

# Putting Stories Alongside the Numbers

by Brenda Walker

I want to tell you about a new project aimed to refocus the debate about immigration away from statistics and toward the human story of what open borders are doing to individual Americans. We have relied for years on citing the outrageous numbers that should have made Congress and the press wake up and pay attention. Instead, their eyes glazed over in denial and boredom.

We need to present our case less like a think tank and more like *People Magazine* because one good human story is better than a pile of statistics. Our opposition certainly knows that fact of psychology. They spin their human interest stories *ad nauseum*. However obnoxious the relentless maudlin tales of victimhood and illegal alien struggle are, they do paint a picture that remains in the mind because facts with emotional content are better remembered.

The website [www.ImmigrationsHumanCost.org](http://www.ImmigrationsHumanCost.org) is just getting underway and will tell the individual experiences of Americans in the front lines of the government-mandated social and economic transformation. First-person accounts are being collected, and I am looking for many kinds of stories.

The idea for [ImmigrationsHumanCost.org](http://ImmigrationsHumanCost.org) grew out of reading too many sensitive immigrant articles informing me that Juan and Maria, formerly of Mexico and south, now ensconced in all corners of America, were here “in search of a better life.” The writer’s purpose was surely to awaken feelings of sympathy and kindness in the reader, but the articles had a different effect on me entirely.

For a moment, let’s consider a few examples of the

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sensitive immigrant article.

On March 18 of this year, the *Seattle Times* shared a touching tale of immigrant struggle against an unfeeling America:

*When Alicia’s young sons had the flu this month, she stayed home from her \$6-an-hour job for four days. She tried not to panic as 7-year-old Reuben and 5-year-old Enrique fought off fevers and struggled to keep down cups of chicken soup (“Health aid reduced for immigrant kids”).*

On the same day, the *Washington Post* pushed the envelope with a real tear-jerker:

*Count Rolando, a shy third-grader with almond eyes and a mop of brown hair, is one of the unintended victims of Sept. 11. Having slipped into this country with his family from Mexico in November, he wasn’t in school because his parents, undocumented immigrants, lacked the official identification required to register him (“Tighter Immigrant ID Rules Shut Doors”).*

And who can forget our recent poster boy, young Jesus Apodaca? In the *Denver Post*’s introductory article about the scholarly Mexican, the writer called him “Tall, slender and a little shy.” Jesus is the illegal alien high school graduate, here only six years, whom some Colorado politicians want to reward with taxpayer-subsidized in-state tuition.

Now, these three examples show people who individually benefit from government permissiveness on details like wanna-be immigrants waiting their turn in the world’s most generous legal immigration system, as well as lawful entry and citizenship.

But America is not an economic perpetual motion machine and there are costs for every benefit. There are many invisible losers in the new cheap wage economy — mostly Americans. What goes completely unmentioned in the press is how the same open borders that permitted

mop-haired Rolando and little Jesus are in fact worsening life and destroying the American dream for many US citizens, particularly our own working poor and increasing numbers of formerly middle-class people.

Why have these Americans been so overlooked? Where are their emotionally sympathetic stories? Why isn't it news that the middle class is fast disappearing — first the blue-collar jobs and increasingly the professional technology jobs that provided work for college graduates. Does anyone believe that America can survive in any recognizable form with no middle class — the backbone of democracy?

Where is the story about an American child who no longer receives a full day of instruction because the teacher is overwhelmed by the multi-track Babelized classroom?

Where is the portrait of an American construction worker who can no longer make a living at his trade at the new lower wages? A Las Vegas television station reported in May about house framer William Ennis whose wages fell in 4 years from \$800-\$1200 per 40-hour week to \$600 for working seven days a week, 12 hours per day. In the booming construction industry there, 70 percent of the workers are aliens.

Where is the series of articles about how the black community has been driven out of Los Angeles because of falling wages and neighborhoods overwhelmed with immigrants living several families to a house? The *Christian Science Monitor* reported last year that Watts (the Harlem of the West) is now 60 percent Hispanic.

If my Berkeley neighborhood is any example, there must be a lot of unemployed American construction workers out there. Many roofers and sheetrockers are now Spanish-speaking, a change in just three or four years. I want to hear from more blue-collar guys. Are there educators willing to talk about how difficult it is to teach while trying to manage a room full of energetic youngsters when many of them don't understand English?

Workers in hi-tech fields are commonly dumped by age 40 these days to make way for younger, cheaper foreign technology employees under the H-1B visa program. I am also looking to hear from women technology workers whose offices have become more sexist and less professional with the hiring of foreigners from misogynous cultures.

In 1994, Roy Beck authored the landmark analysis

of the social breakdown of a small Wisconsin city due to mass immigration in "The Ordeal of Wausau," published in the *Atlantic* magazine. In 2002, Lewiston, Maine, has been the most recent victim of multicultural social engineering and is unlikely to be the last. I hope to hear from those communities that are struggling with cultural fracturing, as well as trying to maintain social services and schools.

I wonder whether there are healthcare professionals who have seen principles of public health compromised in the name of political correctness. In addition, are there doctors willing to speak out about their contract buyouts from HMOs hiring less expensive foreign MDs?

Let's hear from small-business owners who want to hire American workers but are put at a competitive disadvantage by businesses whose payroll is far lower because of exploitable immigrant employees. For example, Matthew Reindl of Great Neck, New York, testified before Congress in September about difficult business competition since he pays all the required employer taxes, unlike some of his competitors. [*See following article.*] The business press needs to hear stories like this to end the automatic assumption that all segments of business love open borders. They don't.

Obviously, every crime perpetrated by an illegal alien is one that never should have happened — and wouldn't have — if this nation had real immigration enforcement. A page of America's Least Wanted is being designed, showing a few examples of the most heinous alien criminals.

This audience certainly understands that for all the Beltway chatter about "intelligence failures" regarding the terror attacks, the dereliction was far more about open borders and the ideology and special interests that benefit from them. Thousands of Americans died because of delusions of a post-national world based on global commerce. Political and financial leaders imagined a world where the only zealotry would be the quest for profits. They ignored other agendas, such as religion and culture, at our peril. The ruling elites disregarded the growing desire of radical Islam to destroy the United States and western culture because of the threat they represent to the Muslim sphere. So we must include the victims of terrorism as another very terrible cost of government failure to control borders.

Hopefully, this project can arouse some media interest as well as provide grist for the activist mill. It

won't hurt that more Americans realize that they are not alone in losing ground. Perhaps even Congress might notice there is a problem. One can hope as well as work.

Finally, let me do a historical comparison. The German anti-Nazi activist, Pastor Martin Niemöller, is credited with remarking: "First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out — because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the communists and I did not speak out — because I was not a communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out — because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me — and by then there was no one left to speak out for me."

A modern version might go something like this: "When they came for the farmworker jobs, I didn't speak out because I liked cheap strawberries. When they came for the union construction jobs, I didn't speak out because I figured I would save money on a new roof. When manufacturing jobs were moved offshore, I didn't speak out because I believed the economists who said the consumer would benefit. When they came for high-tech employment, I vaguely remembered that Americans were promised those jobs in the post-NAFTA economy. Then they came for my job, and by then there were no working Americans left to speak out for me. •