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I believe that in life, both people and moments mark you as a person. Unfortunately, I have experienced death in my family. I have seen the suffering and the amount of damage it causes to one's soul. I can tell you that it takes years of healing to move on. However, I can also tell you that there was a time when I could have been the person my family was grieving.

My family and I migrated from El Salvador to the United States, seeking a better life. However, we arrived at a one-bedroom apartment in Greenspoint. A born-and-raised Houstonian would know this area as "Gunpoint." To say it was the total opposite of my house in El Salvador is a complete understatement. In contrast to the perilous environment, where it was common to hear gunshots every night, I came from a place where we were free to be children. In this new area, minorities are the majority, and criminal activity is the norm. My family and I lived in the same one-bedroom apartment for ten years.

During those ten years, I saw people face disadvantages. Parents would have to work day and night just to provide the bare necessities for their children. I saw children who would not make wise decisions simply because they were missing someone who would guide and care for them. At some point, Greenspoint activities became ordinary to me until one night. The night that could have ended in great grief. It was my freshman year of high school. That day, my mother was taking care of the neighbor's daughter. During the afternoon, we went grocery shopping and started to put everything away. Midway into the task, we noticed our neighbor had arrived. She was sitting outside with her husband, who was doing mechanics. My mother and I decided to drop off the three-year-old toddler to her parents and stayed outside chatting. Outside, we noticed a commotion on the opposite side of the property. Things escalated so quickly that

the next thing we knew, the security guard was chasing a suspect running in our direction. The security guard fell and pulled out his gun.

Immediately upon seeing the weapon, I grabbed my mother's hand and dragged her to the floor, taking cover behind a car. BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! The security guard fired four shots. After the terrifying sounds came silence. For a moment, it seemed as if everyone froze. After the shock, my mother crossed the sidewalk into our corner apartment. She found my brother, who was napping, on the floor, screaming, "A bullet came inside." Upon first inspection, everything was fine. But when we looked in the kitchen, a bullet hole had crossed both walls. Not only had it crossed the kitchen, but it was also chest level. Finding that bullet hole in the kitchen shocked me to the core. If my mother and I had kept putting the groceries away, one of us would have probably died that night. We could have been victims of the phrase "Wrong place, Wrong time."

During my sophomore year of high school, we left Greenspoint and moved to the suburbs. The move was a huge cultural change. Suddenly, seeing pregnant girls in the school hallways was no longer customary. The question, "Will you go to college?" had changed to, "What college are you attending?". The change in environment made me realize that not everyone had the fortune to have financial stability, excellent education opportunities, and career guidance. I have witnessed people set up for failure. I have seen children set up to continue their parents' cycle. However, I have also seen teens with all the structures needed to succeed. I understood from a very young age that everyone has a different race. I also understood that someone raised in the sheltered suburbs would never understand a child raised in Greenspoint simply because they come from entirely different worlds.

As I graduated high school, most of my graduating class had a college plan set up. However, some of my friends from my previous high school had plans to join the workforce the day after graduation. That contrast impacted my desire to become an attorney. I want to be able to defend a troubled child who made a mistake. In a position where I can serve as a resource to a struggling immigrant parent. I want to be in a position to protect the community so there is no more "Wrong place, Wrong time."

I do not desire to change the world, but I believe one can deeply touch a person's life. By impacting one person at a time, we can build a better community for the future. I have witnessed many immigrants being taken advantage of for not knowing their rights. Therefore, the immigrant community is left behind to figure out a system not developed to their advantage. I have seen attorneys give up on a case simply because their client is low-income. I have witnessed bright children lose opportunities to change society simply because of a mistake. I have seen too many people lose their loved ones to the saying, "Wrong place, Wrong time." I could have also been a victim of those same circumstances. Yet here I am, writing this essay, looking to complete my law school education. Upon passing the BAR, I plan on making a career combining criminal and immigration law and helping those who, for one reason or another, have both a criminal and an immigration case. I choose to combine both areas because I feel that there is a disconnection between these areas of law; therefore, many immigrant community members are not given their best shot at the American Dream. As an immigrant, I have witnessed the repercussions of the deportation of a family member, and it's heartbreaking to see. I hope to one day serve the immigrant community and give them back their dreams.