Chapter One

The Border Crossed US

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On May 1, 2006 more than 1 million people took to the streets of Los Angeles. They were there to protest the House of Representatives passage of HR 4437: Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. Their actions crippled the city.

As written, HR 4437 would have criminalized people who provide illegal aliens assistance and would have stripped asylum seekers of fundamental due process protections. It also would have introduced new penalties – including a minimum five-year prison term – for church workers, school-teachers, humanitarian workers, and others who sought to aid immigrants who are in the US illegally.

The tensions surrounding the issues HR 4437 addressed had been escalating for years. By the time of the 2006 “Day Without an Immigrant” protests, groups on both sides of the debate were well organized and deeply entrenched. Those who supported the bill argued it was a necessary step for securing American borders and stabilizing the demand on resources. Opponents believed it was unfair, inhumane, and extreme in the way it dealt with immigrants and their advocates. The latter groups sought legislation that would recognize basic rights, establish a guest-worker program, keep mixed-status families together, and create paths towards citizenship, among other things.
Plate 1.1  Los Angeles, 2006.
Plate 1.2  Los Angeles, May 2003.
Plate 1.3  Los Angeles, May 2003.
Plate 1.4  Los Angeles, May 2006.
Plate 1.5  Los Angeles, May 2006.
Plate 1.6  Minutemen, Burbank, CA, April 2006.
Plate 1.7 Fernando Suárez Del Solar at the Cesar Chavez La Paz Center, Keene, CA, March 2006.
Plate 1.8  Day Labor Center, Burbank, 2006.
Plate 1.9  Day Labor Center, San Fernando Valley, 2007.
Plate 1.10  Downtown Los Angeles, 2003.
Plate 1.11  Downtown Los Angeles, 2006.
Plate 1.14  Lupe, Minutemen Organizer, Simi-Valley, 2008.
Plate 1.15  Lilliana and son, Sanctuary Family, Simi-Valley, 2008.
Plate 1.16  Los Angeles City Hall, May, 2006.
Plate 1.17  A day without an immigrant, May, 2006.