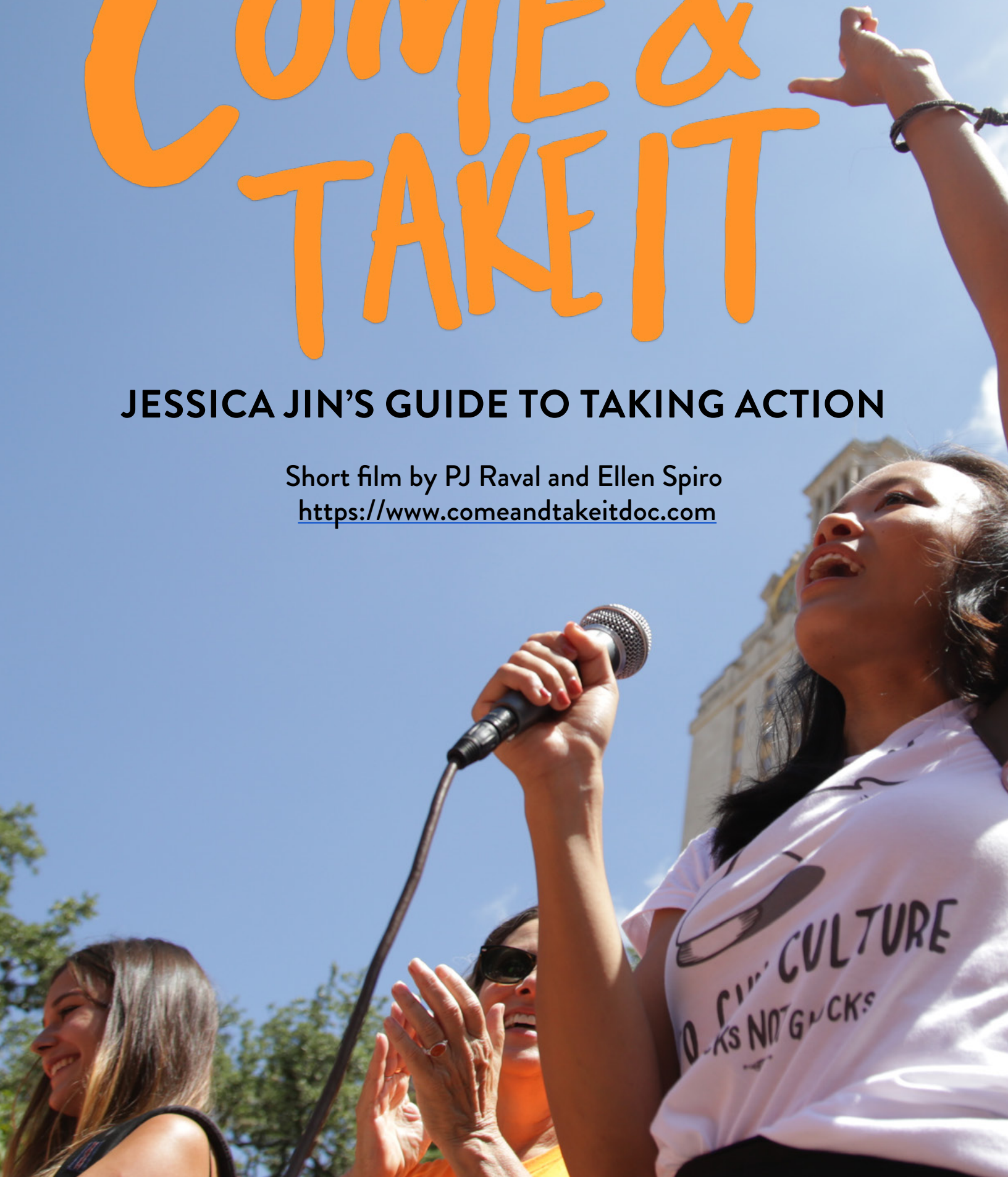


COME & TAKE IT

JESSICA JIN'S GUIDE TO TAKING ACTION

Short film by PJ Raval and Ellen Spiro
<https://www.comeandtakeitdoc.com>



The past 4 years have been all-consuming and emotionally exhausting. When lives and livelihoods are so clearly at stake, joy is harder to find. We're not just having fun fighting ridiculous hero-fantasy laws at school anymore— we're fighting fascism. We're all in the big leagues now. I've found my source of hope and direction in grassroots community organizing, where results are more tangible and personal. Human-to-human connection pulls us out of our bubbles and reminds us why we fight. I've turned towards work within my home state of Texas and my corner of the Asian-American community, because the potential political power in these groups is immense but too often dismissed. This is why I'm so excited to leverage this bit of dildo infamy to lift up organizations that are committed to unleashing the civic power of young Texans and aunties across America.

- Jessica Jin



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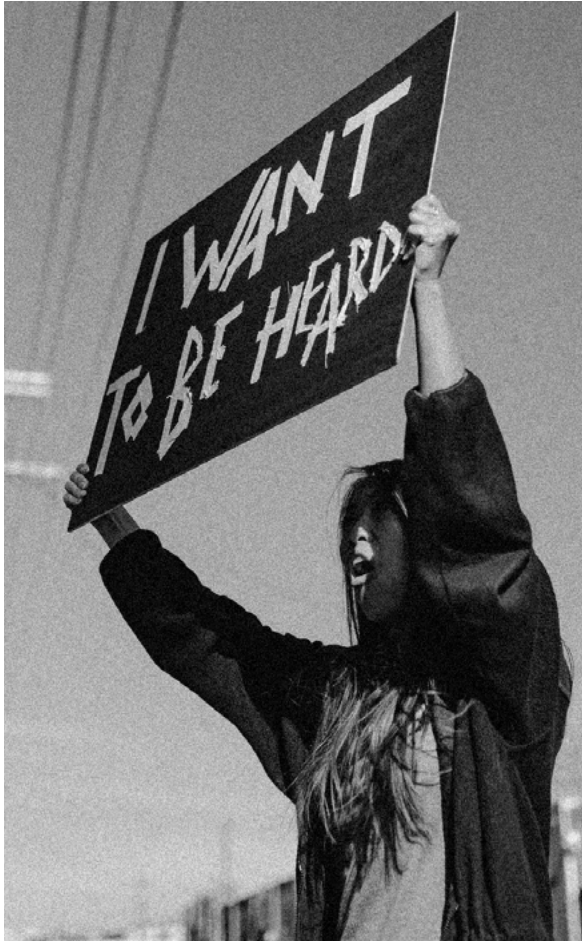
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LESSONS LEARNED/THINGS WHAT I WISH I KNEW THEN THAT I KNOW NOW

1. Basic organizing principles

- a. Everyone should start by volunteering on campaigns regularly to learn the ropes of organizing.
 - i. Organizing is a fundamental life skill. Harnessing collective power is important for creating political change but as you get better at it you'll also learn critical lessons that will positively apply to your social life and career! Organizers make some of the best event hosts and also the best salespeople and managers.
 - ii. Work humbly. No need to reinvent the wheel and no need to drive the bus. Organizers before you have laid down a lot of groundwork and have a lot to teach you.
 - iii. Organizing around issues (reproductive justice, local housing policy, immigration, police funding) is just as important as organizing electoral campaigns!



2. Pass the microphone

- a. Getting a lot of attention for organizing a big dildo protest is fun, but you must wield and redirect attention responsibly.

Questions to ask yourself:

- i. What community is most directly impacted by the issue you are looking to resolve?
- ii. Which impacted people were organizing on this issue before you showed up and how can you help them execute on their strategies?
- iii. Have you used your platform to lift up their stories and their work?
- iv. If you are not directly impacted by an issue, can you find it in you to make space, move aside, pass the microphone so that an impacted person can lead the change-making conversation?

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO EDUCATE YOURSELF ON THE ISSUES?

1. Follow subject matter experts on Twitter!

- a. For example, I feel very naive on matters of disability justice, so I have been lurking for years on the feeds of disabled advocates. I have a [non-comprehensive list of follows here](#).
 - i. To me, conscientious lurking means:
 1. Listening (no fighting or questioning!) and working to absorb ideas even when they're challenging
 2. If you can, tipping on Venmo or Cash App when you've been taught a lesson through a creator's labor



2. **READ: Books! Examples of books that have majorly shaped the way I see issues:**

- a. Organizing + big time LGBTQ history:
 - i. How to Survive a Plague: The Inside Story of How Citizens and Science Tamed AIDS by David France
- b. The crisis at the border:
 - i. Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions by Valeria Luiselli
- c. America's awful legacy abroad:
 - i. The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America's Secret Government by David Talbot
- d. The wild political power of economists:
 - i. The Economists' Hour: False Prophets, Free Markets, and the Fracture of Society by Binyamin Appelbaum
- e. Some of the Black history they don't teach you in school:
 - i. The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by Isabel Wilkerson
- f. Criminal justice soul-twister:
 - i. Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson
- g. Trans rights tearjerker:
 - i. Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality by Sarah McBride
- h. Incrementalism vs. revolution:
 - i. The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the birth of Right and Left by Yuval Levin
- i. The messiness of education reform:
 - i. The Prize: Who's in Charge of America's Schools? By Dale Russakoff
- j. The simplicity of scaling outcomes:
 - i. The Checklist Manifesto by Atul Gawande
- k. Shattering the normalcy of capitalism:
 - i. Carceral Capitalism by Jackie Wang
- l. The indignities of aging amid current labor dynamics:
 - i. Nomadland: Surviving America in the 21st Century by Jessica Bruder

WHAT IS A “HARD” ASK?

It is a specific way of asking questions that will yield results and commitments, and it is thus a tenet of good organizing. Social conditioning makes it particularly uncomfortable for women and minorities to make hard “asks,” but getting better at them is imperative to our personal and collective well being.

Check out [Swing Left’s guide to hard asks](#), then take a couple minutes to consider how making more hard “asks” in your personal and professional life might bring about positive things too!

HOW MUCH DO YOU HAVE TO COMMIT?

There is no endpoint to changemaking. It will literally never end. Educating yourself, volunteering within your community, and inviting people to join you should be as regular a practice as showering. This could be as simple as listening to a history podcast or audiobook while folding your laundry, and signing up for a bimonthly foodbank shift.

I’m working on my own expectations and boundaries around this because it’s hard to not always feel like you could be doing more. This feeling can consume you. This is an ongoing process for me, but some super simple principles I can be sure about are: 1) Don’t do nothing 2) Put your own mask on first; you cannot take care of other people if you are not taking care of yourself 3) Education must be met with action. You can’t just be studying all the time-- you must go out and apply your learnings, or find the courage to learn by doing and to accept the mistakes that you will make. The revolutionaries we admire created change out of necessity, not because they had time to read 100 books in preparation.

HOW DO YOU TACKLE EACH DYNAMIC OF CHANGE: CHANGING MINDS? CHANGING BEHAVIORS? CHANGING STRUCTURES? BUILDING COMMUNITIES?

They're all parts of the same puzzle. None happen without compassion and curiosity, cultural pressure, strong storytelling, and determined organizers. I'm a strong believer in there being room for almost every tactic, and I think strategic bullying is healthy! This is a really big conversation to try to squeeze into a humble guide.



HOW DO YOU NOT LOSE FOCUS AND STEAM?

1. The more locally you organize, the better.

- a. You'll be able to approach conversations with community members with confidence that only comes with authenticity
- b. Outcomes affect your community more tangibly, so you'll be able to witness the impact of your work. This is incredibly energizing.

2. Find your political home. Build Communities.

- a. Political change doesn't happen via one person, and trying to find the gas to attempt to do everything on your own is unsustainable
- b. Finding a community to learn with, strategize with, and organize with is paramount to sustaining your work. You need friends to hold you accountable, to encourage you and look out for you. If you're a busy or distractable person it's critical to plug into a group that you trust that already has a plan and can tell you exactly how to be part of it. The good ol' plug and chug.
- c. Some descriptions of political home from writer and activist [Adrienne Marie Brown](#):
 - i. "purist debate is important, honing how you feel and having a place to practice it fully is important. make sure you have a political home. don't get that confused with the American experiment..."
 - ii. "a place where we ideate, practice and build futures we believe in, finding alignment with those we are in accountable relationships with, and growing that alignment through organizing and education. political home is where we solidify our critiques and generate solutions for human and planetary futures that, with practice and time and a functional government, become viable enough to scale (deepen, normalize), or, faced with resistance and dysfunctional government, divergent enough to move for secession or battle.
- d. Right after this recent election, I realized I did not want to feel politically adrift between elections. I wanted accountability, continued engagement, and community. So I joined [Democratic Socialists of America!](#)
 - i. I had been hesitant to do this for a while because I felt like I hadn't done enough primary source reading to confidently label myself. Things that helped me get over this:
 1. I've been following the work of my local DSA chapter and have appreciated their proactive organizing around hyper local issues, like assembling people to testify against increasing the police budget in our city
 2. I've quietly shown up to a couple events and met a handful of people in the organization that I really like
 3. I align with the overarching stated principles of the organization, and while no organization is perfect, I think DSA is diverse enough that I can control how I will experience membership

HOW DO YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF?

1. Reminding myself that it's OK and important to read and enjoy fiction
2. Wearing sunscreen and drinking water every day
3. Writing is how I process my feelings! It's hard to sort feelings out when they're flying around inside your head like confetti. Dump them all out, organize them, and make sense of them on paper so your brain can have that space back to do good things for you. Don't relegate your beautiful head to simply being a confetti holder; your noggin is not a cascarón!



ORGANIZATIONS TO GET INVOLVED WITH:

- Sign up for email updates from Community Justice Action Fund to keep up with progress and learn how to support Black-led, community-led gun violence prevention: <https://www.cjactionfund.org/>
- Volunteer with MOVE Texas on youth voter engagement and extremely cool local advocacy projects: <https://movetexas.org/volunteer/#>
- Donate to help Sueños Sin Fronteras de Tejas provide immediate housing and food support to undocumented women and families: <https://www.classy.org/campaign/housing-and-food-security-for-immigrant-womxn-and-families-in-south-texas-ssftx-and-weallgrow-latina/c307277>
- Fund care work, community building, solidarity education, and art from Asian Americans: <https://18millionrising.org/2020/11/coiniscare.html>

SOCIAL HANDLES TO FOLLOW:

<https://www.instagram.com/suenossinfronterastx/>

<https://www.instagram.com/18millionrising/>

<https://www.instagram.com/cjactionfund/>

https://www.instagram.com/move_texas/

