

From: Storming the Wall:

Climate Change, Migration and
Homeland Security by Todd Miller
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FIVE

PHOENIX DYSTOPIA: MASS MIGRATION IN THE HOMELAND

*Jumping cholla, la brincadora,
la viajera, la vela de coyote*

—alight in a lightness of being, borderless.

—Logan Phillips

At the front of the July 2011 storm, cold air rushed down with powerful velocity and met a parched desert that had long been in drought. When the fast wind met the loose soil, it whipped up a wall of dust 5,000 feet high and 100 miles wide. The storm resembled the massive, blowing barrier of dust in the apocalyptic car chase of *Mad Max: Fury Road*. It engulfed the sleek silver bank buildings in downtown Phoenix, the domed baseball stadium, and the basketball arena; it blew over Interstate 10, reducing visibility to zero, and over the Maricopa County Sheriff Department's tent city for undocumented people. Climate change has made the U.S. Southwest hotter, drier, and dustier, with predictions of more to come. The wall of dust enveloped Sky Harbor International Airport and even penetrated the buildings

themselves, where passengers covered their faces as they waited for their luggage at the carousel. The storm dumped a thick layer of dust and debris over the entirety of what Andrew Ross calls the world's "least sustainable city." Ferocious storms once considered so rare as to occur only once every hundred years may soon become the annual norm.

More frequent dust storms are but some of the many climate changes expected to impact Phoenix, says William deBuys, author of *A Great Aridness: Climate Change and the Future of the American Southwest*. More than any other city in the United States, Phoenix "stands squarely in the crosshairs of climate change."¹ The dust storms embody everything that could go feasibly wrong for a community, large or small. Not only does drought dehydrate soil to such a degree that it becomes easily swept up by wind, it also threatens a population's fresh water supply, as it has threatened those who rely on Lake Mead, the largest freshwater reservoir in the West. In May 2016—again, the planet's hottest year on record—Lake Mead evaporated down to its lowest level ever.

"Arizona's 'bank' for 40 percent of its water supply, Lake Mead, is being drained faster than it can be filled," making eventual water rationing inevitable in the state, says the Western Resource Advocates.²

The same conditions that produce the dust storms also contribute to the raging wildfires that have tripled in frequency in the U.S. Southwest since the 1970s. One such fire was only 80 miles north of Phoenix, near the small town of Yarnell, in June 2013. In one day, a fatal mix of chronic drought, abnormal heat, and fatal winds drove the fire from 300 to 2,000 acres when it overran and killed 19 firefighters

from the city of Prescott. In March 2017, "wildfires raged across four states, fanned by winds and fueled by a drought-starved prairie," reported the *New York Times*, "killed at least six people and burned more than 2,300 square miles."³

And then there are the heat waves, "the greatest environmental killer," according to Giles Slade. He wrote in his book *American Exodus: Climate Change and the Coming Flight for Survival* that it may seem unlikely to "claim that heat waves will cause an exodus from enlarged cities of mid-century North America, but intense heat lasting through the long months of the summer will become a contributing factor to a prolonged urban exodus that may have already begun."⁴

There are six stages of heat stroke: heat stress, heat fatigue, heat syncope, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and finally, heat stroke. In his book *The Devil's Highway*, Luis Alberto Urrea explains that the process can creep up on a person, starting with dizziness, then general disorientation, fever, cramps, headaches and nausea, and then vomiting, even vomiting blood. When people reach this point, Urrea writes, they might strip off their clothes, not because they are cold, but because they are no longer able to stand the feel of their own nerve endings. "Your muscles, lacking water, feed on themselves. They break down and start to rot. Once rotting in you they dump rafts of dying cells into your already sludgy bloodstream. Proteins are peeling off your dying muscles. Chunks of cooked meat are falling out of your organs, to clog other organs. The system closes down in a series. Your kidneys, your bladder, your heart. They jam shut. Stop. Your brain sparks. Out. You're gone."

What migrants have suffered for many years is now

coming to the world's cities. A 2003 heat wave in Europe killed 70,000 people. Temperatures in London hit over 100 degrees Fahrenheit for the first time in recorded history, while temperatures in parts of India exceeded 120°F in May 2016, melting roads and causing a spike in dehydration, heat strokes, crop failure, mass migration, and even suicides. "Hundreds of people have died as crops have withered in the fields in more than 13 states," reported Alexandra Sims for the *Independent*, "forcing tens of thousands of small farmers to abandon their land and move into the cities. Others have killed themselves rather than go to live in urban shanty towns."⁵

In Phoenix, temperatures hit 100 degrees or more on approximately 100 days out of the year. According to calculations by Climate Central, if nothing is done to slow climate change, by 2100 Phoenix can be expected to endure temperatures in excess of 100 degrees 163 days out of the year. And trust me, it sometimes feels like this is already the case; in the summer, Phoenix is an oven. If anything knocks out the electricity grid for any length of the time, people bake in their homes. "If, in summer, the grid there fails on a large scale and for a significant period of time," William deByus writes for *TomDispatch*, "the fallout will make the consequences of Superstorm Sandy look mild."⁶

When I followed up with deByus in 2015, he took such a scenario one step further, and imagined the exodus of people from the city, clogging up Interstate 17 as they fled north to the White Mountains until conditions improved. Hundreds of campers would enter the tinderbox forests, where an ill-placed match or lightning strike could ignite a fire with

ease. Of course, there are an endless number of potential scenarios that could play out that could make the Valley of the Sun, as *Truthout's* climate journalist Dahr Jamail put it, "uninhabitable by the end of the century." What happens if there is a mass upheaval in the United States? What happens if the word *refugee* no longer refers to a person who comes from outside of the United States, but to someone who is roaming from town to town and state to state within the country? What happens in this scenario, in the context of a border enforcement apparatus unlike anything we've ever seen before, under which agents are given free rein to patrol in the interior? Borders can be enacted quickly through road blockades and interrogating agents, and this has already begun. There is a strong probability that even Americans who support Donald Trump's "big, beautiful" border wall might soon be on the outside of an internal border, looking in.

THE BUM BLOCKADE

Members of a family in Oklahoma packed a ratletrap Ford with everything they owned and headed west. Since their intention was to remain within the United States, they did not expect that armed authorities would force them to halt. On being stopped, they wondered if they had accidentally gone off course and somehow ended up near an international border crossing.

The family was fleeing an Oklahoma suffering from statewide agricultural and economic collapse. It was five years before, in 1931, that the center point of a drought settled over the Great Plains, creating aridness comparable to the deserts of the U.S. Southwest. It would become the

worst drought in U.S. climatological history. It came with temperatures soaring to well over 100 degrees in Nebraska. Thousands died from the heat alone. Instead of precipitation, biblical clouds of grasshoppers descended upon what remained of the crops. It was after the drought had parched the land, already clear-cut in the name of agribusiness, that large air masses and low, sirocco-like winds began to lift enormous amounts of dirt, whipping up dust storms that towered 8,000 feet high and buried entire homes. One particularly powerful storm carried 350 million tons of dirt from Montana and Wyoming and dumped it on cities from Chicago to Atlanta. The dust appeared in different colors and gave off a variety of aromas. It created health problems such as “dust pneumonia” for people who inhaled it and then retreated indoors, but outside livestock and wildlife often suffocated. “I’m on my horse,” one man responded to people who offered him a ride to another town, after seeing that he was covered up to his head with dust.

“The story of the southern plains in the 1930s is essentially about dust storms,” historian Donald Worster wrote in *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*, “and not once or twice, but over and over for the better part of a decade: day after day, year after year, of sand rattling against the window, of fine powder caking one’s lips, of springtime turned to despair, of poverty eating into self-confidence.” Worster argued that there is a close link between the Dust Bowl and the Depression—that the same society and system produced both, and for similar reasons.

In writing about the calamities that befell Midwesterners during the Dust Bowl, Worster might well have been

writing about our current Anthropocene era. He might well have been writing about what’s to come.

A study by NASA predicts a devastating drought to hit the U.S. Southwest and plains states by the end of the 21st century. “Recent droughts like the ongoing drought in California or in the Southwest—or even historical droughts like the Dust Bowl in the 1930s—these are naturally occurring droughts that typically last several years or sometimes almost a decade,” scientist Ben Cook wrote. “In our projections what we’re seeing is that with climate change, many of these types of droughts will likely last for 20, 30, sometimes even 40 years.”⁸ Forty years would be four times longer than the Dust Bowl. Cook was also the lead researcher for a study that found the drought that began in 1998 in the eastern Mediterranean Levant region—which comprises Cyprus, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Turkey—has been the most severe the region has endured in nine centuries. Such a drought might crumble a place like Phoenix entirely, and is as likely as the impending sea rise washing over Miami.

In 1936, the newly formed border guard had no sympathy for fellow Americans who were fleeing droughts and dust storms. The family from Oklahoma in the ratlertrap car only had 10 bucks. The border they had reached was not the one with Mexico, but the one with California, and armed authorities were positioned there to make sure that people like them did not enter the state. The same was true if you arrived by train. Police, like immigration officials today in southern Mexico, patrolled the rails, shining their bright flashlights between the cars as the squeaky, slow-moving

freight trains trudged through an area that even 100 years earlier was not part of the United States. All of a sudden, where there had been no enforced border, an apparatus appeared solely to obstruct people's mobility.

In 1936, Rose Marie Packard reported to *The Nation* magazine that when she asked the police officer what they were doing patrolling the Arizona-California border, the officer said they were only fingerprinting those "who looked like criminals." Similar explanations have come from today's Border Patrol agents working checkpoints. Packard asked the officer if he "did not know that these people had a constitutional right to travel where they pleased?"⁹ The officer responded that he was there on the orders of the chief of police. Packard said that she took two famished young men to dinner because they hadn't eaten in three days. They too were denied at the border when authorities saw they had no money and were unemployed. "This is as far as you go, young man."¹⁰

As with many borders in the world, there were the accusations of violence and abuse occurring at the California "bun blockades." Because the incidents took place far from the public eye, they were very difficult to later prove. As geographer Reece Jones demonstrates in his book *Border Walls*, "exclusion and violence" are inherent "to [securing] the borders of the modern state."¹¹ Or, in this case, the state of California.

In August 1935, Americans heading for California in search of work were warned by H.A. Carleton, director of the Federal Transient Service, to "stay away from California."¹² Carleton said: "California was rarrivno amrovimatahv

7 percent of the entire national relief load, one of the heaviest of any State in the Union. A large part of this load was occasioned by thousands of penniless families from other States who have literally overrun California."¹³

From the mid to late 1930s, two decades before scientists in Hawaii started to detect an increase of carbon in the Earth's atmosphere, about 350,000 environmental refugees entered California. As they did, the stereotypes quickly followed. They were shiftless, lazy, and irresponsible. They had "too many children."

Los Angeles Police Department Chief James E. Davis, sent an "expeditionary force"¹⁴ to the California-Arizona border in February 1936. True to form, this particular stretch of Arizona border, according to the LAPD deputy chief was overwhelmed by a "flood of criminals,"¹⁵ not an increased number of Americans fleeing environmental crises. These were the "trenches."¹⁶ This was a "swift war" on "jobless, penniless winter nomads."¹⁷

The "bun blockade" strategy was similar to today's layered border policing strategy. In a paper titled "The Bun Blockade: Los Angeles and the Great Depression," sociologist Hailey Giczy wrote that the Los Angeles Police Department made it clear that it was based on "two lines of defense."¹⁸ One of the enforcement layers was the city of Los Angeles itself, where authorities pursued, arrested, and fingerprinted "vagrants and beggars."¹⁹ Police gave those they apprehended the option of doing hard labor in a prison camp or wholesale expulsion from the state. And much as in the "See Something, Say Something" campaign of today's Department of Homeland Security in Los Angeles

"housewives" were encouraged to report all hoboes who come to their doors.

The other line of defense was the California state line. A mere 12 years after the U.S. Border Patrol was created, 136 Los Angeles police officers were deployed to "prevent undesirable migrants from entering the state."²¹ And these "vagrants and beggars" were mainly white.

Chief Davis told the newly minted border patrol that, while they controlled the roads and railroad tracks entering the state, they would have much latitude, and "individual initiative is encouraged to determine the proper modus operandi" as they searched for fellow Americans, like the Oklahoma family, who went from "place to place without visible means of support."²² Police were to "shake down" all adult males to make sure they didn't have any weapons.²³ They also fingerprinted them, and often sent them off on the next train going the opposite direction. Even though L.A. city councilman Parley Parker Christensen called Davis "our Los Angeles edition of Mussolini,"²⁴ and said that the "bum blockade" was acting against U.S. citizens' fundamental right to travel from state to state, the deployment of border guards on a state line occurred with official sanction. When pressed that the California border was out of their jurisdiction, the state governor said that L.A. County went "almost" to the boundary. Local police agencies also deputized the officers, and some police agents said it was their right to conduct citizens' arrests, the same claims made by border militia groups on today's U.S.-Mexico border. A state attorney claimed there was a historical precedent—the 1917 forced deportation of 1,300 striking mine workers and

their supporters by a 2,000-strong deputized citizen posse in Bisbee, Arizona. They expelled the workers from the state of Arizona en masse to the state of New Mexico.

At that time, border militarization was hardly as commonplace as it is now, yet was quickly mobilized and justified when the context was the security of the rich versus that of the poor. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court and the California Supreme Court were both on the record declaring that a state has a right to protect itself "against the spread of crime, pauperism or disturbance of the peace, by closing its borders to migrants not self-supporting."²⁵ The U.S. Supreme Court declared that a "State may exclude from its limits convicts, paupers, idiots and lunatics, and persons likely to become a public charge . . . a right founded . . . in the sacred law of defense."²⁶ Similar institutionalized discrimination can also be found in the Immigration Act of 1917 that stated that "undesirables," such as "idiots" and "alcoholics," along with "criminals" and "anarchists" were banned from the United States. Immigration law, history, policy, and rhetoric is low on empathy, high on name-calling. Environmental refugees could become, in the parlance of Donald Trump, as one example, people with "lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists."

California has a history of enacting this type of enforced exclusion based on identity, race, or nationality. It was the state at the frontlines of enforcement of the federal Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1882 law that prohibited the entrance of all Chinese laborers into the United States. Giczy writes that the Chinese were considered a "perpetual, unchanging

and unchangeable alien element that could never be homogenous.”²⁷ The 1930s—one of the crucial decades when the United States was moving to a voracious fossil fuel economy as the car industry took over streetcar systems and other public transportation works in Los Angeles and many other cities across the country—was also a dark period of round-ups, internment, incarceration, and expulsion of people of Japanese and Mexican heritage. Not only a “white paradise,” (only for the right type of whiteness), but also also an enforcement model for potential future use.

On April 20, 1936, a headline appeared in a Colorado newspaper: “Troops Move into Action at Dawn to Prevent Invasion by Indigent.”²⁸ The insinuation was that Colorado’s entire southern border should be patrolled by soldiers because the low-income were coming. Florida initiated a “poverty quarantine,”²⁹ a border blockade established to keep out those with little money, people who the state claimed would “turn to crime for support.” According to one newspaper report, Florida thwarted more than 50,000 “hitch-hiking, rod-riding, and flivver-driving itinerants.”³⁰ Unlike in California, for Colorado and Florida it was the state governments that led the charge: in Colorado, the National Guard; in Florida, the state police.

Colorado even declared martial law along its southern border to “repel” people described as “aliens, invaders,” and “indigents.”³¹ A sign on the Colorado state line read: “Martial Law—Slow—Stop.”³² If you weren’t a Colorado resident and, say, were on your way to do seasonal work on a sugar beet farm, you would be stopped and physically blockaded from entering the territory, regardless of whether or not you

were an American citizen. Where there is no border today, there could be one tomorrow—even in the middle of your own country.

The point of writing this is to say that the patrolling of state borders could happen again, it could happen now, it could happen in the future, it could happen during mass internal migration, or it could happen during whatever. In March 2017, probably close to the same Arizona-California border location where the blockade halted that family in the rattletrap car from Oklahoma, after crossing the ever-winding Colorado River, I came to the booths where an agricultural inspector forced me to stop briefly, then waved me through. I looked behind him only to see a large, idling Border Patrol truck with an agent staring right at me. He didn’t force me to stop, or stop anyone else at that moment, but he was clearly doing visual inspections and had the authority to do more.

Unlike creating comprehensive legislation to prevent climate change by eliminating greenhouse gas emissions, proposals that have languished in Washington for decades, laws aimed at stopping and expelling people have the ability to mobilize nations and states into sometimes dazzling rapid-fire action. For example, within one week of the Paris attacks of 2015, 32 U.S. states declared that they would not accept Syrian refugees in their territories. This reaction was based on Obama’s advance commitment to resettle 10,000 Syrians into the United States in 2016, a small fraction of the total number seeking political asylum for their homes ravaged by war and drought. Leading the charge against them was Texas governor Greg Abbott, who said “American

humanitarian compassion could be exploited to expose Americans to similar deadly danger.”³³

One more step and Texas would be setting up a border blockade, not with Mexico but with Syria. Here climate change and immigration restriction would be meeting in the strangest of places, since any Syrian forced to be a refugee has not only faced off against a brutal political situation and constant international intervention in their country, but also most likely has experienced chronic drought. For Texas, it would not be hard to add an additional vetting protocol on its state boundaries, because the state already has its own Border Patrol. And, for that matter, so does South Carolina. The state’s Immigration Enforcement Unit has its own insignia, uniforms, and vehicles. Arizona’s Border Strike Force, formed in 2015, has an ominous rattlesnake on its flag, perhaps to remind would-be offenders of its lethal capabilities or its affiliation with the Tea Party. The force is led by the controversial sheriff of Pinal County, border hawk Paul Babeu, who was publicly shamed in 2012 when it was revealed that he threatened to deport his male lover, an undocumented foreigner, if he told anyone the details of their relationship. These enforcement units could not function without the Department of Homeland Security’s resources that sustain and enable them. For example, Arizona’s SB1070, the 2010 law that obligates police to check a person’s residency status if they are suspected to be undocumented, could not function properly without the Border Patrol or ICE, the authorities that respond to the calls. It is that idling Border Patrol I encountered non the Arizona-California border that makes things happen.

Today’s budgets for law enforcement, military, and the relatively new Department of Homeland Security dwarf those of the 1930s. If states were to put up such blockades, unless by a completely rogue move with little teeth, it would undoubtedly be in collaboration with the U.S. federal government and have access to the billions of dollars budgeted annually for this category of operations. When the levees, sea walls and dams burst and cities, towns, and homes go under, when wildfires scorch the land for miles and the people who flee for safety are themselves seen as a threat, the federal government will have the capacity to set up thousands of “bum blockades,” enforcing the same exact security zones of exclusion—yet with much more modern force—that the states of California, Colorado, and Florida attempted to impose in the 1930s. Any student of borders knows how quickly and efficiently boundary lines put forth by a sovereign power can be normalized. Likewise, given their artificial nature, one also understands how quickly, as with the collapse of the Soviet Union, such man-made lines can simply disappear.

The bum blockade didn’t last long. However, it lasted long enough to show what might happen when chronic environmental destabilization forces large numbers of people in the United States to flee, as is, indeed, predicted.

Or, as is already happening before our eyes.

CHECKPOINT TRAUMA

Joshua Garcia’s pulse quickens every time he approaches a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint. The staggered speed-limit signs on the side of the highway indicate that he should slow

down from 40 to 30 to 20 miles per hour. Due to his experiences in the past, and unlike most other drivers, he follows the speed limits exactly.

Garcia has done nothing wrong. He is also a U.S. citizen. But he feels that sense of dread. It is like that feeling of trepidation pulling into, say, that checkpoint on the Colorado border where armed, uniformed officials could order you to pull over. *Maybe* this time, as on many occasions, they would just wave him through. Perhaps he'd be able to continue on his way back to Tucson as the harsh afternoon light softens into dusk. He hopes that is the case, because he has two kids from the youth council with him.

Sebastian, who is 17, is asleep in the back seat. Fifteen-year-old Amelia is pointing to a sign that says there are dogs on duty. "I want to pet the dog," she says. Garcia looks at Amelia and jokes, "They're working dogs, you're not supposed to pet them."

In addition to feeling nervous about approaching the checkpoint, there is also exhilaration and afterglow from a great day. That morning, when they drove from Tucson to the Tohono O'odham Nation, a beautiful and muscular wildcat walked across the two-lane road in front of them. "A mountain lion," the kids murmured. They had to look twice to make sure. And then they were sure. It was the first time either of them had seen one. It was the first time for Garcia, too, the adult leader who had spent thousands of hours walking in the desert. There is something about seeing an elusive and endangered animal, free and wild in its own habitat, that stays with you a long time. Conversations about the lion dominated for the rest of the day. Garcia believes that

it was because of the lion that many in the group wanted to walk toward Baboquivari Peak, on a path that climbed to one of the caves where Itoi, the Tohono O'odham creator, resided. From the sacred cave there was a sweeping view of the O'odham aboriginal land that extended as far as the eye could see, including hundreds of miles into Mexico. For a moment there was no international border dividing the land, only the beauty one has of suddenly seeing a vast, inspiring landscape. At the cave they sang to the mountain. It was that sort of day, reconnecting with the living Earth with a sort of reverence that goes against the grain in much of the contemporary United States.

They can see the authorities wave another car forward. They can hear and smell the idling engines. It was another abnormally hot day during the year 2015, which would be the hottest year in recorded history up until that point (only to be surpassed by the very next year). Garcia puts his truck into gear and inches ahead. There are orange striped signs in the middle of the road. There is a stop sign with a trio of orange flags on top, slightly flapping around in the breeze. There are well-armed Homeland Security agents in forest-green uniforms observing his vehicle as he pulls forward into this modern-day bum blockade, located 45 miles north of the international border.

Of course, Garcia is not yet a climate refugee like the Dust Bowl migrants who were turned away from the California border in the 1930s, or the many people fleeing ecological, political, and economic disasters around the world today. A common misperception about border enforcement is that it targets only people on the other side. Lines like in

a bum blockade, however, can be drawn quickly and anywhere at any time, including on all paved roads leaving the Tohono O'odham Native American reservation, creating essentially an extra layer of border security around a particular group of people. Our borders are constantly changing, and the same is true of whom and what they apply to, including U.S. citizens.

Borders may seem passive and static, but they are actually aggressive and dynamic. As evidenced by the Trump administration's January 2017 executive order that banned travel from seven countries, CBP—after multiple days of blockading people from those countries into the United States—demonstrated that it has the will, capacity, and infrastructure to respond swiftly to commands.

Sophie Smith, an activist scholar based in Arivaca, Arizona, has studied the checkpoints that surround her small town and in the broader region. Smith says checkpoints start out as temporary, as did many of them in the Southwest in the post-9/11 era, then become part of border policing strategy. The checkpoints have become, Smith stressed, a “model that is workable in the rest of the United States.”

Authorities, Smith says, “know how the checkpoints would function. They know and have the infrastructure. They know whom to contract; they have all the relationships with the public and private sector. The protocols already exist and are constantly evolving depending on the security situation.”

According to former CBP commissioner Gil Kerlikowske, “the border is a nexus to a continuum of activities that threaten the national interests of both security and

prosperity. In response, CBP will lead collaborative efforts that apply multidimensional pressure on those seeking to do us harm; outside U.S. borders, at the border, and into the interior regions of the country.”³⁴ What Kerlikowske is saying: it doesn't matter where you are; Border Patrol will be there too.

Indeed, as Garcia inches toward the three green-uniformed agents, he is in the 100-mile border jurisdiction area, a “zone of security,”³⁵ in Kerlikowske's words, that wraps around the contour of the United States. This zone was determined in the 1940s and 1950s when Border Patrol was a fraction of what it is today. The Immigration and Nationality Act stated that they can patrol a “reasonable distance”³⁶ away from the border and the U.S. Supreme Court determined that reasonable distance was 100 miles. The expansion of the checkpoints happens like a heat wave. It happens gradually, then overtakes you. In fact, when I was doing the research for this book I could not pinpoint when exactly the Three Points checkpoint was installed. Nobody I asked knew. Was it 2006? 2007? The checkpoints appeared silently, with little fanfare. When asked, Homeland Security says that they are temporary, which in Arizona is technically true. According to the law, all checkpoints must be temporary. What “temporary” means is another issue, because the checkpoints that were installed around 2006 are, as of this writing, still there.

The Three Points checkpoint isn't exactly impressive—just a portable trailer with an attached tarp for shade—but it still qualifies, according to one of the Border Patrol's informational brochures, as “a critical enforcement tool for

securing the nation's borders against all threats to our homeland."³⁷ Authorities at the checkpoint stop every vehicle on the road, quickly look into each one, and then ask the people inside to verify their citizenship.

The surveillance dogs that Amelia wanted to pet sniff each car for traces of narcotics and explosives. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, this is one of the many ways that Homeland Security violates people's Fourth Amendment protection from search and seizure. According to the Border Patrol, such civil rights violations are worth it: "Our enforcement presence along these strategic routes reduces the ability of criminals and potential terrorists to easily travel away from the border."³⁸

When Garcia lurches ahead and finally reaches the authorities, they just wave him over to secondary inspection. Garcia looks at the nearest agent to say something, but the official just waves his hand, now slightly irritated, as if Garcia were a pesky fly. Secondary inspection means that an agent has detected something that requires closer examination. Perhaps it is the dog. Perhaps it is the officially sanctioned "wide discretion"³⁹ an agent has to further invade your privacy. Perhaps it's your ethnicity, as Homeland Security is the only department officially permitted to use racial profiling as a pretext for detaining a person for questioning. When the Obama administration issued new rules in an attempt to curtail racial profiling, the one huge exception was DHS. As one DHS official told the *New York Times*, "We can't do our job without taking ethnicity into account. We are very dependent on that."⁴⁰

Garcia slowly drives into the secondary inspection site.

He drives to where the armed agents are standing. He looks at Amelia and asks: "What happened to the phone that your mom gave you?" Amelia responds: "She took it back." Behind him, Sebastian is waking up, but his phone battery is dead.

Garcia does not, by his own admission, like conflict. He tries to avoid it. When he pulls into secondary he hears a forceful, a commanding voice yelling: "Get out of the vehicle!" The voice is urgent, as if there were explosives somewhere, as if there were a bomb, as if someone were in danger. The yelling has the urgency, the intensity of war. It is so urgent that Garcia briefly thinks that it must be something else. He finds it hard to believe that just a few minutes ago he was talking to Amelia about her dreams, about how she wanted to be a music teacher, about how she played in the orchestra, about how she wants to go to Japan. It was hard to believe that they were just talking softly about animals, remembering the mountain lion they had seen. The Homeland Security agent barks: "GET. OUT."

There is a term used on the Tohono O'odham reservation to describe the lingering side effects of a bad experience with Border Patrol: "checkpoint trauma." This is especially prevalent among little kids, says Amy Juan, a teacher and founding member of TOHRN (Tohono O'odham Hemajkam Rights Network). Kids could be playing, happy, smiling, laughing, but once they know they are in the vicinity of a checkpoint they shut down and become frightened. Although they are U.S. citizens, a massive enforcement apparatus encircles their traditional land and community, a modern-day "bum blockade."

RED DAWN

Now Garcia is thinking the worst. He remembers all the incidents that he's had with the Border Patrol since the upsurge in operations in the mid 1990s. He even remembers when this all began. Since he was young and growing up with his grandparents, he has always been very close to the land. He lived off the reservation, just west of Tucson, near Saguaro National Monument. Garcia loves to take long, slow walks in the desert. He knows the wildlife, the vegetation, and the saguaro fruit that his beloved grandmother taught him how to harvest. Garcia knows how to read the landscape, knows the subtle shifts of weather, when the nopal and the saguaro will flower and fruit. One spectacular October night in the 1990s, when he was a teenager, he saw bright flares light up the sky in a way he had never seen before. At first he was confused. Was there some sort of alien aircraft landing on the Tohono O'odham reservation? Then the sky filled up with helicopters and airplanes as if the flash opened a gate for the advent of homeland security.

"It was kind of like *Red Dawn*," he said referring to the movie that ridiculously depicts the invasion of the United States by North Korea. Garcia said that he knew something had, at that point, changed. This was confirmed a few days later, right after Halloween and the Day of the Dead, when there were trick-or-treater footprints coming and going all throughout his aunt's dirt lot. Border Patrol agents showed up, hyped up and in hot pursuit. At this point, there were more agents than ever before, though a fraction of what they are today.

When I first met Garcia, he would lay out very detailed

stories about how the dynamics of climate change and aggressive law enforcement were impacting the Tohono O'odham Nation. In the same breath he would talk about the massive Homeland Security presence, the unreliability of the rains, and the subsequent out-of-sync fruiting of the saguaro or the prickly pear cactus. Perhaps there is no better place to witness the convergence of climate change and border militarization than on this reservation, a territory bisected by an unwanted international boundary more than a century ago. In the age of global warming, the reservation has become, according to veteran humanitarian activist Mike Wilson, a "prototype police state" for the rest of the country.

The report "Record of Abuse: Lawlessness and Impunity in Border Patrol's Interior Enforcement Operations,"⁴¹ describes in detail the components of this model "police state." Agents' brandishing of weapons during normal traffic stops of Tohono O'odham members, the report says, has become routine. Border Patrol agents have stopped and detained a school bus "more than a dozen times;" each time they forced students to stand out in the heat as they rifle through their personal belongings.⁴² One family said that agents pulled them over after they returned home to retrieve a forgotten item, apparently, according to the agents, a "suspicious act."⁴³ For the O'odham, the result is similar to living under occupation, a term used often in their communities.

Over the years, I have heard stories from many O'odham, most of whom wish to remain anonymous. I have heard about a Tohono O'odham health worker whom Border Patrol pulled over after she picked up patients to transport

them to a dialysis center. I have heard about Border Patrol blocking a funeral procession and then showing up at the cemetery during the burial. I have heard about Border Patrol desecrating a burial ground—and other sacred places—by using it as a shooting range and by driving all over it with ATVs. A man told me that he was simply driving north from the international divide when Border Patrol pulled him over and six agents surrounded him, armed with high-caliber automatic weapons. They never informed him what it was that set them off. Tohono O'odham Nellie Jo David, a TOHRN member and student of indigenous peoples law and policy, put it this way: "We can't visit family, go to the store, attend meetings, participate in our culture, grab a bite somewhere, or say hi to our friends without being accused of something."

Using cases from heavily redacted documents obtained from Customs and Border Protection, the ACLU alleges that agents' "violent, reckless, and threatening" conduct is not that of just a few bad apples. The verbally and sometimes physically abusive routine conduct of the U.S. Border Patrol, according to the report, is not limited to the reservation. In one case, a Border Patrol agent told a woman to "put the fucking keys in the truck" at an interior checkpoint west of Tucson after a false canine alert. When she objected to the language, the agent responded by saying, "I can talk to you any fucking way I want." The agent then explained to his supervisor that he felt a "more forceful approach was needed in order to convey her need to follow my direction."⁴⁴

In another incident, a woman asked why the Border Patrol had detained her in Tucson, 60 miles north of the

border, when she was driving in her car to drop off her two children at school in March 2011. The agents first told her that her Ford Expedition "was running low," and then: "We'll think of something."⁴⁵

The ACLU called these practices a "de facto stop and frisk"⁴⁶ for border residents. It happens almost every single day, with very little attention or fanfare. The targeted mistreatment of indigenous communities is perhaps the most persistent form of racism in U.S. history, and harks back to white colonialism and Manifest Destiny. Such abuse offers a glimpse into what might one day become normal in the future of climate crisis and displacement. Worth stating again, the time is near when the very people who vehemently support a gigantic U.S. border wall may find themselves denied access to the other side.

Surveillance and racial profiling in the Southwest degrades millions of people from all walks of life. Former Arizona governor Raul Castro, for example, was detained and compelled to stand in 100-degree heat for more than 30 minutes while he was closely inspected. He was 96 years old at the time. Although the Border Patrol has made more than 6,000 arrests and confiscated 135,000 pounds of narcotics at checkpoints, records show that it was mostly U.S. citizens who were swept up, not criminals from other countries.

Surveillance and targeting of U.S. citizens is not new, and can only be expected to intensify under Donald J. Trump. For the 2018 U.S. federal budget, the Trump administration proposed to give a further jolt to already sky-high budgets for border and immigration enforcement. Trump plans to hire an additional 100 government lawyers and 1,500 new

ICE and Border Patrol agents. An extra \$2.6 billion will be designated to “high-priority tactical infrastructure and border security technology, including funding to plan, design, and construct a physical wall along the southern border.”⁴⁷ This is on top of existing budgets that already reach, it is worth remembering, about \$20 billion annually (just counting CBP and ICE). A further \$1.5 billion will go to expand incarceration, transportation, and expulsion of “illegal immigrants.”⁴⁸ Add to this an extra \$54 billion extra going to the Pentagon, a 10 percent increase, and slashing the Environmental Protection Agency by 31 percent, further entrenching these preexisting dynamics, ensuring the occurrence of future climate catastrophes and the militarization to corral their aftermath. The advent of a new sort of Red Dawn is upon us—except the invader isn’t North Korea, but the U.S. government occupying its own communities.

Although it is not explicitly stated, the maintenance and expansion of the checkpoint system is implied, which means the policing of U.S. citizens and potentially blockading their mobility—and activism in future scenarios, and in places far away from the southwest border.

In 2008, for example, a Border Patrol agent forced Vermont senior senator Patrick Leahy from his car at a checkpoint 125 miles south of the New York state border. The ACLU unearthed a prototype plan for Border Patrol to operate checkpoints on all five Vermont highways. On the Adirondack Highway, rumble pads slow down traffic headed south from Plattsburgh toward Albany. Rarely are the Homeland Security agents there, but the infrastructure is there for them to commence immediately. At a checkpoint

near Watertown, New York, Border Patrol agents confiscated the car of a college student, pushed her to the ground, and electrocuted her with a stun gun.

In November 2016, the federal government deployed the U.S. Border Patrol at Standing Rock; North Dakota, where Native American groups accompanied by activists from across the country were trying to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which would carry oil from North Dakota to refineries and export terminals in the Gulf Coast and lock-in the equivalent of “30 coal plants”⁴⁹ worth of emissions. According to the statement of the U.S. Border Patrol Grand Forks Sector, the federal Homeland Security agency started its operation there, much more than 100 miles from the international boundary, on November 20—though activists made claims that Border Patrol had been setting up roadside blockades well before then. The statement said the Border Patrol presence “was requested to assist with preserving life and protecting property in and around the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protest location.”⁵⁰

One incident happened the morning of November 22, 2016, when a caravan of 200 cars set off on rural two-lane roads in North Dakota to do an action. About a half an hour in, police cars blistered past the caravan and set up a barrier, blockading the road. Two hundred cars had to suddenly brake to an abrupt halt, causing some rear-end collisions. People got out of the cars and engaged in a singing ceremony with plants in front of the police barricade. Ten green-striped U.S. Border Patrol vehicles pulled in. They told the people who were singing, according to student Nora Collins, who was present, “You are blocking off a public

highway, you must leave now or we will begin arresting people.” When people responded that it was the police who were blocking off the highway, the Border Patrol was “dismissive,” according to Collins.

What Josh Garcia and the passengers in his car were about to experience has become increasingly normalized in the United States. “GET OUT,” the agent bellows. Garcia, Amelia, and Sebastian get out of the car into the already oven-like heat of the afternoon. There is a constant smell of burning exhaust, pollution, and simmering asphalt. An agent enters the car and rifles through Sebastian’s backpack. Does the 17-year-old who wants to be a visual artist have something that threatens national security?

Garcia does not know what to do. He wants to assert his rights, but he doesn’t want to make a scene in front of the kids. Finally he says it: “We don’t consent to a search.” Garcia’s voice is soft, calm, and barely audible to the agent, who continues treating Sebastian’s backpack as if there were a bomb inside. Another green-uniformed agent approaches Garcia. He is walking in a straight line, right at him. He reaches for the club on his gun belt. He yells, “Get back!” Several men in gray uniforms with black hats and boots from the company G4S, the same private-security firm where Omar Mateen worked before killing 49 people at Orlando’s Pulse nightclub in 2016, stand up and walk briskly to join the Border Patrol agent. One of the G4S cops is eating an apple. He throws it to the ground, and joins the action.

G4S has a quarter-billion-dollar contract to provide securitized transportation for the undocumented people

company has also identified extreme weather as a “potential source of business”⁵¹ to the Carbon Disclosure Project. G4S sees potential profits in droughts and famines, and quotes a United Nations projection of “50 million refugees” as if this assures that they will continue their lucrative border contract and maybe even get a few new ones.⁵² The privatized police force also deployed its agents during Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy and offered “security from social unrest.”⁵³ While underscoring their lessening carbon footprint, G4S also wrote, “Climate change presents a risk to people and infrastructure across the globe. As an organization that specializes in managing risk, we recognize that the threat of climate change is an important and growing concern for our group, our customers and communities.”⁵⁴

In Three Points, the G4S agents are showing their ability to work checkpoints and intimidate young people. “We don’t consent,” Garcia says, backpedaling, along with the kids.

“Get the fuck back,” the Border Patrol agent barks, pushing forward, flicking his wrist so that his billy club extends aggressively at Garcia, exposing the brute violence that underpins the border.

“We don’t consent,” Garcia tries one more time.

“Get. The. Fuck. Back.”

The agent raises the club and pushes forward at Garcia as though he is about to strike. Garcia keeps walking backward. Sebastian is walking backward. Amelia is walking backward. The children, too, are bracing themselves to be assaulted by the grown armed men.

The children immediately sit on the burning asphalt. Garcia doesn't sit. He is trying to articulate, now by his actions, that he doesn't consent. The pause is enough to irritate the agent again. "Sit the fuck down," the agent says to the U.S. citizen, again raising his billy club. Garcia finally complies. The border between these two sets of U.S. citizens is as powerful as the actual international border, and the threat of violence can emerge as suddenly and fiercely as an oncoming storm.

WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT YOU: THE LOW INTENSITY DOCTRINE

In New Orleans, a U.S. Border Patrol agent held a machine gun pointed downward, his hand poised so his index finger could quickly squeeze the trigger. He wore a forest-green flak jacket over his desert camouflage uniform, like the six other agents around him as they slowly walked down the stairwell of the hotel. There was anxiety on his face, as if someone might pop around the corner. They were from the Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC). The mission of BORTAC, the same unit that trained the Honduran Special Forces for Operation Rescue Angels, is "to respond to terrorist threats of all types anywhere in the world in order to protect our nation's homeland." That now includes threats that might present themselves from within the "homeland" itself, as in the communities of color that were ravaged by a hurricane.

The 2005 catastrophe gave a powerful glimpse into what could be a typical scene in the future. Outside, the damage was ruinous. The Category 3 storm came ashore

and pounded the population. The final body count would exceed 1,600 people. Everywhere there were flooded neighborhoods, splintered houses with their roofs ripped off. It was in the aftermath of the wreckage that agents in flat-bottom airboats patrolled these predominantly African American neighborhoods, as if they were on the slow-flowing Rio Grande between Texas and Mexico. Where there was less flooding, armed authorities conducted foot patrols, wearing flak jackets that said U.S. BORDER PATROL on the back, as if they were indeed on duty in Laredo securing the wall. News outlets such as CNN reported that "rampaging gangs" had taken control of the "unguarded city" of New Orleans, and the *New York Times* wrote that "chaos gripped" the city and "looters ran wild."⁵⁵ And James Ridgeway reported for *Mother Jones* that "what took place in this devastated American city was no less than a war, in which victims whose only crimes were poverty and blackness were treated as enemies of the state."⁵⁶

As Naomi Klein wrote over 10 years later: "What does #BlackLivesMatter, and the unshakable moral principle that it represents, have to do with climate change? Everything. Because we can be quite sure that if wealthy white Americans had beer the ones left without food and water for days in a giant sports stadium after Hurricane Katrina, even George W. Bush would have gotten serious about climate change."⁵⁷

U.S. Customs and Border Protection deployed more than 600 personnel from Field Operations, Border Patrol, Air and Marine, and Information and Technology for 20 days of "intense operations."⁵⁸ The command base was

called a "Forward Deployed Operational Command Center."⁵⁹ CBP agents patrolled alongside other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies as well as National Guard troops. Also on hand were mercenaries contracted by Homeland Security, including "soldiers" from Blackwater who, according to journalist Jeremy Scahill, hit the streets armed to the teeth with assault rifles and pockets stuffed with ammo.⁶⁰ Stalking the scene were roving bands of white vigilante groups whose leaders openly bragged to the local news about "shooting looters."⁶¹ There was a "virtual martial law"⁶² imposed on New Orleans, Ridgeway reported, and what writer Dave Eggers characterized as a "complete suspension of all legal processes,"⁶³ as in a border-zone.

In a 1979 Pentagon-commissioned report on low-intensity conflict, a section called "A U.S. City in Revolt" envisioned an armed uprising by "a combination of poor and minority activist elements." Washington would react by sending in "regular Army units to restore order, disarm disidents, and close all border traffic."⁶⁴ This was the scenario that sociologist Timothy Dunn laid out in his book *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*, illustrating that the Pentagon doctrine could and would be used on U.S. territory, in U.S. domestic law enforcement. Moreover, as Dunn convincingly argued, it has become the reality of enforcement on the border, and a proving ground for the rest of the country. U.S. doctrine on low-intensity conflict—what the Army has described as a "limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological

objectives"—has applied to a number of U.S. military interventions throughout Central America in the 1980s (including El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala), and not only in "countering revolution," but also with follow-up motivated by a "concern for maintaining social control in other unstable settings." And during "peacekeeping operations," there is the "notion that much of the world is threatened by endemic violence, and that the U.S. military's role is to act as an enforcer of global order so as to protect U.S. interests—however broadly these may be defined."⁶⁵ Scolding for the status quo.

Now there are national preparedness centers such as the Guardian Centers, dubbed "Doomsday Disneyland"⁶⁶ by CNN, where agencies such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepare for disasters and the subsequent anticipated social unrest in fake, manufactured, sometimes flooded towns. FEMA's Center for Domestic Preparedness trains Homeland Security agencies and agents, as well as the military, and national guard, in counterterrorism, responding to disasters, "crowd-control measures," and "understanding protester tactics" as forms of civil unrest.⁶⁷ In an article written by the Center, National Guard First Lieutenant Keith Frederickson even mentioned past experiences of protest from the Occupy Movement and public response to the killing of Trayvon Martin as examples of civil unrest. Vigilant Sentry, the Caribbean interdiction operation mentioned in Chapter Two, is another annual national preparedness exercise by Southern and Northern Command, again preparing itself not only for mass migration, but also for possible civil unrest

and crowd control. And, of course, Edward Snowden's revelations demonstrate quite clearly that surveillance operations by the National Security Agency target U.S. citizens with regularity. The amount of money required to stage all of this is staggering. As political scientist John Mueller and author Mark G. Stewart point out, domestic homeland security expenditures have increased by \$1 trillion since the attacks of 9/11.

To return to the concept of "elite panic," disaster sociologist Kathleen Tierney's definition of the phenomenon, as quoted by Rebecca Solnit, show the parallels between disaster situations, border failure, threats to homeland security, and low-intensity military doctrine all in one fell swoop: "Fear of social disorder, fear of the poor, minorities and immigrants; obsession with looting and property crime; willingness to resort to deadly force; actions taken on the basis of rumor."⁶⁸ Because of this, during Hurricane Katrina, "officials and vigilantes . . . unloosed even more savage attacks on the public because the public was portrayed"⁶⁹ as barbarians like Rear Admiral Parry's Goths and Vandals.

If a hurricane or a succession of massive dust storms takes out a city such as Phoenix, if flooding leaves people homeless, if rising seas make entire swaths of territory uninhabitable, the country's largest-federal law enforcement agency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, will be there. It will bring its ability to carry out search and rescue operations. It will also bring its capacity to impose the low-intensity conflict doctrine upon large geographical areas, as described by Dunn, along with its ability not only to stop the mobility of people, but also to arrest, detain, and deport

them, in collaboration with ICE, if necessary. Instead of the serious yet ad hoc efforts of Colorado, Florida, and California, this is a sort of stealth power developed by a federal agency over the last 25 years to implement borders anywhere, with the U.S. Southwest as the model.

If infrastructure in Phoenix were to become overwhelmed due to water shortages or wildfires, it isn't too much of a stretch to imagine the checkpoints expanding only slightly north from where they currently exist in southern Arizona and surrounding Phoenix at all major veins and arteries, including Interstate 10 and Interstate 17. They could be set up quickly, without much fanfare, and under the guise of "public safety." It would be out of the 100-mile jurisdiction, but remember that the Border Patrol was operating road blockades in Standing Rock, North Dakota.

If Miami were to be inundated, it would be easy for Customs and Border Protection to roll into town, as it did for the Super Bowl in that city, in order to impose perimeter surveillance and deploy special forces units, Blackhawk helicopters, and interdiction operations at Greyhound and Amtrak stations. In all cases, the agents wouldn't go solo; they would work with the totality of the Department of Homeland Security, with other federal agencies like the FBI, with local and state law enforcement, and perhaps even with the National Guard and military.

During acute climate crises that render the desert in the West uninhabitable or drown cities in floods, it is feasible for improvised border situations to be set up, accompanied by new lines of division and ever-changing protocol procedures for vetting and noncompliance. Such situations

can be expected to involve increasingly martial definitions of “legality” and “illegality” that incorporate militarized border vetting established to prevent mass entry. In other words, “defensive fortresses” might be set up not just on the international border lines of the United States, as mentioned in the report *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario*, commissioned by the Pentagon in 2003, but also within the country—demonstrating how malleable and aggressive the borders really are. Say, if you are impoverished and from Oklahoma, you won’t be admitted into California. Or if you are black you are contained in certain places, and not allowed to enter others. Or if you are Native American, your reservation could be “secured” by Homeland Security checkpoints.

Tohono O’odham teacher and resident Amy Juan told me that while the tribal government charges the U.S. Border Patrol \$1 per month to use a massive multipurpose station on the border along with the Tohono O’odham police, it charges the organization Tohono O’odham Community Action (TOCA) \$5,000 per month to rent a small office in the town of Sells. Juan says that these sorts of discrepancies are at the forefront of a problem of priorities. For example, TOCA does crucial work with traditional foods, “the only foods we’d be able to grow as the climate gets harsher,” since they are adapted to heat and less water. TOCA is also promoting rainwater harvesting and flood farming, “very important if we are talking about sustainability and adaptation.” At the same time TOCA is seeking to work in concert with the environment, Border Patrol is “out there messing up the land.

They’re messing with the natural flows, the natural paths that water takes from the mountains, to the valleys, to the fields,” Juan says.

TOHRN member and park ranger at Saguaro National Monument Tina Vavages-Andrews put it to me this way: “In terms of climate change and militarization along the border—all the Border Patrol vehicles, the technology they are using, the helicopters, definitely have an impact. Because we are already in a drought. We are already badly affected by climate change. And they’re not helping reduce the impacts at all.”

On the Tohono O’odham Nation, Juan explained, the elders have talked about the climate changes, “a bunch of little things that add up to big things.” For example, the elders have talked about the changing rain patterns, how there wasn’t as much rain as before; they said the good rains came from the south, and now the rain was coming from all directions. When you pick cholla, you have to pick on a day when it’s not windy, otherwise you’ll get blasted with thorns. Or at least you have to know the direction of the wind, so the thorns fly away from you, not toward you. “The wind’s all over the place now, it’s all crazy. You know that’s just the observation I’ve had from my grandparents and other people.”

Josh Garcia, detained and sitting on the ground at the Three Points checkpoint, is an environmental steward to the core. Amy Juan says he is “really close to the land” and has done a lot of walking in the Sonoran desert. At the 2015 climate summit in Paris, a global coalition of indigenous people gathered to put out the strong message that, as caretakers of the environment, they were not only on the

front lines of climate change, but also the people with the wisdom to lead the world out of this mess. Garcia would be one such person. He can read the land. Juan says he sent her a picture of a prickly pear fruit, noting that its shape, color, and the strange way it was growing amounted to something that he had never seen before, evidence that something was out of balance. Garcia also told me that the saguaro harvests were coming much earlier. It is this closeness to the land that makes Garcia such a valuable leader for the Youth Council, so that youth can get back in touch with O'odham traditions, and better know the beautiful land where they live. Garcia teaches youth environmental stewardship, traditional agriculture, how to harvest the saguaro fruit with long sticks, and sing songs to the mountains, as they move forward into a new generation.

As they sit on the hot pavement watching the U.S. Border Patrol ransack Garcia's truck, the wild mountain lion is still on everyone's mind. The sun is beginning to lower, giving the sky a certain radiance. The colors of the hills where the saguaros congregate take on a golden hue, almost as if the sun were streaking colors across the land, as if the sun herself were an artist. When the K-9 is done searching through the car, and the agent approaches the group, Garcia says, "I didn't consent to a search."

"I don't need consent," responds the agent. "Just go. Leave!"

At that point the two kids slowly get up and return to their vehicle. It would have been an exhilarating day, with the mountain lion, the land, the songs to the mountain at the cave, but now they will be traumatized by this incident

for months to come. Garcia intuitively knows this. He follows the agent and says, "I want the name and the badge number of the agent who assaulted me." But there he is, facing the most massive border enforcement apparatus ever created in the United States. As certain as the intensifying heat waves hitting nearby Phoenix, he is about to be told that nothing really just happened.

"Well," the supervisor says to Garcia, "I was standing out here this whole time and I didn't see an assault."