

My name is Phoebe, I am a ward 2 resident in Burlington where I have lived for 11 years. I arrived at 377 Dorset Street on Wednesday March 11th around 9:45 am after hearing from community members that ICE was present at someone's home there and trying to take them. I showed up to find a group of folks from the community some who I know and some who I do not, holding hands in a circle around the house and singing. I joined hands with them and sang. I was not prepared to stay the entire day, but I was fed food and given beverages, offered warm clothes and welcomed into people's home to warm up and use the bathroom and eventually I was given gear like goggles and a mask to protect myself from the weapons that were going to be used against us. This all came from people who I did not know in the community. For hours we all stood together and gathered around the house singing songs in English and Spanish to let the people inside know that they were not alone that we would protect them as best we could and try to keep them with their families. When I arrived there were four ICE agents and a few local police officers. Over time more ICE agents and police arrived over time and finally the Vermont State Police came in with assault rifles and other crowd dispersing weapons. When they forcefully entered the house I was not able to see because I was standing with neighbors by the back of the house. Our chants and songs turned to yelling and banging. At one point when VSP was forcing their way into the house at least 3 ICE officers approached some folks and I who had linked arms around me and without saying anything took out pepper spray. Luckily one of the people next to me pulled up an umbrella to shield us, and they backed away. After the three people had been forcefully removed from the house I moved to the side of the road where I saw unmarked ICE vehicles drive through a line of protesters. I saw people being forcefully handled by people in uniforms. I saw people crying and people rushing to help wash their eyes out from being pepper sprayed. I heard some kinds of bullets being shot and I heard and saw flash bangs go off. All the cars that drove away drove away fast even though there were so many people around. It was deeply disturbing and scary to be a part of and bear witness to. I did not at all feel protected by the local police who just stood around, I assumed that they were there to protect ICE, and I certainly did not feel like I was being protected by the state police who showed up with weapons to use against a group of protesters who were linked arm and arm singing and sharing food and resources. I am deeply disturbed by the actions I saw and have heard from other protestors that were carried out by local police officers, ICE agents and state police. I am extremely proud of my resilient community who showed an incredible amount of community care. Please get ICE out of our state immediately. The police violated the fair and impartial policing acts and this cannot happen again. Those who violated this act need to be held responsible for their actions.

-Phoebe