

## No Hope of a License By Gerson Sermeno

As I am driving down the road, starting a brand new day, ready for school, not knowing what comes ahead, feeling confident of my driving skills, but trying to do it all perfect, always on the look to do every stop, never skip a red light, and respect the speed limits. I am checking all my mirrors, with the fear of seeing a police car driving by.

And there it comes, exactly a few minutes after 7 am. I see the lights behind me and pull over to the side, as all my nerves are active. Again? I say from inside me. Another stop? Another ticket on my list? Another day at the court? Another \$700 or more? Why? Why is he stopping me now?

And there he comes, an officer with strong steps, getting out of his car, and walking down to my side, my chest hurting with the fast beats of my heart.

It was such a perfect morning. I was driving fine. I respected all. Now, should I be afraid of even getting to school? Should I have to be scared to do something to give back to society? Sitting in that car trying to understand, why all of that is so hard. But I'll put it all together.

The police officer came to the window. And there I was, not knowing what to do.

I just asked him, "Why am I being stopped?"

But he just answered with another question. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"I am on my way to school officer" I answered.

"Can I check your license and the vehicle documents?" he said.

Without saying a word, I pulled out all my vehicle documents, but the license was not present.

And he asked for my license again,

But I had no other choice but to tell him the truth.

"I have no license, Sir," I said.

"Why the fuck are you driving without a license?" he said with strong voice.

With fear in me, I told him that was impossible for me at the moment. And he just said that he has no choice, and gave me four tickets, one for no license, and the other three I never knew why.

There I was, a kid with a government protection document, but without the hope of a license anytime soon, being intimidated by someone who was supposed to make me feel safe, feeling

afraid of the one who had to protect me, crying inside because of someone who is supposed to make me feel calm. Sitting down there, seeing everything I had to go through, seeing and knowing I was stopped or being brown, feeling like someone who was picked out of a pile. Trying to go to school, succeed, give more than what I had, but being stopped by a system that has no feeling for what I am.

And the officer just took my car and left me at the street, walking a few miles to school. The weather was bad, and I was so cold. Walking afraid, and all my confidence that day was gone.