

Visa Chaos: What 6 Chinese Students Say

A graphic narrative written and drawn by Rivi Handler-Spitz.

By Rivi Handler-Spitz

ear of immigration enforcement raids, abrupt deportations and arbitrary visa cancellations continue to upend international students' daily lives and disrupt their sense of well-being. Below, six

humanities Ph.D. students from China studying at U.S. universities recounted their experiences this past summer. Interviewees' identities have been concealed to protect their anonymity.















I try not to lose sight of the comedic side of this entire insane situation. There's always comedy in life.











I tried to
Stay calm
and not
anticipate
the fear...

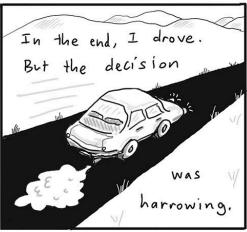




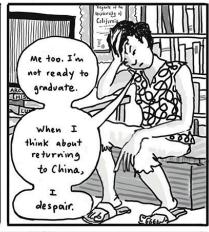


But what if TSA or ICE detains me on some pretext?







































The emotional weight would be crushing.







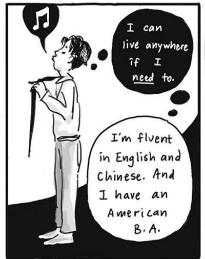
Honestly, nothing could be worse than the pandemic. I got kicked out of my V.S. dorm room and had no place to go.





















here.



















But I still can't imagine participating in a political protest.





What I learned in China is that the people who stick their necks out are the ones who get shot.



I WOULDN'T DARE PARTICIPATE MYSELF!

> But I'm learning a lot ...













On May 22nd, 2025 my visa status was jeopardized simply because I was an international student at Harvard

I didn't dare text
anyone for help,
becavse I thought:
"what if ICE goes
through my phone?"





Expendable







overwhelmed

Like, what does it actually mean when the Secretary of State threatens to "aggressively" pursve students with ties to the Chinese Communist Party. All citizens of China have ties to the Party!



The uncertainty
is the
scariest part.





I keep to myself, because I don't want to burden other people with my fears.













I haven't been deported, so I ought to be working on my dissertation, right?





My professors
don't understand
the impact on
international
students.

time...

The lost



A Chinese graduate
Student from my
university was taken
into police custody
and detained



without due process.



energy.



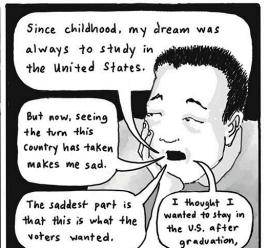














<u>Rivi Handler-Spitz</u> is a professor of Asian languages and cultures at Macalester College.

Written By

Rivi Handler-Spitz

Share This Article

Copyright © 2025 Inside Higher Ed All rights reserved. |