

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a maroon sweater and large hoop earrings, is shown from the side, sorting through items in a large cardboard box. She is holding a dark blue garment. The box also contains a green and blue plaid shirt. The background is a cluttered room with many cardboard boxes stacked on shelves and the floor, suggesting a warehouse or storage area. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman and the box she is working on.

Archiving The Spot: Mutual Aid in Action

For the anti-carceral co+laboratory

BY LYANNE WANG, LAYLA HASSEN
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Introducing The Spot + Our Work

- The Spot is a mutual aid organization in Cambridge that provides free clothing giveaways
- It is 100% volunteer run, almost entirely by immigrants
- Through mutual aid work, The Spot has maintained space for people in Cambridge and neighboring areas to come together, build relationships, and receive access to necessary resources
- Our work focused on helping Virginia and the ACC create a community archive of The Spot by conducting and recording in person interviews with volunteers, documenting The Spot space & events, organizing materials



A community resource
where you can shop for **FREE**

Questions That Shaped Our Project

- How have do people's perceptions of mutual aid shift when moving from a recipient to a volunteer?
 - How does immigrant status intersect with perception of mutual aid?
- What does Mutual aid in Cambridge look like?
 - How do volunteers at The Spot engage in mutual aid and community care?
- How can we use practices of care in co-creating a community archive and mini-documentary?
- In what ways is mutual aid (and The Spot's practice of it) different from charity?



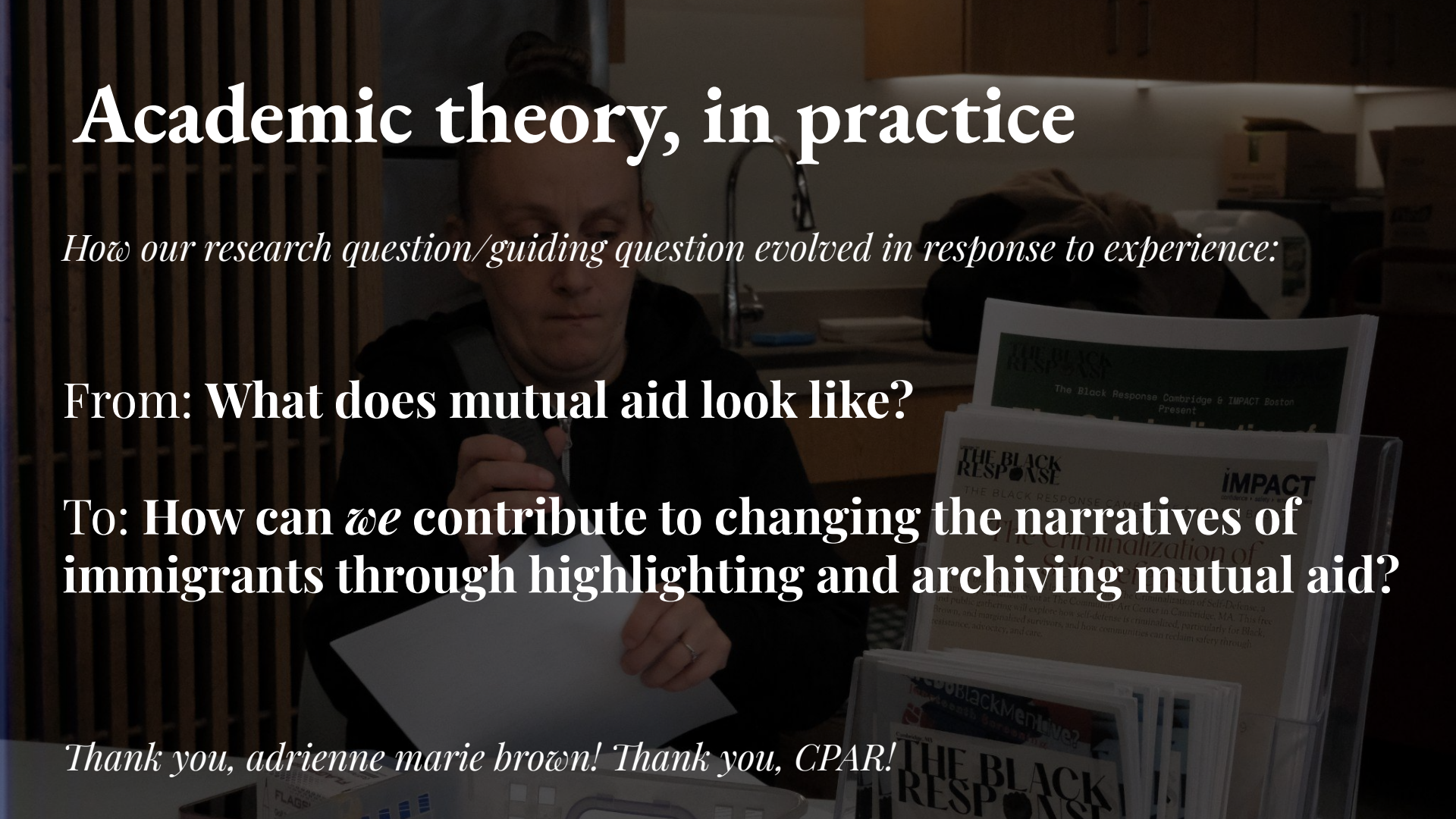
Academic theory, in practice

How our research question/guiding question evolved in response to experience:

From: What does mutual aid look like?

To: How can *we* contribute to changing the narratives of immigrants through highlighting and archiving mutual aid?

Thank you, adrienne marie brown! Thank you, CPAR!



Our Methodology

Why A Documentary

- Volunteers telling their own stories in own words and language
- Seeing the behind the scenes work of volunteers
- Accessible format
- Representational Belonging

Ethics and Care Considerations

- How can we document in ways that are considerate of safety and dignity?
- Deciding what is and isn't included, impacts (unintended & intended) of editing
- Avoiding extraction
- Participant autonomy and consent
 - Area for improvement

Additional Project Components

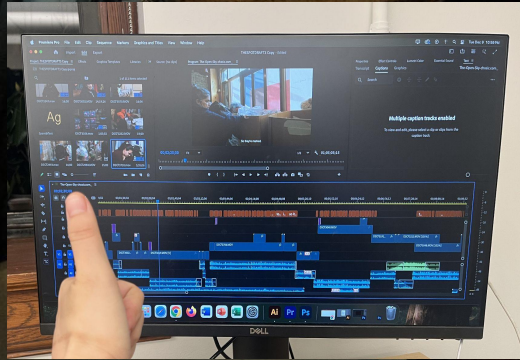
- Zine, Interview Transcripts, Metadata Document, Drive Organization, Highlighted Interview Quotes

BEHIND-
THE-
SCENES:
SHOOTING,
EDITING,
AND THE
ARTISTIC
PROCESS

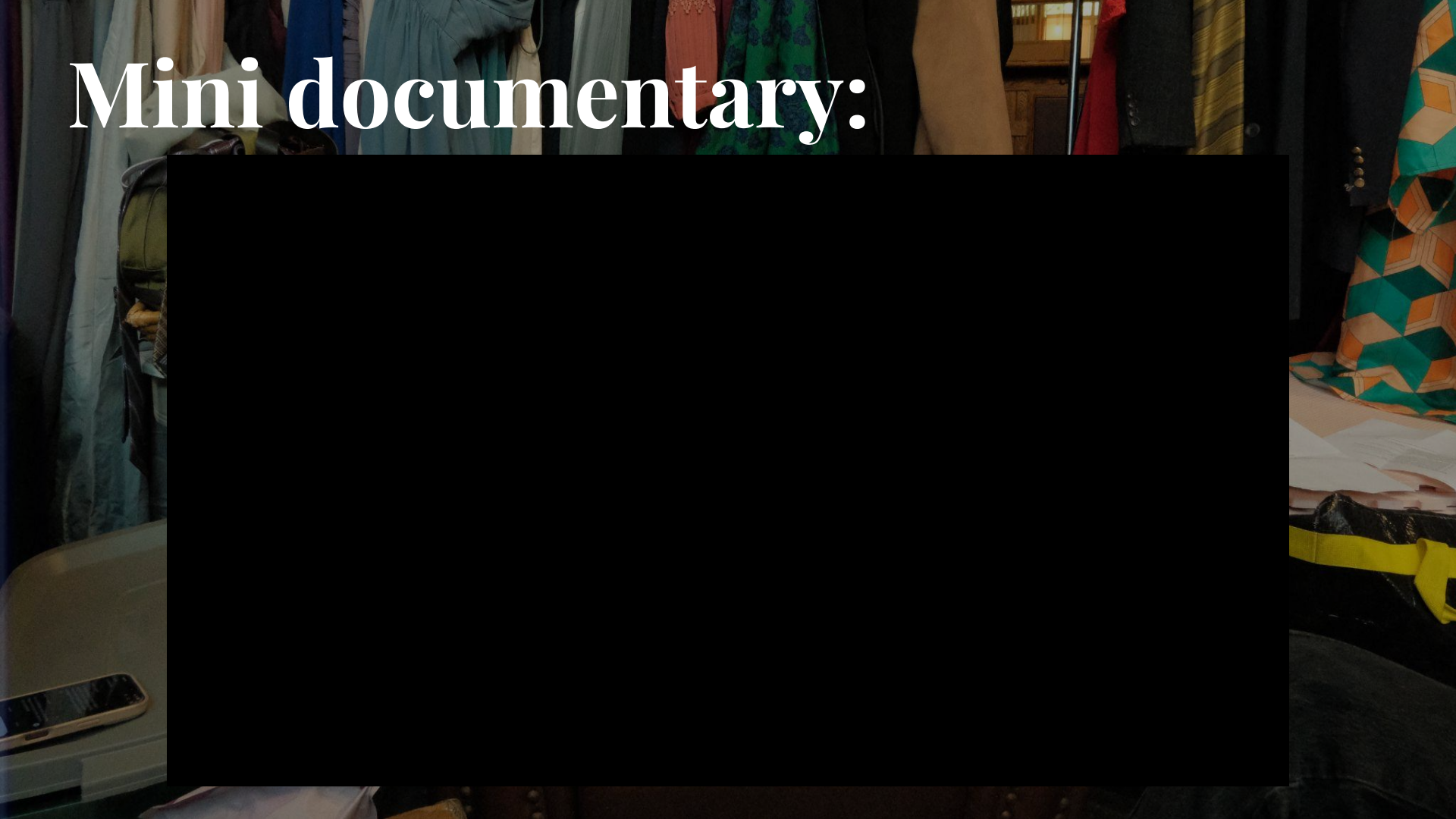


BEHIND-THE-SCENES: SHOOTING, EDITING, AND THE ARTISTIC PROCESS

- **Shooting:** Anonymity?
Energy of the room?
- **Editing:** Whose voice to center? What *not* to show?
- **Artistic process:** Where to leave *our* touch? Whose right to tell the story?



Mini documentary:



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What reactions do you have to the video? What thoughts/emotions do these stories provoke? Were there any moments that stuck with you?
- How can this be seen as an example of using archiving as a form of care?
- Does this shift how your understanding of mutual aid? Is there anything you know now that you didn't know or think about before?
- What practices can archivists/filmmakers/researchers employ to ensure their work is supportive towards participants and is actively contributing towards positive ends (abolitionist or otherwise)?

A woman with short, light-colored hair is laughing heartily, her mouth wide open and eyes closed. She is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt over a white t-shirt. The background features a green wall and a patterned curtain. The text "Thanks for watching!!" is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

**Thanks for
watching!!**