

Here, Soledad State Prison officials engage in a discourse of self-discipline informed by liberal notions of autonomy and will. By having prisoners internalize discipline, officials rely on the "coercion and compulsion of the free labor system…[to make] the dutiful free laborer."[319] This push toward being a self-reliant free laborer is, of course, a paradox to a person imprisoned by, and consequently reliant on, the state.

However, this logic of a space shaped by the demands of large agribusiness. Disciplining prisoners increases the docility-utility of their bodies, so that they may continue producing crops, or at least not act as impediments to that production. These bodies are also racialized by prison procedures, since prison guards were instructed to

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[316] "Director's Rules," December 11, 1968, box 44, folder 8, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin. Emphasis added.
[317] "Rules of the Director of Corrections and of the Wardens and Superintendents," December 11, 1968, box 44, folder 9, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.
[318] "Director's Rules."
[319] Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 126.

lead prisoners out of O wing according to race: "Inmates housed in the Isolation Section shall be exercised outside their cells daily in groups of up to six men. Again these groups are to be racially balanced, with *an equal number* of negroes, whites, and Mexicans"[320] Although official prison documents report a majority of white prisoners from the 1950s-late 1960s, this procedure would only be possible if African-American and Mexican prisoners were statistically overrepresented in O wing. Given the statistical disparity, we may consider that these are people marked for discipline not because of nonconforming behavior, but because they are always already nonconforming in a racial hierarchy.

Soledad State's official documents provide a picture of life in "O" wing as an experience of constant control and degradation. Reading these documents to ascertain this experience requires reading them against the grain. For example, Post Orders 11:00 states that prisoners in "O" wing "may be placed on Quiet status as a control measure, not for discipline."[321] Quiet status consisted of closing the outer door to the prisoner's cell and prohibiting any noise. Since these were single-occupancy cells, "Quiet status" was de facto solitary confinement. Post Orders 11:00 also differentiates "control measure" from "discipline," essentially granting any guard, at any time, the ability to completely isolate any inmate, since control measures do not require the meticulous documentation that disciplinary measures do. Prisoners' own bodies were also mobilized as punishment via humiliation:

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[320] "Post Orders 6:00 – Daily Exercise," December 11, 1968, box 44, folder 8, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin. Emphasis added.

[321] "Post Orders 11:00 – Quiet Cell Operation," May 29, 1968, box 44, folder 8, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.

> If an inmate destroys the toilet facilities in his assigned cell, he may be housed in a cell with neither a toilet nor a wash basin, pending better controlled behavior. At any time that an inmate is housed in a cell without toilet fixtures, he shall be issued two buckets (plastic). One bucket is to serve as a container for fresh water, and the other as a receptacle for waste materials.[322]

Post Orders 17:00 legitimized the prison's power through the prisoner's "self-betrayal," enacting humiliation as circular reasoning for the punishment.[323] That is, the prisoner would not be in this predicament had he conformed to the rules of the prison—a site in which he has no control over what rules are established and how they're measured.

Prisoners were also constantly reminded that their autonomy extended to their behavior, but that their bodies were subject to the prison's operating procedures. For example, every time prisoners were escorted back to "O" wing from daily yard exercise they were subjected to full, naked body searches. Although Post Orders 13:00 prohibited cavity searches, it did allow guards to "forcefully remove" the clothing of any prisoner who "refuse[d] to cooperate in a *routine* unclothed search."[324] That this order does not codify the subjective term "forcefully," in a set of documents that, for comparison, meticulously describe how to return a prisoner's food tray, points to the prison's sanctioning of any individual guard's power over all O wing prisoners. Moreover, that these searches were "routine" signifies that O wing prisoners were vulnerable to be

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[322] "Post Orders 17:00 – Inmates Confined in Cells Without Toilet Facilities," December 11, 1968, box 44, folder 8, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin.
[323] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 50.
[324] "Post Orders 13:00 – Search and Escort," September 18, 1968, box 44, folder 8, Jessica Mitford Papers, The Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin. Emphasis added.

violently stripped every day. This vast bestowal of power distorts any imagined boundary between control, discipline, and punishment.

I detail the origins and conditions inside of Soledad State Prison despite the fact that the prison population is not necessarily from the Salinas Valley. Indeed, studies of Soledad State tend to be divorced from the historical and political context of the valley, making it seem like a farming any-town that simply serves as background to an important site. But with a carceral geography lens, we can analyze the inside and outside of Soledad State to understand: how its function as a prison farm and eventual absorption of a firefighting camp can be traced back to Salinas Valley jails; and, how it incorporates the valley's topography to deploy rurality and isolation as punishment. Moreover, I examine guard practices because the prison's guards and staff either became residents of the valley or were sourced from there in the years after its establishment. They upheld and benefitted from the valley's culture of impunity because their practices of surveillance and control were in keeping with those justified as necessary to secure the valley's prosperity.

FROM SOLEDAD TO THE BORDER PATROL & 1950S DEPORTATIONS

Another group that upheld the valley's culture of impunity were Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and Border Patrol agents. Despite assurances that the extension of the Bracero Program would cut down undocumented immigration, California growers continued to hire undocumented laborers as a means to break strikes or work stoppages by Braceros, and in order to create a surplus labor force that would

depress wages for Mexican-Americans. Public outrage at the practice put pressure on the federal government to enforce immigration law. This coincided with the second generation of the Border Patrol, in which the expansion of the force from the Texas-Arizona borderlands required recruiting officers from all over the nation for regional offices more inland.[325] An INS office was opened in Salinas sometime in 1947, and was originally housed in the six-story Bank of America building downtown along with the federal guayule project office.[326] It moved to a larger space on East Alisal Street because the officer-in-charge claimed their activities would be on a large scale. He was not wrong.

From mid-March to mid-April of 1952, 443 undocumented immigrants were detained at Natividad camp, which was still operated by the sheriff's department. The federal government reportedly paid Monterey County $1 a day for each man's room and board.[327] In June of 1953, *The Californian* published a celebratory account of local policing and detainment efforts in collaboration with Border Patrol officers. The headline for the nearly full-page spread was: "Border Patrol Activities on 'Wetbacks' Here Makes County Camp a Very Busy Spot." The casual use of the pejorative "wetback" not only highlights the editorial staff's bias, but also points out a further distinction between laborers of Mexican descent. There were the Braceros or "Mexican nationals," which served to remind people that they were only temporary presences in the valley. Then

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[325] Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 23. Ebook edition.
[326] "Immigration Service Will Move Offices," *The Californian*, July 21, 1948, Newspapers.com. Newspaper accounts are unclear about when the INS office was established.
[327] "Growing Season Returns to Salinas-Pajaro Valleys--And With it Come the 'Wetbacks'," *The Californian*, April 11, 1952, Newspapers.com.

there were the “domestic laborers,” or simply “Mexicans,” which referred to Mexican-Americans. With “wetback” in the valley’s lexicon, growers and residents could ascribe a different level of criminality to this population. While “domestic laborers” and “Mexican nationals” required surveillance, “wetbacks” were always already illegal. But many times law enforcement and local media did not make a distinction between Mexican Americans, documented or undocumented Mexican laborers.

The headline was also accurate to describe Natividad camp as “busy.” The sheriff's office reported that Border Patrol was bringing in 65 undocumented immigrants per day to the camp in May, with a record high of 135 on April 3rd. The camp quickly became overcrowded with immigrant detainees and county jail inmates, with some "sleeping in the recreation hall." Undocumented immigrants were "kept under 24-hour guard in detention camp barracks." Unlike county jail inmates who worked on the county farm, they were "confined to the barracks area at all times" except for the three times a day they walked to the dining room. This meant that undocumented immigrants at Natividad camp were nearly always confined inside. The sheriff's department reported that ages of immigrant detainees ranged from 15 to 70, with the majority on the lower end of that age range.[328] These two factors combined demonstrates a surprising reversal in the use of agricultural labor as punishment: working-age undocumented immigrants were deliberately kept indoors and barred from participating in agricultural labor. They were let out of their barracks only for mandated recreation time. Thus, immigrant

[328] "Border Patrol Activities on 'Wetbacks' Here Makes County Camp a Very Busy Spot," *The Californian*, June 3, 1953, Newspapers.com.

detention at Natividad operated much like present-day detention centers, in that detained people were confined in an overcrowded space for nearly the whole day, every day.

Importantly, Salinas Valley's record high number of immigrant detention came a year before "Operation Wetback." The INS deployed Border Patrol agents in military-style raids and sweeps targeting people of Mexican descent. Around 300,000 people were deported to Mexico.[329] Curiously for a valley that celebrated dozens of new arrests each day a year prior, there are hardly any news reports on Operation Wetback activities locally. Throughout the yearlong campaign, local reports on the Border Patrol only focus on state and national events or they promote Border Patrol job openings. Given valley growers' penchant for having a surplus of easily controllable labor, we can conclude that deportation efforts significantly deescalated in Salinas Valley at the same time that national efforts ratcheted up. Mexican-American laborers were angry at growers that kept labor wages depressed through the use of undocumented laborers, but they were also resentful of said laborers. A lack of solidarity between Mexican-Americans and undocumented laborers would persist in the valley through until today.

But at the time, Natividad camp was on its last legs. In 1957, James B. Ransdell was named the fledgling camp's new farm superintendent. Ransdell was previously a field foreman for Merrill Packing and a ranch production superintendent for Salinas Valley Vegetable Exchange.[330] His work experience and easy fit into a high-ranking position at Natividad camp demonstrates the relationship between managing agricultural

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[329] Brent Funderburk, "Operation Wetback," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 4, 2017, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Operation-Wetback.
[330] "Monterey County Sheriff's Camp and Farm," *The Californian*, August 31, 1957, Newspapers.com.

labor and overseeing inmates. The skills Ransdell used as a foreman and superintendent at field and packing sites were apparently transferrable to the county jail. Natividad, like the other camps discussed throughout the chapter exhibits all the hallmarks of the carceral-agriculture nexus perfected in the Salinas Valley, even as that particular camp was about to be turned over to private interests.

CONCLUSION

Salinas Valley's carceral geography expanded during the 1940s and 1950s. A carceral geography refers to a space organized around practices of surveillance and control and does not necessarily refer to actual jails or prisons. Agricultural labor camps were designed like prisons, and they oftentimes overlapped with prison camps engaged in farm work. At different periods in time, Camp McCallum was a Mexican-American labor camp, or a Bracero camp, or a POW camp—or all three. Similarly, Natividad camp was both a county jail and an immigrant detention center in the 1950s. Salinas Valley's carceral geography did not constitute an earlier period of "mass incarceration." Rather, it offered a blueprint for increasing the docility-utility of agricultural laborers, a blueprint that the state of California and the U.S. Army adapted in their own protocols.

Practices of surveillance and control didn't happen solely within these sites. Valley law enforcement developed new techniques and acquired important strategies from the FBI, starting in the late 1930s and through the 1940s. Salinas Police's insistence on an FBI training school resulted in a program that spread throughout northern and central California. Valley law enforcement was also overrepresented at the FBI's

National Academy in the early 1940s. The networks of inter-agency collaboration and policing tactics only continued developing in the decade after the 1934 and ’36 lettuce strikes.

It’s important to contextualize the growth of valley law enforcement as continual because too often, agricultural labor histories imagine rural policing as existing at full force during labor disputes. This chapter shows that Salinas Valley law enforcement not only built off its practices in the 1930s but rose to prominence as a frequent partner of the FBI and Army. In the next chapter, I track the transformation of the valley’s carceral geography and its reorientation toward targeting undocumented immigrants. That account necessitates a brief check-in at Camp McCallum.

Salinas’s efforts to purge farmworkers from the community continued after the city’s revitalization plan in the 1950s. In 1972, thirty-seven Mexican-American farmworkers and their families (including 131 children) were evicted from their employer-owned trailer camp after their employer had declared bankruptcy and sold all of its assets. They fought their eviction, but Monterey County courts upheld it and the Public Housing Authority claimed there was a shortage of low-income housing available. This led the farmworkers to squat at Camp McCallum, which had been non-operational and in serious disrepair for a few years at that point. The camp’s military past may have been a stroke of luck for the farmworkers. Foreign Service Officer James R. Falzone advocated on their behalf, an alliance that protected them from being forcibly evicted by valley law enforcement.

FSO Falzone negotiated with county housing authorities, who eventually agreed to let the farmworkers stay for eight months while low-income housing was made available. In order to make the camp safe, "the families volunteered to make necessary repairs and clean up the camp grounds." Another FSO then secured the assistance of Green Berets from the U.S. Special Forces at Fort Bragg to help with more extensive repairs to the camp's "plumbing, water, and electrical systems." A dozen Green Berets lived and worked alongside the farmworkers for 12 days, making the repairs necessary for the safety of the camp.[331] These farmworkers received substantially more direct aid from the U.S. military than valley officials. The latter had been content to leave an entire community of farmworkers homeless. In the time allowed by county officials, the majority of farmworkers had found low-income housing in the valley or moved to another region.

But when the Green Berets left, and the FSO stopped intervening on their behalf, the remaining farmworkers and their families were left vulnerable to the machinations of valley officials and business. On July 23rd, 1973, the land on which Camp McCallum was sited was sold by the Monterey County Housing Authority to a local businessman, Leo Briggs. At the time, seven families were still living on the land and were under eviction orders.[332] The families stayed and organized a cooperative to get a permit for the site from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors. The fight took five years, and in

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[331] "How an FSO Helped Provide Housing for California Migrants," *Department of State Newsletter*, no. 136 (August 1972): 21, Hathi Trust Digital Library.
[332] "Salinas Man Named as McCallum Buyer," *The Californian*, April 26, 1973.

that time 60 families had pulled their resources together to pay the mortgage.[333] Camp McCallum became San Jerardo Cooperative, a permanent agricultural labor community. The community's origins as a farmworker-built site inspired the creation of CHISPA, a nonprofit developer that offers low-income housing to families that help build their own houses in what it terms a "self-help construction group."[334] San Jerardo was also an outgrowth of farmworker activism in Salinas Valley during the 1970s, especially characterized by the union that features prominently in the next chapter: the United Farm Workers.[335]

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[333] Claudia Meléndez Salinas, "Telling the Story of the San Jerardo Cooperative," *Monterey Herald*, November 26, 2017, https://www.montereyherald.com/2017/11/26/telling-the-story-of-the-san-jerardo-cooperative/.
[334] "Frequently Asked Questions," CHISPA, last updated October 4, 2018, https://www.chispahousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Frequently-Asked-Questions_Logo-rev.pdf.
[335] Lisa M. Hamilton, "San Jerardo Cooperative," Real Rural, last updated January 26, 2012, http://realrural.org/story/san-jerardo-cooperative.

Chapter 3: Deportation Schemes & "Empaque" Panopticons: Undocumented Immigrants and Formerly Incarcerated Laborers in the Salinas Valley

Juan Leal sat listlessly on a bench lining one of the walls inside Salinas's regional Border Patrol office. The 38-year-old was an undocumented immigrant who had been caught up in a raid on the strawberry field where he was a picker. Soon, he'd be put on a bus toward the Central Valley, where he'd be joined by other detained immigrants, before reaching his final U.S. destination: a detention camp in southern Imperial Valley. Leal had been detained in the Salinas Valley at least once before in the early 1970s. Now, in 1979, he was unsure if he'd return. When a reporter asked what he thought of the United Farm Workers, who were then carrying out their second lettuce strike, Leal answered in Spanish: "I'm not a member of the union, and I hadn't heard of it before. I didn't know who César Chávez was. But he wants to up the wages, doesn't he? Well, that's good."[336] The reporter then explained that in addition to the wage demand, the union also called for the Border Patrol to raid valley fields and deport "illegal" strikebreakers. Leal remained unmoved by the news. "They just want to win the strike," he said. Leal's steadfast rejection of divisive politics, even as he sat awaiting detention and deportation, stands in stark contrast to the anti-immigrant rhetoric that spewed from nativists, Border Patrol agents, and some union members. His voice is also an example of those that are rarely given uptake in labor histories about the Salinas Valley in the 1970s and 1980s.

[336] Doug Foster, "Walkout and Patrol Raid Cut into Harvesting Force," *The Californian*, May 1, 1979, Newspapers.com.

This chapter analyzes deportation, increasing wealth disparity, and political and financial ties between agribusiness leadership and "tough on crime" elected officials in Salinas Valley from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Although important Chicana/o activism and agricultural labor gains emerged in this time span, a celebratory history would continue to obscure the experiences of undocumented laborers. It also hid how policing and carceral mechanisms continued to be integrated in the agricultural worksite. This analysis reframes the expansion of a carceral geography in rural California by tracking how hyper-surveillance and confinement became naturalized as standard food safety practices in agricultural packing sheds in the 1980s and 1990s. As more punitive state laws against repeat offenders passed in the mid-1990s, public spaces also became more surveilled and policed.

A militarized police force and carceral geography has loomed in the Salinas Valley since the 1930s. But labor histories about the valley typically frame the violence that the United Farm Workers (UFW) faced as a specific response to the union's unprecedented success in the Delano grape strike. Thus, extensive histories of the UFW have already given careful attention to the lettuce strikes, albeit with a particular ideological bent. In contrast to these narratives of UFW intervention, I analyze the union's collaboration with Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and Salinas's Border Patrol field office. Doing so highlights the triad of parties policing and surveilling undocumented farmworkers: Border Patrol agents, UFW members acting as informants for the INS, and growers' private security guards.

The UFW first came into the Salinas Valley in 1970, when lettuce grower-shipper InterHarvest signed sweetheart agreements with the Teamsters in order to avoid the UFW's attention.[337] It is important to note here that the first large-scale labor activism since the 1936 strike was specifically for field workers. After the demoralizing conclusion to the 1930s strikes, shed worker unions gradually lost members and power. Furthermore, the racialized labor division between shed and field workers persisted, with mostly white workers in sheds and Mexican-American and Mexican immigrants in the fields.

The valley's reputation for violently repressing labor activism made several UFW leaders openly argue against organizing in the valley. When they did finally organize, the strikes—in keeping with their predecessors—were especially marked with violence, including police and assaults on strikers and the bombing of the UFW's Watsonville office.[338] The 1970 strike was also the first time that César Chávez was jailed in his career.[339] UFW strikes were more successful in garnering national sympathy than the 1930s strikes because of their previous successes in the San Joaquin Valley. But the force with which valley grower-shippers and law enforcement met the UFW in the Salinas Valley was a result of the financial and political infrastructure created in the 1934 and 1936 strikes.

Indeed, local actors from those strikes were in positions of even greater power in the 1970s. This included growers like Bruce Church who had amassed significant wealth as a

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[337] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 186.
[338] Miriam J. Wells, *Strawberry Fields: Politics, Class, and Work in California Agriculture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 85.
[339] Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming*, 206.

member of the GSVA, which had driven small farmers out of business and consolidated control over the lettuce market after the 1930s strikes. With his extensive production and political power in the valley, Church was able to hold out the UFW's 1979 boycott for nearly 17 years. Anthony Brazil, who had helped growers "stay out of trouble" in the 1936 strike, was now a Monterey County judge. During his tenure, Brazil was appointed to preside over the Soledad Brothers case before the trial was moved to San Francisco due to the defense's argument that they would be unable to get a fair trial in Salinas. He was also the judge that ruled the first 1970 UFW lettuce strike illegal and ordered the UFW to end all picketing.[340] I highlight these continuities to demonstrate how a system that upheld the interests of white agribusiness leaders and a culture of impunity did not suddenly emerge as a response to 1960s and 70s Black liberation or farmworker movements. The key group of "good ol' boys" honed their operating procedures in the 1930s and maintained the power structure for decades.

DEPORTATION AND DIVISION: POLICING UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THE 1970S

The good ol boy network first welcomed the INS to the Salinas Valley in the late 1940s. As discussed in chapter 2, the INS initially operated out of an office on East Alisal Street. They racked up nearly 500 arrests in just one month in 1952. But, curiously, their activities were relatively quiet during "Operation Wetback" the following year. This was most likely because the INS and Border Patrol had a history of selectively enforcing immigration laws, according to the labor demands of California agribusiness. That is,

[340] Lauren Araiza, *To March for Others: The Black Freedom Struggle and the United Farm Workers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 141.

when agribusiness feared profit losses or laborers organizing, deportations went up. But when agribusiness needed a ready surplus of labor to drive down wages for U.S. citizens and permanent residents, Border Patrol agents scaled back their raids. By 1972, the Border Patrol also established a branch office in Salinas. The office was located at Harris Road, a little less than a mile from Highway 101 and close to several agricultural fields and migrant housing. Despite its favorable location near the population they'd be targeting, Border Patrol agents had a small number of arrests in the early 1970s.

In the decade after the end of Bracero Program, Salinas's INS and Border Patrol offices were significantly understaffed with only three agents to cover Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties.[341] Securing more funding and staff was on hold in the early 1970s, as the INS and Border Patrol faced a series of corruption charges and congressional investigations. In response to reports of green card fraud, and physical and sexual abuse from immigrants' rights groups, the Department of Justice began investigating the Border Patrol in what was called "Operation Cleansweep." Cleansweep ran from 1972 to 1974, during which Congress and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights also launched their own investigations. The three investigations found that "more than 150 past and current service employees, including several top officials, facilitated 'the smuggling of illegal aliens and narcotics; [took] hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes and kickbacks from government contractors; [and] engaged in perjury, fraud, and

[341] Frank Bardacke, "The UFW and the Undocumented," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 83 (2013): 164.

obstruction of justice."[342] All three investigations also found evidence of Border Patrol agents enacting physical and sexual violence on detained immigrants. Over forty people were tried as a result of Cleansweep, but the bulk of those convicted were civilians.[343] This means that a mass of corrupt and abusive Border Patrol agents went unpunished and, in many cases, retained their positions.

Around the same time, the INS was under fire from Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman, who criticized the service's ineffectual investigations of suspected Nazi war criminals who had been allowed to enter to the U.S. after World War II. She and Congressman Joshua Eilberg ordered the Commissioner of the INS to provide updated reports in order to "uncover the extent of the government's involvement with Nazi war criminals."[344] When INS reports were still slow, Holtzman and Eilberg began to investigate the CIA's role in obscuring information on Nazi war criminals in the U.S. An internal report found that the CIA "had employed at least a dozen of these subjects over the years."[345] These efforts culminated in the passage of the Holtzman Amendment in 1978, which allowed for the deportation of any immigrant found to have aided the Nazi

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[342] Jensen Branscombe, "Diversity in the Border Patrol: Race and Gender in Immigration Enforcement along the US-Mexico Border," in *Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America*, ed. Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020), 224. Ebook version.
[343] "Criticism Mounts on Handling on Government Probe," *El Malcriado*, October 18, 1974, https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1974/No.%2010%20October%2018,%201974.pdf.
[344] Central Intelligence Agency, "Nazi War Crimes Research Report," by Kevin Ruffner, Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act, Special Collection, www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/NAZI WAR CRIMES RESEARCH REPORT%20 (K. RUFFNER)_0001.pdf.
[345] Ibid.

government in persecuting victims of the Holocaust. While the amendment was an important gain, Holtzman and Eilberg were unable to hold any INS or CIA officials accountable for aiding Nazi war criminals immigrate to and work for the U.S.

Although these investigations are not widely known and thus may be a surprise to present-day readers, they were national news throughout the 1970s. They were also covered in the UFW's *El Malcriado*. Avoiding hearing or reading about the INS aiding Nazi war criminals or Border Patrol agents' human rights abuses was difficult. Regardless, throughout the 1970s UFW leadership consistently advocated for more immigration raids in fields and more enforcement at the border. This advocacy was politically savvy, in that it secured support from moderate Democrats: "Calling on the INS to 'do their job' meant endorsing that role…it put the union in closer alliance with the political system by increasing people's faith in that system."[346] UFW strikers counteracted growers' narratives that they were lawless and destructive by publicly calling for greater enforcement of immigration law, foisting criminality onto their undocumented compatriots.

Projecting an unwavering "faith in [the] system" also served to distinguish UFW strikers as citizens or legal residents. In fact, throughout the 1970s, "people would say that by standing on the picket line with the UFW flag you proved to the INS that you were legal."[347] This idea was based in the make-up of the early UFW, which was mostly second and third generation Mexican-Americans in San Joaquin Valley. But this

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[346] Bruce Neuburger, *Lettuce Wars: Ten Years of Work and Struggle in the Fields of California* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2013), 215.
[347] Bardacke, "The UFW and the Undocumented," 164.

alignment with immigration enforcement proved divisive and harmful as the UFW came into the Salinas Valley, where lettuce field workers were largely first-generation Mexican immigrants, both documented and undocumented. This UFW strategy also built upon existing policing and surveillance structures that historically targeted farmworkers in the Salinas Valley.

As with all immigration laws, it's important to stress the relatively recent creation of the categories and crimes that may now feel timeless. Throughout the 1970s, it was not yet illegal for employers to hire undocumented laborers. This is to say that growers sought to break UFW strikes by deliberately recruiting undocumented workers, and since the UFW did not advocate for "scabs," the brunt of law enforcement *and* harassment was borne by undocumented laborers in Salinas Valley. Union organizer Jerry Kaye recognized the position these laborers were in, saying that the UFW understood they were fleeing poverty and were highly vulnerable to exploitation by growers threatening deportation. But still, the realities of their bleak existence did not change that "[undocumented laborers] don't realize that they are actually breaking the backs of their fellow farm workers who are trying to make the working conditions better."[348] Here, Kaye assumed ignorance on the part of undocumented laborers who simply "don't know" that they were undermining the strike. Glossing over the UFW's failure to incorporate the U.S.'s role in creating economic refugees from Latin America, he highlights unionism for Mexican Americans, not undocumented Mexicans. By evading this critique of U.S.

[348] Rick Rodriguez, "Rising Tide of 'Illegals' Keeps Border Patrol Busy," *The Californian*, October 16, 1972, Newspapers.com.

interventionism, the UFW framed undocumented laborers as desperate, ignorant scabs undermining citizens' organizing efforts.

This discourse fed conservative arguments that undocumented immigrants posed a special threat to American institutions in the Salinas Valley. In October 1972, Salinas Border Patrol agents raided the Brown & Hill Tomato packing plant in King City. They reportedly acted on tips from the UFW, which had been picketing the plant since the year before. No one was arrested during the raid, but in a nonsensical turn of events, the raid convinced Republican Congressman Burt Talcott that "there are more aliens voting in our district than there are illegal aliens working in the fields and packing sheds."[349] Talcott launched a weeks-long investigation but, unsurprisingly, found no evidence to support his claim of widespread voter fraud in Salinas Valley. But a failed investigation did not guarantee that undocumented immigrants were cleared of all suspicion in the imagination of Salinas Valley constituents. Talcott was no stranger or political outsider in the valley. He was president of Monterey County Board of Supervisors, and then served 7 terms as congressman for 16th district. The raid, and Talcott's subsequent investigation, was an opportunity for conservative politicians to take advantage of the UFW's actions for their own ends. In calling for the raid, the UFW inadvertently collaborated with this type of Salinas Valley politician.

It wasn't just Salinas Valley politicians who used undocumented immigrants as a scapegoat for threating Mexican American unionism. Two years after the first Salinas lettuce strike, and much more rigid in his belief that undocumented laborers were the

[349] "Talcott Finds No Voter Fraud," *The Californian*, October 20, 1972, Newspapers.com.

greatest threat to farmworker organizing, César Chávez began urging UFW members to take matters into their own hands. At a 1974 rally in Mendota, he encouraged attendees to write to their representatives in Washington, create petitions, and stress that "Illegals are invading the country because the Nixon Administration is permitting it."[350] Later that year, UFW members striking a lemon field in San Luis, Arizona formed their own "UFW Border Patrol." According to the UFW's own reporting in *El Malcriado*, up to 600 men and women patrolled the border day and night, working in shifts with stations of "small groups no more than 100 yards apart," that turned back immigrants and patched up "the remarkably numerous holes in the fence with barbed wire."[351] César's cousin, Manuel led the efforts and secured vehicles like dune buggies and a small plane, as well as equipment like walkie talkies and tents to house the patrol. Describing the patrol at a rally, Manuel told the crowd "soon the only thing that will cross that border without our knowledge will be desert rats, and even those will have to go underground."[352] Undocumented immigrants were imagined not just scabs, but as something even lower than that: rodents to be driven down.

The UFW patrol at San Luis ran for a year, with no intervention from local or state law enforcement agencies or Border Patrol. According to various reports, hundreds of undocumented immigrants reported being beaten by UFW patrol members, despite the

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[350] "Chavez Assails use of 'Illegals' in Mendotta Rally," *El Malcriado: Voice of the Farm Worker*, July 31, 1974, https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1974/No.7%20July%2031,%201974.pdf.
[351] "The Desert Strike," *El Malcriado*, October 18, 1974, https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/elmalcriado/1974/No.%2010%20October%2018,%201974.pdf.
[352] Ibid.

union's public stance on nonviolence.[353] Although there is no evidence of a similar UFW patrol in the Salinas Valley these patrols illustrate another facet of the UFW's commitment to policing and controlling the movement of undocumented immigrants. They also contextualize undocumented immigrants' reports of harassment from UFW strikers in Salinas Valley. These weren't simply taunts coming from laborers who were otherwise facing the same circumstances in industrial agriculture. The UFW was militant and organized about immigration law and border enforcement, and had proven they were not hesitant to physically enforce the law themselves.

In the Salinas Valley, this militancy translated into stepped up national campaigns and pressure on the INS. After UFW representatives testified at one of the national hearings investigating corruption in the INS, the service increased its staff in the area. Subsequent raids "tripled the number of arrests of undocumented aliens normally made during the lettuce harvest in Salinas."[354] The Salinas Border Patrol office added two more agents, and arrested over 7,500 undocumented laborers in 1975.[355] They kept this pace up the following spring, making over 700 arrests in the span of just four months.[356] With these numbers, the Border Patrol matched their arrest rates in the valley from the early 1950s. Importantly, undocumented immigrants were not detained in labor camps as they had been two decades prior. They were instead processed in the Salinas office, where they stayed for no longer than two hours before being bussed to a central depot in Fresno

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[353] Bardacke, "The UFW and the Undocumented," 166.
[354] Majka and Majka, *Farmworkers*, 261.
[355] "Border Patrol Chief Rebuts Charges by Candidate Panetta," *The Californian*, September 3, 1976, Newspapers.com.
[356] "Border Patrol Nabs 717 Illegals in April," *The Californian*, May 10, 1976, Newspapers.com.

and from there were transported to a detention camp in El Centro.[357] This process created an immigration detention corridor through California's rural agricultural valleys. In this way, 1970s deportation schemes precipitated California's use of rural space to site prisons.

The Border Patrol's arrest streak did not last long. In anticipation of a renewed UFW lettuce strike, agribusiness interests ensured access to undocumented laborers by lobbying for decreased funding for Border Patrol regional posts. By May of 1977, the Salinas office cut its manpower in half; arrests the previous month were down to 371.[358] Anti-immigrant sentiment had not decreased, however, and these perceived gaps in border enforcement emboldened hate groups to organize their own patrols. In November of that same year, the California state director of the Ku Klux Klan announced a new initiative to pull their patrols from the border and move them inland, specifically targeting Salinas Valley.

The KKK called the valley the "second line of defense," and claimed that members would adhere to the law by informing the Border Patrol office and the Monterey County sheriff's department. Instead of condemning or explicitly rejecting the KKK's help on the grounds of it being a hate group, Salinas Border Patrol agents claimed their help would just be ineffectual: "there's little chance the information would be acted on *because of a shortage of manpower within the law enforcement agency*."[359] Here, the Border Patrol was establishing plausible deniability, essentially washing its hands of any subsequent

[357] Rodriguez, "Rising Tide."
[358] "Raiders Ruining Harvest?" *The Californian*, May 21, 1977, Newspapers.com.
[359] "Klan's Been No Help Spotting Illegals in Salinas Valley," *The Californian*, November 5, 1977, Newspapers.com. Emphasis added.

violence on undocumented laborers. The casual attitude of Salinas Border Patrol agents toward the KKK was in keeping with a larger anti-immigrant sentiment that was cosigned by leadership. When Salinas Border Patrol Chief Galley Sill retired in 1978, he recoiled at a reporter's question about whether the patrol's purpose was in keeping with the Statue of Liberty's inscription. Sill replied simply: "That sign on the bottom of the Statue of Liberty should be torn off and thrown into the ocean."[360]

Assistant Sheriff Bud Cook similarly refrained from expressing concerns about the KKK's presence in Salinas Valley. When asked about how the department would ensure people's safety if there were KKK patrols, Cook claimed that "the Sheriff's Department could not interfere with the patrol because citizens are free to tip law enforcement agencies to possible illegal activities."[361] Cook leaned on a discourse of citizens' rights to evade questions about farmworker safety, much like Sheriff Abbott had warned Filipinos in the 1934 strike that the department would be powerless to stop growers from protecting their property by any means necessary. The sheriff's department granted primacy to grower property rights in 1934 and the reporting rights of Klan members in 1977, over farmworkers' right to life. It is these moments that underscore the urgency of reorienting agricultural labor studies toward policing and carceral theories. State violence does not just happen in the context of labor strikes, or only to strikers. Here, undocumented immigrants—the vilified strikebreakers—were vulnerable to detention

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[360] Ken Schultz, "Ex-Border Chief says Keep Aliens Out," *The Californian*, January 7, 1978, Newspapers.com.
[361] "Klan Claims it will Expand 'Illegals Patrol' to Valley," *The Californian*, November 1, 1977, Newspapers.com.

and deportation. The withdrawal of protection from local law enforcement, in the face of an imminent threat, is also a form of state violence.

Insisting on the role of policing in the subjugation of farmworkers and the failures of the justice system is not new. It is a view the UFW expressed at a two-day public hearing in Salinas in 1979 where César Chávez blasted Imperial County officials for dismissing murder charges against a ranch foreman accused of murdering UFW striker Rufino Contreras 2 months earlier.[362] He was critical of law enforcement, framing their inaction to protect strikers as a form of collaboration with growers. He went on to argue that the Border Patrol also collaborated with growers by doing intentional raids during the harvest season. He was especially irate because he claimed that "union officials had supplied specific information to federal Immigration and Naturalization Service officers, from local Border Patrol agents all the way up the ladder to U.S. INS Commissioner Lionel Castillo, with no effect."[363] UFW officials were informants at the local and federal level. And yet, unleashing a deportation force on undocumented laborers was not considered a form of state violence like the one that Chávez was rightfully criticizing. It is more productive to account for this difficult history so that our scholarship does not reproduce a resistance narrative and instead theorize the central role of local, state, and federal policing in industrial agriculture.

Policing and carceral mechanisms were also used by growers, on and off the clock. Under the guise of protecting the fields from strikers, growers hired private security

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[362] Doug Foster, "Senator Opens Hearing with Angry Blast," *The Californian,* April 26, 1979, Newspapers.com.
[363] Ibid.

guards to stand watch during the workday. On the surface, the guards were a line of defense against strikers with a history of hostility toward undocumented laborers. But the guards contained undocumented laborers from the strikers, clamping down on opportunities for them to join the picket. Despite the UFW leadership's collaboration with the INS and Border Patrol, rank-and-file members from Salinas Valley were successful in recruiting undocumented laborers to the picket line. These members also warned that growers' guards were "recruited from the Ku Klux Klan, Nazi Party and Posse Comitatus."[364] Therefore, undocumented laborers were surveilled on the job by armed white supremacists, operating with no legal oversight. Labor camps enclosed by barbed wire and outfitted with secured entries, like the ones pioneered by Salinas Valley growers in the late 1930s, were still in use. So, undocumented laborers' left guarded fields each day for camps that more closely resembled jails.

Undocumented laborers were highly surveilled and policed by three separate entities: the growers' security force, the Border Patrol, and UFW members acting as informants for the INS. With little support from Salinas Valley residents, these laborers were especially vulnerable to unchecked violence. On May 16, 1979, Angel Vargas, an undocumented farmworker, was injured when a Border Patrol van ran into him. The incident happened during a raid on Cooperativa Azteca's strawberry fields. Annie Diaz, a coop representative, claimed that when Vargas ran at the sight of agents, the van picked up speed and hit him with the front left of the bumper. Instead of giving Vargas first aid,

[364] Ibid.

agents threw him inside the van. Diaz claimed that an agent yelled obscenities at her when she protested Vargas's treatment:

> I said, why did you run over him? He said, why did he (Vargas) run. I said, All Mexicans from Mexico run when they see you guys. He said – then that's what they get. They told me to leave. That it was none of my business. He said: F--- all of you. I don't have to take this S---.[365]

The agent' s petulant response was accurate, in accounting for the impunity with which the Border Patrol operated. As shown by three failed federal investigations, the agent did not have to take anything that Diaz was serving.

During the UFW's early days in Salinas, Jerry Cohen, the United Farm Workers chief counsel, was frustrated by Chicana/o student activists who criticized the union's stance on undocumented workers. Cohen proposed a rather morbid analogy in a casual conversation with a white UFW volunteer: those arguing that the UFW should support undocumented workers on the basis of a shared Mexican ancestry would likely also advocate for Juan Corona.[366] Juan Corona was a Mexican labor contractor charged with murdering 25 migrant farmworkers in Yuba City, California. Reflecting on the conversation, the volunteer noted: "Cohen's real point was that criticizing the union's stand on undocumented 'illegal' strikebreakers was tantamount to defending Juan Corona. Undocumented immigrants used as scabs were scabs, period…Scabs were tools of the enemy and needed to be fought against by any means necessary."[367] Cohen's point was far from uncommon among UFW leaders. Undocumented immigrants were seen first

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[365] "Reports Conflict in Border Patrol Arrest of Illegal Farmworker," *The Californian*, May 17, 1979, Newspapers.com.
[366] Neuburger, *Lettuce Wars*, 212.
[367] Ibid., 213.

as strikebreakers, and second as law breakers. Faced with mounting criticism, the union began to acknowledge undocumented workers' vulnerability to exploitation in the mid 1970s. But by the end of the decade, Chávez publicly acted as an informant for Immigration and Naturalization Services and admonished the Border Patrol office in Salinas for not doing their job.

This is not an easy history to digest. Indeed, approaching the legacy of the early UFW and Chávez specifically, is a personally and academically dangerous endeavor. In his blistering response to Matt García's *From the Jaws of Victory*, noted scholar and veteran Chicano activist Rodolfo Acuña dismissed characterizations of Chávez as anti-immigrant, noting that his stance was in keeping with the general consensus of the time:

> César was a trade unionist, and as a trade unionist accepted the ridiculous premise that farm workers could not be organized until the flow from Mexico was stopped. Few activists at the time emphasized that it was American policy that created migration.[368]

This recounting of both Chávez's myopic reasoning, and a widespread lack of critique of U.S. intervention in Latin America is rhetorical sleight of hand. Acuña equates historical fact with moral truth; just because few people at the time committed themselves to the type of inquiry required to see undocumented workers as a vulnerable population does not mean they were then right to treat undocumented workers as "scabs, period."

More importantly, this chapter is not invested in making sense of or apologizing for the early UFW and Chávez's actions. That is an aside that is at best irrelevant and at

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[368] Rodolfo F. Acuña, "It's a Wonderful Life? Too Many Chicana/o Academics Sacrifice Needs of Community or Students for Career Advancement," *Mexmigration: History and Politics of Mexican Immigration*, last modified February 13, 2013, http://mexmigration.blogspot.com/2013/02/acuna-on-sport-of-criticizing-chicanao.html.

worst epistemically unjust, and which would not change the historical facts on which Acuña is so insistent. Chávez and early UFW leaders collaborated with INS, used national media to call on Border Patrol to carry out more raids in Salinas Valley, and engaged in discourses of citizenship to express their identity as UFW strikers and claim their rights as U.S. citizens.[369] All of this is documented in local newspaper archives, as well as the UFW's own publication *El Malcriado*. Simply put: these things happened, and there's proof readily available in archives. They did not introduce anti-immigrant sentiment to the Salinas Valley, nor did they create structures of policing that weren't already there. They did, however, form part of a triad that surveilled and policed undocumented immigrants.

The burden is not on us to rescue or condemn historical actors' moral character; rather, these events provide a useable history. Furthermore, deportation regimes don't necessarily require all actors to have a personal bias against immigrants. Thus, two things can be true at the same time: Chávez et al. were genuinely committed to the fight against exploitative industrial agriculture in Salinas Valley; and, they were insistent on the utility of policing undocumented immigrants, boosting immigration raids and deportation as a tool in that fight. This proved a volatile cocktail in the Salinas Valley, where valley law enforcement was historically uninterested in protecting farmworkers and Border Patrol agents were openly xenophobic. We must sit with this history to stop obscuring the

[369] In an effort to highlight the UFW's stance on undocumented laborers, I will keep the pejorative "illegal/illegal alien" in direct quotations, so as to not retroactively credit them with the term "undocumented."

experiences of undocumented laborers during the 1970s strikes, and truly build a history from below.

NUESTRA FAMILIA & NORTEÑOS: ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT IN THE STREETS

While the UFW was calling the Border Patrol to remove undocumented migrants from convoluting their pathway to full citizenship as enfranchised union members, another simultaneous transformation was taking place in the form of gangs. In addition, unlikely ideological synergies between the UFW and Salinas Valley gangs emerged through anti-immigrant sentiment. For a rural space, Salinas Valley has experienced a surprising level of deadly gang violence. These are not small-time neighborhood gangs, nor are they imported from urban spaces.

The valley is largely Norteño territory. Norteños are the street equivalent of the prison gang Nuestra Familia, a highly sophisticated criminal syndicate running narcotics and guns throughout west and southwest. But its origins are in the experiences and grievances of Mexican-Americans from rural agricultural communities in California. These grievances are intra-ethnic, and towards those they perceive as "invaders" from southern California and south of the U.S. border who exacerbate their poor labor conditions. I detail their history below, not as an apologist account of gangs nor as a condemnation. Instead, this counters the characterization of poor Mexican-Americans in Salinas Valley as an inherently criminal underclass. Exploitative agricultural labor and anti-immigrant sentiment fueled the start of the valley's most active gang.

In the late 1960s, tensions at San Quentin State Prison erupted between Mexican American inmates from rural northern California towns and members of the Mexican Mafia, a prison gang formed by Mexican Americans from East Los Angeles. There is no definitive account on the origin of the hostilities, as some authorities believe it began as a fight over a stolen pair of shoes, while others posit that the rural inmates faced constant pressure from the Mexican Mafia for "things such as canteen items and homosexual acts."[370] In what would ultimately prove to be a short-sighted attempt to control the conflict, California officials transferred the rural inmates to Soledad State Prison in 1973. There, they formed a prison gang first called "the 'Blooming Flower,' then 'La Familia,' then 'La Familia Mexicana,' and finally 'Nuestra Familia.'"[371] The succession of names provides an interesting trajectory in the gang's ideas about their own experiences with violence and agriculture. "La Familia Mexicana" might have seemed too similar to the Mexican Mafia that harassed them. It would have also evoked too close of an affiliation with recent Mexican immigrants, a group with whom rural Mexican-Americans competed for agricultural labor.

At Soledad, founding members of Nuestra Familia (NF) gave formal structure to their prison gang with a constitution, "Supreme Power Structure of La Nuestra Familia," and a special subdivision outlining practices "for street use only." NF is structured like a

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[370] Brian Kahn, *Prison Gangs in the Community: A Briefing Document for the Board of Corrections* (Sacramento: State of California, 1978), 12.
[371] George M. Camp and Camille Graham Camp, *Prison Gangs: Their Extent, Nature, and Impact on Prisons* (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Legal Policy, Federal Research Justice Program, 1985), 93.

paramilitary, with generals, captains, lieutenants, and soldiers.[372] Article V, section IV of the NF constitution restricts membership "only to those of latin extraction," but allows possibility for interracial solidarity "with the consent of both the capitan and nuestro general."[373] This flexibility is rare elsewhere in the founding documents. Article VI, section VIII makes it clear that the Constitution is to be followed to the letter, forbidding any "familiano to put their own interpretations upon said constitution."[374] This level of organization and control aided NF's survival, especially in its outnumbered early days, and marked it as a carefully planned social system.

NF identity is expressed through iconography and rituals that evoke their experience with rural farm work. The violence UFW strikers faced, and their struggle for dignity and respect resonated with NF members. Since the gang's formal launch in 1973, they have used the UFW's huelga bird as one of the gang's symbols.[375] They also adopted one of the union's slogans, "Viva la causa," translating it to English and making "the Cause" an acronym for Carnalismo, Awareness, Unity, Security, and Education/Equality.[376] The Monterey County jail also held symbolic importance for members of the NF street gang Norteños, for whom a part of gang initiation meant being locked up in the same place that once held César Chávez.[377] This ritual proved a

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[372] Kahn, *Prison Gangs*, 13-14.
[373] Ibid., 91-B.
[374] Ibid., 92-B.
[375] "Nortenos 14 Knowledge: A Detailed Look Inside One of Americas Most Deadly Street Gang Alliances," http://nortenos-14.com/.
[376] Julia Reynolds, *Blood in the Fields: Ten Years Inside California's Nuestra Familia Gang* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2014), 61. Ebook.
[377] *Nuestra Familia, Our Family*. Directed by Oriana Zill de Granados. 2006. Emeryville: The Center for Investigative Reporting.

willingness to serve time and provided a history lesson on the strike, both of which gave Norteños credibility as they moved up the NF ranks. Accounting for their highly organized structure and their seeming affinity with the UFW demonstrates how NF was able to spread outside of Soledad State and absorb existing rural street gangs into the Norteño network so quickly. Salinas East Marqueta, the Salinas street gang absorbed by NF, would eventually grow "to include more than a hundred members and was recognized by everyone from local cops to federal investigators as the oldest and largest Norteño gang."[378]

A group of seven Mexican-American youths claimed a fruit stand on the corner of East Market Street and Madeira Avenue as their hangout spot in the late 1960s and early 70s. The group was first known as the "Fruit Standers." They were all children of immigrant farmworkers, who were carving out their identities as Mexican-Americans born and raised in Salinas. They wanted to uphold their dignity from the old white farmers who exploited their parents, but their rebellion didn't feel represented by the "slick pachuco style of L.A."; they also "resented the flood of new arrivals from México who accepted the lowest wages and the worst work in the fields."[379] As NF ideology began to reach the streets of Salinas by the mid-70s, the Fruit Standers morphed into Salinas East Marqueta (SEM), an explicitly Norteño street gang.

SEM members soon combined their existing anti-immigrant sentiment with Norteño identifiers, and reasoned that both immigrants and rival gang members from the

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[378] Julia Reynolds, *Blood in the Fields*, 8.
[379] Ibid., 7. Ebook.

south were one and the same: Sureños, the street gang equivalent of Mexican Mafia, the NF's rival.[380] Merging recent immigrants with Sureños would seem to ignore that gang's roots in urban Mexican-American communities. But, in Salinas, Sureños "had always been foreign, Spanish-speaking, soccer-playing paisas, and it was easy to see them as outside invaders."[381] SEM's violence did not distinguish between actual gang members and recent immigrants. In fact, they continually targeted "paisa farmworkers" for robbery, knowing that many were undocumented and usually carried money from their cashed paychecks because they were unable to open bank accounts.[382]

When histories don't account for the ideological origins of gangs, they preclude an analysis of identity formation in response to socioeconomic factors and intra-ethnic tensions. Nuestra Familia and SEM are examples of Anzaldúan self-making, in which people reclaim a previously denigrated identity and actively *choose* it, rejecting the power of both RSAs and ISAs to hail them. But, this self-making is necessarily messy and often fraught with contradictions, given people's inability to make themselves outside of an already populated discursive field. SEM members were the sons of immigrant farm workers, who had varying citizenship statuses. And, they were anti-immigrant. They resented the way white Americans treated them and their families. And, they based their sense of self in their American upbringing and legal status. They claimed to stand for the cause of the "farmeros," while actively targeting immigrant farmworkers for beatings and robberies. None of this is nuance for nuance's sake. Nuestra Familia and

[380] Ibid., 8. Ebook.
[381] Ibid., 62. Ebook.
[382] Ibid., 62. Ebook.

Norteño gangs pose a serious threat to the well-being of Salinas Valley residents, as I discuss in the next chapter. But viewing them in a vacuum upholds the notion that gangs are the inevitable product of a pathologically criminal underclass, consequently justifying policing practices without taking larger systemic conditions to task. It also hides the way in which SEM's devaluation of undocumented immigrants was largely in keeping with the practices of Salinas Valley agribusiness.

MARGINALIZATION AND HYPER-SURVEILLANCE IN THE 1980S AND 1990S

In 1986, the problem of using undocumented laborers in agriculture was seemingly solved by the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA.) The act granted amnesty to over two million undocumented immigrants. It also made it illegal to knowingly hire undocumented laborers, and finally enacted punishment on growers rather than simply punishing the laborers with deportation.[383] But IRCA still acquiesced to agribusiness demands by including a "stepped-up method of granting illegal aliens, who [had] worked as farm laborers, permanent residency status."[384] Specifically, those who were employed in farm work for a duration of 90 days sometime in the twelve months before May 1, 1986 were eligible for amnesty. For comparison, the other group eligible for amnesty were those who'd arrived before 1982 and had resided in the U.S. continuously since then. The relatively shorter time requirement for farmworkers was a win for agribusiness, since this newly legalized workforce could continue to displace UFW strikers. The discord sewn between the UFW and undocumented laborers

[383] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 284.
[384] "An Immigration Surprise," *The Californian*, October 21, 1986, Newspapers.com.

in Salinas Valley was nowhere near forgotten. Growers could rely on the assumption that even with permanent residency status, those laborers would not join the UFW.

Despite its lofty goal of curtailing future illegal immigration, IRCA's sanctions on growers did not curb their hiring of undocumented immigrants. Through the reinstitution of sharecropping in the 1980s, strawberry growers in Salinas were able to skirt federal law and make labor contractors the official employers. Growers' responsibilities were just to cover operating costs and split profits equally with the sharecropper, who was considered an independent operator.[385] Unsurprisingly, this set up often left sharecroppers drowning in debt and left contracted farmworkers vulnerable to exploitation on the job and unsafe living conditions. In 1985, nearly 200 strawberry field workers contracted by José Ballín were found to be living in makeshift shelters like broken down vans or pick-up truck beds on his property. These were, unfortunately, the better dwellings. A number of the field workers slept in holes in they had to dig in the ground themselves. On the whole of the property, there were no toilets and only one faucet, which was used for both drinking and bathing. The "Ranch of Caves" made local headlines when California Rural Legal Assistance filed a lawsuit against Ballín.[386] It also exposed the lax enforcement of labor safety measures in Salinas Valley, since it was not the first time his camps were operating in such shocking conditions; Ballín's labor camps had already been closed in 1976 and 1981. Strawberry sharecropping phased out when the California Supreme Court decided that sharecroppers could not legally be classified as independent operators,

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[385] Eric Schlosser, "In the Strawberry Fields," *The Atlantic*, November 1995, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1995/11/in-the-strawberry-fields/305754/.
[386] Mark Whittington, "Farm Workers Who Lived in Caves Settle Suit," *The Californian*, April 25, 1987, Newspapers.com.

making growers liable for labor and workers compensation laws. Getting rid of sharecropping was touted as a move toward modernizing agricultural labor. Modernizing would also mean new systems of surveillance and control.

In 1989, members of the lettuce scion Taylor and Church families joined to create Fresh Express, a lettuce product packing shed that would significantly change American groceries, and packers' labor conditions. After microwavable "TV dinners" proved to be a hit in 1986, Fresh Express sensed an opportunity for fresh products. They created what we know call ready-to-eat salads (RTEs), or bagged lettuce products that can be eaten straight out of the bag. RTEs have constituted billions in sales, and they "remain one of the most successful products in the grocery aisle today, with constituent double-digit growth that is second only to bottled water."[387] The comparison with bottled water is appropriate in two ways. First, both are so ubiquitous now that they seem like products that we've always had. Second, they both have political impacts on marginalized communities that the general public may not be aware of. By marketing their RTE's with a promise that consumers would not have to wash or prepare the product before using it, Fresh Express primed customers to believe that new food safety measures and surveillance were justified.

Fresh Express innovated three new categories of food safety, specifically for RTEs, that focused on surveilling and controlling laborers' movements and bodies. The "Good Agricultural Practices" established new standards that lettuce fields had to meet to

[387] Sarah Fister Gale, "Fresh Express: Cutting-Edge Food Safety," *Food Safety Magazine*, March 2004, last modified April 26, 2016, https://www.foodsafetymagazine.com/magazine-archive1/februarymarch-2004/fresh-express-cutting-edge-food-safety/.

supply raw material. Field laborers were subject to Fresh Express's practices, which included matching crews of laborers to lots of raw material.[388] If a lot came up defective or substandard later in the packing process, it could then be traced back to the particular crew that picked it. Despite not working in the packing shed, field laborers could thus still be disciplined by Fresh Express. The "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points" operated similarly, but focused on logistics and sanitation crews. The category that transformed the packing shed into a space of hyper-surveillance and sanitation was the "Good Manufacturing Practices" (GMPs).

The GMPs mandated relatively ordinary practices, like regular handwashing and the use of protective equipment like gloves and hair nets.[389] But making a fresh product that consumers expect to eat straight out of the bag means that the entire body must be sanitized. Because Fresh Express and other companies do not freely share their GMPs or employee rules, the following descriptions are based on my personal experience working inside an RTE packing shed. At the start of each shift, employees line up at a wall with various stations and go through each, one by one. The first stop is the smock room, where they receive a smock freshly sanitized with industrial soap. Then, they move toward a large box-shaped computer on the wall. This is the time-clock, which uses biometric technology; each employee puts their thumb on a thumbpad, and when their print is read, they are clocked in. Employees who have worked at the plant for more than a decade often have trouble clocking in with their thumb. This isn't because of a generational,

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[388] "Fresh Fact 5," Our History, Fresh Express, last modified March 13, 2017, https://www.freshexpress.com/about/history.
[389] Gale, "Fresh Express."

technology divide. It's because their thumbprints are sometimes worn off by prolonged exposure to industrial chemicals. Once they clock in, employees stand over a sink built into the wall and scrub their hands with soap for at least twenty seconds. After drying, they put on gloves that reach to their elbows and before walking into the plant, they must step in the boot dip. The entire process resembles an assembly line, but here the "finished product" is a sanitized laborer.

The sanitizing assembly line is closely monitored on CCTV by food safety managers and the plant's private security guards. Any laborer caught in violation of the GMPs is subject to discipline or outright dismissal. Inside the plant, there are dozens of conveyor belts carrying loose lettuce or spinach leaves toward pressurized air machines that bag them. The bags then continue on the conveyor belt toward laborers who pack a designated number of bags per box. These set ups are simply called "lines." Each line is supervised by a head bagger at the conveyor belt, a Quality Assurance technician, and a floating production manager. In-person supervision is supplemented by CCTV inside the plant too, creating a packing panopticon in which every laborer knows that they are being watched by at least one person at all times. The level of surveillance inside packing sheds is hard to visualize if you've never been inside one, and it's not something easy to learn about because packing sheds are notoriously secretive about their inner workings. This is partly why private security guards are posted at all entrances to the plant compound around the clock every day, and why packing sheds have high fences and barbed wire around their perimeter.

These measures are, of course, in the service of public health; no one wants to contract E. Coli from their bagged salad. However, we should also analyze food safety standards, insofar as they justify hyper-surveillance and punishment of agricultural laborers for a nonessential product created for consumer convenience. Again, ready-to-eat bagged salads are relatively recent inventions, as is the notion that we should rightfully expect to eat produce without having to wash it first. The first national Food Code published in early 1930s, and is now published with updates every four years by the Food and Drug Administration; the most recent iteration was published in 2013.[390] Obviously, food-borne illnesses have been around since before a Food Code was created. We must underscore that food safety standards are not created in a socio-historical vacuum and are not rigid, trans-historical rules. In fact, the Food Code is "filled with flexible standards that can only be applied subjectively."[391] For example, the Code will often state that surfaces are ready to use for food preparation if they are "wiped clean." But what exactly does that mean: wiped clean with a damp rag, or sanitized and spray-washed with an industrial chemical?

These standards can also vary by local and state governments, as these entities are only bound to "use the FDA Food Code *as a model* to develop or update *their own* food safety rules and to be consistent with national food regulatory policy."[392] Food safety standards, then, are the produce of much more varied and subjective judgments than what

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[390] "FDA Food Code," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/.
[391] Alfonso Morales and Gregg Kettles, "Healthy Food Outside: Farmers' Markets, Taco Trucks, and Sidewalk Fruit Vendors," *The Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy* 26, no. 1 (2009): 43.
[392] "FDA Food Code."

we may have assumed. As subjective judgments they are vulnerable to the influence of ingrained biases and external racial discourses that link people of color with disease and dirtiness, facilitating the uneven surveillance and policing of brown and black bodies in the food production industry.

Furthermore, we should account for a longer history of suspicion toward Mexicans and food safety. U.S. immigration officials argued that Mexican migrants who frequently crossed the border into Mexico were more likely to carry disease, and since the 1920s Mexicans crossing the border were sprayed with pesticides because they were assumed to have lice. Immigration officials later used the association between Mexicans and disease as a pretext to deport labor activists in the 1940s.[393] Since Mexicans were linked with disease in American cultural imagination, the things they touched and prepared were also viewed with suspicion. Mexican chili vendors in 1920s San Antonio were seen as dangerous, both for their presumed racial characteristics, and for the unstable nature of chili, which could upset the digestive system of white Texans unaccustomed to the spices in the dish.[394] The preoccupation with white people's physical well-being in the discourse around food prepared by Mexicans continues in the naming of traveler's diarrhea as "Montezuma's Revenge." The use of this term hinges on the idea of Mexican-as-suspect to convey the notion that food prepared by Mexicans is done in such a way as to deliberately punish white bodies. This is important because people of Mexican descent comprised the bulk of agricultural labor, and after the 1980s

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[393] Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 92-94.
[394] Stephen R. Christ, "The Social Organization of Authenticity in Mexican Restaurants," (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2015), 86.

increasingly began working in packing sheds as white laborers moved to other industries. Subjective food safety standards justify hyper-surveillance of people that have historically been perceived as dirty—all for a product that serves no real need, but was since its inception imagined as a convenience.

Fresh Express GMPs expanded the valley's carceral geography into agricultural packing sheds in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This was a process simultaneous with rural California's prison boom. Los Angeles residents pushed back on a proposed new prison in the early 1980s. In response, the California Department of Corrections (CDC) created a Prison Siting Office tasked with finding suitable locations for new maximum security prisons.[395] The Siting Office found rural areas to be prime for development of new prisons, as "industry closures, downsizing, and capital abandonment left large tracts of land available for development."[396] In a span of ten years, rural areas in California saw the creation of eight new prisons. A new maximum-security facility, Salinas Valley State Prison, was opened in 1996 on the same tract of land behind the Soledad State facilities.[397] Despite the promise of new, better-paying jobs with benefits, Salinas Valley residents were largely shut out of employment at the new prison. Guards were instead initially recruited from other prisons.

Increasing Wealth Disparities

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[395] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 103.
[396] Ibid., 104.
[397] Don Chaddock, "Unlocking History: CTF-Soledad's Colorful Past Runs from Hollywood to Disney," *Inside CDCR*, June 22, 2015, http://www.insidecdcr.ca.gov/2015/06/unlocking-history-ctf-soledads-colorful-past-runs-from-hollywood-to-disney/.

Within the city of Salinas, the segregation of low-income farmworkers created the community of Alisal, which was incorporated into the city as East Salinas in the 1960s. In the 1990s and 2000s, East Salinas was, and continues to be, home to the majority of low-income agricultural laborers in the city. The community is comprised mostly of Mexican immigrants or 2nd to 3rd generation Mexican-Americans. Contemporary East Salinas is the most densely populated part of the city, a figure reached by the necessary practice of several families sharing single-family apartments or homes. Much of the Salinas Valley's above national average poverty is concentrated in this area of the city.[398] Over twenty percent of Latino residents—who make up the majority of agricultural workers—and twenty-five percent of children in the Salinas Valley live below poverty level.[399] Outside of Salinas city limits, in unincorporated farming communities like Las Lomas and San Jerardo, residents struggle with water contamination. These communities do not have access to municipal water sources, and their water wells have high levels of nitrate from the pesticides that dust the surrounding agricultural fields. In 2015, they had to appeal to the Salinas Valley's water regulatory board to start planning a resolution to their limited water access.[400]

In contrast, Salinas's 93908 zip code, which includes gated residential community Las Palmas Ranch and unincorporated areas like Confederate Corners, San Benancio and

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[398] Ana Ceballos, "East Salinas Neighborhoods to be Revitalized," *Monterey County Weekly*, July 21, 2016, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/news/local_news/east-salinas-neighborhoods-to-be-revitalized/article_25aec42e-4ebc-11e6-86c8-b739ad18278e.html.
[399] "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates," U.S. Census Bureau, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF.
[400] Dennis L. Taylor, "Monterey County Residents Paying for Contaminated Wells," *The Californian*, March 4, 2015, http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/money/2015/03/04/monterey-county-residents-paying-contaminated-wells/24405737/.

Corral de Tierra, is over eighty percent white.[401] The majority of the valley's wealth is concentrated in this white enclave with a median household income of $119,000, and over twenty percent of residents reporting an income above $200,000 a year.[402] These communities also house the agricultural industry's top staff, with over fifty percent of residents reporting employment in management and business occupations.[403] Thus, these communities are not simply segregated along lines of race and class, but among racialized labor divisions that have been entrenched in the valley since the 1930s.

Since 2012, the Salinas Valley's agricultural production has been valued at over four billion dollars a year.[404] Almost one out of four workers in the valley are employed directly in agriculture.[405] Despite the healthy agricultural economy, the Salinas Valley continues to operate within agriculture oligopolies that contribute to "resource depletion, mechanization of agricultural processes, and closure of manufacturing and other employment establishments," thus perpetuating conditions of poverty for the majority of residents.[406] For example, Fresh Express, which "dominate[d] 40 percent of the $2.7

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[401]"ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates," U.S. Census Bureau, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF.
[402] "Selected Economic Characteristics: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,"U.S. Census Bureau, https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF.
[403] Ibid.
[404] Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, *Monterey County 2015 Crop Report* (Monterey: Agricultural Impact Associates, 2015), 1. http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=12607.
[405] Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, *Economic Contributions of Monterey County Agriculture: Leading the Field Through Diversity and Technology* (Monterey: Agricultural Impact Associates, 2015), 3. http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=1545.
[406] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 64.

billion market," was bought out by Chiquita Brands International in 2005.[407] This acquisition gave Fresh Express—already the leading force over the majority of its market—the capital and structural support of a producer that was originally the United Fruit Company, the paragon of produce oligarchies. Despite their assurance that the processing plant's operations would continue as usual in Salinas, Chiquita moved Fresh Express's administrative headquarters to North Carolina shortly after the purchase.[408] This move meant that the plant—one of the few unionized agricultural sheds with year-round work in Salinas Valley—would only provide residents industrial labor positions with few growth opportunities.

Salinas Valley agricultural packing sheds also benefit financially and in public relations by securing contracts with national corporations that advocate for ethical food consumption. For example, Taylor Farms—founded by third-generation Salinas Valley grower Bruce Taylor (who also co-founded Fresh Express with the Church family)—supplies Chipotle with produce from its Salinas and Tracy plants. While Chipotle's website alludes to the revenue power of large scale agricultural production, they make no mention of the detrimental socio-economic effects that industrial agriculture creates, admitting only that their heightened food safety procedures have made it hard to rely on

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[407] Carolyn Said, "Chiquita Heads into Lettuce/Top Banana Firm Buys Packaged-Salad Leader Fresh Express," *SF Gate*, February 24, 2005, http://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Chiquita-heads-into-lettuce-Top-banana-firm-2728263.php.
[408] Dennis L. Taylor and Bruce Horvitz, "Salinas' Fresh Express Parent Sold," *The Californian*, February 18, 2015, http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/money/2015/02/18/salinas-fresh-express-parent-sold/23627883/.

smaller farms for fresh produce.[409] Taylor Farms presents its operations much in the same way as Chipotle, foregrounding their "genuine commitment to responsible practices," like investment in renewable energy.[410] Like Chipotle, Taylor Farms' ethical concerns extend only to environmental practices, and not to laborers.

From 2013 to 2019, laborers at Taylor Farms' plant in Tracy attempted to unionize and bargain for safer working conditions and increased benefits. Over half of the plant's employees were classified as temporary employees, which means that despite years of working there, these laborers were considered at-will employees who could legally be paid less than permanent employees and be fired without cause. Laborers' requests for union recognition were met, unsurprisingly, with intimidation and threats of deportation.[411] In 2015, a chlorine and chemical leak at the Tracy plant sent twenty employees, including two pregnant women, to the hospital "with symptoms ranging from nosebleeds to vomiting and fainting."[412] Industrial labor is, of course, inherently riskier than other forms of labor and so, as unfortunate as this was, it is not totally outside of expectations for there to be these sorts of incidents.

However, Taylor Farms had previously been fined for this exact safety failure in 2012, when a chlorine leak sent an entire shift to the hospital. The California Division of

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[409] "Local Grower Support Initiative," Chipotle Mexican Grill, https://www.chipotle.com/localgrowersupport.
[410] "Sustainability," Taylor Farms, http://www.taylorfarms.com/art-of-growing/sustainability/.
[411] Rory Carroll, "Billion-dollar California Salad Company Exploits Undocumented Migrants, Says Workers and Teamsters," *The Guardian*, November 23, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/23/billion-dollar-california-salad-company-exploits-undocumented-migrants-say-workers-and-teamsters.
[412] Natalie Jacewicz, "20 Salad Workers Hospitalized in Chemical Spill," *The Californian*, October 19, 2015, http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/my-planet/2015/10/19/salad-workers-hospitalized-chemical-spill/74244700/.

Occupational Safety and Health fined Taylor Farms $1,685—barely a drop in the bucket of the company's $1.2 billion yearly revenue.[413] Victims of the 2015 chemical spill claimed that, upon reporting their symptoms to supervisors, they were told to put on thin dust masks and had to call 911 when management wasn't looking so as to not be reprimanded.[414] Union activists tried bringing these incidents and laborers' struggles to Chipotle's attention with protests outside of their restaurants in San Jose and San Francisco.[415] They also sent a letter to Chipotle CEOs Steve Ells and Monty Moran, to which a Chipotle spokesperson responded by apologizing to Chipotle customers "if their mealtime enjoyment is disrupted by the union."[416] As of 2019, Taylor Farms had not recognized a union at its Tracy plant, and Chipotle's official stance is that it won't intervene in a labor dispute in which it has no stake. This is an example of how discourse on "ethical" food consumption can be used to obscure labor rights abuses. A focus on clean eating and produce also relies on the pastoral ideal, in that it assumes that all fresh produce is farm-to-table, instead of something produced in highly mechanized and surveilled spaces by companies worth billions of dollars that pay their employees poverty wages.

The valley's wealth disparity translates also to a disparity in political power. Statewide, agricultural interests, backed by a nearly thirty-billion-dollar yearly value,

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[413] Ibid.
[414] "Chemical Spill at Taylor Farms," YouTube Video, 2:53, posted by "TeamsterPower," December 10, 2015, https://youtu.be/6TY2h-WBLcg.
[415] David Castellon, "Union Targets Taylor Farms through Chipotle," *The Californian*, April 12, 2016, http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/local/2016/04/12/union-targets-taylor-farms-chipotle/82964912/.
[416] Virginia Chamlee, "Why Chipotle is Getting Hit with Farm Worker Protests," *Eater*, April 14, 2016, https://www.eater.com/2016/4/14/11422610/chipotle-workers-rights-union.

"dominate the districts and counties where they are located, controlling many local legislators and county and town governments, in part through making substantial campaign contributions."[417] This political power is evident in the valley's local political action committee, Salinas Valley Leadership Group (SVLG), whose members include the owners, CEOs, and top staff of four of the largest agricultural production companies in the area.[418] In 2014, SVLG raised over a hundred thousand dollars for county-wide elections, contributing five thousand for incumbent Salinas Mayor Joe Gunter, a former police officer whose main platform was expanding the city's police department.[419]

That same year, SVLG contributed ten thousand dollars to John Phillips's successful campaign for County Supervisor. Phillips served as Monterey County Superior Court judge for over two decades, during which he was known for delivering harsh sentences to young offenders of color.[420] The impact a judge like Phillips had in the Salinas Valley is best measured in the chronic underemployment of ex-convicts of color. The majority of large packing sheds in Salinas Valley, like Fresh Express, do not offer permanent employment to workers with a felony conviction. Informally, those suspected of being gang affiliated, like those with visible tattoos, are discriminated against in the

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[417] Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, 105.
[418] "SVLG Members," Salinas Valley Leadership Group, http://salinasvalleyleadershipgroup.com/members/. The four companies are: Mann Packing, Ocean Mist, Tanimura & Antle, and Taylor Farms. There are also members of agricultural-adjacent industries.
[419] Sara Rubin, "A Look at the Latest Campaign Contributions, Including Local Gifts from a Billionaire," *Monterey County Weekly*, October 9, 2014, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/news/local_news/a-look-at-the-latest-campaign-contributions-including-local-gifts/article_be22fe26-4f1f-11e4-8713-0017a43b2370.html.
[420] Sara Rubin, "Lou Calcagno Retiring After Four Terms; Judge John Phillips Will Run for Vacant Seat," *Monterey County Weekly*, December 19, 2013, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/archives/2013/1219/article_ed4819ac-682f-11e3-a515-0019bb30f31a.html.

hiring process. Ex-convicts and suspected gang members' most constant source of employment in a valley dominated by large agribusiness is temporary employment at packing sheds through a labor contractor or staffing agency, usually at lower pay than permanent employees and with no benefits.

The political reach of Salinas Valley growers extends to the federal level through the Western Growers Association (WGA), an industry group that includes producers throughout California, as well as Arizona and Colorado. The WGA runs a political action committee that donates to Senate and House campaigns, and celebrates the "huge difference [it has made] in *protecting* the fresh produce industry by providing critical support to the *industry's friends* at key moments."[421] Although the WGA PAC touts itself as a bipartisan effort concerned with the well-being of all workers in the industry, this wording signals its intentions: the PAC's contributions ultimately work to *protect* large agribusiness interests, especially in instances in which they are threatened by proposed federal legislation on regulations or worker protections.

The WGA Board of Directors is composed of three men whose family inheritance included some of the largest exporters of produce in Salinas Valley: Mike Antle, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Tanimura & Antle;[422] John D'Arrigo, President of D'Arrigo Bros. Co. of California;[423] and, Bruce Taylor, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Taylor Farms—currently the largest employer in Salinas

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[421] "Political Action Committee," Western Growers Association, https://www.wga.com/fight. Emphasis added.
[422] "Mike Antle," Western Growers Association, https://www.wga.com/users/mike-antle.
[423] "John D'Arrigo," Western Growers Association, https://www.wga.com/users/john-c-d%E2%80%99arrigo.

Valley.[424] Both D'Arrigo and Taylor have served as chairman of the board in the past decade. Despite their framing as job-creators and philanthropists in Salinas Valley, Antle, D'Arrigo, and Taylor have served in the top administration of an organization that has worked to maintain an industry that creates poverty in the valley. This widespread poverty, in tandem with the chronic underemployment of ex-convicts and the agricultural industry's history of violently repressing farmworker activism, perpetuate the structural conditions that facilitate the expansion of carceral spaces in Salinas Valley. By funding "tough-on-crime" candidates, agribusiness interest groups also displace all of the blame for the valley's issues onto gang members.

But at the same time that Salinas Valley agriculture was booming with the advent of RTEs, Nuestra Familia and Norteños were being gutted. During the decade-long Operation Black Widow, FBI convinced Nuestra Familia members facing felony convictions to become informants. Their information led to indictments for "22 Nuestra Familia gang members on charges including murder, racketeering, assault, drug trafficking and conspiracy."[425] The operation left Norteño street gangs divided under two remaining leaders. Another large-scale sweep coordinated by the California DOJ, the ATF, the FBI and the Salinas Police department led to the arrest of 37 Norteños.[426] Those who became informants for the promise of parole, and the hope of a new life in the

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[424] "Bruce Taylor," Western Growers Association, https://www.wga.com/users/bruce-c-taylor.
[425] Julia Reynolds, "Prison Gang Case Puts Role of FBI Informants Under Scrutiny," *SF Gate*, November 29, 2003, http://www.sfgate.com/crime/article/Prison-gang-case-puts-role-of-FBI-informants-2547459.php.
[426] Julia Reynolds, "Operation Knockout: Gang Raid Targets Nuestra Familia in Salinas," *Monterey Herald*, April 23, 2010, http://www.montereyherald.com/article/zz/20100423/NEWS/100429346.

formal economy were soon disappointed by harsher state parole laws and prohibitive city ordinances.

Under California Assembly Bill AB-2152, a convict seeking parole is barred from "participating, promoting, furthering, or assisting in any gang," a requirement that seems reasonable, given a parole board's concern with the candidate's chance of recidivism. However, this bill extends parole requirements beyond actions and into relationships: parolees also cannot knowingly *associate* with gang members.[427] "Associate" is a broad term that can describe a number of activities, especially for Norteños who may be 2nd or 3rd generation gang members (i.e., a family gathering for these Norteños could count as a parole violation.) Given how difficult it may be for some paroled Norteños to avoid "associating" with their family in their homes, and large agribusiness's discrimination in hiring of ex-convicts and suspected gang members, unemployed parolees may pass the day walking about their neighborhood.

With no clear purpose or destination, this activity would be subject to policing under Salinas's ordinance against loitering, a misdemeanor that would jeopardize one's parole. To avoid loitering, a Norteño parolee might ask a non-gang affiliated friend for a ride around town. This activity would also be surveilled, however. Salinas city ordinances prohibit cruising, as it is presumed to be a gang activity.[428] Formerly incarcerated people are thus pushed out of employment in private industry, in public and in their own homes.

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[427] AB-2152, Sess. of 2009-2010, http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100AB2152.
[428] Salinas, California, *Code of Ordinances*, Salinas, CA: City of Salinas, 1995, https://www.municode.com/library/ca/salinas/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIITHCO_CH20MOVETR_ARTXIVCR.

Rather than promote law and order, these conditions severely constrain formerly incarcerated people's options for financial stability, pushing them back toward the informal economy—in which gains are substantially better than the poverty wages of seasonal agricultural labor anyway. Exploitative agribusiness and shifting parole laws therefore perpetuate the conditions that valley law enforcement then use to justify surveilling and policing those they suspect of gang affiliation or having priors: visibly Latinx people.

CONCLUSION

From the 1970s to the 1990s, different groups of people of Mexican descent were marginalized by exploitative industrial agriculture and competing interests. Undocumented immigrants were scapegoated as ignorant scabs by members of the UFW—a stance that played to the benefit of growers, who relied on those divisions to isolate undocumented immigrants from potential allies. Salinas Border Patrol agents and growers' private security guards also benefited from this division, in that they were able to enact power and control over these laborers with very little opposition to that treatment. Immigration detention and deportation expanded the valley's carceral geography. The area's deportation activities also created an immigration detention corridor through the Central and Imperial Valley, precipitating the use of rural agricultural communities as incarceration sites.

Salinas Valley agribusiness added another multi-billion-dollar product to its arsenal, while keeping its wages well-below the area's cost of living. This spurred an increase in

the valley's wealth gap, which was already large since the 1920s; the laborers who harvested and packed the valley's products often could not afford to buy them. The financial and social marginalization of formerly incarcerated people was sustained by discriminatory hiring policies in packing sheds. This population could thus only find seasonal work in the fields, or temporary labor through staffing agencies. Whether or not formerly incarcerated people returned to the informal economy, they found staying out of the police's view difficult. In a relatively small city, with a large population of Norteño gang members, the herculean task of surveilling and policing even the most innocuous of activities required further militarization and expansion of local law enforcement agencies. As I show in the next chapter, these requisites were met with funds facilitated by War on Drugs legislation, excess weapons made for the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, and continued state and federal partnerships.

Chapter 4: "This Just Doesn't Happen Here": Law Enforcement Abuses, Extrajudicial Killings, and Policing as Spectacle

In May 2014, CNN correspondent Stephanie Elam reported on the third shooting of a Latinx man by Salinas Police in less than three months. She quoted then-Chief Kelly McMillin, who stressed more than once that the department did not have a lot of officer-involved shootings because "this is just not something that happens" in Salinas.[429] McMillin's argument clearly begs the question—if there aren't a lot of officer-involved shootings in Salinas because it just doesn't happen here, then why were there three in less than three months? It also tries to hide a highly militarized police force operating behind the pastoral ideal of a small farming town. Unfortunately, McMillin's feigned shock was not actually productive in changing his officers' behavior or in protecting the community he was sworn to serve. Only two months later, Salinas Police would shoot and kill a fourth Latinx man.

In this chapter, I recount a series of financial scams and excessive force incidents perpetrated by Salinas Valley law enforcement from 2011 to 2019. In order to show that these events weren't flukes born in a vacuum, I trace law enforcement's continued militarization, as well as continued state and federal partnerships. Both processes benefitted from post-9/11 security measures and the weapons boom of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Although these were socio-historically unique contexts, the impunity with which valley officers could submit residents to unwarranted surveillance, beatings, and shootings was not. I also examine how gang-prevention initiatives and Department of

[429] Stephanie Elam, "Deadly Police Shooting Sparks Riots," *CNN*, May 22, 2014, https://www.cnn.com/2014/05/22/us/california-protest-police-shooting-hispanics/index.html.

Justice recommendations were foisted onto the community, shifting the burden for peace onto them. The gang-prevention initiatives, in particular, hinged on getting Latinx youth to capitulate to the premise that they were inherently criminal and dangerous—thus, priming them to comply with officer demands, and accept totalizing policing power.

The valley's culture of impunity was co-signed by state and federal agencies, through regional policing and Department of Homeland Security awards, and a White House recognition. White Salinas city officers also amassed fame and fervent social media followings after participating in *Live PD*. This is a COPS-style, nationally broadcast documentary show on A&E, follows police officers on patrol while also interjecting live commentary from a host and two panelists in-studio. The show's format, and Salinas Police's disproportionate policing of Latinx neighborhoods, have made a national spectacle out of policing Latinxs in Salinas Valley. That spectacle is also immensely profitable for A&E, for whom the show was a surprise ratings hit.

In the face of all of this, the families of beating and shooting victims have sought redress by filing federal lawsuits against Salinas Police, and city and county officials, which I'll detail later. Community groups have also organized vigils and rallies that provide counter-narratives which see the victims of police shootings as full persons, and reject a politics of disposability that would justify the deaths of previously incarcerated people or those struggling with addiction. They have also created alternative youth programs that are not premised on the assumption that all Latinx youth are always already gang members. They instead organize around police brutality, attempting to shift

the burden off of youth taught to comply and back onto the heavily armed adults on the police force.

As shown throughout this dissertation, these redresses are always incomplete within the culture of impunity, and a legal system that codifies an officer's life as more valuable than a civilian's. Recounting redress is important because they demonstrate how Salinas Valley residents address their daily circumstances in a highly surveilled and policed space. These redresses also point to new legislative possibilities. California's SB 1421 was enacted on January 1st of 2019, and it compels California police departments to maintain records pertaining to complaints about officers and investigations public upon request.[430] The legislation is a watershed moment in the valley for its potential to expose officer names and misconduct quickly. Its enactment is also important because it won over a much more conservative bill written by California State Senator Anna Caballero, a lifelong Salinas Valley resident and former district assemblywoman. SB 1421, then, is indicative of a blow to Salinas Valley's culture of impunity. It also signals the growing influence of a younger generation of working-class Latinx organizers, who have been more vocal about rejecting "tough-on-crime" politics that are more favored by the valley's Mexican-American middle class.

"VIOLENCE" AND CONTESTATIONS

As I noted in the introduction, police and media narratives about violence in Salinas Valley strategically focus on gang violence. For example, any criminal activity,

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[430] "Senate Bill No. 1421," State California Legislature, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1421.

assault, or shooting involving Latinx is usually identified as "gang-related" in press releases or headlines. This happens when victims' families and friends publicly correct the reports and explain that their loved one was not in a gang. And even then, the narrative about gang affiliation is so powerful that the community can undermine the testimony of families. Perhaps the most egregious examples of this are those involving murdered children.

On October 10, 2010, 14-year-old Alonso Hernández and a friend were walking home from school in Northeast Salinas when they were shot multiple times by an unknown shooter. Hernández died at the scene, and his friend fought through critical injuries at a local hospital. Despite having no evidence that Hernández or his friend were in a gang, then-Salinas Police Chief Louis Fetherolf told reporters the very next day that "the teenagers were wearing 'gang-colored clothing.'"[431] "Gang-colored" clothing can be something as innocuous as a red or blue item. It is disconcerting that Salinas Valley youth face life-threatening situations simply for wearing a particular color. Indeed, youth are warned from an early age to avoid wearing solid red or blue colors, and certain sports jerseys in public; some public schools ban red and blue clothing in their dress code.[432] Fetherolf's comment, though, is not about the dangers that these youth face. The statement signals motive. If we follow his logic, then the youth—who must have known about the dangers of wearing these colors—were signaling their gang affiliation. This justifies the term "gang-related," obscuring the lack of evidence to show the youth were

[431] Griselda D. Ramirez, "Two North High Students Shot," *The Californian*, October 12, 2010, Newspapers.com.
[432] "Dress Code," School Information, Alisal High School, last updated December 5, 2019, https://www.salinasuhsd.org/Page/357.

gang members and that gangs often take any use of a rival's color to signal affiliation, regardless of whether the wearer is a gang member.

One might counter that the term "gang-related" is accurate when applied to the verb "shooting," since the subject who is shooting is indeed part of a gang. But this elides that if it were a verb, the "-ing" suffix denotes an action in the present tense. This discursive slippage demonstrates how when press releases and news reports actually use "shooting"; they use it as an independent noun to denote an event (i.e., "*the* shooting.") In this broader sense, calling the shooting an event that is "gang-related" blurs the distinction between the *shooter* and the one *shot*. One might respond that this is a game of semantics that presupposes malicious intent on the part of officers or reporters. But I am analyzing the language pragmatically, taking into account the context that affects how the meaning is conveyed and taken up. With the valley's history of policing brown bodies, and a space that continues to see them as inherently threatening, "gang-related" is an utterance that marks the victim as inherently suspect. If the utterance is taken up by a hearer, then the hearer may be persuaded to value the victim's life less, or judge the loss as negligible. In more extreme cases, the utterance may persuade the hearer that the death was actually warranted. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear comments or see online replies to news reports arguing that the victim was merely a "future criminal."[433] This makes mourning such lives a practice of radical grief loaded with meaning.

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[433] I offer this claim as a "testimonio" based on my own experiences as a Salinas Valley resident. Testimonios are forms of "purposeful storytelling grounded in praxis utilized to expose and disrupt histories that are otherwise subsumed." See Alejandro Covarrubias, Pedro E. Nava, Argelia Lara, Rebeca Burciaga, Verónica N. Vélez, and Daniel G. Solorzanto, "Critical Race Quantitative Intersections: A Testimonio Analysis," *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 21, no. 2 (March 2018): 253-273.

As Monica Muñoz Martinez argues, mourning can be an act of resistance when it reclaims names and lives that are posthumously criminally maligned due to racial and ethnic prejudice.[434] In Salinas Valley, this type of mourning is done by a community group called 100 Mothers. It's an outgrowth of "A Time for Grieving and Healing," a support group headed by Debbie Aguilar, who founded it in 2003 after the murder of her 17-year-old son Stephen a year earlier. 100 Mothers is open to all surviving friends and family of shooting victims, but its core organizers are, like Aguilar, women grieving their lost children. In addition to speaking engagements with local organizations, the women hold an annual vigil at Closter Park in East Salinas, where mothers hold banners bearing their children's names and pictures.

Aguilar describes the group's work as "going out there to mourn publicly and to acknowledge the dignity, the work of the victim."[435] By sharing their children's histories, their favorite activities, and their hopes and dreams for the future, the mothers contest police and media labels that marked their children as meriting death. Their children weren't conspiring to engage in criminal activity; they were teens who wanted to play professional sports, or young men who'd just gotten a job they were excited about. Acts of remembrance and public mourning, then, are a rejection of racist stereotypes. These acts are especially potent because they are carried out in Closter Park, one of the most surveilled parks in East Salinas due to its history as Norteño gang territory. 100 Mothers, then, not only reclaims lost children but also space in East Salinas.

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[434] Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, 9, 83.
[435] Allison Gatlin, "Support Group Calls on '100 Mothers'," *The Californian*, May 11, 2015, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/crime/2015/05/11/salinas-support-group-founder-launches-mothers/27139043/.

The group prioritizes a wide range of emotions that grieve their children, including anger. But the anger is imagined as a method of "calling in" gang members by making them bear witness to the life-long trauma gun violence can call. Rather than imagining gang members as malevolent, members of 100 Mothers believe that gang members simply "[don't] know the totality of what they're doing."[436] This view also informs Aguilar's work inside Soledad State Prison, where she speaks to inmates hoping that when they witness her grief up close, they will know "what their violence does to the families of those who they kill—to prevent shootings and killings, rather than react."[437] As shown in Chapter 3, Salinas Valley gangs were originally a response to Mexican-Americans' experience being policed and relegated to poverty wages in agriculture, as well as anti-undocumented immigrant rhetoric. By saying that gang members don't know what they're doing, they elide socioeconomic circumstances and other historical push-pull factors around gang membership. However, Aguilar and 100 Mothers do not subscribe to a politics of disposability; they believe all gang members can be redeemed through empathic practices. In this way, the group's vigils and events are a practice of repairing community ties, which are frayed by exploitative agribusiness and state violence.

100 Mothers community-based practice of mourning would largely be discounted from a resistance narrative when the account only recognizes overt rebellion. For example, Aguilar personally supports anti-gang policing efforts, and 100 Mothers

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[436] Ibid.

[437] Ana Ceballos, "In Salinas, as Lethal Crime Soars, 100 Mothers Ask for Peace," *Monterey County Weekly*, December 3, 2015, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/people/831/in-salinas-as-lethal-crime-soars-mothers-ask-for-peace/article_2b6c8716-993b-11e5-b546-c79b56882e91.html.

regularly partners with valley law enforcement for speaking events. Officers are also invited to the annual vigils. These invitations are not framed as restorative justice for police to atone for victims of state violence. Officers' public image thus benefit most from this structure. Furthermore, the mothers still call for legal justice and continue asking the community for information that would help law enforcement apprehend their children's murders. But, importantly, they are not coercive nor strictly punitive like gang-prevention initiatives spearheaded by police, as I show later. If we were to take resistance and oppression as absolutes, the work of 100 Mothers would be illegible at best, or considered complicit with state violence at worst. But, their work to remember and publicly mourn their children, and to radically reimagine their potential had they lived—directly contests the valley's culture of impunity that marks Latinxs as inherently criminal. Furthermore, 100 Mothers presents a feminist alternative to revolutionary movements that dismiss gendered practices of care, like mourning, in favor of masculinist ideas about physical retribution.

Despite the chapter's focus on state violence, it is imperative to make space for the trauma borne from gang violence for two reasons. First, gang violence is real and pervasive in Salinas Valley, and if this dissertation is truly committed to demonstrating the survival and coping mechanisms of residents, then it must represent the people "linked" to gangs with complexity rather than state violence alone. Second, these survival and coping mechanisms still confront the culture of impunity that undergirds state violence in Salinas Valley, and thus the trauma of gang violence cannot be neatly separated from that of state violence. But, importantly, I do not grant primacy to an

account of gang violence because the previous chapters have constructed a genealogy of state violence that highlights the symbiotic relationship between agribusiness and militarized police. This genealogy unseats law enforcement, city officials, and the media's dominant double narrative: that the only true violence in Salinas Valley's is directly attributable to Nuestra Familia and Norteño gangs; and that police shootings just don't happen here.

POST-9/11 MILITARIZATION AND INTENSIVE "COMMUNITY-POLICING"

In May 2003, outraged Monterey County Library employees petitioned the Board of Supervisors, asking them to endorse then-Representative Bernie Sanders's "Freedom to Read Protection Act of 2003."[438] The proposed bill would roll back a part of the Patriot Act that would have allowed federal agents to look at people's library checkout history. For an area with a long, cozy history of collaboration with federal agencies and itself a proponent of intense surveillance, this move may seem out of character. Even more surprising is the City of Salinas's resolution, which affirms the city's "strong support for the constitutional rights for immigrant communities in Salinas and [opposes] racial profiling and scapegoating of immigrants."[439] The valley could have embraced this new era of invasive civilian surveillance but instead publicly opposed it, with a number of other towns passing similar resolutions or at least spiritedly debating them. That the fight against this provision was spearheaded by librarians and city officials—and not law

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[438] Larry Parsons, "County to Challenge Library Searches," *The Californian*, June 3, 2003, Newspapers.com.
[439] "Salinas, CA Resolution," American Civil Liberties Union, last updated August 29, 2019, https://www.aclu.org/other/salinas-ca-resolution.

enforcement. –is critical. A stand against the Patriot Act did not translate into a complete rejection of post-9/11 surveillance and policing initiatives.

From the mid-2000s to the early 2010s, both the Salinas Police Department and Monterey County Sheriff's department were staffed by high-ranking officers who'd graduated from the FBI's National Academy. Chief Louis Fetherolf had graduated in 1983, and then-Lieutenant Kelly McMillin in 2003; Sheriff Scott Miller was part of the 1992 cohort.[440] Although other officers had gone to the Academy before, this was the first time since the 1940s that both the Chief and Sheriff were academy graduates. Like their predecessors, Chief Weight and Sheriff Tibbs, Fetherolf and Miller were leaders during a U.S. war, implemented military-style raid tactics and took advantage of surplus defense infrastructure.

The Monterey County Gang Task Force shifted toward surveilling and policing gangs as terrorist organizations. It was instituted by Fetherolf's and Miller's predecessors, Chief Daniel Ortega and Sheriff Mike Kanalakis, on April 9, 2005.[441] It focused on four towns in northern Monterey County and on the peninsula, but assigned more officers to Salinas, Chualar, Greenfield and King City in the valley. The force was staffed exclusively by local law enforcement, including Salinas Police, sheriff's deputies and county probation officers.[442] But, its local makeup did not mean it was small-scale or underfunded. With the advocacy of Senator Barbara Boxer and Representative Sam Farr,

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[440] FBI National Academy Associates. *Directory of Graduates of the FBI National Academy and Officers of the FBI National Academy Associates*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2002. 99 total officers from Salinas are listed in this directory.
[441] Zachary Stahl, "Task Force Takes Shape," *The Californian*, May 9, 2005, Newspapers.com.
[442] News accounts do not name the officers and deputies who formed part of the task force, so it's difficult to know the racial and ethnic makeup of the force.

the task force secured over $4.7 million dollars in state and federal funding for its first year of operation.[443] The task force focused exclusively on intense suppression. By October of 2005, they netted 118 felony and 152 misdemeanor arrests, and an additional 56 juvenile arrests. The task force also recorded 1,106 traffic stops and 937 "field interviews"—a euphemism for detaining and questioning civilians while on patrol.[444] In total, the task force had varying degrees of contact with over 2,300 residents. This might not seem like a statistically significant number when compared to nearby metropolitan areas, but the numbers are stark when understood within the area's rural space. The total cited above would have been the equivalent of the task force contacting *every single resident* of Bradley, Chualar, Moss Landing, and Spreckels, plus twenty more people, in just seven months.[445]

Chief Fetherolf and Sheriff Kanalakis inherited and grew these programs based on their training and federal contacts. They transformed these programs by strategically directing the nation's wartime resources to Salinas Valley policing initiatives. For example, beginning his tenure in 2009, Fetherolf began contracting Afghanistan and Iraq War combat veterans as advisors that trained Salinas Police officers in "applying counterinsurgency tools to local anti-gang efforts."[446] Typically, analyses of militarization focus on the acquisition of weaponry or tanks, but here we see wartime

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[443] Stahl, "Task Force Takes Shape."
[444] Zachary Stahl, "Focus Shifts to Outreach," *The Californian*, October 19, 2005, Newspapers.com.
[445] This estimation is based on population data from the 2000 census, in which each town reported the following populations: Bradley, 120; Chualar 1,444; Moss Landing 300; Spreckels 485. This totals 2,349 residents—20 less than the total contacted by the gang task force from April to October 2005.
[446] Kristian Williams, "The Other Side of the COIN: Counterinsurgency and Community Policing," *Interface: A Journal For and About Social Movements* 3, no. 1 (May 2001): 94.

enemy containment strategies fully integrated. These strategies were specifically premised on *counterinsurgency*, which highlights how Salinas Police were trained to see gangs as groups in active revolt against a political regime, rather than street criminals or even drug runners. Furthermore, because the advisors were combat veterans rather than civilian signals that Salinas Police treated police patrols as active combat scenarios.

In addition to training, the combat veterans also instituted a software program that "maps the connections between gang activity, individual suspects, and their social circles, family ties, and neighborhood connections."[447] This was not the first time that Salinas Police had deployed advanced mapping tools to aid surveillance. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, they collaborated with the California Highway Patrol and Sheriff's Department to create a crime spot map as part of their FBI training in 1939. The differences here were two-fold: first, the demographics had shifted to a Latinx population; and, the new tool would map crimes alongside familial, friendship, and community bonds. Thus, Salinas Police used wartime tools to map Latinx intimacies across the city. As part of the gang task force, the department shared this intel with other agencies, embedding that policing infrastructure across the valley.

Gang suppression efforts were also bolstered by the acquisition of military-grade weapons. The National Defense Authorization Act of 1990 was an outgrowth of the War on Drugs, which allowed the Department of Defense to transfer excess military property to aid state and federal narcotics task forces. An addendum in 1997 expanded access to military property to civilian law enforcement agencies, under what is known as the 1033

[447] Ibid.

program.[448] Although the program began before the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, these wars created a surplus of equipment in a relatively short amount of time. Never ones to shy away from acquiring military-grade munitions, Salinas Valley law enforcement began participating in the program in earnest in 2006. In the span of eight years, law enforcement agencies acquired over 3,000 pieces of equipment totaling $1.2 million dollars; acquisitions ranged from M-16 rifles to cameras and laptops.[449] They also acquired a $750,000 mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicle for the Salinas Police Department.[450] The vehicle was an MRAP, rather than using the vague term "tank," because its capabilities point to the shift in seeing gangs as insurgent groups. Why else would a police department need a vehicle built to defend against improvised explosive devices (IEDs)? The department also obscured this connection by terming it an "Armored *Rescue* Vehicle," despite it being used for gang task raids.[451]

The valley's culture of impunity also elides the extent of law enforcement's military-grade weapons and tactics. For example, after federal records disclosing 1033 acquisitions were made public, then-Chief McMillin dismissed concerns over police militarization as making a fuss over an ill-defined "buzz phrase." He played up being confused, responding to a reporter's question with his own: "Does that mean you have

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[448] "1033 Program FAQs," DLA Disposition Services, Defense Logistics Agency, last updated May 9, 2020, https://www.dla.mil/DispositionServices/Offers/Reutilization/LawEnforcement/ProgramFAQs.aspx.
[449] Ibid.
[450] Allison Gatlin, "Monterey County Cops Sound Off on 'Militarizing' Issue," *The Californian*, September 20, 2014, Newspapers.com.
[451] Michelle Imperato, "Salinas PD's Giant Military Tank Turning Heads," *KSBW 8*, December 20, 2013, http://www.ksbw.com/article/salinas-pds-giant-military-tank-turning-heads/1299575.

surplus military equipment? Or you're engaging in military tactics?"[452] As I've shown, in Salinas Valley militarization has been and is deliberately and enthusiastically *both*.

This two-pronged militarization aided expanded gang suppression efforts. Operation Knockout was a massive multi-agency effort carried out from September 2009 to April 2010, intended to cripple Salinas street gangs. Salinas Police officers and Monterey County Sheriff's deputies worked with over 100 agents from: the Department of Justice; the ATF; the FBI; the DEA; ICE and Homeland Security Investigations; the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement; and, the California Highway Patrol.[453] They carried out military-style raids and sweeps; valley law enforcement was armed with recently acquired weaponry. Operation Knockout resulted in nearly 100 arrests, as well as the seizure of over fifty pounds of illicit drugs, a dozen firearms, and over $30,000 in cash.[454] These are very small numbers in relation to the total resources allocated to Operation Knockout. The valley was thus subjected to intense and wide-ranging policing from nine different agencies for a negligible overall result.

Knockout spawned copy-cat Operation Street Sweeper in late 2010, which covered Monterey and nearby Santa Cruz County. Operation Knockout's longer legacy

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[452] Gatlin, "Monterey County Cops Sound Off."
[453] "Two Operation Knockout Defendants Sentenced to Federal Prison for Conspiracy to Distribute Methamphetamine," Press Releases, San Francisco Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, last updated July 22, 2016, https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/sanfrancisco/press-releases/2011/two-operation-knockout-defendants-sentenced-to-federal-prison-for-conspiracy-to-distribute-methamphetamine.
[454] "Major Gang Sweep in Salinas Nets 37 Arrests, Guns and Drugs," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 22, 2010, https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2010/04/22/major-gang-sweep-in-salinas-nets-37-arrests-guns-and-drugs/.

was the creation of the Monterey County Narcotic and Violence Task Force (NVTF.)[455] NVTF was created by the direct order of then-Attorney General Jerry Brown, who added California Highway patrolmen to the already existing Joint Gang Task Force. In addition to upping its manpower, Brown also moved oversight of the task force to the California Department of Justice.[456] This move guaranteed easy allocation of state funds to valley policing efforts, shoring up an already fierce policing force at the start of the 2010s.

Valley law enforcement also benefitted from asset forfeiture laws used in the War on Drugs, heightening their reliance on the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO.) RICO was originally meant to aid police in seizing assets from the Mafia; since the Mafia often laundered money into legitimate businesses, RICO gave police "a means by which it could broadly define a series of crimes as organized crime."[457] Nuestra Familia and Norteños deliberately model themselves after the mob, and their extensive activities across a vast swath of Northern California make them the main drug runners in the area. While this justifies Salinas Valley law enforcement's use of RICO, we should be mindful of two details.

First, there's a significant difference in the burden of proof between criminal and civil asset forfeiture. The former is secured only in a trial by judge or jury that finds the

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[455] Daniel Lopez, "Dozens of Norteño Gang Members Arrested in Operation Street Sweeper, Including Man Police say Ran Watsonville Regime," *The Mercury News*, August 31, 2010, https://www.mercurynews.com/2010/08/31/dozens-of-norteo-gang-members-arrested-in-operation-street-sweeper-including-man-police-say-ran-watsonville-regime/.
[456] "Major Gang Sweep in Salinas Nets 37 Arrests, Guns and Drugs," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, April 22, 2010, https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2010/04/22/major-gang-sweep-in-salinas-nets-37-arrests-guns-and-drugs/.
[457] Stephen A. Bishopp and John L. Worrall, "Asset Forfeiture," in *Courts, Law, and Justice*, edited by William J. Chambliss (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2011), 4.

defendant guilty beyond reasonable doubt. Civil asset forfeiture, on the other hand, requires a much lower burden of proof and can be enacted even if a person is not found guilty of a crime.[458] This is done by legally designating the *assets* guilty of criminal activity. Seized assets can then be used to cover police departments' budget deficits if they claim that said deficits were incurred from drug-related policing (i.e., personnel, supplies, confidential informant pay, etc.)[459] The second detail concerns the population most likely to have assets seized in the valley.

Statements from former Salinas Police chief Kelly McMillin, indicate that from the mid-1990s to 2009 valley law enforcement's standard procedure was to detain and question suspected Norteños while on patrol. Law enforcement officers sometimes made contact based on tips, or extensive surveillance files that listed known gang members and their family and friends. Most of the time though, officers would "drive around in 'black-and-whites' [police cars] and look for people who *looked* like gang members and find probable cause to contact them and see if they were in fact gang members."[460] Since Nuestra Familia and Norteños were Mexican-American gangs, officers were actively and exclusively approaching brown people that they perceived to be of Mexican descent for nearly two decades. This, coupled with the ease of asset forfeiture, means Salinas Valley law enforcement substantially bolstered their agency budgets with assets largely seized from Latinx suspects. As discussed in chapter 3, formerly incarcerated Latinxs and those suspected of being in gangs are systemically shut out of permanent, year-round labor in

[458] Ibid., 5.
[459] Ibid., 5.
[460] "Kelly McMillin Speaks on White House Champions of Change Panel, 4/4/2012," YouTube video, 3:07, posted by "FutureFuturo," April 4, 2012, https://youtu.be/jxBxit4MqsM. Emphasis added.

valley agriculture. The informal economy, including drug dealing, becomes a way to earn money in the face of economic inequality. Thus, asset forfeiture deepened economic inequality by disrupting the informal economy.

At a 2012 White House panel, McMillian described police procedure because he was named one of twelve "Champions of Change" for spearheading a gang prevention initiative. McMillin's comfortable and open description of nearly two decades' worth of racial profiling in Salinas Valley while sitting in the White House is striking. But his nonchalant admission is evidence of his good faith belief that those policing measures were justified and necessary for protecting the prosperity of the valley. He is thus part of the in-group of the valley's culture of impunity, and one with a significant legacy that impinges on Latinx youth's day-to-day life to this day.

The gang prevention program created a new mechanism by which to surveil and control Latinx youth. The program transplanted a community-policing initiative, Operation Ceasefire, from the East Coast. That initiative began in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati and Indianapolis in the mid-90s. It was a new approach to preventing gang and gun violence, in which police departments, city agencies, and nonprofits collaborated to provide low-income youth of color with services like vocational training, membership in community organizations, and employment opportunities.[461] I deliberately term the target population as low-income youth of color, instead of using the Department of Justice's term: "youth most likely to commit gun violence." I make this distinction because we of

[461] "Operation Ceasefire and the Safe Community Partnership," Programs, The United States Attorney's Office Northern District of California, last modified December 29, 2014, https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndca/operation-ceasefire-and-safe-community-partnership.

course do not live in a *Minority Report*-style universe in which law enforcement agencies can use precognition to actually see these youth committing crimes in the future. The Department of Justice's label, then, is an absurd euphemism denoting youth of color as always already criminal.[462] In 2009, then-Commander McMillin launched Salinas Valley's version of the Ceasefire model: Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS).

GVRS works by "calling in" a select group of youth to a meeting with valley law enforcement. Once there, officers inform them that they've been identified as gang members with the highest potential to cause harm, based on intel gathered from the NVTF. Officers simultaneously reveal that the youth have been actively surveilled for some time before the meeting. The youth are then given the illusion of a choice: participate in GVRS-approved employment training and/or community service, or suffer the consequences. In McMillin's words: "if you take our help, we'll see you on a pathway out of violence. But if you refuse, we'll bring the full weight of enforcement against you and *remove you from society*."[463] Here, McMillin referred to GVRS's promise that if the youth are caught committing a crime they will be effectively exiled to facilities outside of California.[464] GVRS, then, actively fissured family and community bonds as a form of punishment. This extra layer of punishment is harsh enough, but his

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[462] This is also a reflection of the Department of Justice's racial and class politics around what they consider "gun violence" (i.e., gang-related shootings in low-income communities of people of color.) If gun violence were a term more widely applied to mass shootings, then young white men would be correctly labeled "youth most likely to commit gun violence," given their statistical overrepresentation as mass shooting perpetrators.

[463] "Kelly McMillin Speaks on White House Champions of Change Panel, 4/4/2012." Emphasis added.

[464] Julia Reynolds, "Trying to Get a Grip on Gang Violence, Salinas Embarks on Innovative Plan," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, September 13, 2009, https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2009/09/13/trying-to-get-a-grip-on-gang-violence-salinas-embarks-on-innovative-plan/.

particular phrasing—"removed *from society*"—conveys such finality that it's hard not to infer a lethal threat.

Proponents of GVRS counter that the youth invited to these "call in" sessions have already committed violent crimes, or that there is sufficient evidence to show they are indeed in a gang. But this again collapses previous behavior or social identity into a claim that police can see the future; a past rap sheet does not necessarily equate future crimes. This also obscures extralegal intimidation of youth into GVRS participation. They are told they will be "[tailed] night and day if they choose to ignore this last chance" – that is, they will be subject to unwarranted surveillance by several law enforcement agencies.[465] Framing the ultimatum as a "chance or choice" also implies that the youth in attendance should be grateful to be called into docility.

GVRS is still currently deployed by Salinas Police, and has expanded into a partnership with Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP.) CASP began in 2011 as a collaborative network of more than sixty social service organizations, nonprofits and religious leaders who outreach to low-income youth of color in Salinas Valley. CASP's efforts are praise-worthy; they offer worthwhile, sustainable volunteer opportunities and employment resources to an underserved community. These include environmental groups focused on community and beach clean-up, and a youth leadership academy that instructs students in civic participation. But CASP still imagines its efforts primarily as a response to the "tragedy of gang violence" and is ultimately envisioning their services as prevention and intervention services.

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[465] Ibid.

This is not a bad thing in and of itself. CASP is responding to a very real immediate need: Salinas youth have consistently advocated for more activities and opportunities, and are deeply invested in having peaceful communities. Still, CASP's vision of gang prevention plays into the valley's discourse on gang violence, albeit inadvertently. Offering programs for youth as a method of gang *prevention* implies that said youth will inevitably join gangs without them. They are thus, always already criminal unless there is direct intervention. This view of Latinx youth—and Latinxs in general—informs the ways in which valley law enforcement signal the full force of their abilities in training exercises.

McMillin became Salinas Police Chief in 2012; he was an obvious choice due to his long service in the department, his leadership in Operation Ceasefire, and his national prominence as a "Champion of Change." McMillin was also groomed for the position since 2003, when he graduated from the FBI National Academy at Quantico. Like Fetherolf, McMillin was part of the long line of federally-trained leadership cultivated by Salinas Police since the early 1940s. During his tenure, Salinas Police would carry out their deadliest year in recent history, which I examine in the following section. To get a sense of his rhetorical abilities and ideological power in the valley, it's important to analyze another moment where he obscured valley law enforcement's practices.

In his interview denying the extent of police militarization in Salinas Valley, Chief McMillin also negated a connection between war zone strategies and city policing: "Do we have some military equipment here? Yes…Do we occupy neighborhoods?...No." This is a slick misrepresentation of valley law enforcement's training procedures, which often

include mock military-style raids in low-income neighborhoods. For example, in December 2016 the sheriff's SWAT team used an entire abandoned public housing complex in East Salinas to practice opening a door with explosives.[466] SWAT team members were dressed in full riot gear and armed with high-power rifles. The training was carried out in the middle of the day. East Salinas is the most densely populated part of the city, and has the highest concentration of poor Latinxs. The training exercise may not have been "occupying a neighborhood" in the sense McMillin meant, but the use of an entire apartment complex in the most densely populated and poorest neighborhood distinguishes it from a singular raid. The sight of heavily armed SWAT officers setting off several explosives in the middle of the day on a street full of other apartment complexes, was a demonstration of force to the population that valley law enforcement is most invested in policing.

SCAMS AND SCANDALS, 2014-2018

Valley law enforcement agencies have historically operated with little accountability. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a number of police abuses, including far-reaching financial scams. The most notable of these was in King City, a small town on the southern edge of Salinas Valley. In early 2014, five King City police officers were arrested. Notably, two previous Police Chiefs, Nick Baldiviez and Bruce Miller, were also arrested. From 2010 to 2014, these seven officers colluded to pull over drivers and impound their cars without cause. They deliberately targeted brown people, knowing it

[466] Claudia Meléndez Salinas, "Fire and Law Enforcement Use Abandoned Buildings to Practice Real-Life Scenarios," *Monterey Herald*, December 9, 2016, http://www.montereyherald.com/article/NF/20161209/NEWS/161209771.

was likely these drivers did not speak English—and that there was a significant chance that they also did not speak Spanish. Since the early 2000s, cities at the south of Salinas Valley, like King City and Greenfield, have experienced an influx of Indigenous immigrants from the Mexican state of Oaxaca. These immigrants speak Triqui or Mixtec as their first language, and have varying degrees of Spanish fluency. This population is also likely to be undocumented. Officers banked on this last factor, since they could more easily impound cars from unlicensed drivers.

The officers transferred impounded cars to a towing yard owned by Chief Miller's brother, who would then set an exorbitantly high price to recover the car. The majority of impounded cars were never recovered because the majority of targeted drivers were also farmworkers making poverty wages in the fields. The towing yard would then sell the cars, and split the take with the involved officers.[467] The majority of the officers were sentenced to "probation or jail time that ended up being served in home confinement," with only one officer getting sentenced to state prison for two years.[468] While it is significant that officers were tried and convicted in a court of law, their punishments were hardly commensurate with the harm they caused. For poor farmworkers, cars are a lifeline; there is no job security for undocumented laborers in seasonal farm work—if you don't show up to work, you're fired.

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[467] Amy Larson, "King City Police Chief and Ex-Chief Arrested," *KSBW 8*, February 25, 2014, http://www.ksbw.com/article/king-city-police-chief-and-ex-chief-arrested/1053630.
[468] Ana Ceballos, "Last King City Cop to be Sentenced in Corruption Scandal is Jailed," *Monterey County Weekly*, April 29, 2016, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/crime_blog/last-king-city-cop-to-be-sentenced-in-corruption-scandal/article_5fe05cc0-0e3e-11e6-a5bb-0b20aa02b1ec.html.

In addition to losing wages, Indigenous farmworkers faced humiliation and intimidation from police and the towing yard. And while they were eventually able to find legal assistance, Indigenous farmworkers still contended with living in a space that was increasingly hostile toward them. Since 2011, second and third-generation Mexican-Americans in Greenfield and King City have complained about Triqui newcomers, claiming that the latter "ruined [Greenfield] financially, 'destroyed' its school system, caused violent crimes and were part of gangs."[469] Mexican-Americans in Salinas Valley also map U.S. racial scripts upon Indigenous immigrants that were once used to describe their own ancestors. This is not cognitive dissonance on Mexican-Americans' part, nor a simple disavowal of shared heritage. It is part of a longer history of "disjuncture between the celebratory narratives of mestizaje" that exalt indigeneity in Mexican and Chicano nationalisms, and anti-indigenous sentiment and violence.[470] Mexican-Americans might celebrate Mexico's romanticized indigenous past, but that does not translate to solidarity with present-day Indigenous immigrants. This extends to the Mexican-American police officers involved in the car impound scam; they were not fleecing their *paisanos*, but people who they imagined as their inferiors. This may sound like a particularly harsh take on the officers' motives, until we remember that they deliberately preyed on the population that would have the least financial resources and community support to fight back. This is a historic practice. It is no different from Mexican American business owners taking advantage of Braceros in over-charging for goods, services, and housing.

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[469] Gosia Wozniacka, "Town at War: Older Immigrants vs. Newer Ones," *NBC News*, August 15, 2011, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/44151448/ns/us_news-life/t/town-war-older-immigrants-vs-newer-ones/.
[470] Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 4, 18.

The misdeeds of city police departments in southern Salinas Valley were compounded by the Sheriff's Department's unethical practices. Specifically, the department's drug unit in Greenfield consistently and knowingly pushed the bounds of legal discretion. This happened under the tenure of Deputy Detective Brian Pickens, who served in the department from 1989 to 2018. In 2007, the DA's office wrote a letter of complaint claiming that Pickens had "used dubious means to rack up an impressive string of drug and narcotics arrests," including illegal searches of cell phones and adding information to deputies' affidavits in order to ensure warrants were granted. He added claims in the deputies' voice, swearing they'd seen a drug sale or that they had "an informant who had seen where narcotics or other contraband was hidden."[471] Pickens' actions were apparently so well-known in the valley that Salinas and Greenfield Police stopped relying on his information for warrants. A code of silence among officers still protected him though, since no one ever actually reported him. Instead, Pickens was "promoted twice and was even honored as the department's deputy of the year [in 2015]"[472] The first promotion was strategic, since it got the department out of having to investigate him. As a sergeant, Pickens "would supervise detectives in the field without having to appear in court himself," and thus would not be directly responsible for information in the affidavits.[473] Despite the DA's initial complaint, Pickens was cleared of criminal charges, after which he was allowed to retire.

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[471] Royal Calkins, "The Cop Who Bent All the Rules," *Voices of Monterey Bay*, May 1, 2020, https://voicesofmontereybay.org/2020/05/01/sheriffs-detective-bent-the-rules/.
[472] Ibid.
[473] Ibid.

The DA investigation is touted as an important step in reform, since it uncovered larger issues in the Sheriff's Department. These included a consistent "failure to maintain files on confidential informants, failure to prepare written contracts with informants and lack of records of payments to informants."[474] Not keeping records on confidential informants makes them vulnerable to exploitation and intimidation from deputies. For example, not preparing a contract meant that confidential informants receive no compensation, and that they might collaborate with deputies without ensured protection. That is, once a confidential informant coughs up the information deputies are looking for, they might not get paid or the get the plea deals they were promised for cooperation. Refusing to keep track of confidential informant payments also lends to corruption, since warrants and subsequent convictions cannot be traced back to them or their tips and preclude the defense from receiving potentially beneficial information.

In fact, the Monterey County DA was ultimately more concerned with their prosecution rate, since an investigative report revealed that they'd never included Pickens' misdeeds in "Brady material," which is exculpatory evidence that prosecutors are required to disclose.[475] Instead, the DA's office simply put him on an "informal list signifying that he should be watched closely."[476] None of the convictions based on Pickens' actions have been overturned. His legacy includes several "catch and release" cases, where he caught people with drugs and handguns, and released them in an effort to turn them into informants. Six of them fled the valley, including one woman who was found in possession of "12 ounces of methamphetamine, two handguns,

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[474] Ibid.
[475] Jonathan Kim, "Brady Rule," Cornell Law School, last updated December 23, 2017, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/brady_rule.
[476] Ibid.

and $20,000 in cash," as well as an additional "five pounds of methamphetamine, one of the largest drug seizures in county history."[477] This may have been the largest for a rural area, but it pales in comparison to cartel busts throughout the nation. This comparison is warranted given that the funds and inter-agency manpower allocated to Salinas Valley are on par with several metropoles. There is thus a giant gap between the resources granted to valley law enforcement and the end results of their policing. But previous budgets are then used as precedents for continued funding, and as counter-arguments toward people calling for less spending on police.

It's important to compare Pickens's legacy and the DA office's complicity, with the discourse on gang violence in Salinas Valley. The familiar tale is that intense surveillance and militarized police forces are necessary for public safety because of prevalence of high-level gangs and drug runners. But in recounting Pickens's actions, we can see that a single deputy deliberately let free a number of the same people that supposedly terrorize the community, including one of the largest meth drug runners in the valley. It was Pickens's lack of judgment and loose adherence to the law that had a negative effect on the safety and well-being of valley residents for nearly two decades. Beyond individual failings, this history also indicts a system that half-heartedly investigated him; the DA investigation only covered one of his twenty-nine years in the sheriff's department. Furthermore, the informal list that the DA's office kept to avoid Brady disclosures allegedly included upwards of 100 valley law enforcement officers at

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[477] Royal Calkins, "The Cases," *Voices of Monterey Bay*, May 1, 2020, https://voicesofmontereybay.org/2020/05/01/the-cases/.

one point. An unknown, and unthinkable, number of convictions may have been the result of law enforcement's deliberately shoddy policing and the DA's thirst for high prosecution rates. In concert with increased militarization, intra-agency collaboration, and lack of oversight, police transgressions escalated from financial scams and lax policy adherence, to extrajudicial killings.

EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, 2011-2017

In January of 2011, the Monterey city police and Sheriff's Department were investigating a New Year's Eve shooting in a popular bar in Monterey, an affluent city that is a main tourism site on the peninsula. A tip from the joint gang task force named Rogelio "Roger" Serrato as a person of interest. The sheriff's department dispatched a SWAT team to Greenfield, where they "surrounded Serrato's house in a military-style operation."[478] The SWAT team threw a flash-bang grenade through the living room window in order to stun and disorient Serrato before entering the home. The grenade, however, sparked a fire on a piece of furniture, which then spread quickly through the living room. The SWAT team did not act to rescue Serrato, "who was emitting 'anguished cries' and breaking windows"; one of their MRAPs blocked the fire department for several minutes.[479] Here is a stark example of why calling an MRAP a "rescue" vehicle is epistemic violence. The MRAP was never meant to rescue Serrato in this case. Instead, it was a tool to prolong his suffering and act against life-saving efforts.

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[478] Virginia Hennessey, "Monterey County Agrees to Pay $2.6 Million in 'Flash-Bang' Death of Greenfield Man," *Monterey Herald*, August 19, 2013, http://www.montereyherald.com/article/zz/20130819/NEWS/130818031.
[479] Ibid.

Importantly, Serrato was not a suspect in the shooting, and the sheriff's department simply wanted to question him about the shooting to provide information to the Monterey city police. Eventually, even the Monterey Police department publicly admitted Serrato had not been at the scene of the shooting. But they reiterated that they did want to use the occasion to arrest him for two misdemeanor warrants.[480] In essence, police from affluent Monterey called in the sheriff's department to apprehend a low-income Latinx on the mere suspicion that he'd been in their city. Serrato's death signaled the start of a deadly era for Latinxs in Salinas Valley.

From March to June of 2014, Salinas Police officers shot and killed four Latinos: Ángel Ruiz, Osmar Hernández, Carlos Mejía, and Frank Alvarado Jr. Alvarado was the only one who was unarmed, and all four were experiencing a mental health crisis at the time of their death. Ruiz was the first to be killed. He was shot by Sergeant Mark Lazzarini, and Officers Brent DeBorde and William Yetter on the night of March 20th. Ruiz was allegedly behaving erratically and threatening people with a gun in a restaurant parking lot in northeast Salinas. He was carrying an airsoft pellet gun. Airsoft pellet guns can cause serious eye or soft tissue damage, but are largely nonlethal. The Salinas Police department and California Highway patrol claimed after Ruiz's death that he was a suspect in three other crimes, including an armed robbery of a fast-food restaurant. His family said he was in mental distress and possibly suicidal. Police reports indicate a "suicide-by-cop." A toxicology report during his autopsy showed "a potentially toxic

[480] Robin Urevich, "Investigators Try to Determine What Went Wrong in Death of Misidentified Man," *Monterey County Weekly*, January 13, 2011, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/news/local_news/investigators-try-to-determine-what-went-wrong-in-death-of/article_071d0f5b-b3d0-5b12-bfe8-430ad6fc43a8.html.

level of medications prescribed for psychiatric disorders…and his blood alcohol level was 0.15."[481] The details of Ruiz's shooting are tragic, but are represented as an inevitable outcome of the circumstances; he was in possession of a realistic weapon and may have been an active shooter. But these details, of course, do not account for the entirety of his lived experience.

Ruiz was remembered by friends and coworkers as a devoted father who'd also fostered two children in need of a home. Some also recalled conversations with Ruiz about his past drug and alcohol abuse, and his recent stint in rehab.[482] Unfortunately, this context does not change the fact that he threatened restaurant patrons and pulled the airsoft gun on police officers the night of March 20th. But it does make us question the supposed inevitability of his death. This was a man who was clearly struggling with addiction, and according to his family, mental illness. Ruiz's downward spiral is an indictment of Salinas Valley's dearth of accessible mental health resources. His death, then, is less an inescapable tragedy, and more an example of how valley law enforcement disposes of those underserved by public health departments. This is an especially important point because the confluence of substance abuse, mental illness, and lethal police force repeated only two months later.

Osmar Hernández was shot by Officer Derek Gibson and Sgt. George Lauricella on May 9th. Hernandez was a 26-year-old Salvadoran farmworker who had been

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[481] Amy Larson, "Salinas Police Officers who Shot Angel Ruiz Cleared of Wrongdoing," *KSBW 8*, May 8, 2015, https://www.ksbw.com/article/salinas-police-officers-who-shot-angel-ruiz-cleared-of-wrongdoing/1056619.

[482] Allison Gatlin, "Man's Slaying Stuns Friends," *The Californian*, March 26, 2014, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/crime/2014/03/26/friends-recall-angel-ruiz-as-family-man/6931999/.

experiencing mental distress in the weeks leading to his death. He was drinking more, which may have been an attempt to cope with trauma, as he'd been viciously beaten and stabbed on the street the year before.[483] He was reportedly wielding a knife in front of a grocery store in East Salinas. He was first tased by the responding officer. Two backup officers arrived to arrest Hernandez, at which point he reportedly reached for a weapon—which turned out to be a lettuce knife. This detail may seem jarring to people unfamiliar with rural agricultural communities, but it's quite common for farmworkers to carry their work tools in public.

The officers claimed that Hernandez was acting erratically and couldn't ascertain whether he was understanding their commands: "Hernandez puckered his lips at one, as if to blow a kiss, then said in Spanish, 'Please forgive me'," right before pulling the knife, during which the two officers shot him ten times.[484] This is a clear parallel with Ruiz's shooting: Hernández's plea for forgiveness implies that he also knowingly sought suicide-by-cop. His violent death and history as a victim of violence also echoes back into time to Proceso Vitacion's untimely demise in 1935. Both men were described as pleasant young men, whose moods darkened after the trauma of their beatings. We can certainly have compassion for the officers, since being used for someone's suicide must also be traumatic. But that compassion should not obscure that all three officers had been involved in two or more previous shootings. It should also not justify the use of lethal force as an acceptable alternative to mental health care for victims of violence.

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[483] Sara Rubin, "Salinas Police Chief Clears Officers who Shot and Killed Man with a Knife," *Monterey County Weekly*, May 15, 2014, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/salinas-police-chief-clears-officers-who-shot-and-killed-man/article_23b0025a-dc8b-11e3-8eb9-001a4bcf6878.html.
[484] Ibid.

Furthermore, Hernández reportedly reached for his lettuce knife, which served as the basis for claiming that the officers feared for their life—but the lettuce knife is not in and of itself a weapon. It is primarily an agricultural tool; it can of course be used to maim or kill, but that is not its primary purpose. These are important distinctions because another Latino would be shot and killed for holding his work tool just three weeks later.

Carlos Mejia was shot by Officer Josh Lynd and Sgt. Danny Warner on May 20th. The shooting happened mid-day, only a block away from a middle school in East Salinas. Mejía was a construction day laborer and a gardener; he was carrying garden shears when he was shot. The officers wrote in their official report that Mejia had exposed himself to a woman in the neighborhood and attacked her dog. In a later lawsuit, his family charged the officers with misrepresenting Mejía as criminal, and countered that he was going door-to-door offering his gardening services and then had to fight off the dog.[485]

Mejía's shooting was captured on video by a nearby resident; the video shows Mejía putting his arms up and backing away from officers, in contrast to police reports that he lunged at the officers with his garden shears.[486] The video quickly circulated through social media immediately after the shooting, and a protest developed at the scene. Residents were especially concerned that police had left Mejía's bloodied body uncovered on the street for several hours—including during the time that middle-schoolers were walking home. Disciplinary punishment was not only enacted on Mejía;

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[485] Sara Rubin, "Family of Carlos Mejia, who was Shot and Killed by Salinas Police, Prepare to Sue City," *Monterey County Weekly*, May 27, 2014, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/family-of-carlos-mejia-who-was-shot-and-killed-by/article_ad4f9116-e5f4-11e3-93fa-001a4bcf6878.html.
[486] Nic Coury and Sara Rubin, "Videos Show Officer-Involved Shooting," *Monterey County Weekly*, May 20, 2014, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/updated-videos-show-officer-involved-shooting-warning-graphic-content/article_8d7018e8-e07c-11e3-8da9-001a4bcf6878.html.

but for Latinx residents of all ages, witnessing Mejía's dead body reminded that police officers could carry out deadly force on their own bodies. Further violence was meted out at the protest over Mejía's shooting. Constantino García, a young farmworker and father, was shot several times as he stood outside of his home while people were gathered for the demonstration. Salinas Police's official statement described the efforts to save García as futile in the face of angry East Salinas residents:

> As officers arrived in the area to render aid to the victim and investigate the shooting, many people who had gathered in the area to protest started to throw bottles, sticks, rocks and bricks…a bottle hit the officer [administering CPR to Garcia] preventing him from rendering aid.[487]

Local media outlets also framed García's death as a direct result of residents' violence toward police, stating that "Garcia was *still clinging to life*" before the officer was struck by the bottle. They displaced the responsibility for his shooting onto residents, noting that no witnesses came forward with information even though "at least 100 people [who] witnessed the homicide."[488] This displacement of responsibility was accomplished by a sleight of hand: first responders were indeed called in response to García's shooting—but there were already dozens of highly trained officers on the scene prior to the shooting. They were, thus, also witnesses to García's homicide.

These officers set up a strategic perimeter encircling the protestors. They were aided from sheriff's deputies and officers from five other police departments across the valley. Salinas Police officers were ready for a confrontation, since all "were wearing

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[487] Amy Larson, "1 Killed During Riot in Salinas; Demonstrators Turn Violent Against Police," *KSBW 8*, May 22, 2014, http://www.ksbw.com/article/1-killed-during-riot-in-salinas-demonstrators-turn-violent-against-police/1054226.
[488] Ibid.

heavy riot gear."[489] What is obscured in local media accounts, then, is that these officers were not there to ensure the safety of the protest and its participants. They were there to repress it. Valley law enforcement—along with García's murderer—were thus part of the violence with which East Salinas residents were met that night. This violence was justified in media narratives that portrayed them as riotous and irresponsible. No officers were charged in Mejía's death, and García's murder is unsolved to this day—no one has been held responsible.

Frank Alvarado Jr. was shot by Sergeant Brian Johnson and Officer Scott Sutton in southeast Salinas on July 10. Alvarado had been trying to reintegrate into the community after a decade incarcerated at Chuckwalla Valley State Prison in southern California. He had only been out for a little less than a year before his death. While incarcerated, Alvarado worked through anger issues in "therapy and self-help groups," and was optimistic about the possibility of turning his life around with a new California ID with which he got a new job at an auto shop.[490] Unfortunately, the brighter future he envisioned did not come to be; his struggle with substance abuse and mental health resurfaced. Alvarado's family called 911 to request medical assistance, as Alvarado was high on meth and had set fire to curtains at his grandparent's house.

When police arrived, they fired twenty-three rounds at Alvarado as he stepped out behind a car holding a cell phone. Witnesses state Alvarado was raising his hands to

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[489] "Angry Crowd Confronts Police Near Fatal Shooting Scene," *Monterey Herald*, May 21, 2014, http://www.montereyherald.com/article/zz/20140521/NEWS/140528573.
[490] Mary Duan and Sara Rubin, "Man Killed by Salinas Police said he Sought New Life after Decade in Prison," *Monterey County Weekly*, July 10, 2014, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/man-killed-by-salinas-police-said-he-sought-new-life/article_6448d4fe-0878-11e4-8d1e-0017a43b2370.html.

comply with their commands.[491] Witnesses also stated that the officers never warned Alvarado that they would shoot their guns; they also used handguns instead of tasers in their first approach. The DA eventually claimed that Alvarado's death was suicide-by-cop—a decision based entirely on his mother's claim that Alvarado had told her he was planning to die this way. That claim is disputed by every other member of Alvarado's immediate family, including his father and sister.[492] We of course can't know Alvarado's state of mind, but even if his mother's claims are true, the facts of the matter don't change: Johnson and Sutton shot twenty-three rounds at an unarmed man, hitting him at least twenty times. If Alvarado was indeed planning a suicide-by-cop, then these officers shot an unarmed *and* mentally ill man. Salinas Police officers' excessive use of force on mentally ill Latinxs would repeat in 2015, 2017, and 2019. These incidents are the result of Salinas Police's refusal of accountability, a disingenuous investment in changing their training, and their expert ability to clamp down on community protest.

During a community talk in late 2014, Chief McMillin argued that his officers' sharp decision-making prevented Salinas protests from playing out like the protests over Michael Brown's shooting in Ferguson, Missouri. He also praised the intervention of other Salinas Valley law enforcement agencies that arrived at protests "on their own

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[491] Sara Rubin, "Family of Frank Alvarado, who was Killed by Salinas Police, file Federal Lawsuit against the City," *Monterey County Weekly*, June 10, 2015, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/family-of-frank-alvarado-who-was-killed-by-salinas-police/article_5388a420-0fbe-11e5-9234-d34b00c38439.html.
[492] Katharine Bell, "DA: Shooting Death 'Suicide by Cop'," *The Californian*, June 19, 2015, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/crime/2015/06/19/da-alvarado-shooting-death-suicide-cop/29008057/.

because they heard us calling for help."[493] McMillin portrays Salinas Police as an overwhelmed, under-resourced police force. This, of course, is disingenuous; Salinas Police had a vast arsenal of military-grade weapons, and had arrived at protests decked out in riot gear. Furthermore, his comments frame the participation of other law enforcement agencies as spontaneous solidarity. This elides Salinas Valley law enforcement's lax adherence to jurisdiction, and decades-long history of collaborating to suppress protests.

A later think-piece by *The Washington Post* argued that the Latinx makeup of the Salinas Police Department negated the need for a larger anti-police brutality movement in the valley. Representation, apparently, was a salve to the trauma of state violence. While the department does have a significant percentage of Latinx officers, the article misses a very obvious point: all four Latinos were killed by white police officers. Furthermore, Latinx officers do not necessarily stand in solidarity with the Latinx residents they police, since the latter are mostly poor and the former earn a middle-class, steady wage in an occupation that has historically been complementary to agribusiness that creates conditions of poverty. This is why it's important to again underscore the valley's culture of impunity—it is not just a succession of failures in accountability. It is a set of beliefs and practices that justify surveillance and police violence as necessary for protecting the prosperity of the valley. It requires good faith belief, and it marks who is part of the in- or out-group. So, despite sharing an ethnicity, Latinx police officers that uphold a "code of silence" with their fellow officers, and that believe each shooting was justified, are in the

[493] Gatlin, "Police Chief."

in-group. Latinx protesters are in the out-group. Representation and shared cultural references do not easily uproot that historically entrenched culture, as seen in Mexican-Americans' antagonism toward Triqui immigrants.

The *Washington Post* piece also troublingly minimized the ways in which Ferguson, Missouri is a place invested in the economic subjugation and violent repression of Black people. McMillin's own anti-blackness went unchallenged in a national article. On first reading, McMillan's comment that "Salinas could've been Ferguson," can be inferred as conveying relief that large-scale protests did not last more than two days, or that there were no more officer-involved beatings or shootings at these events. But this would be to discount the violence that did occur: a man was shot and killed in the middle of the second night of protest. McMillin's comment also naturalized the series of events in Salinas, as if things didn't reach the scale they did in Ferguson because of some unknown factor—when in reality, valley law enforcement came out in full force. This is not to discount the scale of police response in Ferguson. Rather, it's to counter McMillin's insinuation that things just sort of turned out well, as if almost the entirety of valley law enforcement didn't immediately roll in with their MRAPs and encircle protesters while decked out in riot gear.

Furthermore, his phrasing denotes an anti-black narrative; when asked to expand on the differences between Salinas and Ferguson, McMillin stated "I don't have an African American *issue* here, in any way. I have a huge Latino population that I need to

address."[494] McMillin uses "issue" to categorize African-Americans as an aggregate problem. On the other hand, his use of "address" points to McMillin's idea of Latinxs as residents with demands, to whom he needs to appeal. This is another example of the point I first made in Chapter 2: anti-blackness is a cultural practice in Salinas Valley, even in the absence of a historical or contemporary African-American population. It is also an example of the rhetorical gymnastics that the Salinas Police department engaged in to dispel accusations of racism.

On the Salinas Police Department's website, a public FAQ on the 2014 shootings uses demographics to argue that these were not the product of officers' racial bias. They explain: "In Salinas, 77% of the population is Latino. That means that, all other things being equal, nearly 8 out of 10 of the small number of people who commit violent crimes would probably be Latino – just because nearly 8 out of 10 people who do everything in Salinas are Latino." They then clarify that they don't commit crimes *because* they are Latino, but because "violent crime is more likely in underserved neighborhoods…In Salinas, those neighborhoods are much more likely to be Latino…In short, what we see in Salinas is that when police have contact with a violent person, that person is likely to be Latino."[495] This is a puzzling bit of reasoning that demonstrates the police's racial bias. It can easily serve to confuse the reader, consequently making them buy into the

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[494] Lydia DePillis, "First Person: Salinas Could've Been Ferguson. Here's Why it Wasn't," *The Washington Post*, August 22, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/storyline/wp/2014/08/22/first-person-salinas-couldve-been-ferguson-heres-why-it-wasnt/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.28badba9610d. Emphasis added.

[495] "Frequently Asked Questions: Officer Involved Shootings in Salinas," Salinas Police Department, last updated September 5, 2015, https://www.salinaspd.com/frequently-asked-questions-officer-involved-shootings-salinas-page.

argument despite three non sequiturs and a conclusion that begs analysis. I'll reconstruct the argument here in order to demonstrate the fallacies:

> *Premise 1*: There's so many Latinos in Salinas that statistically they carry out the majority of <u>all</u> activities[496]
> *Premise 2*: Some of these activities include violent crime
> *Intermediate Conclusion*: the majority of violent crimes in Salinas are perpetrated by Latinos
> *Premise 3*: Violent crimes happen more often in Salinas's poor neighborhoods
> *Premise 4*: Latinos are more likely to live in Salinas's poor neighborhoods
> *Intermediate Conclusion*: the majority of violent crimes in Salinas are perpetrated by poor Latinos (non sequitur: does not follow from the previous premises)
> *Premise 5*: Police encounter violent criminals, who are more likely to be poor Latinos
> *Implicit Premise*: police are justified in shooting violent criminals
> *Intermediate Conclusion*: police were justified in shooting poor Latinos (begs the question)
> *Final Conclusion*: Every person shot was Latino because they are Latino.

Clearly, the department's public information officer was not particularly invested in providing a valid and sound counterargument, as much as they were tasked with reinforcing a narrative that Latinxs are inherently criminal. That narrative was consequently presumed to be enough to justify every shooting. This response to the 2014 shootings is still an active page on the Salinas Police Department's website; that is a testament to the way the valley's culture of impunity can endure even in the face of criticisms and protest. It also signals to us that 2014 was not a fluke—and indeed, Salinas Police continued brutalizing Latinxs.

In the middle of the day on June 5th 2015, four Salinas Police officers beat Jose Velasco with batons as he lay in a median on a busy intersection in North Salinas. An

[496] I use "Latino" instead of "Latinx" here to mirror the Salinas Police Department's wording.

onlooker filmed the beating on their cellphone and uploaded the video, which showed the officers striking Velasco twenty-one times. Officers reported that they'd been called to the scene after several 911 calls claiming Velasco was throwing a woman into traffic; the woman was later identified as his mother, Rita Acosta. The officers' report provides little space for sympathy toward Velasco, who they claim not only savagely attacked his own mother in broad daylight, but also allegedly attacked officers and tried to take one of their tasers.

Acosta vehemently denied this narrative, saying that her son had been suffering a schizophrenic episode and told her earlier that day "that he had been seeing demons, and that he believed someone was chasing him."[497] She also countered that she'd called 911 to request medical assistance. In fact, other 911 calls stated that Velasco was running in and out of traffic, and did not claim that Velasco was slamming his mother on the pavement as police had initially claimed. To Acosta's horror, police officers—and not EMTs—arrived when she was trying to pull her son to safety on the sidewalk. Rather than help her get Velasco out of the street, they began beating him over and over again, each taking turns. Velasco suffered fractures to his legs, and lacerations to his head—despite officers being trained not to use batons on people's heads. He was also arrested and held on charges of assault and resisting arrest. Officers continued enacting punishment on Latinxs struggling with their mental health in the coming years.

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[497] Jeff Mitchell, "Celebrity Attorney Files in Beating Case," *The Californian*, June 19, 2015, Newspapers.com.

Sixteen-year-old Marlon Joel Rodas-Sánchez was shot and killed by officers Manuel Lopez Jr. and Jared Dominici in the early hours of January 18, 2017. Twelve other officers had responded to 911 calls from neighbors and housemates saying Rodas-Sánchez was high on meth, holding a six-inch knife and talking to himself. Official reports stated that the officers had engaged Rodas-Sánchez outside, shouting multiple commands in English and Spanish, and that they'd deployed several non-lethal strategies including a taser, rubber bullets, and blasting him with a fire hose. Officer Lopez slipped on the wet floor when he followed Rodas-Sánchez into the house and shot the boy immediately afterward, hitting him twice with AR-15 rounds from the floor. Dominici then followed and shot Rodas-Sánchez three more times with his .45-caliber handgun. These are hard details to write, and I imagine they are just as hard to read. I do not recount them here for the purpose of spectacle.

Instead, valley media narratives about Rodas-Sánchez did everything they could to portray a sixteen-year-old as an imminent threat to fourteen heavily armed officers. These narratives diminish a key fact: Officer Lopez immediately fired at Rodas-Sánchez after slipping, meaning that his response was most likely out of panic than out of measured judgment. Officer Dominici similarly shot Rodas-Sánchez as a reflex to the sound of Lopez's gunshots. At the very least, this demonstrates the two officers were operating from fear rather than procedure; more seriously, this points to a deadly lapse in police department training. The details of that night also de-center the officers' perspective and reorient us toward Rodas-Sánchez's excruciating experience. In the last moments of his

life, hallucinating and disoriented, Rodas-Sánchez received a plethora of devastating blows to his slight 5'4", 100-pound body.

Valley media also used Rodas-Sánchez's life story to paint him as a dangerous criminal, preemptively removed from the community before he could inevitably cause damage. The boy had emigrated from El Salvador three years earlier. One report claimed that he'd been "smuggled" into the country by his father. It also details Rodas-Sánchez's drug use, claims from his housemates that he "did not go to school or have a job," and descriptions of his Facebook photos to imply he was an active member of MS-13.[498] His citizenship status and immigration story are difficult to verify with available public records, but the use of the verb "smuggle" frames his father as a criminal and the boy as contraband. Moreover, if Rodas-Sánchez did come into the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant, then this is salient context for his troubled behavior afterward, rather than proof of inherent delinquency. Rodas-Sánchez would have been just thirteen when he made the dangerous trek across three international borders.

Salvadoran migrant children are especially vulnerable to violence from Guatemalan, Mexican, and U.S. police forces, as well as was gangs like MS-13 and Mexican cartels. This last group has repeatedly kidnapped, tortured, and executed Central American migrant women and children en masse.[499] The wording in the local report ("smuggled in

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[498] Amy Larson, "Salinas Police Fatally Shoot Boy: No Wrongdoing Found by DA," *KSBW 8*, July 15, 2017, https://www.ksbw.com/article/watch-live-da-investigation-into-salinas-police-fatally-shooting-boy/10309219.

[499] Cartels like Los Zetas carried out mass kidnappings, torture, and massacres of over 300 Central American migrants in three separate incidents from 2010 to 2012. Other cartels have been known to make kidnapped youth and men fight to the death as a way to recruit new members, while trafficking women and children in sexual slavery rings. For further reading, see: "Mexican Police Helped Cartel Massacre 193

by his father") is also ambiguous, making it hard to ascertain whether Rodas-Sánchez made this journey unaccompanied. Whatever the case, Rodas-Sánchez was on his own in the U.S. since age fourteen, first living on the streets and then joining friends at the house where he'd eventually be killed. His housemates reported that Rodas-Sánchez had begun experimenting with crystal meth. All of this context points to a child struggling with frayed family relations, the trauma of border-crossing, and homelessness.

I detail the Ruiz, Hernández, Mejia, Alvarado, and Rodas-Sánchez shootings, as well as the beating of Velasco, to make two important points. First, the narratives about the shootings make it difficult to see these men as innocent victims, creating an obstacle to garner public support for police accountability. For example, only one of the five men shot were technically unarmed. But I use the qualifier *technically* because two of those men were "armed" with their work tools: a lettuce knife, and garden shears. The qualifier distinguishes the level of armament for each party. Salinas Police had handguns and high-capacity rifles that they'd acquired from the Department of Defense; Ruiz had a pellet gun, while Hernandez, Mejia, and Rodas-Sanchez had knives or shears.

The second point is about the victims' alleged drug use. Every affected family reported that their loved one was suffering from some form of mental illness at the time of their death. Mental illness is not, in and of itself, a threat to someone else's life. Several police reform advocates have stressed the need to train officers to deescalate situations,

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Migrants, Documents Show," *NPR*, December 22, 2014, https://www.npr.org/2014/12/22/372579429/mexican-police-helped-cartel-massacre-193-migrants-documents-show. See also Natalia Cote-Muñoz, "Lost in a Black Hole of Violence: Central American Migrants in Mexico," *Washington Report on the Hemisphere* 31, no. 17 (September 2011): 1-3. EbscoHost.

and view mentally ill folks as sick and in need of medical assistance.[500] Moreover, several studies have shown that, in the face cost-prohibitive mental health care, poor people often self-medicate with illicit drugs.[501] Narratives that highlight victims were under the influence of drugs do so in order to justify officers' actions. They thus skip holding county public health officials accountable for the dearth of mental health resources available to low-income community members. And, they obscure the conditions of poverty that industrial agriculture create, and which make health care inaccessible. The valley's culture of impunity, then, holds that it is just and necessary for police to punish and kill the people whom public health officials and agribusiness leaders fail. Meanwhile, the people in charge are allowed to build new, prosperous lives.

McMillin announced his retirement in mid-2016. He went on to become the Chief Compliance Officer for Indus Holdings, Inc., a Salinas-based cannabis company.[502] He'd overseen Operation Ceasefire, which essentially gave youth of color the option of joining police-sponsored activities or having "the full weight of enforcement against them." He ignored multiple warnings about his officers' use of force and defended his officers after they killed four Latinxs in one year. We can only wonder how many Latinx residents of

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[500] Henry J. Steadman and David Morrissette, "Police Responses to Persons with Mental Illness: Going Beyond CIT Training," *Psychiatric Services* 67, no. 10 (October 2016): 1054-1056. See also "Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Programs," National Alliance on Mental Illness, last updated May 4, 2020, https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Crisis-Intervention/Crisis-Intervention-Team-(CIT)-Programs;

[501] Katherine M. Harris and Mark J. Edlund, "Self-Medication of Mental Health Problems: New Evidence from a National Survey," *Health Services Research* 40, no. 1 (February 2005): 117-134. See also Caroline Olney, Sarah Stroe, and Anne Hughes, "Poor, Homeless, and Underserved Populations," in *Oxford Textbook of Palliative Nursing*, edited by Judith A. Paice and Betty Rolling Ferrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 492.

[502] "Kelly McMillin: Chief Compliance Officer," Indus Holdings, Inc., last modified May 29, 2020, https://www.indusholdingsinc.com/team/kelly-mcmillan/.

Salinas Valley were arrested for weed possession by McMillin or his officers, as he now enjoys cushy executive-level salary from a lucrative weed venture.

Throughout the physical and epistemic violence perpetrated from 2014 to 2017, surviving family members sought different forms of redress. They advocated for charges against all officers involved. Anticipating that the DA would not charge any police officers, several families filed lawsuits against the Salinas Police Department, individual officers, and the city of Salinas. Osmar Hernández's family filed a federal lawsuit against the city of Salinas and the police department in October 2014, accusing officers of excessive force and violating his constitutional rights. This lawsuit has not yet been settled, but it was an important first step in challenging the valley's culture of impunity. It also served as inspiration for the other families.

Carlos Mejía's family filed a similar suit that December, seeking damages but also hoping to hold the entire police department accountable for systemic failures that led not only to Mejía's death but also the three other men shot in 2014.[503] The U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California ruled that the individual officers could not be sued in 2017. This was successfully appealed in 2019, and save for the pandemic-related court closures, moves the suit closer to trial by jury.[504] The Mejía suit is particularly important because it is the closest that surviving family members have been to holding Salinas Police accountable on a federal level, and beyond a settlement. It is also significant because civil rights attorney John L. Burris. who successfully represented Rodney King

[503] Rubin, "Family of Carlos Mejia."
[504] Eduardo Cuevas, "Lawsuit Against Salinas Officers who Shot Man Holding Gardening Shears Cleared for Trial," *USA Today*, March 19, 2019, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2019/03/19/salinas-police-officers-mans-2014-shooting-death-can-stand-trial/3204409002/.

in his suit against the Los Angeles Police Department, and later represented Oscar Grant's family. His work in Salinas Valley also led him to represent Jose Velasco; Burris stated that the video of Velasco's beating "reminded him of the Rodney King beating."[505]

Marlon Joel Rodas-Sánchez's mother, Ana Rodas, also successfully sued the city of Salinas, as well as Police Chief Adele Fresé and five of the fourteen responding officers. The lawsuit held the individual officers accountable for wrongful death, and that police department leadership and city officials had violated Rodas-Sánchez's civil rights. Ana Rodas received an undisclosed, "substantial settlement" in 2019.[506] Frank Alvarado Jr.'s family also filed a federal lawsuit against the police department and city, but unexpectedly dropped the suit in 2016.

His family then focused on advocacy and protest movements in Salinas Valley and the greater Monterey Peninsula. For example, after the 2016 killings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, Alvarado's father participated in a Black Lives Matter protest in Seaside. Seaside has the largest African-American population in Monterey County, with roots reaching back to African-American GIs who settled in the area after World War II. The event was the work of a multi-racial coalition, including the NAACP, Whites for Racial Equality, and the Watsonville chapter of the Brown Berets—a militant Chicano

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[505] David Schmalz, "Famed Civil Rights Attorney John Burris Lays Down Strong Words at Salinas City Hall in Prelude to Velasco Beating Lawsuit," *Monterey County Weekly*, June 18, 2015, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/crime_blog/famed-civil-rights-attorney-john-burris-lays-down-strong-words-at-salinas-city-hall-in/article_1f686214-1632-11e5-93b6-5f7b9ad60772.html.
[506] Joe Szydlowski, "Salinas Settles Lawsuit over 2017 Deadly Police Shooting of 16-year-old," *The Californian*, April 18, 2019, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/2019/04/18/salinas-deadly-police-shooting-2017-lawsuit-teen-settled/3498273002/.

activist group modeled after the Black Panthers.[507] Alvarado Sr. also continued refuting claims that his son had committed suicide-by-cop. Although Alvarado's family was not able to seek damages or have their day in court with Salinas Police, they still fight for change. By participating in rallies and protests, they connected their family's struggle to wider protests against police brutality across racial lines. They also committed themselves to countering the valley's culture of impunity, publicly challenging narratives that framed Alvarado's death as just and necessary. Valley law enforcement, meanwhile, worked to shift the burden of reform and accountability onto the community.

TURNING RECOMMENDATIONS BACK ON THE COMMUNITY

In 2016, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office of the Department of Justice released a report on Salinas Police's policies and community relationship. The report listed 110 recommendations to ensure policy adherence, increase transparency, and rebuild trust with the community, and in particular mend the department's "fractured relationship" with East Salinas.[508] According to the findings, the Salinas Police Department consistently failed to provide regular training to officers on use of force, neglecting to download information from tasers' onboard memory to document their use in case files, and had no "early warning/intervention system" in place

[507] Ivan Garcia, "Black Lives Matter Supporters Protest in Seaside," *Monterey County Weekly*, July 14, 2016, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/black-lives-matter-supporters-protest-in-seaside/article_3db20848-49f2-11e6-b1b4-abfbdec3adbb.html.
[508] Roberto Santos, Rick Gregory, Leocadio Cordero, and Gerald Richard, *Collaborative Reform Initiative: An Assessment of the Salinas Police Department* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Intergovernmental Research, 2016), 82.

to identify officers with troubling use of force records.[509] This last finding is particularly troubling when we remember that each of the three officers who shot Carlos Mejía had already been involved in two or three shootings prior to killing him.

The report also documented that officers were overusing "distraction blows," or closed-fist punches used to disorient an individual; they were also under-documenting use-of-force cases by not consistently photographing people that had received those blows.[510] These two findings point to a disturbing trend: if the investigators found that the department chronically under-reported use-of-force cases, while also finding that they were overusing distraction blows, one may reasonably ask how many more cases of excessive force have gone unreported. One recommendation to remedy this was for the department to agree to let an outside agency investigate all officer-involved and in-custody deaths.[511] This suggestion was not retroactive, though, and so any deaths before 2016 did not have to be reinvestigated.

Taking into account the varying states of crises that each victim was in, the report also suggested that the department step up training on interacting with people with mental illness and disabilities.[512] The fact that the department wasn't already doing this meant that it was violating its own policies requiring consistent training. It also lends to my argument that in the cases from 2014 to 2017, police largely acted as a disposal force rather than as first-responders for people experiencing a mental health crisis. In addition

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[509] Ibid., 37, 41, 43.
[510] Ibid., 45, 48.
[511] Ibid., 67.
[512] Ibid., 119.

to not following their own policies, the department also crafted three separate ones on use-of-force—all of which were deemed too vague. None of the three even mentioned de-escalation either.[513] In the absence of clarity and a goal to de-escalate, Salinas Police officers were thus trained to enact power and control according to their own discretion, which often translated to whatever means necessary.

Unlike the Salinas Police department's website, the COPS report acknowledges that Salinas Police's frayed relationship with Latinx residents was largely due to prejudice. They noted that, at the time of the report, the department was "not training its members regularly on implicit bias, cultural awareness, or procedural justice."[514] Recommendations included hiring more Spanish-speaking staff and providing short "Spanish for policing" courses to existing personnel, as well as developing an overarching "community-collaborative policing strategy."[515] Here, one might wonder if the COPS investigators had not read about McMillin's anti-gang initiative, for which he received White House honors. Salinas already had what it imagined was a community-policing strategy. But the report astutely noted that Salinas Police had largely superficial relationships with community and faith leaders, and that their initiatives were not truly community-informed.

This point, coupled with the scrutiny of a federal investigation, must have really grinded McMillin's gears. When the report was released, McMillin was defensive and dismissive saying that "some of it, frankly, we disagree with…much of it we could have

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[513] Ibid., 34.
[514] Ibid., 4.
[515] Ibid., 4, 173.

written ourselves."[516] He also attempted to spin the report's findings to make the opposite point, claiming the section on use of force did not find "indications that Salinas Police officers use fore excessively or unjustly," nor any evidence of "bias or disparate treatment in how force is used with people of different races."[517] As scholars theorize the last four years as a "post-truth" era, McMillin's comments provide an example of how law enforcement uses reform initiatives to their own ends.

McMillin's comments also signaled a new strategy for deflecting blame and making policed subjects responsible for their own survival. Eight months after the release of the COPS report, the Salinas Police department and Monterey County Sheriff's office received a joint $850,000 grant from the California Board of State and Community Corrections to run a program focused on rebuilding trust in the community.[518] The Salinas Police department used some of those funds to contract "Why'd You Stop Me?" (WYSM), a nonprofit that provides workshops to law enforcement agencies and youth groups in communities across the country. It was founded by active Long Beach police officer Jason Lehman, who believes the workshops should be for both officers and the community because "acts of violence…could be greatly reduced if both parties could step

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[516] "Salinas Police Chief's Response to DOJ Report," *KSBW*, March 22, 2016, http://www.ksbw.com/article/read-salinas-police-chief-s-response-to-doj-report/1296751.
[517] Chelcey Adami, "DOJ Cites 'Hard Truths' about Salinas PD," *The Californian*, March 22, 2016, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/my-safety/2016/03/22/doj-cites-hard-truths-salinas-pd/82148086/.
[518] Mary Duan, "Community Program Aimed at Community Cooperation with Police Misfires," *Monterey County Weekly*, November 3, 2016, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/archives/2016/1103/community-program-aimed-at-community-cooperation-with-police-misfires/article_5b700484-a154-11e6-8743-27b923fb6b0e.html.

into each other's shoes to see, hear and feel the power struggle we each faced."[519] Lehman references power struggles, but does so in a way to place the power of an armed officer and the power of a youth of color on the same scale. His vague description of "acts of violence" obscures that he's talking about *state* violence. By positioning youth of color as equal to police officers, he shifts responsibility for preventing state violence onto youth. WYSM is thus invested in training youth of color to be docile even in the face of an unjustified stop. This analysis contextualizes the true effect of the organization's name; youth are taught not to "escalate" the interaction by asking "why'd you stop me?" and instead engage in an empathic practice that makes them vulnerable to infringement on their rights.

It should be noted that African-American parents often speak to their children about how to interact with police officers. The practice, known as "the talk," is one of racial socialization in which African-American parents prepare their children and teenagers for bias by explaining to them that their race is "a salient dimension of identity in a racialized society," and that it shapes their interactions with social and state actors.[520] African-American children and teens are taught, for example, to keep their hands visible and motionless when approached by a police officer.[521] This lesson, however, does not hinge on the idea that children and teens should practice empathy with armed adults; it recognizes that long-held stereotypes about African-Americans and aggression put them

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[519] Jason Lehman, "Founder's Message," Why'd You Stop Me, last updated July 13, 2018, http://www.whydyoustopme.org/team-member-page/.
[520] Raygine DiAquoi, "Symbols in the Strange Fruit Seeds: What 'The Talk' Black Parents Have with their Sons Tells Us About Racism," *Harvard Educational Review* 87, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 515.
[521] Ibid., 529.

in immediate danger of being violently arrested or shot. The context of "the talk" underscores its difference from WYSM's approach; the latter tries to bring "participants into the shoes of the police officer in order to understand the struggle with power and *fear* that *our officers* encounter."[522] WYSM not only grants primacy to the lived experience of police officers, it positions their fear as valid. Youth of color are thus expected to accept the premise that there is something inherently scary about them, and that they are ultimately the ones responsible for mitigating the fear of armed adults.

WYSM further makes a connection with youth of color by having a "male African-American ex-gang member" and a "female Hispanic recovered drug addict" be part of the workshops.[523] These two staff members can impart valuable lessons about reintegration after incarceration or recovery from the chronic illness of drug addiction. But their goal is instead to create "trust and respect for policing."[524] They are used as cautionary tales in the vein of "scared straight" programs that eschew addressing historical and contemporary structural racism in favor of a discourse of individual responsibility. Moreover, both staff members are described first-and-foremost by their race or ethnicity, and by their proximity to criminality—rather than by their names. They are promoted by WYSM as racial placeholders for already existing stereotypes, and as finding redemption through ready compliance with police.

In October of 2016, WYSM conducted its first workshop with Lehman as the sole presenter for an audience of mostly East Salinas youth. During his four hour presentation,

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[522] "How is the WYSM Message Delivered?," Why'd You Stop Me, last updated July 13, 2018, http://www.whydyoustopme.org/. Emphasis added.
[523] Ibid.
[524] Ibid.

Lehman ran through his standard spiel about appropriate ways to interact with police officers with the goal of teaching the youth "how to respect authority."[525] Part of his presentation included a role-play exercise with a sixteen-year-old volunteer in the role of a police officer, and Lehman as someone being detained.[526] In line with WYSM's priorities, the exercise was meant to make the audience empathize with police officers' fear. Halfway through the exercise, and with no forewarning, Lehman pulled a gun and aimed it at the volunteer's head.

A silence fell across the audience, while the volunteer stood frozen. It wasn't until then that Lehman disclosed to the audience that the gun was a prop. There was a level cruelty in Lehman's actions that becomes more apparent when we underscore his and the audience's identity. Lehman—a white, physically imposing, active police officer—pulled a gun on a young Latinx, in front of an audience of other young Latinxs. Some of them had already witnessed gun violence growing up in East Salinas. He deliberately withheld that the gun was fake for dramatic effect, with no regard for the emotional well-being of the youth.[527] Lehman used trauma as a tool to dominate the audience.

But Lehman is not an individual actor peddling trauma theater for his own agenda. His nonprofit was the beneficiary of an undisclosed amount of Salinas Valley law

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[525] Mary Duan, "Community Program."

[526] I am not naming the volunteer because they were a minor at the time and I do not have a community tie to them.

[527] Contemporary research demonstrates a correlation between youth experiencing mental and emotional distress (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder), and their exposure to gun violence. Hallum Hurt, Elsa Malmud, and Nancy Brodsky, "Exposure to Violence: Psychological and Academic Correlates in Child Witnesses," *Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 155, no. 12 (2001): 1351-1356. See also Karen Slovak and Mark Singer, "Gun Violence Exposure and Trauma Among Rural Youth," *Violence and Victims* 16, no. 4 (2001): 389-400.

enforcement's $850,000 grant because WYSM aligned with the valley's culture of impunity. For example, Lehman argued that Salinas and WYSM were the right fit because "instead of worrying about changing police policies, the community should worry about cooperation."[528] Present-day reporting frames the prop gun incident as a lapse in judgment, and Lehman's comments as his misunderstanding of the community initiative goals. But this dehistoricizes Salinas Valley law enforcement's commitment to protecting officers from accountability, and to promoting a set of practices and beliefs that positions hyper-policing as necessary for the prosperity of the valley. As I've shown, this culture of impunity dates back in an unbroken chain to the 1930s. It's important to situate WYSM in this chain because it demonstrates that the nonprofit's relationship with the Salinas Police department and Monterey County Sheriff's office is not an unfortunate fluke. It is part of a much longer, deliberately maintained status quo. In fact, Salinas city officials rejected the idea of terminating WYSM's contract, and the group continues to give seminars to Salinas Police officers and Monterey County Sheriff's deputies to this day.

Salinas Police have also increased the number of Latinx officers and leadership to meet recommendations in the COPS report. In November of 2016 Adele Fresé replaced McMillin, becoming the city's first Latinx woman police chief. Her hire was framed as a sign of a healing relationship with the Latinx community, with city officials dismissing concerns over her limited Spanish fluency by foregrounding her "multiracial"

[528] Mary Duan, "Community Program."

background.[529] Fresé is Puerto Rican on her father's side, and has shared stories about growing up in the Bay Area city of San Leandro that point to a working-class background.[530] She swore in Manuel Martinez Jr. as Assistant Chief the next year.[531] So, a year after the COPS report suggested boosting the number of Latinx officers, the department had two in the highest positions. But, as we remember that Marlon Joel Rodas-Sánchez's death was in 2017, we must ask how effective Latinx representation truly was in reducing implicit bias in the department. Furthermore, Fresé's intersectional identity as a Latinx woman from a working-class background did not prevent police from killing Brenda Rodriguez Mendoza (a poor, Latinx woman) in 2019.

Fresé also has the distinction of having brought *Live PD* to Salinas in 2018. *Live PD* is a documentary series on A&E that follows police officers across the nation. It is similar to *COPS* in that film crews ride along with officers on patrol, and film all interactions without the consent of those detained or arrested. Consent, in both shows, only plays into whether a subject's face is visible or blurred. But, *Live PD* is different in three key ways, that make it especially suited to promote Salinas Valley's culture of impunity. First, as the name implies, the events being filmed are streamed live—with broadcast delays between 20 seconds to a few minutes. The broadcast delay is a standard tool for live programming which helps directors and editors avoid inadvertently airing

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[529] Ana Ceballos, "Greenfield's Top Cop Hired as Salinas' First Female Police Chief," *Monterey County Weekly*, September 21, 2016, http://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/greenfield-s-top-cop-hired-as-salinas-first-female-police/article_d4175244-803d-11e6-b0a6-a3602b1e4a3b.html.
[530] Chelcey Adami, "Salinas Police Enter New Era," *The Californian*, December 2, 2016, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/my-safety/2016/12/02/salinas-police-enter-new-era/94848894/.
[531] "SPD Holds Swearing In and Badge Pinning Ceremony," Police Department, City of Salinas, last updated December 21, 2017, https://www.cityofsalinas.org/es/police-department/news/spd-holds-swearing-and-badge-pinning-ceremony.

explicit sexual or violent imagery.[532] In *Live PD*, however, the broadcast delay also serves an entertainment purpose. It helps in-studio directors bounce back and forth between different cities and on-air talent. By structuring the show as entertainment, *Live PD* makes officers protagonists in an action-packed drama.

This is facilitated by the fact that the only subjects that talk directly to the camera are the officers. That element, plus the show's live stream, quickly create an unprecedented level of intimacy. This intimacy is actively encouraged, as viewers are constantly primed to chime in with their opinions on Facebook and Twitter throughout the show's 120-minute runtime. The viewer is thus persuaded to empathize with the officers on their hero's journey out to the streets, where some unknown but inevitable conflict awaits.

Live PD supplements the live feeds with an in-studio host and two analysis who provide color commentary on each feed in real time. The analysists, Tom Morris Jr. and Sean Larkin, are former police officers who offer their own experiences in similar situations or openly ponder on what crimes a subject may have committed, despite their presumed innocence. *Live PD* is not necessarily invested in due process; this is another point of affinity with the valley's culture of impunity. The studio set consists of a broad desk and jumbo screens that stream feeds from up to three different police departments across the nation. While the live feeds promote empathic bonds between the viewer and

[532] Stephanie Marriot, *Live Television: Time, Space and the Broadcast Event* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007), 48, 72.

the officer, the studio set and real-time color commentary imbue the show with an ESPN-like structure that make policing seem like a spectator sport.

This combination of intimacy and sports-like analysis lend to the creation of a fervent fandom. A fandom is a community of avid viewers who "create social structures, ecologies, rituals and traditions of their own."[533] Online, a fandom's rituals may include creating and proliferating memes based on content from the show, or even inside jokes from social media threads or forums. Social media hashtags and fan accounts (pages dedicated to an actor or character) also form part of online fandoms. *Live PD*'s fandom refers to itself as "Live PD Nation," which also serves as a hashtag to curate pictures and meme collections on Twitter and Instagram.

Live PD Nation has its favorite officers across the many departments that participate in the show. Salinas is nearly 80% Latinx, and the police department is headed by two Latinos. *Live PD* also regularly includes Latinx officers. But by far, the department's breakout stars are Mike Muscutt and Cameron Mitchell. Both are white, and neither are originally from Salinas. Muscutt is frequently presented as a no-nonsense father figure in fandom memes. In one *Live PD* scene, Muscutt responds to a call from an older man asking for assistance because he felt unsafe with his family.

Muscutt and the man are talking outside of a home. The older man stands very still, with his hands clasped behind his back. The viewer can see the man has nothing in his hands because the shot is framed by a "rule of thirds," which evenly distributes a shot

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[533] Mark Duffett, *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003), 48. Ebook Central.

vertically and horizontally in thirds. This kind of dynamic shot allows the viewer to capture action in all parts of the frame. An older woman stands next to the man; she is listening and also has her hands clasped behind her back. Both the man and the woman seem to be using their stillness and their hand positioning to signal to Muscutt that they are not a threat. This does not seem to work.

Despite the man being the caller asking for assistance, Muscutt asks him: "do you have anything on you that's going to hurt me?" The man responds: "I'm not going to hurt *me*, I'm not going to hurt anyone." By replying first that he wasn't going to hurt *himself*, the man is already attempting to mitigate Muscutt's assumption that the man is suicidal or in a mental crisis. The woman seems to sense a shift in the interaction and takes two small steps back. The rule of thirds shot allows the viewer to see these small context clues to infer that a conflict is arising. Depending on the viewer's sensibilities, they might interpret the context clues as a sign that Muscutt is in imminent danger—or, they might recognize that the man's statement and the woman's careful steps back are attempts to de-escalate Muscutt's increasing aggression. In this way, *Live PD*'s documentary elements do provide some space for either assenting to or resisting police narratives that justify police officers' fear.

But then a quick change to a center-frame shot pulls the viewer's gaze from other parts of the frame and straight to Muscutt and the man. In this shot, Muscutt is the clear protagonist: the viewer never loses sight of his face, and he stands several inches taller than the man. This kind of shot also creates suspense, since the image is flatter and there

is less to look at other than the action in the center. Muscutt grabs the man's hand, and the man flinches.

This is all it takes for Muscutt to pull both of the man's arms back in an attempt to cuff him. The man panics, pulls away and yells "you're not going to cuff me." Muscutt then clotheslines and throws the man down onto the sidewalk. As he falls, the man's pants begin to slip down his waist, exposing his buttocks. Muscutt then flips the man onto his stomach and sits on his back. All the while, the camera keeps the action in the center frame, then slowly zooms in and pans up Muscutt's torso so that he is all that is visible. The man disappears from the frame, and only his voice can be heard, pleading Muscutt to get off of him. This is a low angle shot, or "hero angle," typically used in action or superhero movies to make the viewer feel as if they are literally looking up at the protagonist; it is meant to inspire awe. Muscutt, then, is meant to be seen as the victor in an important battle.

The camera slowly zooms back out to show that the man is still exposed and cuffed on the sidewalk, with Muscutt straddling his back. This scene invites the viewer to relish in the man's sexualized humiliation. Indeed, this seems to have also been the intent of the person who uploaded the clip to YouTube because they wrote the video description as: "I give you Mike Muscutt and a guy who needs to pull his pants up," followed by a peach, crying-laughing, and face-palm emoji. The uploader presents the clip as something funny. Moreover, the title "Because I love the Live PD Nation…" presents the clip as a gift for the fandom. And this particular gift was offered by Mike Muscutt's wife, Rachel, who

uploaded this clip to her personal YouTube page.[534] The Muscutts thus profit from the *Live PD* contract, and relish in the local and national fame gained by policing and humiliating Salinas's Latinx population.

Cameron Mitchell's enthusiastic social media followers post tributes and photos particularly focused on his good looks and humorous interactions.[535] His affable persona endears him to fans, who construct him as a "good-guy cop" in their posts. One of the inside jokes they share revolves around a comment he made about Little Debbie Swiss Rolls. In that scene, Mitchell backs up another patrol after locating a stolen vehicle used in a robbery. When Mitchell arrives at the scene, he runs out of his car and immediately pulls his weapon. The suspense is short-lived though, as the responding officer has already cuffed the man suspected of stealing the vehicle.

The man is making off-handed comments and generally teasing the officers; when one lifts his shirt to look for gang tattoos, the man jokes "get a picture of my abs." One of the officers points out a possible scar on the man's stomach. But, in a moment that breaks the fourth wall, the man pauses for a beat then looks directly into the camera and says, "I think that might be cancer," putting on an exaggerated pout. Although officers talk directly into the camera, the viewers aren't jarred out of the show's narrative like they are in this moment. The man has crossed the line from a figure with no subjectivity, to one who is keenly—maybe uncomfortably—self-aware.

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[534] Rachel Muscutt, "Because I love the LivePDNation…," YouTube Video, 3:17, posted by "Rachel Muscutt," July 10, 2019, https://youtu.be/YxOvwUnRtPw.
[535] A frequent hashtag accompanying posts about Mitchell is #hottiesoflivepd ("hotties of live pd.")

Mitchell then checks the man's pupils to see if they're dilated. The man attempts to engage Mitchell in small-talk, offering that he likes strawberry-flavored Swiss Rolls. Mitchell pauses for a second and looks off into the distance, as if weighing whether or not to engage, before responding "I'm a chocolate swiss guy myself."[536] This moment spawned a series of hashtags and inside jokes on the LivePDNation twitter feed, with fans assessing the moment as a genuine moment of connection that helps "humanize the badge." But this take elides that Mitchell pauses for a beat before deciding to engage in the conversation. This is similar to the pause the man took earlier in the clip, and just as the man is deciding to ridicule the show with blatant absurdity, Mitchell is playing into a persona that serves his public image well.

Mitchell was one of the responding officers on the night 16-year-old Marlon Joel Rodas-Sánchez was shot with rubber bullets, blasted with a water cannon, and ultimately shot dead. Mitchell is one of the officers who tased him. I want to underscore the sharp divergence in online archives between Mitchell—a grown man who participated in the tortuous final moments of a boy's life—and Rodas-Sánchez, whose drug use and suspected gang affiliations are mentioned in nearly every news report. Mitchell exists as a good-natured, "hunky" cop online and on national TV. Rodas-Sánchez's life is memorialized as a drug-abusing gangbanger.

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[536] A&E, "Live PD: Check Out My Abs (Season 3)," YouTube Video, 3:03, February 13, 2019, https://youtu.be/9Yjmvq4RYkM.

CONCLUSION

From 2005 to 2019, visibly Latinx people in Salinas Valley faced particularly harsh and deadly circumstances. Law enforcement's funding and firepower was supercharged by wartime developments and federal partnerships. They used this power to actively question and apprehend brown people they perceived to be of Mexican descent—a gang unit practice openly admitted by Chief Kelly McMillin as he received a White House honor. The valley's culture of impunity protected sheriff's deputies and police officers whose unethical actions resulted in convictions or lost livelihoods. Holding law enforcement accountable became a painfully futile endeavor in 2014. Even after killing four men in the span of just five months, and being the subject of a federal investigation, Salinas Police confidently brushed off reform efforts. They focused instead on turning scrutiny back on Latinx residents. Through programs ostensibly meant to make amends for breaking the community's trust, Salinas Police attempted to instill in Latinx youth a sense that they were inherently dangerous and thus deserving of being shot if they didn't comply with all officer commands. Valley law enforcement's power was immense, but not totalizing, and Latinx residents in the valley sought multiple avenues for redress.

In October of 2019, the city of Salinas announced that *Live PD* had chosen not to renew its contract and would cease production in the city. Mayor Joe Gunter claimed that producers had told him they were "looking for a place that has a lot more activity than

ours. We're kind of a boring community."[537] Gunter's comments were the type of "aw, shucks" comments McMillin had made in 2014, when he claimed that police shootings just don't happen in Salinas. Both men harken a pastoral ideal of a sleepy farming town that couldn't possibly be complex enough for national media to pay attention to for long.

Gunter was also covering up that both the Alisal Union School District and Salinas Unified School District boards had passed resolutions petitioning the city to cancel their contract with *Live PD*. Both resolutions expressed concerns from Latinx students and parents that the show met no real community need, and instead propagated stereotypes about low-income Latinxs as inherently criminal.[538] Although *Live PD* claimed to have voluntarily left Salinas students and parents of both districts were integral in pushing the show out. They carried out a concerted campaign to highlight the damage the show actually did in the city. This win was an important sign of Salinas residents' power to reject racial scripts, and redress their image in the valley and in the nation.

But redresses are incomplete when operating within the bounds of the culture of impunity. The Salinas Police Department participated in 101 episodes of *Live PD*. Their extended participation in episodes that lasted up to three hours created a bevy of content

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[537] Mary Duan, "Live PD Declares Salinas Too Boring, Opts to Leave Town," *Monterey County Weekly*, October 17, 2019, https://www.montereycountyweekly.com/blogs/news_blog/live-pd-declares-salinas-too-boring-opts-to-leave-town/article_85662e74-f14e-11e9-996b-c75cfe8b2475.html.

[538] Eduardo Cuevas, "Salinas School Board to City, Cops: 'Immediately Terminate' Contract with 'Live PD'," *The Californian*, September 11, 2019, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/2019/09/11/salinas-school-board-city-nix-live-pd/2290963001/. See also Alani Letang, "Alisal Union School District Approves to Formally Oppose Live PD," *KSBW 8*, October 16, 2018, https://www.ksbw.com/article/alisal-union-school-district-approves-to-formally-oppose-live-pd/29495423.

that sustains the fandom and celebrity, even though the department no longer appears on the show. Fans still trade in memes and "thirst posts," and each of the officers maintains a following of over 3,000 on their Instagram accounts. All four officers also regularly post personal content, including videos they take while in uniform and in police vehicles. So, although Salinas Police's participation in *Live PD* only lasted a calendar year, its online legacy shows no sign of fizzling out. There's a popular saying that's meant to caution people against sharing personal or potentially embarrassing content online: "the internet is forever." In this case, Salinas Police's brief foray into policing Latinxs as spectacle is cached across a plethora of fan accounts.

CONCLUSION: "COMMUNITY POLICING DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE SOFT ON CRIME"

The older white woman sat with her arms crossed, furrowed brows framing her eyes as she watched Chief Adele Fresé approach the podium. Earlier during the public comment portion of the Police Community Advisory Committee (PCAC) meeting, the older woman had expressed her concerns over Salinas Police officers' wardrobe at the city's annual Rodeo. She'd seen the pictures all over local news sites: different officers assigned to Rodeo security detail wearing a "charro" suit modified to look like a uniform. She'd read the descriptions, and understood it to be something like a Mexican cowboy outfit.[539] But she was nonetheless disturbed to see public servants smiling as they wore "foreign uniforms."[540] She was quick to assure that she was not a racist—she simply didn't want citizens' tax money paying for the police department to "look Mexican." Weren't there other heritages in the valley that were important too, she asked. The Swiss, for example. Or, the Okies?

Now she sat glaring at Fresé, who had not touched on the comments at all during the course of the meeting. But as the meeting was coming to an end, Fresé approached the podium again and asked if she could make a final comment. The committee allowed her to speak, eschewing the procedures of their independent community-based police

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[539] A charro suit consists of tight pants, a white collared shirt worn with a silk tie and short coat, and a wide brimmed hat (sombrero.) The suit is usually decorated with bold embroidery. It was a traditional outfit for horsemen from the Mexican state of Jalisco, but was popularized nationally and transnationally by mariachis. Thus, a regional outfit circulates globally as a visual signifier of Mexicanness. The suit Salinas Police officers wore was blue with silver clasps, and bore the department's insignia on the left coat arm as well as a seven-point star badge.

[540] This is my testimonio of the events that occurred during the Police Community Advisory Committee meeting on July 24, 2019. It will have to serve as evidence since the video proceedings from this particular meeting have yet to be uploaded for public review.

accountability board. In Salinas Valley, a law enforcement officer speaks when they please. The white woman's comments did have an impact on Fresé, who now stood explaining that the charro suit had not been funded by city coffers. It was a special gift from an officer's uncle. "Salinas is 80% Latino," Fresé said. The white woman began shifting in her chair, arms still crossed. Fresé continued, "we honor that community with this suit." Then—as if she were the defiant protagonist in a feel-good movie where a racist gets their comeuppance—Fresé promised that she would do everything she could to ensure that officers wore that suit at every Rodeo from then on.

To Salinas's first Latina police chief, this must have felt like a triumph over the vestiges of a bygone racist era. Indeed, if this dissertation were invested in seeing representation as a tool for dismantling white supremacy, this interaction might be categorized as a form of redress. But that would be to obscure the myriad options law enforcement have for "honoring" Salinas Valley's Latinx community. They could stop disproportionately surveilling and policing Latinx neighborhoods, and avoid using their public housing complexes as explosives-training sites. They could also have officers act as medical first-responders when they interact with people in a mental crisis. Sheriffs and DAs could stop taking campaign funds from agribusiness leaders that pay their laborers poverty wages, given that these leaders create the unequal socio-economic conditions that push Latinxs into informal economies. Salinas Valley police departments and the Sheriff's Department could pressure the DA to release the alleged informal "Brady" list and share potentially exculpatory evidence with the Public Defender. They could also stop beating and killing Latinxs.

On March 1, 2019, Salinas Police officers Carlo Calupad, Bryan McKinley, and Robert Miller shot and killed 20-year-old Brenda Rodriguez Mendoza. Rodriguez Mendoza was sitting in her parked car, on her mother-in-law's driveway, depressed and hallucinating. She'd been struggling with the fact that her newborn baby was placed in the care of county social services after doctors found drugs in the baby's system. Rodriguez Mendoza had undiagnosed bipolar disorder before giving birth; she had a history of using illicit drugs to self-medicate. After her newborn was taken away, she received a prescription for bipolar medication and over the coming weeks her mental state showed signs of improvement. But two days before her death, Rodriguez Mendoza ran out of the medication. Now, she sat locked in her car, holding a non-functioning airsoft BB gun and surrounded by Salinas Police for three hours. Officers fired eighteen rounds at 1:30pm, at around the same time kindergartners from nearby Sánchez Elementary School were walking back home.

One week later, the Salinas Police Department received the James Q. Wilson Award for Excellence in Community Policing.[541] The department announced a public celebration, but cancelled when residents scheduled a vigil for Mendoza at the same time. The vigil organizers were dismayed that the department would receive any type of accolade, much less be praised only a week after shooting another Latinx. Fresé

[541] "Press Conference to Celebrate Salinas Police Department being Named the Recipient of the James Q. Wilson Award for Excellence in Community Policing," Salinas Police Department, last modified March 6, 2019, https://www.salinaspd.com/content/press-conference-to-celebrate-salinas-police-department-being-named-recipient-james-q-wilson.

countered that the shooting did not invalidate the merits of the award, since "community policing doesn't mean we're soft on crime."[542]

The award is decided by Community Policing Institute of California, and is named in honor of late UCLA and Harvard professor James Wilson. In 1982, Wilson and George Kelling, proposed the "Broken Windows" theory, which would transform how intensely police officers entrenched themselves in low-income communities of color. In their article, Wilson and Kelling argued that more foot patrol and aggressive policing of minor infractions were solutions to major crimes in economically depressed urban area. "One unrepaired broken window," they claimed, "is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing."[543] But studies in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Boston have found no empirical evidence to support the theory.[544] Scholars have argued instead that "broken windows" policing in these cities led to increased racial profiling. Wilson himself admitted that the theory was largely based on an assumption, commenting on the theory's veracity with "God knows what the truth is"—a flippant response that reads as especially callous when weighed with the deep impact his theory had for low-income people of color.[545] While I hesitate to justify *awarding* the Salinas Police Department in general, the type of dangerous policing this

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[542] Joe Szydlowski, "Salinas Police Honored for Community Policing, Protesters Allege Police Brutality," *The Californian*, March 8, 2019, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/2019/03/08/salinas-police-win-award-protesters-point-fatal-shooting/3104702002/.
[543] George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," *The Atlantic*, March 1982, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/.
[544] Bernard E. Harcourt and Jens Ludwig, "Broken Windows: New Evidence from New York City and a Five-City Social Experiment," *The University of Chicago Law Review* (2006): 315.
[545] Patricia Cohen, "Oops, Sorry: Seems That My Pie Chart is Half-Baked," *The New York Times*, April 8, 2000, https://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/08/arts/oops-sorry-seems-that-my-pie-chart-is-half-baked.html.

award recognizes—one that deliberately infiltrates and fractures a community of color—is exactly the type that the department and valley law enforcement have perfected.

At the same PCAC meeting where Fresé took her stand in support of the charro suit, she also broke the news that the department had received another award, this time from the Department of Homeland Security Investigations Unit (HSI.) On July 31, 2019, the HSI's San Francisco office presented Fresé and the department with the Partnership of the Year Award.[546] Fresé categorized the department's partnership with HSI as an anti-human trafficking initiative. But valley law enforcement's track record with ICE casts suspicion on her claim. California's TRUTH Act compels local law enforcement to share the extent of their participation with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The act was passed in 2017 as a supplement to the 2014 TRUST Act, which limits local jails from detaining people longer solely to aid ICE in deporting them. Importantly, the TRUTH Act does not prohibit this practice and it's largely up to local law enforcement to decide whether or not to act as deportation forces. Under pressure from local immigrant rights groups, the Salinas Police and Sheriff's department agreed in 2018 not to share information with ICE if the subject had not committed any violent crimes. But the number of people detained by ICE straight out of the county jail actually rose from 2018 to 2019.

I highlight both of these awards because they remind us of two key themes in this dissertation. First, the valley's culture of impunity persists and informs how law

[546] "Salinas PD Awarded HSI Partnership Award," Police Department, City of Salinas, last updated August 8, 2019, https://www.cityofsalinas.org/our-city-services/police-department/news/salinas-pd-awarded-hsi-partnership-award.

enforcement is valued in public discourse. Within that cultural lens, valley law enforcement is not award-worthy *despite* its violent history with Latinxs—it is award-worthy *because* of that. Second, redresses are significant forms of survival and resistance, while also being incomplete within the constraints of disciplinary punishment. For example, the nonprofit Motivating Individual Leadership for Public Advancement (MILPA) has been a vocal proponent of decreasing incarceration rates in the valley, and has organized protests after police brutality cases. It was also an ardent advocate for pushing *Live PD* out of Salinas. MILPA is a group headed and almost exclusively staffed by formerly incarcerated people, and has had success in garnering community support and funding since its founding in 2012. After Brenda Rodriguez Mendoza's death, MILPA organized several vigils and protests—including the one that derailed the police department's award celebration. Eight months later, three valley news organizations released a joint investigative report claiming, with little evidence other than hearsay and a prison video call, that MILPA had been infiltrated at all levels by Nuestra Familia leadership.[547] After reading this dissertation and understanding how the culture of impunity marks out-group members for punishment, we should see this investigative report with skepticism.

We should also see the ways in which a focus on state power can benefit agricultural Labor Studies, especially those focusing on Latinx communities. Significant collaborations can be uncovered when we resist using "vigilante" as a blanket term for

[547] "How a Criminal Organization Took Control of a Nonprofit Community Group in Salinas," *Voices of Monterey Bay*, October 24, 2019, https://voicesofmontereybay.org/2019/10/24/how-a-criminal-organization-took-control-of-a-nonprofit-community-group-in-salinas/.

any violence perpetuated during a strike. When the violence was directed and done by state actors, let us name it state violence. Doing so reorients policing and carceral studies toward rural spaces. Intense suppression in these spaces does not exclusively happen during labor strikes. As show, law enforcement partnerships and the munitions they acquire create a highly organized and militarized force for decades to come. This lens thus disrupts the pastoral ideal which is used to obscure violence in rural, agricultural communities. It also challenges people's tendency to imagine a white Rural/black and brown Urban binary; Rural Studies has perpetuated this concept by focusing largely on the white south, Midwest, and Appalachians. This focus ignores the experiences of millions of people of color in rural spaces.

Highlighting the experience of people of color in rural spaces is especially key during this pandemic. In California and many other states, agricultural workers are excluded from stay-at-home orders. Not only do they have to continue laboring in hazardous conditions for no pay and with little-to-no labor protections—they also have to face surveillance and policing on much less-trafficked streets. In Salinas Valley, this means the population most vulnerable to state violence might not have any witnesses or people to capture video evidence should they be brutalized by police. Meanwhile, the department most responsible for Latinx deaths in the last nine years is getting even more support; the Department of Justice awarded Salinas Police over $230,000 for COVID-19 related expenses, including "hiring, personal protective equipment costs, [and] overtime."[548] Of

[548] Joe Szydlowski, "DOJ to Give Salinas $235K Public Safety Grant as City Grapples with $19M Deficit," *The Californian*, May 7, 2020, https://www.thecalifornian.com/story/news/2020/05/07/doj-give-salinas-235-k-public-safety-grant-faces-19-m-deficit/3091490001/.

course, that amount pales in comparison to the city's mounting deficit, and seems insignificant given the scope of the pandemic. But this amount made Salinas Police the recipient of the fourth-largest grant awarded in Northern California. This small-town police force thus continues to be favored among federal law enforcement.

The valley's culture of impunity has also adapted itself quickly to the current moment. In what was surely meant to be a comforting post for some, the Salinas Police Department posted a picture of a motorcycle officer out on patrol. The officer is parked on a residential sidewalk, his outstretched hand holding a speed gun. Behind his seat, a built-in holster holds a high-powered AR-15 rifle with a scope. The caption reads: "Our number one priority will always be to keep our community safe, even in tough times like these!...just know that we are still out here protecting our community."[549] In the midst of a global pandemic, Salinas Police is armored up and ready to stop, cite, question and arrest the population that can't stay at home.

As these "essential workers" go out to the fields and packing sheds, they traverse a palimpsest of carceral geography. The fields they pick in and labor camps they live in once held Mexican-Americans, Braceros, and WWII enemy combatants. The sites on which Camp McCallum and Camp Soledad stood are still housing for agricultural laborers; they are known respectively as San Jerardo and San Benito Street Housing. On their journeys out to work, they move through a space that bears the markers of a selective memory that upholds the valley's culture of impunity. The only physical

[549] Salinas Police Department (@SalinasPoliceDepartment), March 21, 2019, https://www.instagram.com/p/B-AfIlsFf2m/?igshid=jc39ow4nxpwg.

remnant of the Filipino field labor is a reconstructed bunkhouse outside of the Monterey County Historical Society's office. The society receives major funding from agribusiness leaders, and they are currently building a museum "dedicated to the pioneer agricultural [read: white] families of the Salinas Valley."[550] Aside from the bunkhouse, little else is visible of this generation of Filipinos; it's hard even to find the former site of Canete's Green Gold Valley labor camp. The Jeffrey Hotel, which acted as the headquarters for a heavily armed and aggressive labor suppression force, is now a nondescript office building in downtown Salinas, where police now regularly patrol to ensure homeless people don't loiter in an area actively trying to "revitalize."

The only historical landmark for a farmworker movement is at the old county jail. It got listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 2004 because it's where César Chávez was imprisoned in 1970. Not only are there no historical markers for the 1930s strikes, or for laborers actually from the Salinas Valley, but the only one to this day is for a jail that held a man who played a role in extending the valley's carceral geography. The only other official historical marker about farmworkers in general is the "Bracero Memorial Highway" sign that designates the site where 32 Braceros died in a train accident. Official history of farmworkers in the valley, then, only recognizes the sites of incapacitation and death. But unofficial counter-narratives of survival, mourning, and community building also exist in this space—in the public library's local history

[550] "Museum Founders Club," Support MCHS, Monterey County Historical Society, last updated October 18, 2019, http://mchsmuseum.com/salinas/support-mchs/museum-founders-club/.

section; in the voices of deportees in newspaper microfilms; in the pictures of deceased children at vigils; and in residents' continued contestations over state violence.

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