

## DECLARATION OF LEIGH KUNKEL

I, Leigh Kunkel, declare as follows:

1. My name is Leigh Kunkel. I am 38 years old and am competent to make this declaration. I reside in Chicago, Illinois.
2. I am submitting this declaration to describe the violence I experienced when I went to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency facility in Broadview, Illinois on September 26, 2025. I went to the protest because, as a community member of a neighborhood that has been targeted by what I view as violent abductions, I wanted to show support for my fellow Chicagoans and protest their unlawful detention in deplorable conditions.
3. At around 7am I arrived with my fiancé and we saw 15-20 protestors standing near the illegally constructed fence near Lexington and Beach.
4. Starting at around 7:50am I witnessed an ICE officer standing on the roof of the facility begin to shoot pepperballs into the peaceful, unarmed crowd without any verbal warning, and did so multiple more times over the span of the next 40 minutes. Below are stills from a video I took of some of these events with the munition circled:



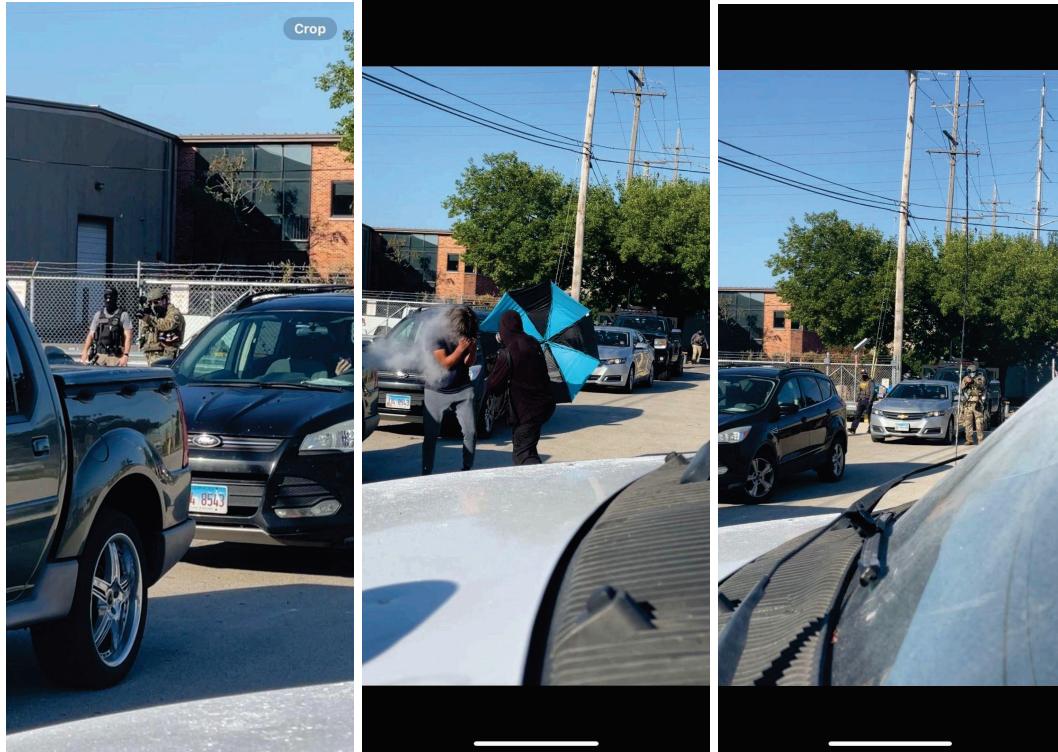
5. At around 8:15am my fiancé was hit in the eye with a fragment of pepperball. Photos of him washing chemical weapons off his skin and what half of an exploded pepper ball, like what hit him in the eye, looks like:



6. At around 8:30am we moved to the other side of the facility, on Harvard Street and an adjoining public parking lot where more protesters were gathered.
7. Just before 9am a man came out and shared with protestors that he was not an ICE agent but part of a local union and asked the protestors to make room for his organization to bring their cars out. The protestors complied within literal seconds. Video still of the man making the request:



8. About 10 minutes later several ICE agents accompanied the cars on foot out of the facility, and started firing pepperballs into the crowd.

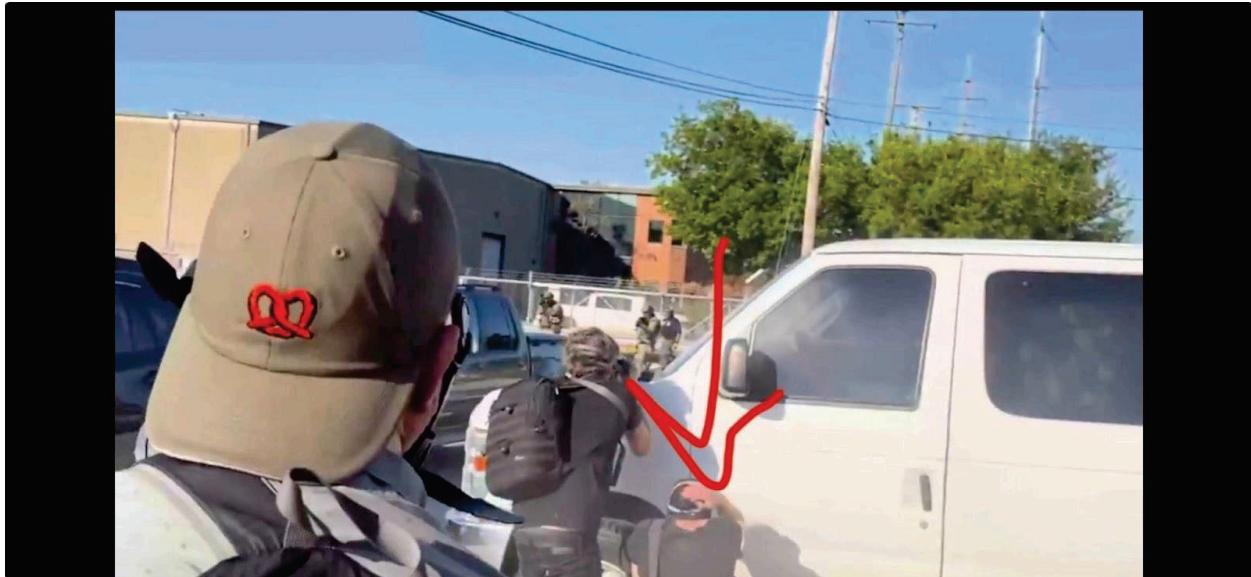


9. I ducked behind a nearby van, and quickly realized that this placed me alongside a fence. Photo taken later to illustrate positions: red is where I was standing, yellow where the ICE agents were behind the fence

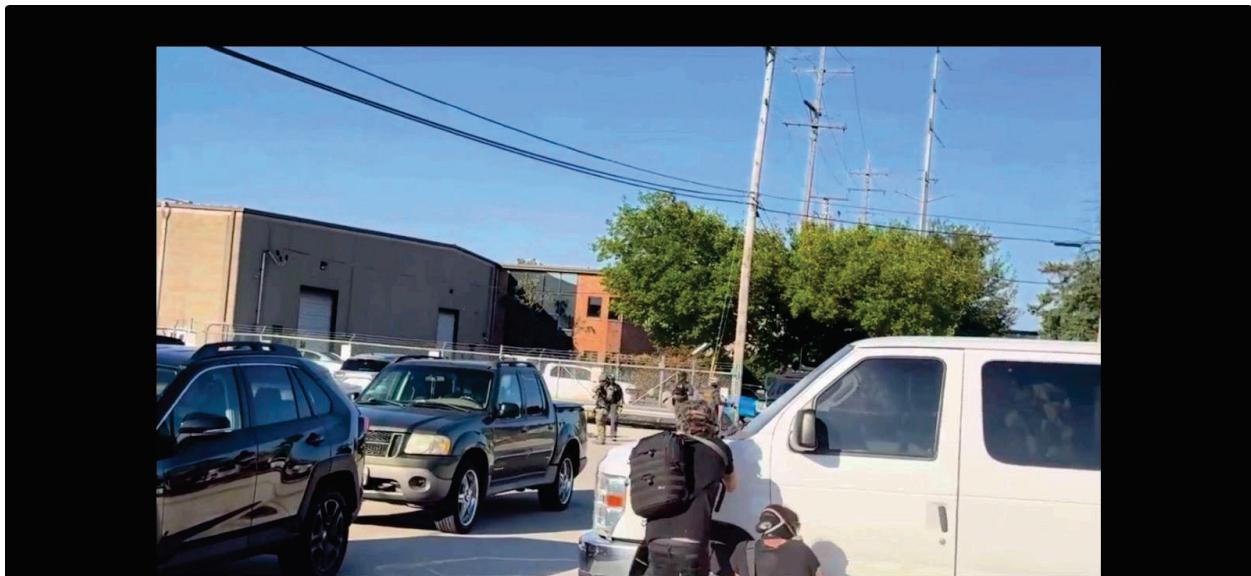


10. I then heard another person yell “They’re behind the van on the right...they’re going to ambush you” (as confirmed by a video I was filming at the time) and felt a sharp pain in the back of my head.
11. I crouched to the ground and began to check the back of my head for bleeding.

Video still from a journalist:

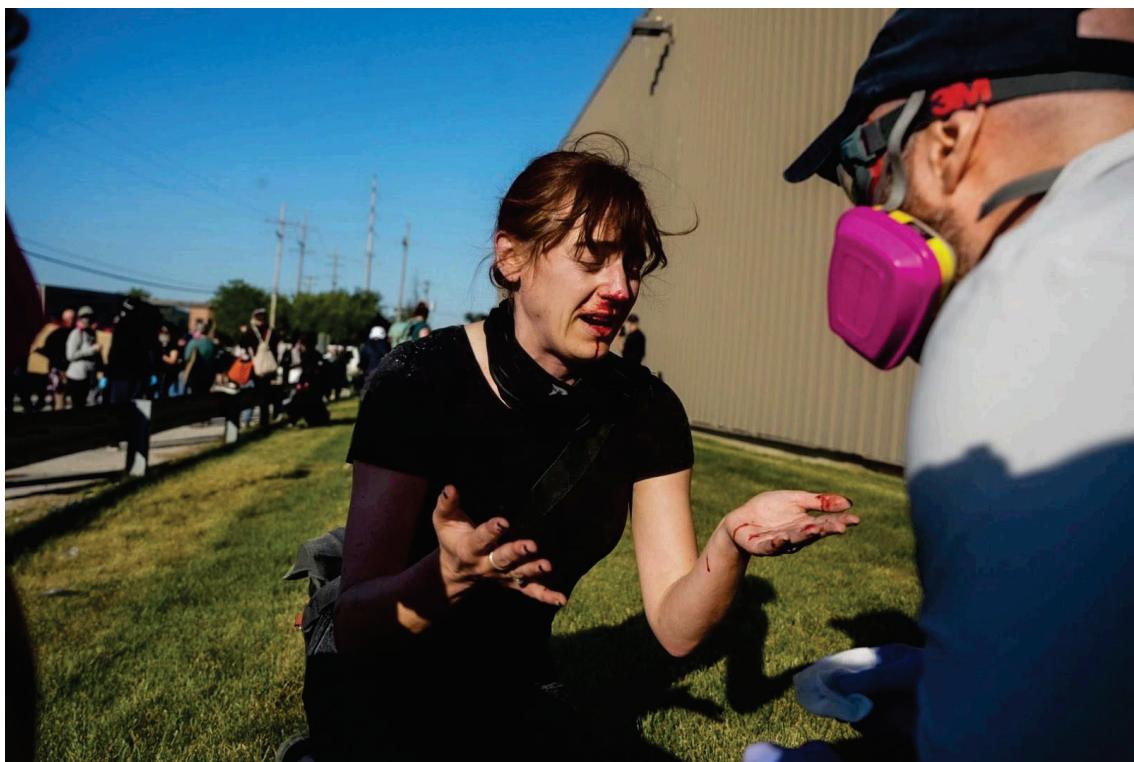


12. I looked to the side that the shot had come from and saw an ICE officer with his weapon drawn, pointed directly at me. They then shot me with another pepperball from roughly 20 feet away in the face. Video stills from a journalist (the white powder in my hair is from the first shot):





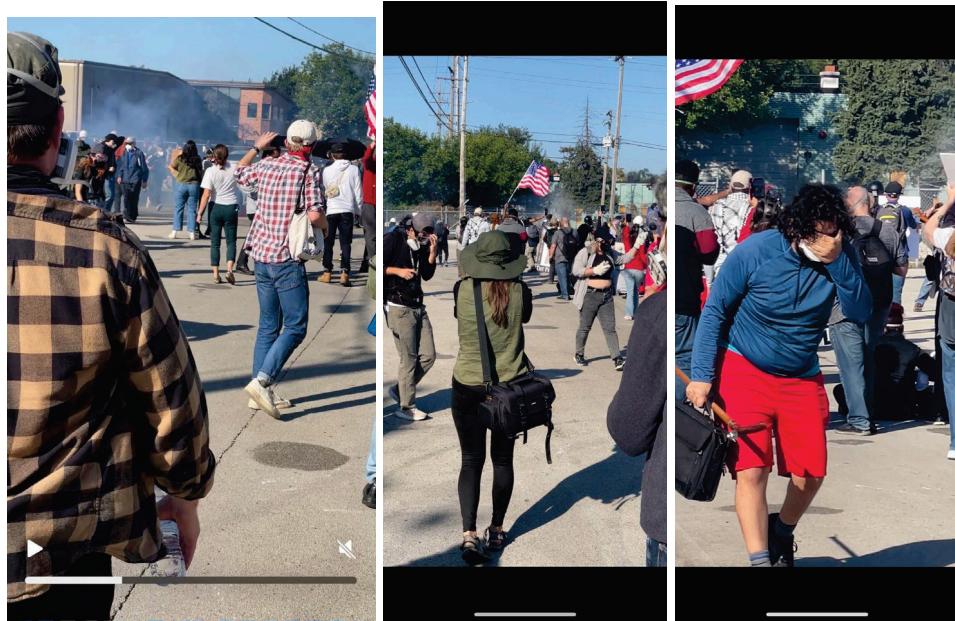
13. I was wearing a full respirator in response to the violence and chemical munitions that I had seen videos of ICE deploy in the past, as well as my own personal observances that morning, so luckily I had only a burst blood vessel and not a broken nose.
14. I obtained gauze to help stop the bleeding from my nose. Photo of me shortly after being shot in the face with a pepperball:



15. I stepped back from the protest for a few minutes to clean the blood and chemicals out of my clothing and respirator and recover. I then went to find my fiancé. Photos of my neck gaiter covered in blood and pepper powder, and my face after the bleeding was stopped:



16. About 30 minutes later I returned to the main protest, where I saw multiple canisters of tear gas released closer to the fence, as well as continuing shooting, forcing many protesters to flee as the chemicals burned their eyes, skin, and throats. Screen shots from video below:



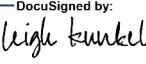
17. While recuperating with other protestors near a building on the edge of the parking lot, a space that was clearly observable area where people were drinking water, eating snacks and resting, I witnessed an ICE sniper on the roof deliberately targeting the group with pepperballs, breaking and damaging several of the windows of a local business.
18. On Friday October 3, my fiancé was arrested by ICE agents while peacefully protesting outside the Broadview facility. He was held from approximately 9:30am until 4:30pm and then was driven a half-mile from the facility and released with no charges at a gas station. At the time he was arrested he was standing in the Illinois-State-Police established “free speech zone.”
19. He was thrown to the ground and has been experiencing pain when breathing since the time of his arrest.
20. I plan to return to the facility to continue showing solidarity but am fearful for my safety. I believe that doing so under the current conditions risks injury, even with additional protective gear, as well as the potential of arrest even though I will not break any laws and will comply with any orders I am given to move. I have never before been afraid to attend an event or speak my mind, but my experience at Broadview makes it clear that both of those things are no longer safe, either physically or legally.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on:

10/3/25

Date

DocuSigned by:  
  
Leigh Kunkel  
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