

**OMNI NATIONAL IMMIGRANTS DAY NEWSLETTER #2,
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Proclamation 5732 -- National Immigrants Day, 1987

October 16, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our national celebration of Immigrants Day is a moving reminder to us that America is unique among the nations. We are the sons and daughters of every land across the face of the Earth, yet we are an indivisible Nation. We are one people, and we are one in that which drew our forebears here -- the love of "freedom's holy Light."

This year we most appropriately observe **Immigrants Day on October 28, the 101st anniversary of the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty**, the beloved statue Emma Lazarus called "Mother of Exiles," from whose "beacon-hand/Glows world-wide welcome." That welcome is America's welcome, which has ever beckoned millions upon millions of courageous souls to this land of freedom, justice, and opportunity.

Immigrants have always brought great gifts to their new home on these shores -- the gifts of hardiness and heart, of intellect and hope. Two hundred years ago, immigrants were among the framers of a Constitution for these United States. They knew what they were about, for they began that charter of liberty and limited government with the words, "We the People" and created what a future President named Lincoln would call "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

One immigrant, J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, had described that people very well in 1782 when he wrote, "Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of man whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world." This prophecy came true, and immigrants helped, and are still helping, to make it so -- immigrants to a country and a people one in mutual loyalty and one in steady devotion to "freedom's holy Light."

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 86, has designated October 28, 1987, as "National Immigrants Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of

this event.

Now, Therefore, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 28, 1987, as National Immigrants Day, and I call upon the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:48 p.m., October 16, 1987]

BOOKS

USA

--Barry, Tom. *Border Wars*. MIT 2011. Consequences of political fear-mongering and tough talk on immigration in the US Southwest.

--Carens, Joseph. *Immigrants and the Right to Stay*. MIT P, 2010. Immigrants in the US should be offered a path to legalized status.

--**Collectif** Argos. *Climate Refugees*. MIT, 2010. (Orig. Fr. Ed. 2007). See Dyer, Parenti, Paskal. By 2050, 150 million climate refugees. This book studies the first of these refugees resulting from permafrost melt in Alaska, island nations being submerged, Chad and China desertification, floods in Bangladesh, glacial melt in Nepal, hurricanes USA.

--Daniel, Ben. *Neighbor: Christian Encounters with "Illegal" Immigration*. WJK, 2010. Daniel is Pastor of Foothill Presbyterian Church in San Jose, CA. From a review: Daniel "examines the conundrums of illegal immigration through the lens of human dignity and a practical love for others."

--Davis, Mike and Justin Akers-Chacon. *No One Is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Haymarket Books, 2009. The authors debunk right-wing opposition to immigrants, remember the long tradition of resistance among immigrants, and chart a course toward justice and equality for immigrants in the US.

--Dunn, Timothy. *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*. CMAS Books, U Texas, 1996.

--Hoeller, Suzie. *IMPASSE: Border Walls or Welcome the Stranger* is a book for all who wish to repair our broken immigration system. Unlike many others writing on immigration issues, the author rejects the extremist and divisive rhetoric which has helped to sustain the policy impasse in Congress

---Omer, Peter, ed. *Underground America : Narratives of Undocumented Lives*. McSweeney, 2008. Rev. FFW (8-7-08). 24 stories (out of 60 interviewed) of economic and political refugees who risked much to make it to the Land of the Free.

WORLD

--Bacon, David. *Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants*. Beacon, 2008. Documents how undocumented workers have become the world's most exploited workforce. "Illegals" of all nationalities are central in the global struggle for economic justice.

Documentary Pries Open the Door to Immigrant Detention Centers

Video courtesy of Presente.org

http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/10/documentary_pries_open_the_door_to_immigrant_detention_centers.html

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Tuesday, October 18 2011, 10:03 AM EST Tags: [detention](#), [documentaries](#), [ICE](#)

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In Maria Hinojosa's documentary, "Lost in Detention," which aired on PBS' *Frontline*, a father of three sits down with the journalist who asks him how he has handled his wife's deportation. She was removed from the U.S. after she was pulled over for a traffic violation.

"I haven't handled it," he said. "It handled me."

In many ways the immigration enforcement system is so overwhelming and so rogue that it handles all it touches. Making sense of what's happening, and of the damage the system inflicts, is no easy task.

Hinojosa's film uncovers some of the most troubling sides of that system, from local police involvement in deportation to abuses in detention centers. The film is perhaps the first time a full narrative about the failures of Obama's immigration policy has been articulated to a mainstream public audience.

"I would just hope that maybe this documentary helps people engage with their neighbors and their friends," Hinojosa told me. "Maybe we can just have this conversation."

The last time I talked to Hinojosa, we had both recently returned from reporting inside immigration detention centers. And at the time, we were both still reeling from the experience. When we spoke again yesterday, I asked her about the detention centers.

In your film, you spend a lot of time on Willacy Detention Center, which you entered and filmed. When I went there, I most remember scenes of detainees marched up and down the hallways in silence, except for the sounds of guards yelling and metal doors slamming. I remember walking by a small holding cell where recently detained people were jailed after being loaded off the buses and paddy wagons. One woman was called

out and a guard pointed her over to sit down at a table to conduct intake, handing her a face mask to wear before she spoke to the detention center worker. The women looked like they were coming into a prison camp, which is exactly where they were. The place was unreal. It's not.

When I think back about what I saw in these detention centers, to be honest with you, everything that I saw was shocking. I heard stories of people who were detained who said things to me like, "I was fed food with maggots;" "I was fed raw chicken;" "I was fed spoiled food;" "I had no one to talk to and so, you know, we gave rats names;" "We could not see the sunlight;" "I was held for 10 days and nobody once told me why I was held, I never got a phone call out, I never got to see a judge, I never got to see a lawyer." All of these things are shocking because they are happening in our country, on our watch.

Here in this office today, there was someone who I was talking to who looks like you—a woman with fair skin—but she has a green card, she's from France. I just told her, "You have to become a citizen, you have to become a citizen now, you are not safe."

People don't realize that, you know, people think, oh Maria you're being a little bit extreme. But the truth is that there are people who are being held in these places who have been living in our country with legal permits, with green cards and now they are being rounded up and detained and deported.

Willacy is a notorious place and you've done a lot of work in "Lost In Detention" to substantiate why: rampant sexual abuse, physical violence and blatant racism by guards. I know that you also visited two other detention enters while reporting. Is it your sense that immigration detention in the United States suffers from these kinds of abuses generally?

The problem with the immigration detention reality is that nobody at a very senior level has really spent any time understanding the fact that we now have the largest civil detention system in the world. So from the beginning, you have a huge population that's being held, but there is no real government policy that is applied to civil detention. If you're housed in a prison, you fall under the legal structure of the Bureau of Prison. If there's abuse in that prison, there's a legal path for you to make a complaint. If you are an immigrant and you are detained in an immigrant detention facility, you do not have the same rights to challenge the conditions under which you are being held.

So, what does that mean for our country? That you have thousands of people that are being held, but it's unclear whether or not they have any legal recourse if anything happens to them while they're being detained?

As a journalist, I'm concerned about this. As an American, I'm concerned about this. Because we believe that there's some kind of legal recourse that we all have, because we have basic rights in our country. Now all of a sudden, you're encountering a population that's being told,

“Actually you don’t have any legal recourse.” If abuses happen, well, if the abused is an immigrant then they just deport that person and the abuse case goes away.

Your documentary focuses in significant part on Secure Communities. You tell stories about that program, which checks the immigration status of anyone booked into a local jail, tearing families apart when a mother is stopped for a traffic violation. You interviewed Cecilia Munoz, the Obama administration’s top person on immigration. She told you that as long as long as Congress funds ICE to deport 400,000 people a year, the administration will continue to uphold the law of the land and these kinds of “collateral” consequences are inevitable. Resistance against Secure Communities is huge. I wonder how long you think the administration can keep this up?

I think that right now this is a system that the wheels are turning and it’s going to be very difficult to stop. You know, one of our whistle blowers, a former ICE employee, basically said, this is a machine that is starting and it’s being funded by Congress and so you’re not going to go back to Congress if you’re ICE and say, “Oh we couldn’t reach the 400,000 number that you funded us to meet.” No, if you’re ICE, you’re going to find 400,000 to deport.

You hear something like this coming from Cecilia Munoz, who was given a MacArthur Genius Award for her work on immigration and being an immigrant advocate... I’m sure this is very difficult for her; she didn’t say that it was in her interview. What she did say is that there will be 400,000 deportations a year.

The Obama administration, when it was running for office, was saying, we hear your pain to Latinos and to other immigrant constituencies. Now it is essentially saying, we feel your pain but we’re going to cause it, too.

You’ve said this is getting worse. What do you mean?

Well, we didn’t have hundreds of detention centers housing immigrant detainees. We didn’t have that. If you were here and you were a refugee and you were applying for political asylum, you were not going to be housed in a detention center while that was happening.... I think that it’s not just individual stories of families being separated, it’s the fact that this is happening every hour in our country, somewhere a process is being made to figure out which immigrant where is going to be detained.

As a woman in particular, this was a difficult story to report, because I met two women personally who were sexually assaulted while they were detained. One of them ends up in our documentary, basically telling us that she had been told that if she talked about the fact that she had been sexually assaulted by a male guard, that it would go worse for her. That she could be killed; that she could be deported. This to me is so distressing....

I think of one story that resonated that did not end up in the documentary. One of the young women we met, she was raised in Austin, she speaks perfect English, your typical American

girl—except she wasn't, she didn't have a working green card. She was telling this story about what they would do at Willacy when they would find a bed bug or a flea or lice. She said that they would take all of the women, they would undress them, they would strip them, they would have them strip all the beds, all the sheets, put this all into one big pile, that they'd go wash or destroy it. And then all the women had to stand in line for the showers, which are open, no privacy. And she said, "So there we were all standing in a line naked to go to the showers, and you know there's this movie I remember seeing as a younger person, and I felt like I was in it. The movie was called 'Schindler's list.' "

To me, that just sent shudders through my spine. Maybe she did not quite understand what the comparison was that she was making, I don't know. To me, just hearing her say this was so shocking that I almost did not have a follow-up question. This is important for all of us living in the country to know and see. We have to see it in order for it to change.

The grim reality of life under Alabama's brutal immigration law

The Guardian. Fear of detention, families torn apart – Hispanics in Alabama are trapped in a unique half-life under punishing new immigrant laws

MORE <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/14/alabama-immigration-law-families-trapped>

ARTICLES ON IMMIGRATION FROM *THE ECONOMIST*

<http://www.economist.com/topics/immigration-policy>

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