

CHANGE THE LAW, WHY DON'T YOU BABE?¹



FAVORITE OLDIES IMMIGRATION LAW & POLICY LYRICS

with selections from "All Rights Reserved," a 1996 songbook sequel to "Immact Verses" (1992), by Lory Diana Rosenberg

including new lyrics from 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005
(original lyrics provided in some songs only)

¹"You Just Keep Me Hangin' On" ["Set me free, why don't cha babe?"], sung by the Supremes, song by Brian Holland/Lamont Dozier/Edward Holland, Jr.

WHO'LL CHANGE THE LAW

(To "Who'll Stop the Rain" John Fogarty)

Long as I remember
The law keeps coming down
Families deported
Removal all around
Errors in decisions
Thousands that I saw
And I wonder still I wonder
Who'll change the law?

Lawyers out in Portland,
Boston and Harlingen
Represent the poor folk
Who have no place to run
When they seek asylum
No one believes their claims
And I wonder, still I wonder
Who'll change this game

Heard they're now detaining
All those the law denies
Soon they'll close the borders
Nine-eleven (9/11) justifies
Still I keep on writing,
Finish every brief
And I wonder, still I wonder
Who'll grant relief?

Some say we can change things
That new law can evolve
Though immigration's broken
It can get fixed with "SOLVE"²
I sure am one to hope so
Cause we can't take much more
And I wonder still I wonder
Who'll change the law?

WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN

Credence Clearwater Revival (by John Fogarty)

Long as I remember
The rain been coming down.
Clouds of myst'ry pouring
Confusion on the ground.
Good men through the ages,
Trying to find the sun;
And I wonder,
Still I wonder,
Who'll stop the rain.

I went down Virginia,
Seeking shelter from the storm.
Caught up in the fable,
I watched the tower grow.
Five year plans and new deals,
Wrapped in golden chains.
And I wonder,
Still I wonder
Who'll stop the rain.

Heard the singers playing,
How we cheered for more.
The crowd had rushed together,
Trying to keep warm.
Still the rain kept pouring,
Falling on my ears.
And I wonder,
Still I wonder
Who'll stop the rain.

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Diana Rosenberg, IDEA Consultations

² A 2004 legislative initiative.

CRIME OF VIOLENCE 2004

[To Sounds of Silence, by Simon and Garfunkel

Hello, darkness my old friend
The law has retrogressed again
Doesn't matter when the crime occurred
Aggravated felony will be inferred
And enforcement over liberty will reign
Once again,
Especially, with a crime of violence

They picked my friend up last July
Probation said she should come by
Jailed a mom who never would use force
Someone told her she should plead, of course
Then I heard that a crime without mens rea,
Down Florida way
Had been called another crime of violence

And after researching I saw
The overbreadth that taints this law
Covers almost every type offense
Doesn't make a single bit of sense-
Not just elements, but probabilities
Make de-por-tees
Of those convicted of a crime of violence

"Fools!" said I, "she didn't know,
Removal seems ex post fac-to
Back in '95 she had a few
Called her ex and made a threat or two
Though her words would never harm a hair,
(no one cared)
They believed, it was a crime of violence

Because Congress bowed and prayed,
And by hysteria was swayed.
So the law deports without regard
To whether separation makes life hard,
And the law means removal from your family in
the States. Yes, that's your fate
Especially, for a crime of violence.

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SOUNDS OF SILENCE

by Paul Simon (1966)

Hello darkness my old friend,
I've come to talk with you again.
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sounds of silence.

In restless dreams I walked alone,
Narrow streets of cobble stone.
'Neath the halo of a street lamp,
I turned my collar to the cold and damp,
When my eyes were stabbed, by the flash of a Neon
light, That split the night
And touched the sounds of silence.

And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more.
People talking without speaking,
People hearing without listening,
People writing songs that voices never shared,
And no one dared
Disturb the sounds of silence.

"Fools!" said I, "you do not know,
Silence like a cancer grows.
Hear my words that I might teach you,
Take my arms that I might reach you."
But my words like silent raindrops fell...
And echoed in the wells of silence.

And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon gods they made.
And the sign flashed out its warning,
In the words that it was forming,
And the sign said, "The words of the prophets are
written on the subway walls And tenement halls."
And whispered in the sounds of silence.

ITS GONNA HURT SOMEONE

(to "You Keep Me Hangin' On," by the Supremes)

Amend the bill why don't you babe
Strike out that clause, why don't you babe
We really don't need it
It's just gonna hurt some-one
We really don't need it
It's just gonna hurt some-one

You keep sayin' we need these laws
To keep our borders wide and free
Then you go and build a fence
And jail all the refugees
Why do you push them outside
When our country's built on immigrant pride?

Amend the bill why don't you babe
Strike out that clause why don't you babe
We really don't need it
It's just gonna hurt some-one
Now we really don't need it
it's just gonna hurt some-one

You keep on cutting the ways
That refugees and fam'lies can stay
But how can you wipe out relief
When ending it only bring their families grief?
(And there's nothin' we can do about it!)

Wo-oooo-ooo
Amend the bill why don't you babe
Strike out that clause why don't you babe
Amend the bill why don't you babe
Strike out that clause why don't you babe

You keep claimin' that those crim'nals abound
And we don't need their type around
But take a look and you will see
Legal residents who have fa-amilies
Why delete section 212(c)-
When it's only discretion-ar-y? Hey!
Why don't we be more fair about it
A-and let them be?
Why don't you be more even handed
And reta-ain relief?
Go on - strike out, strike out that clause
and retain relief.

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Diana Rosenberg, IDEA Consultations. (Note: Its 2005
and we are still fighting same issues)

KEEP ME HANGIN' ON

Brian Holland/Lamont Dozier/Edward Holland, Jr.

Set me free, why don't cha babe
Get out my life, why don't cha babe
'cause you don't really love me
You just keep me hangin' on
You don't really need me
But you keep me hangin' on

Why do you keep a coming around
Playing with my heart?
Why don't you get out of my life
And let me make a new start?
Let me get over you
The way you've gotten over me

Set me free, why don't cha babe
Let me be, why don't cha babe
'cause you don't really love me
You just keep me hangin' on
Now you don't really want me
You just keep me hangin' on

You say although we broke up
You still wanna be just friends
But how can we still be friends
When seeing you only breaks my heart again
And there ain't nothing I can do about it

Woo, set me free, why don't cha babe
Woo, get out my life, why don't cha babe
Set me free, why don't cha babe
Get out my life, why don't cha babe

You claim you still care for me
But your heart and soul needs to be free
Now that you've got your freedom
You wanna still hold on to me
You don't want me for yourself
So let me find somebody else hey!

Why don't you be a man about it
And set me free
Now you don't care a thing about me
You're just using me
Go on, get out, get out of my life
And let me sleep at night

9/11 Lament— With Justice Denied

(to Bob Dylan's, "With God On Our Side")

Oh, my name it means nothing,
It won't be released.
Been held incognito,
For over 10 weeks
They came to my home, and
They took me aside
Now I sit in this jail cell,
With justice denied

Well, I came as a student,
But then I was wed,
I dropped out of school, and
Was working instead
My wife filed the papers,
But they said we lied.
So now they detain me,
With justice denied

Now they say its because of
The terrorist threat
Since I am from Yemen,
They say I'm suspect
If I had some contact,
Gave someone a ride
I'll be held with no bail, and
With justice denied

Well, they claim they can do this
Because we're at war
They rewrote the statute and
They changed the law
I'll be here forever,
Unless I decide
To admit that I'm guilty
With justice denied.

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Diana Rosenberg, IDEA Consultations (inspired by
a colleague's real case)

SECRET

(to "Do You Want to Know a Secret," Beatles)

Listen,
All the evidence is secret
Under law its classified,
Whoa-oh-oh

Sorry,
You're a terrorist my friend,
You've got nothing to defend,
Whoa-oh-oh
You will be removed!
Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh

(Break) We can't allow you to review our file;
We could redact it but it takes a whi-i-ile,

Listen,
All the evidence is secret
Under law its classified,
Whoa-oh-oh

Sorry,
You're a terrorist my friend,
You've got nothing to defend,
Whoa-oh-oh
You will be removed!
Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh

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50 WAYS TO LOSE ASYLUM

(to "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," Paul Simon)

You've got a problem
With your case it seems to me
Proving both elements and credibility
I'd like to help you with your struggle to be free
But there are - 50 ways to lose asylum

I hope this knowledge
Will not make you come unglued
But it happens very often
That a claim is misconstrued
Could be the record --or the judge's attitude
But there are 50 ways to lose asylum

You gotta be hurt, Burt
Show us your scar, Char
Tell us the truth, Ruth
And get yourself free

Got pulled off a bus once?
That doesn't prove nexus!
You need some I.D., Lee
To get yourself free

You waited to leave, Steve
Coulda hid in the sticks, Rick
And now things have changed, James
There's de-mocracy

Got tortured and jailed once?
That doesn't prove nexus!
You need some I.D., Lee
To get yourself free

Could be the trauma, or maybe just plain fear
But your application's missing
Most of what you've just said here, and
In your airport statement - the contradiction's clear
So you're - gonna lose asylum

You got a passport or used one that was flawed,
Either you were in no danger,
Or else you are a fraud
No matter what you claim, your explanation's odd,
Cause there are - 50 ways to lose asylum

So which story's true, Lou?
Just put on that veil, Gail
Why can't you go back, Jack?
And get yourself free

Got threatened and raped once?
That doesn't prove nexus!
You need some I.D., Lee
To get yourself free

It wasn't so bad, Brad
The men were unknown, Joan
You failed to recall, Paul
To get yourself free.

(c)1998. The Siren (based on real reasons for denials)

50 WAYS TO LOSE A "CAT" CLAIM

[CAT=Convention Against Torture]

Now you've got a CAT claim under 208.18
But the risk must be more likely
And the cruelty more extreme
Official action, is central to this scheme
So you are - going to lose protection

It must be severe, dear
Not just a few days, Fay
And don't count on death, Beth
Cause you'll be removed.

So they kept you in jail, Gail
You can't demand meds, Ned
You even can starve, Marv
You'll still be removed.

Lawful sanctions are exempt,
And beatings aren't enough.
Unintentional mistreatment's out,
Even though it may be rough.
Must be to punish, or coerce, and yes, its tough,
But you will never win your CAT claim.

Must be some intent, Brent
You need some more facts, Mac
And where's that report, Mort,
Or you'll be removed.

It's only a chance, Lance
The burden's on you, Lou
Your chances are slim, Jim
So you'll be removed.

The Siren (c) 2000 (based on real reasons for denials).

BELIEVE ME

(to the song of the same name by Dusty Springfield)

Laws that passed in nine-ty six
Need a legis-lative fix
All that's left are memories
Of justice and relief

But as things stand right now its clear
A guilty plea from any year
Is all that INS must prove
And you will be removed,

You don't have to be convicted
If you took a plea
You don't need a guilty verdict
Just a penalty

Believe me,
Believe me
You'll still be deported
And believe me
You're not comin' back.

Waivers and review restored
Are changes we can well afford
Discretion whether to detain
Would be much more humane

But as things stand right now its clear
A guilty plea from any year
Is all that INS must prove
And you will be removed,

You don't have to be convicted
If you took a plea
You don't need a guilty verdict
Just a penalty

Believe me,
Believe me
You'll still be deported

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Diana Rosenberg, IDEA Consultations

NOW THAT THE LAW IS SO HARD

(to "Now that the Buffalo's Gone, BuffySt.Marie")

Can you remember the time,
That you once held your head high,
And told all your clients
"You help make us great;"
Your clients worked hard,
and they enriched the state.
They settled their families,
Lived without hate.
And what has become of these ones?

When the '52 Act was in force
Getting in wasn't easy, of course.
Still, over and over,
Restrictionists claimed,
That crim'nals abounded,
Our complexion was changed.
They argued for limits,
They de-manded names.
And what has become of these ones?

When our fear of the other is claimed,
Diversity's goals are defamed.
Just look at what happened, back in '96 -
Discretion was excised, compassion was nixed.
Now all would concede that the law needs
some fix.
But what will we do for these ones?

Can a change come about through the court?
Before this hard law will deport,
The father, the mother,
The daughter, the son,
Who made a mistake, didn't tell anyone,
Who entered a plea, was a poor refugee.
And what will we do for these ones?

It's not all in the past, as you'll see,
Both suspension and old 212(c).
The government needs to correct the excess,
Pass some amendments and clean up the mess.
Restore some discretion, and lighten the tests;
Now that the law is so hard.

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SAY THAT YOU'LL BAR ME (1997)

To "Say That You Love Me" by Fleetwood Mac
("The Dance" version)

Have mercy, Congress, on a poor gal like me,
Who's been livin' here, supportin' her fam-i-ly
Been three long years since I quali-fied.
And if you don't act now, there'll be no 245(i).

Cause when October comes
And the time runs out
All my adjustment plans are thrown in doubt
You tell me now that I'd better leave,
Or you say, that you'll bar me.

Have pity, Congress, just when
I thought it was over,
Well, the months went by,
And soon it was nearly October,
I'm beggin' you for a little sympathy,
Cause to pack up and go
Would just be the end of me.

Cause when October comes
And the time runs out
All my adjustment plans are thrown in doubt
You tell me now that I'd better leave,
Or you say, that you'll bar me. horus

(Background words:
I don't want to talk about it;
I don't want to think about it;
I don't want to think about it, now)

Congress, Congress, don't make me go away,
Because my roots are here,
And I'm workin' ev-e-ry day
And I contribute to this economy
So to bar me now, would just be an indignity.

Chorus

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ALIEN RAREBIT (1996)

(to White Rabbit, by Jefferson Airplane)

One bill makes you wonder
And ones leaves you appalled
And the one that Congress gives us
May not do too much good at all
Its not malice
Its just elections this fall

And if you go seeking waivers
Well, it may be to no avail
When they're apprehending parents
And detaining them all in jail
Its not malice
Though its beyond the pale

When those in the Congress
Decide to limit families
And the INS sets up its port courts
Designed to keep out refugees
Its not malice
Though it may seem so

When logic and proportion
Are replaced by hate instead
And, you've scanned the bill for hours
And you can't believe what you've read
Re-e -member, that its not too late
Litigate, litigate.

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Diana Rosenberg, IDEA Consultations

GONE GONE GONE

(Lyrics to “Til Her Daddy Takes Her T-Bird
Away,” the BeachBoys)

Back in 1952, we had
The Walter and McCarran Act now,

And if you made few mistakes,
They could be waived
And someday you could come back now

But when the 90s came along, you know that
Congress threw us right off of track now
And now you’re gone gone gone
Since Congress took the waivers away.

Well, you might recall a time
An Immigration Judge had certain discretion
She could order no removal
If you paid your dues
And made an impression

But now it doesn’t really matter
If there’s hardship, or that you learned your
lesson,
Because you’re gone gone gone
Now that Congress took the waivers away.

SAVE THE LAST GRANT FOR ME

(Lyrics to “Save the Last Dance for Me,”
the Drifters)

You can grant
An asylum claim, as adjustment case
Go and have your fun
You can grant
A suspension claim,
Though the standard's high
And not for everyone

But just forget those LPRs
Charged with deportability
Oh, darlin,
Save the last grant for me

Well, I know (well I know),
That its critical, that the law does lack
An effective date
And I know,
That the *Landgraf* case
Says in no plain terms
Not to speculate

So don't forget that LPR
Who always planned on 212(c)
Oh, darlin',
Save the last grant for me

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CREDIBILITY

Words adapted by Lory Rosenberg 1997, 2004

O-o-over and over
When you first came here
At the port of entry
You said you had no fear
Told the port inspector
The words he'd want to hear
Now, o-o-over and over
The contradiction's clear

'Cause you lack - credibility
Lack, supportability
Got no ability (to)
Talk with credibility
Lack, credibility
Just implausibility
And that's 'cause
inconsistency's your style-yle-yle
Now over and over
Oh, discrepancies appear,
So, o-o-over and over
The contradiction's clear

Well, o-o-over and over
The judge gave the oath to you
Over and over, man
You swore your words were true
But, over and over
You just might lose your claim
'Cause o-o-over and over
Your story's not the same

'Cause you lack credibility
No supportability
Got no ability (to)
Talk with credibility
No credibility
Just implausibility
That's 'cause
inconsistency's your style-yle-yle
So over and over,
It seems this much is true
If you can't keep your story straight,
Asylum's not for you

PERSONALITY

Lloyd Price c. 1959

Over and over
I tried to prove my love to you
Over and over
What more can I do
Over and over
My friends say I'm a fool
But over and over
I'll be a fool for you

'Cause you got personality,
Walk, personality
Talk, Personality
Smile, Personality
Charm, personality
Love, personality
And of course you've got
A great big heart
So over and over
Oh, I'll be a fool to you
Now over and over
What more can I do ?

Over and over
I said that I loved you
Over and over, honey
Now it's the truth
Over and over
They still say I'm a fool
But over and over
I'll be a fool for you

2000 FAVORITES

A HOUSE NEAR NEW ORLEANS

(from House of the Rising Sun)

There is a house near New Orleans
They call the place Oakdale
And if you have your hearing there
Your claim will likely fail

They'll move you there from Varick Street
From Boston town, from Krome
No matter where your lawyer is,
Your hearing's on the phone

You might have had some witnesses,
A spouse to vouch for you,
But if they don't have airplane fare
Got none in that venue

Alone you face the charges,
Despite remorse and grief,
Detained and cuffed, you don't look good
Why should you get relief?

And now they've ordered you removed,
You're stuck in jail alone,
Your country will not take you back,
You haven't got a home

So shun this place near New Orleans
Yes, Oakdale is its name
No comfort in the system
When detention is the game.

YOU KNOW IT DON'T COME EASY

(based on a song by Ringo Starr)

INS cannot refuse
To approve the EB-2s
But you know it don't come easy

Five years and a degree
Will support equiv'lency
And employers find that pleasing

A labor cert's
Not limited to masters

Acceptance of a bachelor's
Doesn't doom it to disa - aster

It don't take too much
To qualify as such
But you know it don't come easy

To come within the class
Just apply and do it fast
And you may adjust this season.

It don't come easy, you know it don't come
easy.

YOU GOT ME BABE

(from I Got You Babe, by Sonny and Cher. Written before
the death of Sonny Bono)

They say our borders overrun
Need new laws before the day is done
Well, if that's true,
Then tell me please,
Why a law that deports families?
Babe,

You got me babe
I don't see babe

We got visas for some
We let businesses come
But if a family settles down
And makes a new life,
They're deported if foun-ound -ound.

Yes these new laws could seal the fate
Of working folks
Who've made this country great
So, maybe you should
Think this through,
And hear these words
Cause we elected you, babe

You got me babe
I don't see babe

Change the law 'fore its too late
Its your job to legisla-a-ate
Refugees can't hope to land
Things have gotten out of hand,
Don't cut hearings or appeal
The rights that they insure are real
You got -- me babe.

Roldan Reconsidered

*to the tune of Proud Mary, by John Fogarty
(the Siren, (c) 2000, updated 2005)

* You must be familiar with *Matter of Roldan*,
Pickering and *Song* to understand these lyrics

Intro adapted from Tina Turner's "Proud Mary" (on What's Love Got To Do With It)

[Spoken]

You know,
Every now and then
You'd think you'd get something from
Congress that's nice – and easy

There's just one thing.
You see, Congress never, ever
does nothin' that's nice – and easy
Plain language? Its always been nice,
-- and rough

Well, we're gonna take the beginning
and do it - easy
But then we're going to do the finish - rough
That's the way we do, Roldan

[half time]
And its,
Roldan, Roldan,
Should be reconsidered

Listen to the story now,
[Sung - SLOW VERSION]

Verdict that's expunged in Tucson
Judgment that's withdrawn up in San Jose
Board said with approval, that supports
removal
Under section one-oh-one, (a) forty-eight A.

Judgment's not essential
Plea is what's consequential
(And its) Roldan, Roldan,
Should be reconsidered
(Should be reconsidered)

First time for a drug possession
Thirty six oh seven, eighteen USC
Though it seems a fiction, that's not a
conviction
Board ignored the statute in-inappropriately

Judgment's not essential
Plea is what's consequential
(And its) Roldan, Roldan,

Should be reconsidered
(should be reconsidered)
Say its Roldan, Roldan,
should be reconsidered....

[FAST VERSION]

Verdict that's expunged in Tucson
First time for a drug crime up in San Jose
Board said with approval, that supports
removal
Under section one-oh-one, (a) forty-eight A.

Plea's not consequential
Judgment is what's essential
(And its) Roldan, Roldan,
Should be reconsidered
Roldan, Roldan, should be
reconsidered

OO-ooop doop-doop-doop
OO-ooop doop-doop-doop
OO-ooop doop-doop-doop

Vacation differs from expungement
Leaves the former ruling barely flickering
Board might find it pleasin,' to focus on the
reason
And disregard state action, but for Pickering

Plea's not consequential
Judgment is what's essential
(And its) Roldan, Roldan,
should be reconsidered
I tell you, Roldan, Roldan,
should be reconsidered

OO-ooop doop-doop-doop
OO-ooop doop-doop-doop
OO-ooop doop-doop-doop

Sentence still can be amended
Takes away a bit of the futility
Reduction of a sentence, seems better than
repentance
For managing to beat remova-bility

Plea's not consequential
Judgment is what's essential
(And its) Roldan, Roldan,
Should be reconsidered
I tell you, Roldan, Roldan,
should be reconsidered

OO-ooop doop-doop-doop
OO-ooop doop-doop-doop

OO-oop doop-doop-doop. . .
Roldan, Roldan, should be reconsidered
Roldan, Roldan, should be reconsidered
Roldan, Roldan, should be reconsidered
Roldan, Roldan, should be reconsidered.