

Crime and Personal Safety

Open borders are welcoming dangerous criminals. A crime-minded foreigner envisions the American Dream as a different sort of opportunity than the one imagined by immigration sentimentalists. He sees cash and expensive items available for easy theft, a market for selling his illegal drugs and a police system that cuts enormous slack to obvious illegals. Along with the material affluence, he may imagine women and children are easy targets for his sexual desires in America's open culture.

Immigrant crime is not much discussed in polite company, since the subject violates the romantic fable of the earnest hard-working newcomer, even the so-called "undocumented." However, in addition to their unlawful entrance or visa overstays, many illegal aliens are variously engaged in identity theft, fraudulent social security numbers and ID cards, tax evasion or driving without a valid license or insurance – crimes which are practically made necessary by their unlawful status.

The availability of false documents within immigrant communities facilitates criminal aliens' escape from law enforcement, which may only follow the undetering "catch and release" policy.

Determined criminals take advantage of our laxity: "In some areas of the country, 12% of felonies, 25% of burglaries and 34% of thefts are committed by illegal aliens," according to the Congressional testimony of John Morga-nelli, a Pennsylvania District Attorney. Further, more than one-quarter of federal prisoners are illegal aliens. The percentage is similar for Los Angeles County's jail, where criminal aliens cost the county over \$150 million annually.

The likelihood of a person being affected by foreign criminals has increased with growing immigration anarchy. Ethnic gangs have moved in all over America, turning pleasant American communities into mean streets plagued by theft and violence. Highways are more dangerous too, as the number of illegal alien drunk drivers has increased. Nearly half of California's drunk driving arrests are Latino men, and the state's percentage of fatal hit-and-run accidents is more than twice the national average, namely 7.8 percent versus 3.8 percent nationally.

The future doesn't look hopeful since common-sense proposals for improved enforcement and identification have been received unenthusiastically in Congress. Worsening threats to Americans' safety are another instance of how uncontrolled immigration does not serve the national interest.

– *Brenda Walker reports on immigration and crime at: www.LimitsToGrowth.org and www.ImmigrationsHumanCost.org*