

Detention Empire

Friday, January 19, 2024 | 12:00PM - 1:30PM Pacific Time
Will be held via Zoom (This Event May Be Recorded)



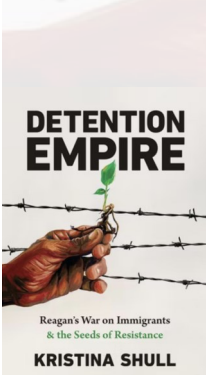
Author: Tina Shull

Tina Shull, PhD, is Associate Professor and Director of Public History at UNC Charlotte. She is the creator of the digital history projects IMM Print, Climate Refugee Stories, and Climate Inequality CLT, and lead curator of the Climates of Inequality: Charlotte museum exhibit. She was awarded a Soros Justice Fellowship from the Open Society Foundations in 2016 for her work in immigration detention storytelling. Climate Refugee Stories has been awarded grants from NC Humanities, National Geographic Documenting Human Migrations, and the University of California Critical Refugee Studies Collective. She holds a PhD in History from UC Irvine, a Master's in Humanities and Social Thought from NYU, and a BA in History from UCLA.



Discussant: Ingrid Eagly

Ingrid Eagly is a professor at UCLA Law and an expert in the intersection between immigration enforcement and criminal justice policy. Professor Eagly serves as faculty director of UCLA's Criminal Justice Program, co-editor of the ImmigrationProf blog, and an affiliated faculty member of the UCLA Center for the Study of International Migration.



The early 1980s marked a critical turning point for the rise of modern mass incarceration in the United States. The Mariel Cuban migration of 1980, alongside increasing arrivals of Haitian and Central American asylum-seekers, galvanized new modes of covert warfare in the Reagan administration's globalized War on Drugs. Using newly available government documents, Shull demonstrates how migrant detention operates as a form of counterinsurgency at the intersections of US war-making and domestic carceral trends. As the Reagan administration developed retaliatory enforcement measures to target a racialized specter of mass migration, it laid the foundations of new forms of carceral and imperial expansion.

Reagan's war on immigrants also sowed seeds of mass resistance. Drawing on critical refugee studies, community archives, protest artifacts, and oral histories, Detention Empire also shows how migrants resisted state repression at every turn. People in detention and allies on the outside—including legal advocates, Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, and the Central American peace and Sanctuary movements—organized hunger strikes, caravans, and prison uprisings to counter the silencing effects of incarceration and speak truth to US empire. As the United States remains committed to shoring up its borders in an era of unprecedented migration and climate crisis, reckoning with these histories takes on new urgency.

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