

Beat: Politics

My American Transition; Belo Horizonte- Brazil, Tijuana - Mexico, San Francisco

Immigrant reflections

San Francisco Bay Area, 10.11.2023, 20:05 Time

USPA NEWS - As the first caravan of Central American migrants makes its way to our border with Tijuana I am reminded how different my arrival experience from Brazil to my adopted country was.

I did not walk thousands of miles in heat, rain, and wind sleep against a tree or under a hastily constructed tarp, nor wait in food lines for donated bread, fruits, and vegetables. I simply boarded a United Airlines jet, passport and required visa in hand for the 10-hour flight to Houston. I simply cleared customs before connecting on to San Francisco, and with little fanfare arrived on a blistery cool San Francisco afternoon eyes wide with wonder and excitement.

I carried with me no desperation, no escape from poverty, persecution, or war. But I did carry with me the hopes and dreams of many a young man. Like so many before me, I left to prove to myself that a new life awaited me, to prove to my family that I was more than capable of the challenges I faced and more than ready for a new life. Like many before me, I might have been a bit naive, a bit too ambitious in my dreams, a bit too carefree in my thinking, and a bit too casual in my understanding of American culture.

Yes, I have come to face the truth, my truth, that life is equally hard for the immigrant and the American born citizen alike, maybe harder still for me. That America for all its power, responsibility and influence on the world stage sometime chooses to ignore what is right, in favor of what's right for America. That shortsightedness can be prevalent in a democratic government, and that it's harder than it looks for a young man to follow his dreams, fulfill his own destiny, and be the success that I left my homeland, family and friends for. Don't get me wrong, I am still glad I'm here. My struggles are real, and often daunting, but I am still privileged to call America my new home. And I have no doubt, given the chance, anyone of the migrants spending tonight propped up against the border wall built along wind swept Tijuana beach would feel the very same way.

In fact, one thing that seems to have followed me from Belo to San Francisco is the perception that I was guilty before being proven innocent. People perceive that I'm somehow saying the wrong thing, at the wrong time...

I remember Donald Trump's racist comments about wanting more immigrants from places like Norway rather than from "shithole counties" like Haiti and those in Africa. Really? I'm sure in his eyes, despite my many positive contributions to this country, Trump assumes I'm just a Latino third-world immigrant from another "shithole country" taking up valuable space that could have been given to a white Norwegian. SAD!

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-23774/my-american-transition-belo-horizonte-brazil-tijuana-mexico-san-francisco.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Ricardo De Melo Matos

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