

WHRD

She came after a hard day of work,
and preferred
an open place
where she could smoke.

She made the appointment
at a crowded bar.
This put us in a place with a lack
of privacy,
a lot of noise.

I felt she was comfortable,
she spoke openly
with confidence
despite not being in a place
with privacy.

She mentioned starting activism
at 16
She mentioned the 60s;
leftist movements from Latin America;
the revolution;
student movements and feminism;
prominent influences
in the building of her political thinking.

*'We have been accused of defending criminals.
A colleague accompanied a woman,
a survivor of violence.
The companion of this survivor
was a cacique
with links to narcos
and organised crime.
We received threats
by telephone,
rumours;
someone saying
'Your organisation is hiding criminals'
'I recommend you be careful'
We do risk
analysis
case-by-case'*

She mentioned
that during a demonstration
she and other companions were spreading
political messages, in walls.
She and other companions were detained

36 hours.

She mentioned
gender; men detained were battered,
not women. Women were undressed
and put in front of a physician
to be examined. Women were reminded
that they had kids
that could be disappeared.

Composed by Juliana Mensah from the interview transcript of a Mexican woman human rights defender working on women's rights, indigenous rights and civil and political rights from the research project 'Navigating Risk, Managing Security, and Receiving Support', which focuses on the experiences of human rights defenders at risk in Colombia, Mexico, Egypt, Kenya, and Indonesia (securityofdefendersproject.org).