



When You Run from Death But Aren't Welcome

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Back in Burkina Faso, teenage Mariam was beaten until she bled, stabbed in the back, and hit by a car while she was sleeping in her parents' house. Her then-husband, a man who had purchased her with a dowry and therefore had full control over her by law, was the one who committed these horrors. The police refused to help; according to them, Mariam's job was to obey her husband.

Like any reasonable person running for her life, Mariam fled to America. As reported by The Daily, she was welcomed.

But soon, domestic violence victims like her won't be.

We are a country that was built on the backs of immigrants, despite the fact that we've historically terrorized them. Yet, this administration's immigration policies as of late are another level of disturbing. We're set on disallowing domestic abuse victims like Mariam from seeking asylum. We're forcibly separating thousands of children and infants from their parents, placing them in unsupervised prisons, warehouses and even Walmart stores. New footage shows that they sleep under foil blankets, and that their pleas to see their parents go unanswered. Some will likely never see their parents again. And then of course, there are plans to pour millions into a border wall.

These are children. These are abuse victims. These are people, running scared for their lives.

And they'll keep running here, because climate change guarantees that we will have a refugee crisis. Immigration is now an unstoppable force.

The Department of Defense in 2014 determined that climate change is a "threat multiplier" that breeds instability and fosters terrorism. In fact, many experts agree that the Syrian civil war and refugee crisis were both caused by climate change.

Some reasons for the crisis are tangible; a warmer climate in many underdeveloped countries means decreased crop yield and access to potable water, and an increased prevalence of disease. Death is imminent for anyone who can't access resources.

Yet what do we make of the question of terrorism? Stanford analyzed 56 recent studies and found that yes, without a doubt, climate change is causing everything from more fist fights and

rapes to more wars. **Simply put, our world is more dangerous than it used to be, and it will not be getting safer.**

What strikes me is that we come up with all sorts of excuses as to why we shouldn't allow innocent people in: they'll take our jobs. They'll commit crimes. We need to protect our own first. The law says they can't come in, and the law is immutable and has existed for 500 years even though our country is only around 250 years old and no one can ever change the law, ever (Please excuse the sarcasm, I get that way when I'm heated. Blame it on climate change.).

It has been reported, over and over again, that undocumented immigrants are no more likely to commit violent crimes than Americans. Cato Institute even found that undocumented immigrants are *less* likely than native-born Americans to indulge in criminal activity.

As Art Acevedo, the police chief in the immigrant hub that is Houston, told NPR: "There's no wave of crime being committed by the immigrant community. As a matter of fact, a lot of the violent crime that we're dealing with is being committed by people that are born and raised right here in the United States."

He went on to say they're just trying to earn an honest living.

And thank God, because immigration has been tied to economic growth and innovation. As the Brookings Institute highlights, highly skilled immigrants disproportionately become entrepreneurs, as well as investors in American enterprises. Meanwhile, the low skilled immigrants take the jobs that American citizens typically wouldn't take (but need to be done nonetheless), like gutting fish and farming.

So unfortunately, according to Brookings, many of the issues we have with the economy, wages and jobs are caused by home-grown problems like lack of investment in safety nets and skills mismatch.

I will contradict myself here: the world is more dangerous than it used to be, and it will not be getting safer. **But stranger danger really is the stuff of fairytales.**

Let me paint the picture. You are born, through no fault of your own. Your parents love you, but every night you feel the pangs of hunger. One day, crisis hits. Maybe your brother is recruited by an insurgent army, and doesn't return alive. Maybe your sister, like Mariam, marries a monster who rams his car through the house, nearly killing her and you. Maybe the person you love most, whoever they are, dies of starvation. Will you be next?

No, you won't be. Your mother takes you somewhere, anywhere that's safe. You take your child somewhere, anywhere that's safe. Will the threat of being turned away stop you? Will the threat of being separated from your mother, or you from your child, be enough to stop you in your tracks as you run from death?

Most of you reading this will never have to endure these decisions. But as the earth heats, as food and water become scarce, as deadly disease becomes more prevalent and harder to treat, as the threat of being murdered becomes increasingly real, millions of families will make the decision to come to America, despite the dangers here.

This could easily be you.