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RIOTS IN LOS ANGELES



DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

By Barry Cassidy

Not many people deal with riot control on a civilian level. As I watch TV and observe the rioting, I think about the measures that I had to invoke after the Mardi Gras riots and the Greek Picnic sexual assaults on South Street.

Sitting down and reviewing everything with the city and state police was eye-opening. Much of it was about the preparation and the initial setup of barriers. For the most part, my role was the public information portion and the voice, eyes, and ears on the street to call in potential issues.

None of that was applicable on the first day of the LA riots. I was surprised that the Apple store was not looted until the third day. You would think getting the electronics would be a priority for rioters. The Federal buildings were a priority, which shed a different and more political light on the situation.

I found it interesting that Mexican flags were flying everywhere. As I explained in previous articles, many of the true migrants come from Nicaragua and Guatemala. Palm oil plantations play a significant role in the agricultural landscape of both Nicaragua and Guatemala, being crucial for their economies and a major factor behind dislocations and migration. Guatemala is a leading producer of palm oil in Central America, while Nicaragua's palm oil industry has seen substantial growth in recent years.

So Where were those flags? Oil palm plantations are rapidly gaining ground in Latin America, driving communities from their lands and causing deforestation, violence, and poverty. They weren't there because the rioting was not about migrants; it was about facilitators.

During the time of the "Day without Migrants," I wrote a couple of articles

about human trafficking and how many migrants were sold into slavery in places like chicken farms in Iowa, where the so-called "Coyotes" held a debt over people's heads for smuggling them into the country and acting as their employment/slavery agency. I noticed a raid far from LA in Omaha, Nebraska, on a Glenn Valley Foods meat processing plant.

Before the raid, law enforcement audited the I-9 forms of Glenn Valley Foods' employees. Authorities indicated that the audit uncovered a significant number of suspected fraudulent identification documents and documents that did not authorize employees to work in the U.S. It also revealed that workers were fraudulently using the identities of multiple United States citizens, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Authorities stated that Homeland Security received numerous reports from victims regarding these stolen identities.

I watched a YouTube video featuring Gary Rohwer, the CEO of Glenn Valley Foods. He talked about how he never knew these individuals were illegal immigrants. He spoke about how they were like family, provided them with pizza on Fridays, and mentioned how they enjoyed ice cream. It was touching.

Heartland Workers Service Executive Director Lina Traslavina Stover said, "What happens then, is that we have paralyzed people not being able to — choosing not to leave their homes, choosing not to engage in the economy, choosing not to go to work. So, the consequences now... What happens if 30 percent of the workforce does not show up to their construction site, right? There are real consequences for this paralysis that is happening in this community."

My personal feeling is that if you steal my identity and make my life a nightmare just so you can work for some meatpacking place, you better hide. What are the consequences for me? Bad credit, IRS questions, and giving his kids my last name. Those are real consequences.

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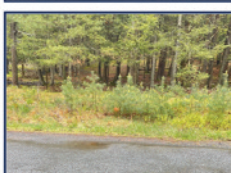
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DOWNTOWN MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

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Thirty percent of workers not showing up at a construction site only impacts cheap labor/wage slave accessibility.

Most of the assistance people receive comes from non-profit organizations that provide services. I wonder how involved they get when offering legal representation, like the Center for Immigrant and Refugee Advancement (CIRA). They are essentially supplying legal services to individuals who commit identity fraud. Again, are they part of the solution or more part of the problem? On the CIRA website, they say *Our refugee services team offers comprehensive support to help refugees resettle and thrive in their new communities.* Are they providing fake names from some stolen identity list or something?

This all feels too organized for me. Mexican cartels have a lot of money because they prey on displaced and terrorized migrants. Perhaps that is why the only flags you saw waved in LA were the Mexican flag.

This operation is vertically integrated — reminiscent of the George Floyd disruptions, with pallets of bricks and

people breaking windows with hammers. It lacks the stochastic quality to be genuine, either from the heart or from your gut. Organized civil unrest is occurring, and if we allow it to be framed by references to 30 percent of a construction force not showing up, we are in trouble.

Barry Cassidy is a freelance grant and economic development consultant. He can be reached at barrycassidy@comcast.net.

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