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**Note:**

*When I submitted my abstract, I had in mind a paper that would consider three deaths in custody, seeking to understand the power that was imprinted on each person in the prison. I thought that what I might be writing about was how these three prisons compared and how we might talk about the racial terror that goes on in each. I couldn't get out of one case. What you read below is only a vignette revealing a very preliminary attempt to think once again of how states dispose of surplus people.*

**HUMAN WASTE AND THE BORDER: A VIGNETTE**

Sherene H. Razack

*At the end of all our theorizing, there is someone's body, so I start there.*  
Mari Matsuda, (Matsuda, 2010. p.359).

*The production of 'human waste', or more correctly wasted humans (the 'excessive' and 'redundant', that is the population of those who either could not or were not wished to be recognized or allowed to stay), is an inevitable outcome of modernization, and an inseparable outcome of modernity.*  
Zygmunt Bauman, (*Wasted Lives*, 2004, p.5).

The Images:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/migrants-bodies-wash-up-libya-mediterranean-zawiya-italy-smuggling/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3198872/The-Mediterranean-s-grim-tide-shocking-never-seen-pictures-migrants-bodies-washed-beach-Libya.html>

<https://www.1843magazine.com/content/features/caroline-moorehead/lost-mediterranean>

<http://www.aol.co.uk/travel/2013/10/01/13-migrants-die-beach-sicily/>

<http://www.desertsun.com/story/news/investigations/2016/07/06/border-bodies-california-mexico/85193162/>

What does it mean for the theorist to start with someone's body, as Mari Matsuda advises? To start with the body of a refugee<sup>1</sup> who has died in flight or in detention is to start with a body that has been transformed into human waste. The words "human waste" are so ugly that it feels as though in using them I strip refugees of the last vestiges of humanity, disappearing them into an unbearable image. I am drawn nonetheless to the words (and to the images of the above media stories) because they so clearly emphasize that disposability is a condition written on the body. Elsewhere, in the context of Indigenous women's bodies that are disposed of through extreme practices of sexual brutalization, I show that disposability is a scopic regime, a visual inscription on the flesh of the body's value in the social order (Razack, 2016). As

Cavarero notes, the power that is inscribed on flesh is “the savaging of body as body,” a process that she describes as “horrorism.” (Cavarero, 2009, p.9). Horror is not simply about the frightful but also about repugnance. What is written on the flesh and that which disgusts, is a violence that is “not content merely to kill because killing would be too little.” It is a violence that “aims to destroy the uniqueness of the body, tearing at its constitutive vulnerability” (Cavarero, 2009, p.8). If disposability is written on the body, this process says nothing about what those marked as disposable do with their own bodies in the spaces dedicated to waste disposal. Confronted with a future where death awaits, and subjected to the carceral regimes of the prison or the slow death of what Mbembe called deathworlds, the targeted risk all, and sometimes reach the limit of what can be tolerated, expressing this limit in their physical state. It is important, then, that we read bodies not only in terms of the disposability that is inscribed on them but also for what the dead tell us about what has befallen them.

In this paper, I explore how refugees are transformed into human waste, a process I trace in a Canadian detention center. We are likely to be more familiar with the endpoint rather than the process of refugee transformation into waste, and more so in contexts other than the detention center – in the waters of the Mediterranean, or the deserts of border regions of the United States, for example. The scopic regime of refugee waste disposal, the savaging of the body as body, is evident on the nightly news when we see dozens of refugees jumping into the Mediterranean from boats that have capsized. Some of these bodies wash up on the shore, and come to rest side by side with the bodies of tourists bronzing themselves on the beach. Others achieve an iconic status in death, but only in the singular. Three-year old Ayan with his kid sneakers still on his feet washed up on a beach as so much driftwood, and prompted an outpouring of outrage that other bodies washed ashore do not. When we view the pictures of refugee bodies washed up on beaches, the words flotsam and jetsam come to mind, marine debris, except that instead of bits and pieces of the floating wreckage of ships, these are parts of human bodies coming in with the tide – a part of a man’s torso, for instance, still dressed in the belted green trousers he chose to wear to undertake the perilous trip across the Mediterranean. The “grim tide” of migrant bodies washing up on the shores of the Mediterranean has its parallel in the deserts of California and Arizona where bodies found in a position of crawling through the dirt, wear clothing in which pockets are filled with few pesos and receipts for bus tickets and a hotel in Mexico. These banal aspects of flight, the belted trousers, the hotel room receipt, offers glimpses of the human, a ghostly presence that persists even after the transformation into debris. They also offer glimpses of a deliberate destruction of the body’s unity, a crime that is “staged as an intentional offence to the ontological dignity of the victim.” (Cavarero, 2009, p.9)

Where does the transformation into debris begin? In *Wasted Lives*, Zygmunt Bauman reminds us that unlike a reserve army of labor, the redundant don’t simply wait in storage until ready to be used. Their existence as waste is what makes modernity possible. In his words, “Modern survival –the survival of the modern form of life –depends on the dexterity and proficiency of garbage removal.” (Bauman, 2004, p.27) Populations marked for disposability are always on their way to becoming waste, their communities targeted for destruction. Forced to flee, those who are targeted find themselves travelling through zones over which a diffused terror reigns. Notably, garbage disposal takes place in a legal gray zone. Canadian detention centers in this account, for instance, can be an immigration holding centre, a provincial jail, or a hospital. In each space, the legal regime that is in operation is anomalous; as a Canadian report found of jails where migrants are held, “no single government department is clearly accountable for the

conditions of confinement, and health and safety of detainees” (IHRP, 2015, p. 7). Scholars refer to such sites as legal black holes where legal indistinction permits violence.

The border, for Bauman, is one site where “the incessant activity of separation” of useful product from waste takes place. Describing the border as a site of ambivalence, a place that “oozes anxiety and strains the nerves,” (Bauman, 2004, p.28) Bauman emphasizes that the violence that takes place at the border is authorized. It is the zone that Agamben captured in *Homo Sacer*, the place where the body may be killed but not sacrificed. Chillingly, Bauman concludes: “the right way to deal with waste is to speed up its ‘biodegradation’ and decomposition while isolating it as securely as possible from the ordinary human habitat.” (86-87). The isolated sites of which Bauman speaks may be off shore detention sites such as the Australia detention centers on the islands of Manus and Naru, where doctors are now legally prohibited from speaking of the conditions in which they find refugees,<sup>2</sup> or they may be a motel near an airport where a site’s very ordinary, everyday usage masks the violence occurring within (Pugliese, 2009). In the context I address here, waste disposal occurs in a prison, euphemistically termed a detention center, in Toronto, Canada where Jan Szamko, a young Roma man from the Czech Republic was detained and where he died in 2009.

We do not easily see waste disposal when it is done behind the walls of the detention center, whether it is a jail, a hospital or a holding centre. In Canada 35% of immigration detainees are held in prisons (Cleveland, 2015, p.84) The walls that confine migrants block our view of what is unfolding, and there is typically a formal secrecy surrounding what happens there. The Canadian Border Services for instance, routinely refuses to release information about migrant deaths in custody and the indeterminate legal status of the migrant is such that the state cannot be compelled to release information<sup>3</sup>. Equally, when a death has occurred and an inquest becomes mandatory, legal procedures wrap the dead body in a shroud of scientific details (diagnoses), law (discrimination is not persecution) and morality (we tried to help but he was beyond it). These rhetorical moves craft a codified story of a death that is to be expected. Jan Szamko, a young man of 34 with no apparent prior conditions, was deemed to have died a natural death in his cell. If we are tempted to read his feces-encrusted body as a body refusing the conditions of his incarceration and deportation, and thus bringing on its own end, we will find confirmation on the legal record in the opinion of the prison psychiatrist appearing at the inquest into Szamko’s death. Prisoners do this sort of thing, Dr. Glancy testified, and perhaps Szamko was suffering from Ganser’s syndrome, a prison psychosis of uncertain origin where the prisoner exhibits what the medical literature describes as a “clouded consciousness”, and is either aggressive and agitated or stuporose and placid (Dwyer and Reid, 2004, p.471.) This official story is one of a mind and a body in decay that have both finally given out, despite the medical care lavished on it.<sup>4</sup> The official record maintains the logic that detainees have brought death on themselves, either through genetic predisposition, through (mysteriously) losing the will to live, or through taking risks (jumping on a boat in the Mediterranean, crossing a desert on foot, or engaging in protests). When the Coroner, Dr. Dan Cass, deems the means of Szamko’s death to be natural (Office of the Chief Coroner, 2011, p. 2), it is hard to see the logic but a perennial figure animates the storyline: the duplicitous fake refugee who has brought death on himself, consciously or unconsciously.

Those slated for waste disposal have always fought back. Refusing to passively await biodegradation and decomposition, they flee, risking the sea, the open road or the desert, places that are organized to speed up the very biological processes of destruction they hope to avoid. Those who make it through the seas, the desert and the barbed wire fences and walls at the

border sometimes still end their lives in detention, prisons that are institutions organized for waste disposal. Migrants fight back in these prisons, as we know from those who sew their lips together in an island detention camp in Australia,<sup>5</sup> those who stage hunger strikes<sup>6</sup>, those who choose suicide, who self-immolate,<sup>7</sup> or whose minds surrender, as perhaps Jan Szamko did, caking himself in his own feces as if to confirm his own condition as waste. A conscious act of resistance or an unconscious response to trauma, all that is certain is that as waste, or more specifically as wasted human, Jan Szamko merited neither respect nor care, his body having already announced to all its transit from human to waste.

In this paper, I make the argument that waste disposal in the prison is evident in the speeding up of the processes of bio degradation of the refugee's body and in the casual expectation of a body's decline. Guards are able to ignore the groans and extreme deterioration of the body through ideas about the duplicitous refugee who is merely faking. Significantly, medical care is not absent but instead crucial to biodegradation, scripting the cries and moans, and the feces, as something we can do nothing about, something that merely reveals a mind broken by its own duplicity. The inquest picks up on the narrative thread, urging improvement in communication but accepting nonetheless that a body that has reached this state of biodegradation has done so of its own accord. Waste disposal, enacted through these familiar medical and legal discourses, has all the hallmarks of bureaucracy. It is hard to find in its routines, evidence that an encounter has taken place between someone declared superfluous and those charged with his disposal. Jan Szamko, however, may well have narrated his own experience of the event through his body, a narration whose traces on the body we must work hard to see.

### **Part One: Becoming Waste**

In a manner of speaking, Jan Szamko, a 31 year-old Romani refugee from the Czech Republic, washed up on the shores of a Canadian immigration holding center. Although not a journey by water, but instead by air and road, Szamko ended up no less as so much flotsam and jetsam, his feces-caked body lying naked on the floor of a detention center just hours before a deportation order was to have been enforced. In considering what happened to Szamko in the same way as I suggest we do for the bodies washing up on the shores of the Mediterranean, I mean to emphasize not only the shared condition of disposability of the migrant's body, but more specifically that such bodies are first transformed into waste, are intelligible to their captors only as wasted humans, and are disposed of as waste. In spaces such as these, waste disposal is not a metaphor.

Szamko entered Canada in November of 2008 and applied for asylum. He joined his wife and young child who were already in the country. When he received news of his mother's grave illness, Szamko abandoned his refugee claim intending to return to the Czech Republic to see her but his mother died before he could leave Canada. He reapplied for asylum soon after. When his refugee claim was rejected, he was summoned for deportation and when he missed two appointments, he was arrested and taken to a Toronto Immigration Holding Center on November 28, 2009. He was scheduled for deportation on December 6, 2009. The day before his scheduled deportation he developed chest pains but after multiple tests, was declared fit to fly and was diagnosed as suffering from heartburn. It was at this point that Szamko began to urinate and defecate on himself, actions understood at the time and afterwards by the jury as a refusal to cooperate. Deemed "uncooperative," and faking, he was transferred to a segregation cell in the West Toronto Detention Center to await imminent deportation on December 8. Once in the

detention center, his condition deteriorated further. He did not respond to verbal instructions and he continued to urinate and defecate on himself. Checked every twenty minutes, he was, in the coroner's words, "usually noted to be lying on the floor, and often covered in urine and feces" (Office of the Chief Coroner, 2011, p. 5).

The inquest revealed that no one took Szamko's vital signs or thought that his complaints about chest pains or his groans, defecation on himself, and his refusal to eat and drink were significant signs of distress. Instead, Dr. William Mueller testified that on December 7, he visited Szamko but was unable to conduct a physical exam because the patient was 'uncooperative.' "Whether he understood (me) or not, he was not responding. He was completely mute," Mueller recalled. (Mueller as quoted in Keung, 2011c). Mueller ordered a psychiatrist to see Szamko the next day. On the morning of December 8, a psychiatrist determined that Szamko had Ganser syndrome, a syndrome described as a prison psychosis. An extremely rare dissociative disorder of unknown origin that often comes with extreme stress, Ganser syndrome is described as a kind of hysteria and detachment from one's immediate surroundings. It is associated with prisoners who are faking in order to gain leniency from courts or officials. Ganser's syndrome is not listed in the DSM-5 published in 2013.

For these last two days of his life, Szamko, although diagnosed as not in any acute medical distress, reportedly spent much of his time in detention lying naked on the floor of his cell. A prison guard who testified at the inquest into his death, described his physical condition during this time: "He was covered head to toe in fecal matter. . . I washed his upper torso front and back as best I could but the feces on his legs was caked on and very dry." Apparently not overly troubled by the physical condition of the prisoner, itself a remarkable indicator of the normality of a body in its last stages of decay, the guard noted that Szamko was also able to stand on his own while he was being cleaned up. After nearly 48 hours, Szamko was found "lying in an unusual position" at 7 p.m. on the night of December 8, he was declared dead by 7:50. His body was found lying face down on the floor, feces smeared on himself and on the wall. (Keung, 2011c).

The feces-smeared naked body offering few signs of sentience gave no one pause, not even after death. For the guards, initially equipped with the finding that Szamko was fit to fly, Szamko simply "chose" not to communicate. While he was not responsive to directives, they testified at the inquest that he was not catatonic. Believing that he was faking, one guard, Steve Bean, who saw Szamko at the Heath Centre where he was being assessed, advised him that his strategies were not going to work and that he was still going to be transferred to jail and deported no matter what. Explaining his own response to Szamko's condition, Dr. Graham Glancy, the detention center's psychiatrist told the inquest that he believed that it was not uncommon for inmates in segregation to defecate as a means of protest. He trusted the guards, Dr. Glancy noted, who are "pretty good at differentiating between people who are ill and people who are simply difficult," Glancy testified" (Glancy as quoted in Keung, 2011c)." Although not an expert in prisoner protests, Dr. Glancy nevertheless remained on the record as the only expert speaking to prisoners' behavior.

Considered faking and "uncooperative." Szamko's body did not merit adequate care although, as the coroner's counsel commented, during his time in detention, Szamko could not be said to have been without care. Szamko was seen by nurses, two doctors and a psychiatrist and kept in a segregation cell a few feet away from a medical unit, where he was never far from medical help. Each medical professional who saw him concluded, however, that he had no acute medical issues. A forensic pathologist and an internal medicine expert witness testifying at the

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inquest, would later suggest that had his vital signs been taken, it is likely that abnormalities would have been apparent and “it may have triggered further medical assessment of Mr. Szamko” (Office of the Chief Coroner, 2011, p. 5).

The inquest concluded that Szamko died of heart failure, an accumulation of fluid around the heart that was likely due to a viral infection. Confronted with the paradox of neglect within a structure of multiple health professionals, the jury concluded that the key issue was an institutional failure to communicate an inmate’s medical needs. Law, in the form of an inquest, staged improvement, recommending better mechanisms for sharing medical information of inmates, but remaining resolutely indifferent to the groans, and the 48-hour transformation of a healthy person into a body where the feces were caked on and dry so long that they marked the body as waste. If, as Bauman has suggested, the best way to accomplish waste disposal is to speed up biodegradation, the detention center performed its tasks in an efficient manner, relying on medical professionals to either confirm that the prisoner was “fit to fly” or to offer the scientific basis for the diagnosis that the prisoner was merely displaying a form of hysteria. Guards who steadfastly ignored the body’s condition complete the circuit required for waste disposal. If Szamko’s own human waste marked his body as disposable, and as a body that must be left to rot, those charged with his care appeared to understand the detention center as a way station, a temporary stop on the way to a final disposal, and a place where biodegradation must be allowed to take its course.

## **Part Two: The Apparatus of Waste Disposal**

The detention center is the endpoint (or near endpoint if one does not die in it but is instead deported) of the process of waste disposal; it completes a process begun much earlier. As with all other way stations along the way, it is a space where law legitimates waste disposal. Szamko’s story shows the history of authorized waste disposal against the Roma. Racial violence against the Roma is not a new phenomenon. The Roma have a history of enslavement in 15<sup>th</sup> century Romania and a persistent history of being forced to adopt a Nomadic life by virtue of being denied place and citizenship. It is estimated that 1.5 million Roma were killed during the second world war and many Roma women underwent forced sterilization (Stefanova, 2014, p. 124). In the Czech Republic and Slovakia alone, 250,000 Roma were killed. In the post-war period, several European regimes pursued forced assimilation regimes, confining Roma children to special schools for children with mental disabilities, criminalizing the speaking of Romani, and creating the conditions for a spatially excluded population, simultaneously criminalized and forced into crime (Levine-Rasky, Beaudoin, & St. Clair, 2014). In the late 2000s, many European countries began expelling their Roma populations (Levine-Rasky, Beaudoin, & St. Clair, 2014, p. 72; Diop, 2014; Stefanova, 2014, p.127).

The year 2008, when Szamko left the Czech Republic was a flashpoint in the history of the persecution of the Roma in Europe. In the summer of 2008, Roma communities in Naples and in Sicily were attacked and their homes burned to the ground (Nicolae, 2013, p.67). There were targeted killings of Roma in Hungary, Romania, France, Finland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic and the perennial anti-Roma violence in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia intensified; families and children were often targeted (Lakatos, 2016; Levine-Rasky, Beaudoin, & St. Clair, 2014, p. 73). Racialized, the Roma have attracted the attention of Neo-Nazi groups, whose activities have largely been tolerated by European states. Neo-Nazi attacks on the Roma have been most virulent in Hungary and the Czech Republic when extreme right and other right-wing parties rose to power in 2007. The parties’ paramilitary wings engaged in open acts of

violence against the Roma. At the time that Szamko fled, there were three widespread attacks against Roma in the Czech Republic by far right groups carrying stones and gasoline bombs (Stefanova, 2014, p.130). There is little evidence that European states have intervened to protect the Roma from these groups.

The actions of European states against the Roma have found support from other Western governments, and particularly so from Canada under a conservative government seeking economic ties with the European Union. Jan Szamko possibly picked the worst moment to seek asylum in Canada since the time of his arrival coincided with concerted anti-Roma efforts on the part of the Canadian government. As Diop shows, discourse formation at the state level concerning the Roma in general but the Czech Roma in particular constructed them as archetypal bogus refugees coming from a country deemed democratic and safe, a construction that sustains Canadian sovereignty (Diop, 2014, p.68). The Canadian state's efforts to entrench this construct reached its apotheosis in 2009 when the Immigration and Refugee Board produced a report (now missing from public record) based on a delegation's visit to the Czech Republic. It was determined that while the Roma may suffer from discrimination, they do not suffer from persecution, a logic that earlier Canadian court cases involving Roma refugee claimants adopted (Diop, 2014, p.79). This report enabled decision makers to find support for decisions denying asylum. New visa restrictions, policies directed at establishing Roma identity, and delay tactics that resulted in Roma returning to their families in the Czech Republic before their claims could be heard, particularly if members of the family had not yet made it out, all added to a deliberate targeting. While the acceptance rate for Roma was around 85% in the late 90s, when Roma began arriving from Hungary, this more concerted campaign began to delay claims, and to establish the Hungarian government as a fully functioning democracy where the Roma are protected (Lee, 2000, p. 59.) As several scholars have shown, most Western states have enacted laws restricting Roma movements and restricting their opportunity to seek asylum (see, for example, Stefanova, 2014). With respect to Canada, one effective approach is to make it extraordinarily difficult to file and prepare asylum claims. Chief among the tactics used is the listing of countries as safe, as Canada did with respect to Hungary and the Czech Republic (123). (The Canadian government went on to solidify these arrangements in 2011 and 2012 when it tabled a bill diminishing refugee rights and targeting Roma refugees specifically.)

Western states have persistently ignored skinhead attacks on the Roma of the kind Szamko described that he suffered. The legal and discursive apparatus discussed above works to conceal the escalating racial violence even as it makes it possible (Stefanova, 2014). Indeed, the Roma are persistently viewed as nationals of the country they are fleeing and not as Roma, a racialized group (Levine-Rasky, Beaudoin & St. Clair, pp.89-90.) Seen in light of this history, the state's indifference to Jan Szamko's body in the detention center, responses that come clothed in the rituals of medical care (the tests, the diagnosis but not the taking of vital signs), and specifically the capacity of the detention center's prison and medical professionals to tolerate a body lying face down in feces unambiguously announces the project of waste disposal and the body's abjection. There can be no mistake that the detention center only temporarily houses surplus humanity, humans shuttled from one site of violence (the holding centre, the hospital, the jail) to another. These transitions from site to site, journeys we capture with the word "detention" are in reality a tightly scripted "blocking of the exits" (Bauman, 2002, p.114) by states and authorized in law.

**Conclusion: Terror at the end of the line: An alternative reading**

In a recent issue of *The New Yorker*, Rachel Aviv reported on the case of Georgi, a 15 year-old Russian Roma refugee in Sweden who, upon hearing of his family's deportation order, went to bed and became totally passive, unable to eat and drink (Aviv, 2017). Georgi became non-responsive to communication of any kind, including pain stimuli. Swedish doctors, who began to see hundreds of children like Georgi, described the children as suffering from resignation or apathy syndrome and as having lost the will to live. The children lie in a coma-like state for months and years. Swedish psychiatrists protested to the Minister of Immigration that new restrictions on asylum seekers were causing the disease. The Swedish public, perhaps moved by images of children who had to be loaded onto stretchers to be deported, also protested and the Swedish government passed a temporary act permitting a review of pending deportations. Its Migration Board began allowing families like Georgi's to stay. The government also commissioned a medical report which declared that the children were culturally raised to think of the group and were sacrificing themselves for the sake of their family. (Doctors in the countries of origin of the refugees had never heard of such an illness and Aviv points out that this report does not critically examine Sweden's role in producing the illness). Despite the governmental impulse to culturalise the children's responses, attributing it to Roma culture rather than to the extreme stress of deportation, Swedish psychiatrists themselves have for the most part concluded that the children are not faking or indulging in a culturally specific response to deportation. An article in a Swedish medical journal compared the children to the Musselman, the prisoners in Nazi concentration camps, of whom Primo Levi wrote, and who simply stopped responding to their environment, when that environment became intolerable.

A disproportionate number of the children diagnosed with "resignation syndrome" are Roma. Refugees who feel totally helpless have sometimes responded the way Roma children have done in Sweden. In her article, Aviv mentions Cambodian women refugees in California who had seen family members tortured by Pol Pot, who lost the ability to see. She cites the 1940s work of an American psychologist Walter Cannon. Cannon described an Aboriginal man who was condemned to death for breaking a religious edict and whose physical condition deteriorated rapidly after being sentenced. The man died, Cannon, suggested, terrorized and literally frightened to death. Importantly, as one Swedish pediatrician has tried to show in his research, children who are properly treated and given hope can recover. Georgi, whose family was eventually allowed to stay, eventually recovered. He described his experience to Aviv as a feeling of being trapped in a glass box under water. Any movement on his part would result in death. He could not easily tell if the glass box was real or not.

It is not hard to imagine that Szamko's deportation order would have left him feeling hopeless. With a wife and child in Canada, his deportation back to the Czech Republic, a place where he had already been injured by Neo-Nazis, would not likely have felt like something he could survive. The inquest established that Szamko did indeed have a virus at the time of his death. Confronted with guards and medical professionals who refused to take note of his deteriorating condition, Szamko was left with nothing but his own bodily waste. Waste spoke for him, communicating his condition long after words failed. We should listen to what he had to say.



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<sup>1</sup> The word refugee can mean someone who is formally (that is legally) acknowledged to be a claimant or it can refer to someone who is running away from violence. I use it here in this latter sense instead of the word migrant which also seems to me to dispel some of the violence that pushes people to flee.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.refugeeaction.org.au/?page\\_id=4528](http://www.refugeeaction.org.au/?page_id=4528)

<sup>3</sup> Black (2016) *Toronto Star* article is a good reference for this.

<https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/03/10/secret-cloaks-death-of-immigration-detainee-in-toronto-jail.html>

<sup>4</sup> . Previously I traced the same redemptive story with respect to Indigenous deaths in custody, where the Indian is only ever a figure on the brink of death who defeats all attempts at rescue (Razack, 2016),

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2010-11-19/asylum-seekers-sew-lips-together/2343854>

<sup>6</sup> At the end of April, 2017, migrants held in the for-profit Northwest Detention Centre (run by GEO group) in Tacoma, WA re-launched a hunger strike.

[https://www.democracynow.org/2017/4/26/headlines/immigrants\\_imprisoned\\_in\\_tacoma\\_wa\\_relaunch\\_hunger\\_strike](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/4/26/headlines/immigrants_imprisoned_in_tacoma_wa_relaunch_hunger_strike)

The strike spread to NORCOR jail in Oregon, which contracts with ICE.

[https://www.democracynow.org/2017/5/3/headlines/imprisoned\\_immigrants\\_hunger\\_strike\\_spreads\\_to\\_oregon\\_jail](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/5/3/headlines/imprisoned_immigrants_hunger_strike_spreads_to_oregon_jail)

<https://www.mintpressnews.com/media-silent-as-u-s-prisoners-continue-to-hunger-strike-abysmal-conditions/227446/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/may/03/asylum-seekers-set-themselves-alight-nauru>

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