Hollywood, Washington, and the Making of the Refugee in Postwar Cinema

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Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies.
—Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno[1]

Universal-International's film *Illegal Entry* opened in June 1949. It tells the tale of Anna (Marta Toren), a beautiful European woman tangled up with the criminal ring that smuggled her brother, a war survivor, over the Mexico-US border.[2] The studio marketed the film as an authentic depiction of contemporary US border enforcement—"the first explosive exposé of the illicit border traffic in human cargo," as the film's publicity materials put it.[3] Universal-International was so committed to this notion of authenticity that, at one point, filmmakers even arranged to embed themselves with the Border Patrol near the Mexico-US border. While on site, or so the studio claimed, "the filmmakers and their camera crew flushed a car parked in dense undergrowth." The car sped away, and the Border Patrol jeep pursued it, overtook it, and arrested the driver "and four aliens jammed like sardines in the fleeing car's turtleback."[4] Whether true or invented, the story of this car chase serves to blur the line between the work of law enforcement and that of movie-making. The filmmakers, however briefly, are cast in the role of the Border Patrol itself, doing the work of securing the border against smuggled aliens.

Universal-International was not the only studio looking to capitalize on the real-life dramas generated by the US government's anti-alien-smuggling operations. In 1947 and 1948, several Hollywood studios pitched government officials on similar projects, hoping to be granted permission to mine the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) case files for screenplay material. Thus deluged,

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government officials decided that they could not accommodate all the studios. Columbia Pictures, for one, having proposed crafting "an 'A' picture of great interest and suspense" based on INS exploits, was rebuffed.[5] Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), however, succeeded in getting federal government partners on board with its alien-smuggling picture. In 1950, MGM came out with *A Lady Without Passport*, exploring similar themes to those taken up in *Illegal Entry*.[6] This time, the obligatory beauty (Hedy Lamarr) is herself a concentration camp survivor, stranded in Havana and desperate enough to pay smugglers to fly her to Florida.

Neither of these noirish films turned out to be a great critical or popular success ("unimpressive," the *New York Times* yawned of *A Lady Without Passport)*.[7] Both, however, are of interest for reasons apart from artistic merit or mass appeal. The two films help us understand a piece of the process by which legal and cultural discourse of the post-World War II era created a new character—"the refugee"—and instilled it in the national (and international) imagination. The movies illuminate this process in two ways. The first is at a narrative level. The plots of both films wrestle evocatively with the liminal figure of the refugee. The tension between the imperative to extend sympathy toward those fleeing war-torn lands, on the one hand, and the desire to control the nation's borders, on the other, was very much on the American public's mind. In the early postwar years, government officials, journalists, civic leaders and ethnic community organizations engaged in heated public debate about the nation's stance toward refugees—in particular, toward the millions of European "displaced persons." That stance was undergoing momentous shifts in ways that would fundamentally reshape US policy. In 1946, a vast majority of Americans surveyed told pollsters they did not want US immigration law changed to allow more European refugees, broadly seen as undesirable and potentially dangerous influences, into the United States.[8] In early 1948, when the films were first pitched, "refugee" was still not yet really a category recognized formally by notoriously restrictive US immigration law.[9]

By the time both films had premiered, however, two major and controversial pieces of legislation—the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and an amended version of that law passed in 1950—had begun permitting hundreds of thousands of refugees to resettle in the United States.[10] At the heart of debates over these measures was the same fundamental question that animated the plots of the two films I examine here. Did war refugees pose a threat to the sweepingly restrictive immigration system that the United States had implemented after World War I in the name of protecting the nation from political, racial, and economic threats? In the real world of policy that served as the films' backdrop and context, some lawmakers railed about the hordes of dangerous criminals and political subversives who would take advantage of any visas the United States made available. Refugee advocates, meanwhile, including Jewish, Italian, and other ethnic and civic groups, conducted widespread media campaigns in support of the displaced persons legislation, portraying refugees as deserving victims of the same evil regimes the United States had gone to war to fight. Those politicians who increasingly saw refugee policy as an important element of strategy in the emerging Cold

War also made a case for increasing admissions, which, they hoped, would, along with the Marshall Plan, help stabilize Western Europe and counter Soviet power. In the face of this determined advocacy, public opinion about the desirability of refugees had moved by the time the legislation passed, too. However, the nation remained divided on the issue. In 1948, when the original Displaced Persons Act passed Congress, pollsters estimated that only about half of the American public had come to favor admitting more refugees.[11]

The two films I consider here joined other movies of the wartime and postwar period in dramatizing the very topical tales of war refugees. The plots of well-regarded pictures like *Casablanca* (1942) and *The Search* (1948), for example, also revolved around the desperation refugees faced.[12] But *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport* are noteworthy for the way they navigate a particular set of tensions that characterized debates over US policy in that postwar moment. On the one hand, in the happy endings granted their leading ladies, the films help chart a national shift toward an acceptance—however grudging and qualified—of the idea that refugees might be particularly deserving of sympathy and, at least when granted by benevolent authorities, of admission to the nation. On the other hand, both films portray refugees as objects of suspicion. In both stories, refugees are tangled up in a shadowy criminal underworld of "alien smuggling" and implicated in the undermining of US control over its geographic borders. Indeed, neither film uses the term "refugee" at all, instead employing the word "alien" to refer to the foreigners in the story.[13] And as the tale of Universal-International's Border Patrol ride-along suggests, both productions explicitly celebrated the work of federal immigration enforcement. The films thus gave expression to the nation's uneasy efforts to reconcile a strict devotion to immigration restriction and border control with emerging humanitarian and political commitments to the displaced peoples of Europe.

They enacted, too, the uncertainties inherent in the emergent legal category of "refugee." Those advocating for admitting migrants displaced by war made the case that refugees were different from other migrants, people whose stories of suffering should make them exceptions to the rule of restricted immigration; these stories thus served as the key to an otherwise closed door to the nation. But what, precisely, was the line between refugees and other would-be immigrants, or between refugees and "illegal aliens?" Were foreigners who fled terrible circumstances and who felt desperate enough to be smuggled into the United States potentially dangerous invaders who should be kept out? Or were they people with a right to haven within the nation? This question was, as it has remained, at the heart of struggles over national policies and attitudes toward refugees.

At the narrative level, then, the dramas that *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport* depict are compelling reflections of broader cultural attitudes toward such issues. But these two films are also of interest at a second level: the level of production. The behind-the-scenes history of their making reveals some of the curious circuitry by which narratives around refugees could be generated at this volatile postwar moment. Both films were very much active collaborations between

Hollywood studios and government authorities. Each partner looked to the other as a source of authenticity, positive publicity, and narrative possibilities. The studios sought the added value that "real" government files and government spokespeople could provide their productions. Government officials, meanwhile, saw the power in crafting dramatic narratives around their own practices. Film was a way for the immigration authorities to launder their own images. On screen, they could be cast as dedicated but benevolent protectors of national sovereignty. To be sure, these films, a form of soft propaganda, were not the first such Hollywood-Washington coproductions, nor the last.[14] But at a moment when both the institutions of the major film studios and US immigration authorities were, as we shall see, politically challenged and working to redefine themselves, they became symbiotically intertwined in particularly strange ways.

Whatever claims to authority drove the collaborative work of state and Hollywood, however, semi-documentaries—these "ripped from the headlines" dramas—were always a volatile mix of reality and artifice.[15] Even as these films lay claim to a measure of verisimilitude, they also, like all reality productions, point toward their own constructedness. The fictionalization is explicitly announced, after all, in the "semi-" of the genre's name, and further made visible via the familiar conventions of melodramatic romance that structure the story on screen. Simultaneously, if less explicitly, the films also point in the other direction. By making government actors visible as active collaborators in film production—in film credits, publicity materials, and, indeed, on screen like "actors" in the dramatic sense—semi-documentaries remind viewers that the state, too, crafts narratives. By extension, then, semi-documentaries also gesture more broadly to the way that the state is always already telling stories through its laws and policies about, in these cases, the distinctions between the alien and the refugee, between the criminal and the victim, and between the foreigners who should be hunted down and arrested and those who should be welcomed and protected. Such distinctions—like the blurred line between the state and the film industry that both paralleled and generated the blurred line between reality and fiction that characterized these films—remained fundamentally unstable, both onscreen and in real life. And that instability reflected the nation's moral and cultural ambivalence. Seen in their historical context, these films reveal a postwar moment defined by uncertainty and contradiction, when the United States wished to cast itself as a global savior even while it refused "the refugee" a stable role in the national imagination.

Finally, I would suggest that these particular films, and the peculiar notion of "reality" that characterized their making, help shed light on some of the historical roots of recent public discourse around immigration and refugees, which has been as toxic as during any time in the last half century. The precariously thin line that divides the refugee from the "illegal alien" has been nearly erased by our recent reality-show President, who made border enforcement the centerpiece of his regime's political show—a show that sought to fully collapse any distinction between fiction and news, the state and the entertainment industry, to disastrous effect. It is perhaps the case that the "border drama" has never been at its current

pitch before, but the intertwining of media spectacle and border enforcement is, as the story of the two films discussed here show, not new.

The discourse of immigration restriction in the era of mass media

Despite *Illegal Entry's* publicity claims to originality, movies whose plots revolved around the traffic in unauthorized immigrants appeared regularly during the decades of mid-century. After all, Hollywood studios and US immigration restriction both came of age during the 1920s, and the real-life dramas produced by the harsh new regime of migration control were readymade for the rapidly growing motion picture industry. In 1921 and 1924, the United States passed laws to sharply reduce what had been an unprecedented influx of immigrants into the country during the century's first two decades. By allocating only small quotas to the nations of southern and eastern Europe and almost entirely blocking immigration from Asia and Africa, the new legislation—which remained in place until 1965—was supposed to stem the tide of foreigners considered racially inferior and politically dangerous. These restrictive immigration laws were thus a grand experiment in statecraft and social engineering. They resulted, however, in an upsurge in illicit immigration that posed a grave challenge to the new legal regime. People from countries targeted by the restrictions now drew on networks and strategies long employed by Chinese immigrants, who were largely banned from legal entry into the United States since 1882, to get around US law. Foreigners who in earlier years might have entered the United States legally now had to seek alternatives. Some, for example, sailed into major ports with forged documents. Others paid smugglers to get them across the Mexican and Canadian borders on foot, or traveled from Cuba to Florida, hidden in boats that might also be transporting contraband liquor.[16]

Scriptwriters took note. Cinema has always had a special affinity for stories of artifice and fakery, undercover adventures and hidden identities. Film is itself, after all, always a form of counterfeiting. As in theater, the illusion created by script, set, and acting simultaneously does its work to tell a story even as it points beyond itself, toward the actors underneath the costumes and the scripted lines. But film's counterfeit nature exceeds the theater's, for even the most reality-based of films can never be more than a two-dimensional simulacrum of whatever appears onscreen.[17] Real-life tales of human trafficking thus lent themselves easily to the silver screen, filled as they were with smugglers masquerading as legitimate businessmen and investigators in disguise as smuggled foreigners. Indeed, in the realm of migration, the very idea of authentic identity had become both highly charged and extremely unstable. Amidst the rise of ethnic nationalisms after World War I, both emerging and established nation-states sought to shore up sovereignty and national identity by means of legal barriers to migration. Nations engaged in an immigration-control "arms race," creating new technologies of documentation and implementing new forms of border-guarding.[18] In the universe of international alien smuggling, fabricated identities thus became commodities for sale, a way to

navigate or profit from the regime of borders and migration control. That regime, in other words, had produced a highly theatrical underworld; this was the stuff of movies.

In 1936, for example, audiences could see Claire Trevor, Brian Donlevy and Rita Hayworth (then still calling herself Rita Cansino) in the Twentieth Century Fox production *Human Cargo*. Trevor plays a plucky aspiring journalist who teams up with a seasoned reporter (Donlevy) to investigate a nefarious alien smuggling ring; their exploits get Hayworth's character—a Latin dancer named (naturally) Carmen Zoro, who is mixed up with the ring's boss—shot, and they themselves are nearly killed when they go undercover posing as foreigners purchasing the smugglers' services. In the end, the daring couple escapes and the evil smugglers are busted. In the detective drama *Yellow Cargo* (1937), a small Hollywood production company serves as a front for smuggling Chinese immigrants, achieved by disguising the company's white actors in "yellowface" and pulling a switcheroo with the aliens. This scheme, too, is derailed by diligent undercover work. Other films of the 30s, 40s, and 50s also explored the smuggling and illegal entry of Chinese immigrants (*On the Border,* 1930; *Border Phantom,* 1936; *Shadows of the Orient,* 1937; *Daughter of Shanghai,* 1937) as well as Mexicans (*Border Incident*, 1949; *Wetbacks,* 1956). Like *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport,* some depicted Europeans' illicit entry into the nation (*Paddy O'Day,* 1936; *Forged Passport,* 1939; *Secret Service of the Air,* 1939).

Film studies scholars have ignored most of these films. Immigration historians have not paid attention to them either. This scholarly neglect has, I think, a few main causes. With some important exceptions, cinematic representations of alien smuggling have gotten lost in the realm of film studies because they were not necessarily the flashiest examples of the famous genres of which they were part—genres which have commanded most of the field's attention in studies of the era. Scholarship on the gangster and crime films that proliferated in the 1930s and in the era of film noir, for example, is plentiful, as is scholarship on "social problem" films, but in neither of these subfields does the issue of alien smuggling merit more than a passing reference.[19] For their part, historians who write about immigration during this era, particularly those who explore the phenomenon of unauthorized immigration, have generally approached their studies from the perspective of legal and social history rather than cultural history. These scholars are diverse in terms of the groups they have studied; their recent works include explorations of the mid-twentieth century efforts to control the immigration of Europeans, Asians, West Indians, and Mexicans, for example. But these historians share a focus on the genesis and implementation of exclusionary immigration laws and policies, not on cultural reflections of such policies.[20]

The mass culture of the time, however—the respectable and not-so-respectable press, fiction, radio and film—both reflected and helped generate the discourse that produced and propped up the restrictive immigration regime. This first struck me many years ago, as I sat in the archives reading government documents whose authors were trying to get a handle on the alien smuggling

business that burgeoned in the wake of the 1921 and 1924 laws. The nation had never attempted immigration control on that scale, and there was vast confusion on the government's end about how the new legislation would work and to whom, precisely, it would apply. Thus it is not surprising that government functionaries, corresponding with each other or pounding out their endless reports, sometimes deployed the pulp-fiction twang of Hollywood scripts, hard-boiled detective stories, or the sensationalist press. The slangy talk about rackets, gangsters, and bootlegging allowed those in government to describe murky realities of law enforcement in stark moral terms, as talk of criminality always does. The bureacratic officialese of government authories, in turn, could lend an air of dramatic gravitas to fiction, movies and pulp journalism.

In the 1930s and early 1940s, US immigration policy remained severely restrictive, reflecting an abiding suspicion of newcomers. The Depression saw the flow of immigrants cut to a trickle by strict implementation of existing statutes as well as by executive actions such as President Herbert Hoover's 1930 order instructing consuls to be rigorous in their denial of visas to anyone deemed "likely to become a public charge."[21] The deportation machine went into high gear, as foreigners were increasingly seen as burdens on overtaxed public relief systems, and increasingly feared as successful fomenters of dangerous leftist ideologies.[22] By the mid-1930s, for example, nearly a half-million Mexicans—and Mexican Americans—had been deported or coercively "repatriated," in the name of national and local economic interests.[23] In Congress, several bills that would have suspended all immigration entirely were proposed.[24] As of 1939, with the start of hostilities in Europe, fears of German spies and "fifth columnists" were added to existing reasons to clamp down on immigration and resist calls to take in those trying to flee the Nazis. A bill to admit twenty thousand German refugee children died in Congress. In 1940, meanwhile, the INS was transferred from the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice, a move that signaled policymakers' conviction that the war unfolding in Europe demanded stronger border and immigration enforcement. Immigration authorities were now officially under the auspices of a federal crime-fighting, law-enforcement apparatus.[25]

The Hollywood alien smuggling films of the era thus reflected and magnified (and sought to profit from) the national mood around immigration.[26] Even an industry that became home to a number of high-profile European exile actors and directors produced movies reminding viewers, however melodramatically, of the dangers associated with foreigners.[27] Simultaneously, and relatedly, Hollywood and Washington were building partnerships. The relationship particularly flourished around spy movies. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover saw great value in the power of mass media, and worked closely with both radio and film producers to shape the depictions of "G-men," approving a stream of straight-from-the-files-of-the-FBI scripts.[28] After the Border Patrol was moved to the Justice Department, where its budget and personnel were vastly expanded, it followed suit, launching its very own serialized radio show.[29] Modeled on popular adventure-story radio shows of the era, it presented what were clearly intended to be suspenseful dramatizations

of actual heroic Border Patrol exploits, including, of course, the busting up of alien smuggling rings.[30] By the start of World War II, then, narratives of immigration restriction and border control had long been jointly produced by government and the popular media, woven back and forth between the two.

Hollywood and the US government: wartime collaboration

Illegal Entry and *A Lady Without Passport* were a genre of collaborative propaganda with roots in the early years of big studio productions. But they also represented more recent forms that merged state projects with Hollywood ones. The United States' entry into World War II further tightened the relationship between the government and Hollywood. The US government gave film studios freer reign to continue production as usual than it did to other industries (such as the auto industry), which were fully converted to the massive war effort. Nevertheless, the government was eager to harness the power of film for the Allied cause.[31] As a division of the Office of War Information, which coordinated the US government's extensive wartime media strategy, the Bureau of Motion Pictures liaised with studio heads. Commercial studios obliged the government's desire for strong media support for the war effort. They produced an enormous quantity of military training films and war-related newsreels.[32] Donald Duck and Bugs Bunny appeared in propaganda cartoons.[33] Feature films took up patriotic and war-related themes. Movie theaters, meanwhile, became central hubs for supporting and promoting the war effort. Not only were commercial theaters screening government films as well as their own patriotic output, they also served as a sales force for US war bonds, and as collection sites for precious war materials, from blood to paper to scrap metal.[34] To enter a cinema during wartime was thus often to encounter the dual worlds of the film industry and the state, and the intertwined realities and fantasies of war narratives both on- and off-screen.

During the war, too, the notion of "reality" and the artifice of the moving image became fused together in new ways. This was the heyday of newsreels and news magazines, both of which entailed extensive cooperation between filmmakers and the US government, and which brought the war vividly into the nation's movie theaters.[35] Realism and fiction converged most dramatically in depictions of battle. Hollywood producers adopted a semi-documentary approach to the combat films they churned out. Filmmakers who entered the military, meanwhile, often served in the Army's cutting-edge filmmaking ventures. They brought their own stylized sensibilities and Hollywood war-movie tropes to their military work, which included documentaries featuring frontline action.[36] By midway through the war, studios' combat films, in turn, were drawing heavily on the look and feel of such frontline production.

Filmmakers with experience in movie-making for the military brought their new realist sensibilities back to Hollywood.[37] They employed the semi-documentary style in a number of postwar crime films. In this breed of film noir, filmmakers worked closely with government agencies to produce movies that projected a vision of the large, manly federal institutions that had come to characterize the

mid-century state protecting a nation from, as scholar R. Barton Palmer puts it, "an underworld of the maladjusted, dissatisfied, or conspiratorial."[38] The bad guys' story lines are invariably more dramatically compelling, but the state triumphs in the end, putting to work modern techniques of surveillance, investigation, and law enforcement. *The House on 92nd Street* (1945), for example, an FBI-hunts-German-spy film set in 1939, was a ripped-from-the-files picture from Twentieth Century Fox, made in full cooperation with the FBI. Hoover even appeared briefly—as himself—in the film, which also included real footage of lesser FBI personnel at work. The Bureau, moreover, allowed two of the lead actors to train at Quantico with their agents.[39] With *To the Ends of the Earth* (1948), Columbia Pictures took a similar tack, working with the Department of Treasury's Bureau of Narcotics to produce a high-octane tale of international opium smuggling. Both of these films were cited by studio executives in their above-mentioned correspondence with the government as inspirations for the alien smuggling films they hoped to make.[40]

Movie studio executives had both economic and political reasons to want to please government officials. Tensions between Hollywood and the federal government resurfaced after the war, throwing the film industry into crisis. First, the Justice Department resurrected an antitrust suit against the industry, charging that the studios' ownership of the vast majority of the nation's movie theaters was monopolistic. Between 1945 and 1949, the case got battled out in the courts, even reaching the Supreme Court. Ultimately, the studios lost, and were forced to separate their production and exhibition businesses. The dismantling of the vertically integrated structure that had been so critical to the studios' economic success made this an anxious, uncertain time for industry leaders.[41] Second, Hollywood faced attack once more for its supposed infiltration by dangerous leftists. In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee held contentious hearings meant to ferret out Hollywood's Communists, launching an era of blacklisting and intra-industry division.[42] In response to such political pressure, the film industry worked all the harder to portray itself as a promoter of American values and a partner with government. The Motion Picture Industry Council, for example, was established by corporate leaders in Hollywood in 1948 to coordinate public relations. It conducted intensive media campaigns and goodwill tours with famous actors, and pledged to make sure that the film industry toed the emerging Cold War policy line.[43] Postwar films, particularly those featuring contemporary political themes and the exploits of government agencies, thus reflected the complexities of Hollywood-Washington relations during this era. It was out of these relations that *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport* emerged.

Illegal Entry (Universal-International Pictures, 1949)

After the film's opening credits roll against a backdrop of the official seal of the INS, viewers must endure not one but two exceedingly wooden introductions from government officials seated at their desks. The first is delivered by the Attorney General of the United States Tom Clark, the second by INS Commissioner Watson B. Miller. "It is not wrong to wish to enter the United States," Clark intones,

staring straight into the camera. "But it is wrong to enter illegally, or to remain here unlawfully." After a narrator explains that the movie is a "tribute to the men and officers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service," including forty-three who have lost their lives in the line of duty, Miller explains that his agency's "greatest single problem is illegal entry, including attempted and sometimes actual smuggling of aliens." Cut to a shot of an accordion file, from which is drawn a folder marked "Case file number 191: The Blue Danube Affair." Then the action finally begins.[44]

A forest ranger in the woods of San Bernadino County finds a corpse face-down in the dirt. A close-up reveals the tattoo on his back: "DACHAU 57437." The Los Angeles INS office takes up the case. The authorities soon get a call from the dead man's distraught cousin, who explains that he paid $2000 to have the victim smuggled in from Poland. Before the caller can explain the details of the scheme, he is fatally stabbed. But he manages to gasp out "Blue Danube Café" before expiring on the phone booth floor. INS higher-ups in Washington authorize the L.A. office to recruit a new undercover agent in the form of Bert Powers (Howard Duff). Bert is an Air Force veteran who was war buddies with the American husband of the Blue Danube's owner, Anna Duvak (Marta Toren), who came to the country legally as a European war bride before her husband was killed in action.[45] Bert agrees to the gig. He befriends Anna, who is indeed reluctantly connected to the alien smuggling ring. Soon, Bert finds work flying for the small charter plane outfit that serves as the front for their alien smuggling operation, operating back and forth across the Mexico-US border. These are brutal gangsters, willing to toss their migrant cargo out of the plane if they fear detection. We meet Dutch Lempo (Richard Rober), the boss, deported from the United States and now headquartered in Mexico. He has the hots for Anna, but she rebuffs him. After narrowly escaping a sting operation, the smugglers realize they have been infiltrated, and set out to find the snitch.

Meanwhile, Bert, too, has developed feelings for Anna. She comes clean. She explains that she has figured out that he is the undercover agent, but that she has not ratted him out to the smugglers. Bert also learns that Anna is entangled with the criminal ring because she had them smuggle in her ailing brother Stefan (Eric Feldary) from Europe; the brother is holed up at her place, looking distressed. Bert prepares to collude with Anna to get Stefan out of the city to make a fresh start, but Stefan, distraught over the trouble he is causing his sister, hangs himself in her apartment. After this, events unfold quickly. Bert manages, after some quick thinking in a cockpit fight, to deliver the plane and smugglers to waiting agents. The bad guys are arrested. Anna, happily, avoids any charges being brought against her, as a reward for cooperating with law enforcment, and Bert is allowed to take her into romantic "custody."

Illegal Entry got mixed reviews. One critic thought it had "zip and . . . polish;" another that both script and acting were "pedestrian" and dull.[46] They were not all convinced by the film's breathless claims to being a vessel for truth. Some critics noted that the film's ripped-from-the-files-of format was hardly original—"the latest contribution to the alphabet soup of documentary-style films dealing with 'G-men,' 'C-men,' 'T-men,'" as *Newsweek* put it.[47] But some found the focus on alien smuggling in the current moment interesting, and the "authenticity" compelling.[48]

Illegal Entry, though explicitly proclaiming its loyalty to the US government's immigration enforcement apparatus, nevertheless captured deep national ambivalence about the extent to which war refugees might be seen as "illegal aliens" violating US borders. Critics' terminology picked up on some of the sympathy that infuses the film's portrayal of Anna and her brother (played by Swedish and Hungarian actors, respectively). But the narrator's voice-over at the start of the action, as the camera dwells on the Dachau tattoo of the faceless dead man whose murder gets the plot rolling, is tellingly cryptic. "Tattooed markings on the dead man's back told their own story," the narrator says. But, in fact, we—like the characters in the film—are left not knowing precisely what that story was, or what its implication is for American viewers.[49] This narrative uncertainty permeates the film. Although the exact origins of the smuggled, doomed brother remain unclear, he is a figure for the contemporary drama playing out in the real world outside the theaters. A few movie critics gestured to this reality, in which "American families of 'war-weary' Europeans" were struggling to help their loved ones cross the geographic and legal barriers to get to the United States.[50] We see, briefly, such "war-weary," meek, but respectably dressed Europeans being smuggled aboard the small plane Bert flies. But the desperation of such people's relatives, in the film's world, produces nothing but blood and mayhem—bodies thrown from planes, informants stabbed in phone booths. "Dachau" tattooed on a dead man's back may signify that we owe him sympathy. But how far our relationship should extend remains unclear.

Anna is also herself something of a cipher, and not only because we don't know where she is from. We know only that she is European, and that, as a war bride, she has been deemed by law to be exempt from immigration restriction.[51] Indeed, we learn in an early scene that she has become a US citizen since her arrival. But if her legal status relative to the nation is clear, her moral status is less so. On the one hand, her strength and resolve are admirable, and part of what (along with her impeccable posture and beautiful face) seem to draw the upstanding, square-jawed Bert Powers to her. On the other hand, Anna's loyalty to her refugee brother has led her down a criminal path; she is facilitating the operations of some very bad men, whose alien smuggling operations bring violence and unvetted foreigners into the space of the nation.

Anna is, at the film's end, fully redeemed by Bert—made legitimate in the eyes of the US authorities, for the second time, by the love of a patriotic war hero. Any criminal threat she embodies has been defused; she has been safely "domesticated." It is also helpful in her redemption that her illegal alien brother has been removed from the equation. But the real heroes are, as the film explicitly states, the immigration officials—the INS officers and the Border Patrol. The authorities can be merciful when appropriate, as in the case of Anna. And, the film suggests, they don't have serious beef with migrants themselves, who are the victims of alien smugglers. The US government's business is to protect the nation's borders, and as such its nemesis is the alien smuggling rings—the film's true villains. Two scenes drive this home. In the first, we are inside the office of the INS, where the immigration officer is contemplating a regional map on the wall, labeled "Immigration and Naturalization District 16." The border, and the outlines of the INS district,

are clearly, darkly drawn on this map. The officer is interrupted by the entrance of a uniformed underling informing him that a plane is on its way with smuggled aliens.

In the second scene, the smuggler ring-leader Lempo is plotting with his colleagues about how to ferret out the snitch in the group. They are meeting in Lempo's posh lair on the Mexican side of the border, where he has lived since being deported. "There's a leak somewhere, so we find it," he tells them. From behind the bar, he pushes a button that, proto-James-Bond-style, raises a painting (depicting a bucolic scene of Mexican figures in iconically rounded hats) to reveal a map of the region. "This is the border," he says, pointing. "There's a rat on your side, or on mine." Lempo's map indicates the border (though not quite as starkly as the INS map) but says nothing about US enforcement. The immigration officials' cartography, meanwhile, signals their crystal clarity about how the territory should work. The border may be an abstraction, especially transgressable by air, but the INS district is real. Smugglers might try to make good profit off the mismatch between the border's sharply defined meaning in immigration law and its porousness in practice. But in the end, the tables are turned on them, because the INS is on the case. The immigration authorities are the ones, ultimately, who find and close "the leak," not Lempo. The border's integrity is restored. [52] That this integrity entails blocking an avenue of ingress for "war-weary" Europeans, or others, is a consideration that remains uneasily at the margins of the film's moral universe, its story as unexplored as that of the corpse at the film's start. Nor does the film consider, as indeed government officials did not in real life, that the smuggling rings themselves were called into being not by the criminal tendencies of bad eggs like Lempo, but by the political fiction of the border itself. That political fiction was in turn conjured up by the authors of US immigration law, and given material reality by the actions of those charged with enforcing it.

If the moral bearings of the film were somewhat murky, so, too, relatedly, was the film's relationship to "reality." As with other from-the-files-of thrillers, the studio capitalized as much as possible on the picture's "authenticity." Publicity materials played up the true-life nature of the story: "Based on actual files of the Department of Justice!" read one version of the film poster printed in the production's pressbook. "Only from real people could such SHOCK DRAMA be torn!"[53] The studio milked its partnership with the INS and the Justice Department for the film's launch, too, promoting the film as an important, authentic commentary on the realities of immigration and border enforcement. Along with the usual blitz of radio and print spots, the publicity campaign added some creative touches. In cooperation with the INS, Universal produced a glossy souvenir brochure for the occasion, with bios of the film stars alongside glowing narratives of INS and Border Patrol history.[54] Senator Alexander Wiley (R-WI) praised the film from the Senate floor.[55] The film premiered at the RKO Keith theater in Washington, DC, on June 8, 1949. Generals, Supreme Court Justices, ambassadors, White House representatives and other Washington VIP's were scheduled to attend, their entrance into the theater's lobby to be broadcast on local TV.[56]

All of this cozying up to official Washington was no doubt intended to serve multiple purposes. Most obviously it was all part of the marketing of hard-boiled authenticity that studios seemed to think audiences were hungry for in this era, as evidenced by the many films they made in the "government files" genre. Universal was also clearly engaging in the sort of anxious politicking mentioned above. Tom Clark, who delivered the film's opening monologue, was not only the Attorney General. He was also the very person who, before his promotion to the Justice Department's top spot, had built the government's ongoing antitrust case against the film industry. One can imagine that Universal executives might have calculated that it could pay to cultivate his good will. They may have felt, too, that such a display of patriotic loyalty, premiering in the nation's capital, could serve as an antidote to the highly public official suspicion directed at Hollywood via the HUAC investigations.

The efforts to imbue *Illegal Entry* with authenticity took some strange turns, however. The government partners in the enterprise were not always satisfied that they were being fairly represented, and stepped into scriptwriting territory to try to shape the film's portrayal of them more to their liking. The Attorney General's office wrote to Universal in November 1948, for example, to complain that the script sorely neglected the good work of the Border Patrol, and to suggest revising the script to include a "flashback" showing the Border Patrol at work screening immigrants, all "while the conspirators are plotting."[57] The studio did not, apparently, think that this flashback would make for a good revision, as they did not ultimately include it.

Filmmakers did, however, exploit the story of their brief stint with the Border Patrol on the nation's boundary with Mexico, recounted above, for publicity purposes. And in a weird inversion of that ride-along's melding of law enforcement and movie roles, Universal's publicity people arranged for two Border Patrol officers to be flown from Texas to New York City for *Illegal Entry*'s premiere there. The two men made the rounds of local radio and TV to promote the film. The publicity plan also called for the officers to stand in the movie theater's lobby, in front of a photo exhibition about the Border Patrol, answering any questions moviegoers might have about "I-Men."[58] One wonders what theater patrons made of these two. Did they assume the officers were from the Border Patrol? Or that their uniforms were costumes, and the two men actors? Where did the world of the movies leave off, and the world of immigration enforcement begin?

A Lady Without Passport **(Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1950)**

The strange intersections of these worlds continue in *A Lady Without Passport*. At the start of the film, a murder on a street in New York City leads US immigration authorities to Cuba and an alien smuggling ring. In Havana, INS officer Pete Karczag (John Hodiak) goes undercover to try to get to the ring's leader, known as Palinov (George Macready). Palinov runs his operation out of the nearly empty Gulf Stream Café, where a grim bartender presides over the liquor. Posing as a Hungarian migrant eager to reach the United States, Pete presents himself at the

Gulf Stream. He meets with Palinov and engages the smuggler's services. While at the café, Pete also encounters the beautiful Marianne Lorress (Hedy Lamarr), a concentration camp survivor from Vienna. Lorress is stranded in Havana, unable to get a US visa, and thus has also sought out Palinov. Palinov, who has a thing for her, intimates that he would waive his usual smuggler's fee in exchange for sexual favors, but Marianne spurns this offer.

Pete, too, falls for Marianne. She begins to reciprocate his feelings after Pete gets her out of a jam. As an alien, Marianne is not allowed to work in Cuba. In need of money, however, she dons a glittery outfit and goes to work selling cigarettes. When a local cop insists on arresting her for working illegally, Pete, who happens upon the scene, pretends that she is his wife, and whisks her away. Marianne eventually promises Pete that she will give up her scheme to get to America, despite her hopes of joining her father there, if Pete stays with her in Cuba. Pete is so smitten that he agrees to this, and privately types a letter of resignation from his job as an immigration inspector. He never gets the chance to send it. The romance goes sour when Palinov, who has discovered Pete's identity, reveals to Marianne that Pete is working undercover for the INS. Disillusioned, Marianne returns to plan A. Ultimately, all three end up in the United States, Pete tracking the small plane the smugglers are using to bring Marianne, five other European aliens, and Palinov (who has decided things are too hot for him to stay in Havana) illegally to Florida. There is a chase scene that involves a dramatic crash landing in the Everglades and an unfortunate encounter between the pilot and a venomous snake. In the end, Pete triumphs. Like Bert at the end of *Illegal Entry,* Pete finishes the film with the glamorous foreign object of his affections safely, and willingly, in his "custody."[59]

Unlike *Illegal Entry, A Lady Without Passport* was not marketed explicitly as a straight-from-the files-of semi-documentary. Indeed, the film's relationship to "authenticity" shifted over the course of its production. Apparently, the original plan was to draw heavily on documentary techniques. Director Joseph H. Lewis recalled that Louis Mayer had envisioned the film being made together with immigration authorities, involving "no actors," and "all portable equipment," a prospect Lewis found exciting.[60] Ultimately, however, the filmmakers did not employ such "real-life" footage or other documentary conventions. Nevertheless, the finished picture retained many of its semi-documentary trappings. The opening credits thanked Immigration and Naturalization Service officials for their cooperation. The studio's publicity materials, meanwhile, emphasized the film's connection to "daily news headlines telling of the growing problem faced by the US Immigration Service in its attempt to halt illegal immigration." These materials also highlighted that producer Samuel Marx's "extensive study of official records" and two research trips to Cuba were integral to the making of the film.[61]

Indeed, the picture grew out of an ongoing interchange of documents and ideas between the studio and government authorities. In 1948, for example, MGM gave an early draft of the film's story to Ray Farrell and Walter Miller of the INS and Dean Schedler of the Attorney General's office. The film's plot, at that point—drawn from contemporary events—involved American pilots who started out smuggling

arms from the United States to Dominican exiles plotting Trujillo's overthrow from their base in Cuba, and then turned to smuggling European and Chinese aliens in the other direction. The studio reported that all three of the officials "expressed complete satisfaction with the line of the story." In particular, the three men admired the realism of MGM's story, agreeing "that many situations could have happened exactly as written."[62]

As it happened, however, events unfolding in the real world were rendering MGM's draft story obsolete. To make the film "entirely authentic," the filmmakers explained to the government officials, they now wanted to change the storyline to capitalize on the recent arrest and confession of a "daredevil" pilot by the name of William Murphy, who had played a crucial role in the complicated Cuba-Florida smuggling scheme. The impending trial of Murphy and co-conspirators, suggested the studio, "offers MGM an unprecedented opportunity to base a film on an adventure which will certainly merit space in newspapers and news weeklies throughout the nation."[63] The authorities were amenable to the new plot twist. Possibly, they felt that a flattering film was just what they needed to bolster their professional profile, given that, humiliatingly, the smuggling ring's leader, a Russian named Gregorio Simonovich (formerly an informant for the INS), remained frustratingly at large in Cuba.[64] In any event, the Miami office of the INS helpfully provided the studio with extensive reports on the case, which the studio then used to craft background materials and story outlines.

The studio, for its part, seemed delighted by how these government reports almost seemed able to author the script themselves, down to the characters involved. MGM's write-up of the "background and facts" gleaned from the INS documents noted, for example, that the star immigration inspector in Miami who had helped solve the Murphy case had the air of a classic superhero about him: he "is a crack shot, can do anything with his hands. I watched him change a flat tire on a car in less than five minutes, single handed, in the dark, without even a flashlight, and never get a single smear of dirt on his sleeve cuff."[65] Even better, the man looked like movie star Robert Mitchum and had a name almost too perfect to be true: his last name was Fullilove and, though his first name was Cecil, he went by Chuck. "A pretty incredible combination," the MGM writer observed.[66]

In a remarkable extension of the state-studio collaboration, the smuggler-pilot Murphy himself played a role in shaping the film from behind the scenes. In September 1949, producer Samuel Marx sent Murphy the latest draft of the script. Murphy read it closely and wrote copious detailed comments, "for the most part unessential but for purity," he explained in the note that accompanied the script when he sent it back to Marx. He noted, for example, that the small plane the smugglers flew would have no partition separating pilot from passengers, and he suggested minor changes to dialogue.[67] Murphy said nothing about why he was invested in the authenticity of MGM's picture (in which the pilot character's exploits played a fairly modest role), but his willingness to perform this editorial work underscores just how much authority on-screen depictions of events, however obviously fictionalized, could have. If the film was to be the public's view of the

underworld of Cuba-Florida alien smuggling, then not only the INS but also the convicted smuggler wanted a shot at shaping the narrative.

Ultimately, neither the complicated back story of Edward Murphy's smuggling career, nor the details of his sensational trial, made it into *A Lady Without Passport*. The film instead centers, as its title suggests, on the character of Marianne. This shift in storyline was perhaps because the studio was eager to capitalize on Lamarr's star power. Even though Lamarr's Austrian refugee character takes the film's center stage, so to speak, *A Lady Without Passport*, like *Illegal Entry*, expresses a deep ambivalance toward refugees, and uncertainty around what, if anything, distinguishes refugees from "illegal aliens." Marianne is fully prepared to violate US immigration law, and the film's plot revolves around the urgency of the authorities' mission to combat such violations. But she also makes a powerful case for the impossible position refugees occupy vis-à-vis legal regimes, an argument that co-exists uneasily with the film's law-and-order narrative. This critical perspective emerges most clearly in a scene after Pete rescues Marianne from the local cop who tries to arrest her for working without permission. Pete takes Marianne, still clad in her sparkly two-piece cigarette-girl outfit, back to his hotel. In an exchange with Pete about her near-arrest, Marianne articulates the collective predicament war refugees face. "For ten years," she says, "they've driven me and everyone like me around the world. We can't stay here. 'We have laws. Get out!' But where can I go? Now I'm in Cuba. I may stay, but I can't work. The law says, 'Don't earn your living or you'll be deported. Find your bread on the street!'" Pete attempts to calm her down and come on to her at the same time: "You live with anger. There are more pleasant companions." But when he comes up behind her and places his hands on her arms, she throws him off, sits down angrily on the bed, and turns to face him, putting her hand to her hip in a gesture of defiance. The motion serves to shift the fabric of her off-the-shoulder halter top such that a concentration-camp tattoo is revealed on her upper arm. She looks down at it, and then at Pete: "Another souvenir of the law. Buchenwald!" Pete backs off, chastened. "The law," both in Marianne's telling and in the person of Pete, does not come off looking admirable.

The law's capacity for putting refugees in an untenable position is driven home again in a later scene. Pete urges Marianne to reconsider her plan to be smuggled to the United States, noting that some migrants "wait to enter legally." Marianne tells him that getting where she needs to go is not a matter of patience. Her father, she explains, has been in the US for a decade but cannot help her enter legally, because he himself is unlawfully present in the United States. Marianne's story thus confronts viewers with the uncertainties about law, morality and deservingness that threaded through the era's debates about refugees.

How much viewers are meant to take Marianne's side in the matter, however, remains uncertain. Her moral stature is called into question not only by the film's ultimate insistence on the righteousness of US border-guarding, but also by the presence of Lamarr herself, an ambiguous character in both her on- and off-screen personae. Lamarr was one of Hollywood's most famous European exiles, and the

parallels between Marianne and Lamarr—both glamorous Austrians fleeing to America—would have been obvious to anyone in the audience. The connection between actress and character is underscored by the fact that a painting of the very vessel with which she arrived in New York's harbor for the first time—the *Normandie*—hangs (unremarked) on the wall in the Gulf Stream Café. Indeed, the story of Lamarr's landing a contract with Louis Mayer while both were aboard that ship was a legend of both beneficent rescue of a lovely damsel and of fairy-tale success in Hollywood.[68] Marianne, too, may indeed be deserving of rescue and a fairy-tale ending. But the painting's positioning in the unsavory Gulf Stream Café, a hub of Havana's European criminal underworld, gestures as well to darker associations carried by the actress's European past. As a young actress, Lamarr became infamous for appearing nude and acting out sexual climax in the 1933 Czech film *Ecstasy*, which caused an uproar on its release and met with condemnation and censorship in the United States. This scandalous history made Lamarr permanently suspect, a celebrated Hollywood beauty who nevertheless remained marked as a dangerously sexualized foreigner.[69]

This tension imbued Lamarr's most famous femme fatale characters, which in turn would seem to cast doubt onto Marianne's virtue. Every viewer watching Lamarr as Marianne in *A Lady Without Passport* would have had in mind the image of the actress in her most recent role: Delilah, the exotic seductress who betrayed and unmanned the hero in Paramount's 1949 blockbuster *Samson and Delilah*.[70] Indeed, MGM went out of its way to link the two characters, exploiting the earlier film's success in its publicity as much as possible. The movie poster for *A Lady Without Passport,* with Lamarr in her form-fitting metallic cigarette-salesgirl outfit, clearly evoked Delilah's golden two-piece number. The idea that "Delilah" was present onscreen in *A Lady Without Passport* would have been obvious even without the film's trailer pitching the story as an encounter between Hodiak as a "super snooper with a soft heart" and Lamarr as the "delectable Delilah who cut him short!" The script, too, takes care to remind us of the danger inherent in Marianne/Lamarr's sexuality. "Never trust a beautiful woman," Palinov warns, when Pete catches sight of her in the Gulf Stream. And indeed, Pete's infatuation with Marianne nearly leads him to abandon his vital, patriotic job. That his feelings for her mirror Palinov's further serves (like Lempo's relationship with Anna, also described as "clever and dangerous," in *Illegal Entry*) to highlight Marianne's moral ambiguity, positioned as she is at the point of a love triangle with the smuggler on one side and the "I-man" on the other.

What of the five other foreigners on the plane with Marianne to Florida? Like Marianne, all of them are involved in a sinister alien smuggling underworld, and all are prepared to violate US law to enter the country. Are they so different from her? After we see them board the smugglers' small airplane in Cuba, the film cuts to the Miami INS office, where Chief Patrol Inspector Frank Westlake (James Craig), the officer in charge of the smuggling sting operation, is going over the intel on the Florida-bound group with an underling. Westlake holds a stack of portraits of the Florida-bound migrants, courtesy of an undercover quick-sketch artist whom the

accommodating Cuban police cleverly stationed in front of the Gulf Stream Café. Portrait by portrait, Westlake announces each of the migrants' foreign-sounding names and the attribute which marks him or her as clearly "undesirable" and thus excludable under US law. Each would-be immigrant in the plane, in other words, is not only entering the country in a clandestine manner—a misdemeanor or felony at the time, depending on whether it was a repeat offense—but is clearly marked as a distinct threat to the well-being of the nation. First portrait: "Dimitri Matthias, seventeen. Tubercular. Refused visa on account of contagious disease." Second one: "Asa Sestina. Forty-seven. Naturalized in 1929, stripped of US citizenship and deported in 1938" for involvement in "the rackets" (i.e., a gangster). Third one: "Elizabeth Alonescu, 35. The lady doesn't believe in paying duty on the jewelry she brings into the country." When Westlake comes to Marianne's portrait (as glamorous an image as any publicity still of Lamarr), however, he gets as far as reciting her name, but is interrupted by Pete's sudden entry into the room. We are left hanging. Was Westlake about to announce some hitherto unrevealed reason that Marianne—about whose back story we know very little, after all—is an "undesirable alien" like the others? Or was he going to recount her experience in Buchenwald and thus suggest that she has some claim on our, and the law's, sympathy? This uncertainty underscores that the line between Marianne and her co-passengers is a thin one at best. The distinction between "deserving refugee" and "undesirable illegal alien" hangs on the thread of Marianne's chance relationship with Pete, the INS inspector who sees her as very desirable indeed. Unlike Marianne, the other passengers either die a violent death or are captured, and, presumably, not given the same opportunity for redemption that Marianne will (we assume) be.

Film scholar Diane Negra observes that the characters Lamarr played who were located outside US borders tended to be dangerous, exotic temptresses. Those she played inside the space of the nation, by contrast, were inclined to be respectable and dull. Thus, the roles in which Lamarr was cast reinscribed the geographic divide central to her own narrative arc, in which she began as a sexually wild young woman in European film, but was later "domesticated" by Hollywood's wholesome values and restrictive production code, which served to strictly limit displays of sexuality.[71] *A Lady Without Passport* encapsulates this geographic trajectory within its own narrative. After the film's action moves from Havana's moody foreign streets to the United States, the exotic Marianne appears to be wholly tamed. In the film's final scene, deep in the Florida Everglades, Marianne stands on a wooden dock between Palinov and Pete, caught in the middle of their showdown. Palinov urges her to return with him to Cuba. "We'll make it the next time," he says. "He'll arrest you, and you will be jailed and deported." Pete confirms that he must arrest her. "I have no choice, Marianne," he says. Faced with the choice between speeding away on a boat with the villain and returning to foreign territory to try her hand a second time at illegal entry into the United States, or remaining in the United States with the upstanding Pete (forgiven, it seems, for deceiving her) and facing the immigration enforcement music, Marianne opts for the latter. In this moment of submission to US law, the INS, and generic cinematic

conventions about the power of love, Marianne looks utterly demure, nothing like the defiant woman in the cigarette-seller's outfit who bared her Buchenwald tattoo. Being within the nation's borders, it seems, in combination with the love of a loyal American, has acted upon her, and she has proven herself redeemable.

If the film's depiction of its own geographic universe thus highlights the liminal space occupied by its central character, it also produces a spatial counternarrative to the triumphant inevitability of the script's action. As Chief Inspector Westlake narrates the story of the aliens in the portraits in the scene described above, he conveys brisk certainty about the mission at hand, and indeed viewers can guess who is likely to prevail. But throughout the scene, Westlake is seated in front of an enormous map that bears witness to a rather more complicated reality than the one the film's narrative arc insists on. The map depicts the region that makes up Westlake's beat: the empty expanse of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, rimmed by the US coastline from Texas to Georgia, as well as Cuba.[72] Like the map in the office of immigration authorities in *Illegal Entry,* it is simultaneously a reminder of the US government's vigilance and determination to control its borders as well as of the difficulty of the border-guarding enterprise.[73] There would not be a smuggling business, after all, if those borders were impenetrable.[74] Unlike the map we see in *Illegal Entry,* however, there are no crisply defined lines here. This time the map, like the film's narrative itself, is centered on the watery borderlands of the Caribbean and the Gulf. The image suggests that the narrative of migration, and of immigration enforcement, is not always one of clearly demarcated lines between here and there, good and bad, refugee and illegal alien. That the film's action culminates in a the remote, swampy wilderness of the Everglades intensifies the sense that the legal and moral terrain the film occupies is a morass, providing a dramatic visual backdrop that calls into question the tidy ending provided by the script.

Authenticity and erasure

In their tales of sinister "alien smuggling" and limited redemption for selected beautiful European women, *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport* represent carefully curated versions of authenticity and government authority. Yet in their efforts to control the meaning of the refugee story and its relationship to US border guarding, they present some telling omissions. Indeed, by looking at the narrratives that the two films obscured, we can observe some fascinating contrasts. The aliens whose stories these films explored were European. To be sure, "illegal entry" of European aliens was in the news during this period, and government officials (as their willing participation in these film projects suggests) were concerned about the supposed dangers posed by unauthorized European border-crossers.[75] Nowhere in *Illegal Entry*, however, do we see evidence of the traversing of the Mexico-US border that was fast becoming of far more pressing concern in the era, namely the migration of Mexicans themselves. We do see Mexicans in some minor background roles, but not as migrants, authorized or otherwise. This is not because Hollywood was uninterested in the dramatic potential of this phenom-

enon. In the same year that *Illegal Entry* came out, MGM's *Border Incident* hit the theaters. Directed by Anthony Mann, *Border Incident* featured Ricardo Montalban as a Mexican government investigator working with his US counterpart, played by George Murphy, to bust up an alien smuggling scheme on the Baja California/California border. The distinction between the narrative in Mann's film and the stories told in *Illegal Entry* or *A Lady Without Passport* is stark. Mexicans receive sympathetic treatment in *Border Incident*, and US law enforcement does not come off looking particularly good. The aliens here, however, are not refugees. They are workers. And however sympathetic the film is to the Mexican workers it depicts, they are clearly marked as "illegal."[76] Indeed, the film reflected and appeared in a moment in which US authorities were ratcheting up their apprehensions and deportations of Mexicans traversing traditional northbound routes to work in the United States, and in which the notion that these migrants were "illegals," or "wetbacks," became lodged firmly in the nation's discourse.[77] The different worlds of the films throw into sharp relief the emerging divide in the political imagination between "refugees" and undocumented immigrant labor. The line between refugees and illegal aliens may be blurry in *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport*, but for the Mexican migrants of *Border Incident*, the divide between legality and illegality is capricious but absolute.

If *Illegal Entry* erases Mexican migration from the drama of the region, sketching out a national and regional drama purely centered around European war refugees and ignoring questions of migrant labor, *A Lady Without Passport*, similarly, erases the ethnic other from its universe. It was clear to the filmmakers from the government reports they were relying on—as well as from the press—that, while indeed some of the smuggling in the region was of European aliens, much of it also consisted in the traffic in Chinese migrants, who were still, even after World War II, largely barred from entering the United States. There were, of course, millions of Chinese displaced by World War II and then the revolution in 1949. Unlike Europeans, however, Chinese were less likely to constitute, in US policies or political imagination, refugees. Thus they did not even have access to the liminal legal status of "potential refugee," a category to which at least some Europeans did have access.[78] The real-life events on which *A Lady Without Passport* was based makes this evident. Most of the aliens Murphy smuggled into the United States were, in fact, Chinese, as the INS reports that the filmmakers drew on in to create their script detail.[79] The film transposes the story onto Hedy Lamarr, however, through whom it narrates the possibility that some—a select few, perhaps, but some nonetheless—European immigrants, even those determined to enter the country without permission, might be deserving of admission.

To be sure, neither *Illegal Entry* nor *A Lady Without Passport* resolves the uncertainties around the status of European refugees. The sympathy and welcome accorded Anna and Marianne are provisional, mediated through the deeply gendered tropes of heterosexual romance. Other Europeans in the films who share their desire for safe haven are not so fortunate. The question of who is cast as a refugee, and who is not, remains at the whim of the scriptwriters—as it did, in real

life, of the government authorities whose own narratives were so intertwined with these Hollywood fantasies. This conceptual struggle continues in the present. It is, of course, not simply a matter of representation, but of life and death. The fate of migrants from many nations seeking asylum at the nation's southern border, in particular over the last several years and at the current moment, rests in large part on the determination—in popular understanding, in media portrayals, in policy and law, in official hearings—of whether they are threatening invaders or people deserving of safe haven.

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Notes

1. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, eds., *Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 75.

2. *Illegal Entry*, directed by Frederick de Cordova (Universal-International Pictures, 1949).

3. "Showman's Manual," file "Illegal Entry," Box 36, Pressbook Collection, University of Southern California Cinematic Arts Library (hereafter USC-CAL).

4. January 26, 1949, file 12854, box 442, Illegal Entry collection (hereafter IE), USC-CAL; on the shooting along the Mexican border and cooperation with the US government see also "Story Plans Develop Rapidly at Warners; Rooney Slate Expands," *Los Angeles Times,* Dec. 10, 1948.

5. E. Maurice Adler to B.B. Kahane, January 22, 1948; B.B. Kahane to Hal Hode, January 23, 1948; Hal Hode to William Coblenz, January 28, 1948; Irving Cummings to W.A. Carmichael, February 3, 1948; William Coblenz to Watson Miller, February 6, 1948; file 56234/356, Entry 9, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC (hereafter RG 85, NARA).

6. *A Lady Without Passport,* directed by Joseph H. Lewis (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1950).

7. "Hedy Lamarr as 'Lady Without Passport,'" *New York Times*, August 4, 1950.

8. Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 115; Maddalena Marinari, *Unwanted: Italian and Jewish Mobilization Against Restrictive Immigration Laws* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 103; Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (New York & Cambridge, MA, Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press), 305.

9. Although there was no real legal framework for refugee admission until the postwar era, there were, however, some early precedents for treating those understood to be fleeing persecution differently within US immigration law. On US policies regarding providing haven for refugees in earlier eras, see Carl Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees During the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 15; Julian Lim, "Immigration, Asylum, and Citizenship: A More Holistic Approach," *California Law Review* 101.4 (2013): 1013-1078; Marinari, *Unwanted,* 36-42; Yael Schacher, "Exceptions to Exclusion: A Prehistory of Asylum in the United States, 1880-1980" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2015).

10. Displaced Persons Act of June 25, 1948 (62 Stat. 1009) and Displaced Persons Act of June 16, 1950 (64 Stat. 219).

11. Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust,* 176. On the Displaced Persons legislation and the debates around them, see, in addition to Dinnerstein's thorough exploration, Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 21-26; Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), chap. 5; Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921-1965* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 188-196; Gil Loescher and John A. Scanlan, *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America's Half-Open Door, 1945-Present* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), chap. 1; Marinari, *Unwanted,* 98-110; Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 181-188; Zolberg, *A Nation by Design,* 304-308. In 1951, the fledgling United Nations would produce a treaty declaring that refugees were people with a "fear of persecution" in their home countries and who could not be protected by those countries, and that signatories to the treaty had an obligation to recognize their claims to asylum. The UN definition is still the basis for the one much of the international community, including the United States, recognizes today.

12. *Casablanca,* directed by Michael Curtiz (1942); *The Search,* directed by Fred Zinnemann (1948). On *The Search*'s portrayal of war refugees, see Anna Holian, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Jewish Children and the Holocaust in Fred Zinnemann's *The Search* (1948)," *Film History* 31, no. 2 (2019): 116-43, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/filmhistory.31.2.05; Sharif Gemie and Louise Rees. "Representing and Reconstructing Identities in the Postwar World: Refugees, UNRRA, and Fred Zinnemann's Film, *The Search* (1948)," *International Review of Social History* 56, no. 3 (2011): 441–73, doi:10.1017/S0020859011000198. Interestingly, Fred Zinnemann had also directed *Forbidden Passage* (1941), a short film about refugees and alien smuggling for the MGM series of shorts *Crime Does Not Pay* that anticipates many of the themes of the films I consider here. (Thanks to Anna Holian for this reference, and to Jacob Fuentes for pointing me to *The Search*.) On short film projects that the International Refugee Organization and voluntary agencies produced in the immediate postwar era to publicize their work and the plight of displaced persons, see Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 74; Rachel Beth Deblinger, "'In a World Still Trembling': American Jewish Philanthropy and the Shaping of Holocaust Survivor Narratives in Postwar America (1945-1953)," (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2014), 103-109.

13. Indeed, in *Illegal Entry,* the characters use terms like "cargo," "passengers," or other circumlocutions that avoid the issue of classifying the story's foreigners, although the immigration officials whose speeches introduce the film use the term "aliens."

14. On Hollywood's historical role in propaganda production, see, for example, James E. Combs and Sara T. Combs, *Film Propaganda and American Politics: An Analysis and Filmography* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1994); Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Jennifer Fay, *Theaters of Occupation: Hollywood and the Reeducation of Postwar Germany* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda*

Shaped World War II Movies (New York: The Free Press, 1987); Thomas Schatz, *Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), esp. chap. 7; Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007); Peter H. Smith, *Talons of the Eagle: Dynamics of US-Latin American Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 82-85. Shaw's exploration of "state-private networks" that characterized the "grey" propaganda media productions of the Cold War era is relevant here, though he does not explore films about immigration or human smuggling. Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War,* 4-5. On particular government agencies' active involvement with the worlds of film and television, see, for example, Anita Huizar-Hernández, "Bordering Reality: Dramatizing Policing the North American Borderlands in American Television," in *Border Policing: A History of Enforcement and Evasion in North America,* ed. Holly M. Karibo and George T. Díaz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2020), 252-268; Tricia Jenkins, *The CIA in Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016); John Sbardellati, *J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies: The FBI and the Origins of Hollywood's Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Simon Willmetts, *In Secrecy's Shadow: The OSS and CIA in Hollywood Cinema, 1941-1979* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

15. On the genre of semi-documentary, particularly in relation to film noir, see R. Barton Palmer, "Borderings: The Film Noir Semi-Documentary," in *A Companion to Film Noir,* ed. Andrew Spicer and Helen Hanson (Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 125-141.

16. Ashley Johnson Bavery, *Bootlegged Aliens: Immigration Politics on America's Northern Border* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020); Grace Peña Delgado, *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism and Exclusion in the US-Mexico Borderlands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), chap. 3; Patrick Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines: Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration, 1882-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); Garland, *After They Closed the Gates*; Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), chap. 3; Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003);* Julian Lim, *Porous Borders: Multiracial Migrations and the Law in the US-Mexico Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), chap. 3; Marinari, *Unwanted*, 88-93; Adam McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), chaps. 8-10; Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), chaps. 1-2; Elliott Young, *Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era Through World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), chaps. 3-5.

17. For musings on the question of cinema's claims to "reality" in the realm of documentary filmmaking, even while remaining essentially "mimetic distractions and counterfeitings," see Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 3. Film theory and criticism continues to debate film's relationship to reality—as its reflection, its generator, and its foil. For more on this debate, see, for example, Richard Rushton, *The Realities of Film: Theories of Filmic Reality* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

18. See John Torpey, "The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Passport System," in *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*, ed. Jane Caplan and John Torpey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 256-70; Aristide R. Zolberg, "Global Movements, Global Walls: Responses to Migration, 1885-1925" in *Global History and Migrations,* ed. Wang Gungwu (New York: Westview Press, 1997), 279-80 and Zolberg, *A Nation by Design,* 240-41.

19. See, for example, Lee Grieveson, Esther Sonnet and Peter Stanfield, eds., *Mob Culture: Hidden Histories of the American Gangster Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005); Jonathan Munby, *Public Enemies, Public Heroes: Screening the Gangster from* Little Caesar *to* Touch of Evil (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Jack Shadoian, *Dreams and Dead Ends: The American Gangster Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); Brian Neve, *Film and Politics in America: A Social Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1992). There are a few notable exceptions to the neglect of these films, particularly in explorations of unauthorized Mexican immigration and the US-Mexico border. See, for example, Jonathan Auerbach, *Dark Borders: Film Noir and American Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), chap. 4 and "Noir Citizenship: Anthony Mann's 'Border Incident,' *Cinema Journal* 47, no. 4 (Summer 2008): 102-120; Dominique Brégent-Heald, "Dark Limbo: Film Noir and the North American Borders," *Journal of American Culture* 29, no. 2 (June 2006): 125-138; Camilla Fojas, *Border Bandits: Hollywood on the Southern Fontier* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), esp. chap. 3; and David R. Maciel and Maria Rosa Garcia-Acevedo, "The Celluloid Immigrant: The Narrative Films of Mexican Immigration," in *Culture Across Borders: Mexican Immigration and Popular Culture*, ed. David R. Maciel and María Herrera-Sobek (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998).

20. My own work falls into this category, as do the other works that explore the history of unauthorized immigration listed in footnote 11, above. To this list one might also add Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010) and S. Deborah Kang, *The INS on the Line: Making Immigration Law on the US-Mexico Border, 1917-1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

21. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 295; Tichenor, *Dividing Lines,* 155-56; Zolberg, *A Nation by Design,* 268-69.

22. Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State, from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 124-27; Gardner Jackson, "Doak the Deportation Chief," *Nation,* March 18, 1931; Kang, *The INS on the Line,* 63-64; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects,* 75-80.

23. Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 49–71, 97–125; Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929–1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), 33–35, 120–21; Kang, *The INS on the Line*, 64-67; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects,* 71-75; George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), chap. 10; and Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917–1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), chap. 5; Zolberg, *A Nation by Design,* 269-270.

24. E. P. Hutchinson, *Legislative History of American Immigration Policy, 1798-1965* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 228-229; 241.

25. Hernández, *Migra!,* 104.

26. On the "Gestapo spy" films of the period, which likewise reflected deeply xenophobic fears around alien infiltration, see Auerbach, *Dark Borders,* chap. 1.

27. David Wallace, *Exiles in Hollywood* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Limelight Editions, 2006). The fact that studios had so many foreign actors to hire made for even more possibilities for "authentically" representing foreigners in movies, which movies like *Illegal Entry* and *A Lady Without Passport* made use of, albeit, like the industry had often done, freely swapping in other national identities for the actors' actual ones, and letting their accents just vaguely signify "foreignness."

28. Combs and Combs, *Film Propaganda and American Politics*, 123-125. Relatedly, on the FBI's relationship to Hollywood during the early Cold War era, see Sbardellati, *J. Edgar Hoover Goes to the Movies.*

29. On the move to the Department of Justice and the Border Patrol's expansion, see Hernández, *Migra!,* 104-106.

30. Sound Recording 85.17-85.21.A (1941?), Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

31. Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 139. Schatz observes here that some in the US government advocated for the movie industry, too, to be fully converted to the war effort, as were the movie industries of Germany and Italy. For more on the relationship between Hollywood and the war effort, see Doherty, *Projections of War.*

32. Schatz, *Boom and Bust,* 248.

33. Ibid, 222-23.

34. Ibid, 150.

35. Thomas Doherty, "Documenting the 1940s," chap. 12 in Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 397-404. Doherty also discusses wartime government-studio collaborations around military training films, propaganda films, and combat reports. Ibid, 405-413.

36. Schatz, *Boom and Bust*, 139-142; 222-24; 244-49; Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage Books, 2nd ed., 1994), 150-51.

37. For example, E. Maurice ("Buddy") Adler, the producer making one of the many pitches for semi-documentary alien smuggling films in 1948, had wartime experience working on documentaries in the military. B. B. Kahane to Hal Hode, January 23, 1948, file 56234/356, Entry 9, RG 85, NARA.

38. Palmer, "Borderings: The Film Noir Semi-Documentary," 134.

39. "The House on 92nd Street," American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films, American Film Institute, https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/MovieDetails/24454?cxt=filmography; "FBI Filmed Nazis with a Telephoto," *New York Times,* Sep. 13, 1945.

40. E. Maurice Adler to B.B. Kahane, January 22, 1948; Irving Cummings to W.A. Carmichael, February 3, 1948, file 56234/356, Entry 9, RG 85, NARA.

41. Schatz, *Boom and Bust,* 160-164; Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, 272-73.

42. Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War,* 44-46; Sklar, *Movie-Made America*, 256-68; Reynold Humphries, *Hollywood's Blacklists: A Political and Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), chap. 4.

43. Kathryn Cramer Brownell, "'Movietime USA.': The Motion Picture Industry Council and the Politicization of Hollywood in Postwar America, *The Journal of Policy History* 24, no. 3 (2012): 518-542.

44. The *LA Daily News* griped that "for at least half a reel, audiences find themselves listening to government authorities like Atty. Gen. Tom Clark, and it takes some time to shake off the impression that one has walked in on a newsreel." Review of *Illegal Entry*, *LA Daily News,* June [?] 1949, file "Illegal Entry," Motion Picture Association of America, Production Code Administration records (hereafter MPA-PCA), Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills, California (hereafter MHL).

45. The film seems to have fudged a bit here with the real world's war bride timeline, however, as the War Brides Act was only enacted on December 28, 1945 (59 Stat. 659).

46. Review of *Illegal Entry*, *Motion Picture Daily,* June 9, 1949 and Review of *Illegal Entry* in *LA Daily News,* June [?] 1949, file "Illegal Entry," MPA-PCA, MHL.

47. "I-Men," *Newsweek*, June 27, 1949.

48. "Smugglers' Crimes Told in Feature," *LA Times*, June 13, 1949; Review of *Illegal Entry*, *Motion Picture Daily,* June 9, 1949.

49. On the trope of the concentration camp tattoo as a visual motif identifying concentration camp survivors in visual media postwar, see Deblinger, "'In a World Still Trembling'," 119, 272. Auschwitz was the only camp to tattoo numbers on prisoners' arms; some camps also tattooed "KL" for *Konzentrationslager.* The tattoo on the back reading "Dachau" was thus an invention of the filmmakers, and perhaps speaks to their

sense that they needed to spell out the name of a camp in order for the tattoo to "tell its story." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Tattoos and Numbers: The System of Identifying Prisoners at Auschwitz," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/tattoos-and-numbers-the-system-of-identifying-prisoners-at-auschwitz.

50. Review of *Illegal Entry, Hollywood Citizen News*, June 14, 1949, file "Illegal Entry," MPA-PCA, MHL.

51. At least as far as European war brides were concerned, the War Brides Act of 1945, which allowed servicement to bring their foreign wives to the United States outside of immigration quotas, was fairly uncontoversial. Many Asian women, however, remained excluded by the law. David Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 21-22; Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door*, 94, 97; Philip E. Wolgin and Irene Bloemraad, "'Our Gratitude to Our Soldiers": Military Spouses, Family Re-Unification, and Postwar Immigration Reform," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 41, no. 1 (2010): 27-60, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40785025.

52. Dominique Brégent-Heald observes in her study of what she calls "border noirs"—the noir films that play out on the Mexican and Canadian borders with the United States, rather than in the more conventional noir spaces of urban streets—that "filmmakers frequently use maps or establishing shots of the landscape to insert the audience into the geographic specificity presented on screen. The mapping of territory indicates the need to control space, or be controlled by it." The maps thus call attention to the geopolitical backdrop, the United States struggling to assert its claims to control over space in the shifting terrain of the postwar world. Brégent-Heald, "Dark Limbo," 126.

53. "Showman's Manual," file "Illegal Entry," Box 36, Pressbook Collection, USC-CAL.

54. "World Premiere of Illegal Entry," file 12747, box 453, IE, USC-CAL.

55. US Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 81st Cong., 1st sess., June 6, 8, 1949, Vol. 95, pt. 6, 7224; 7397.

56. Phil Gerard to Al Horwitz, press release, June 7, 1949, file 12747, box 453, IE, USC-CAL.

57. Leo M. Cadison to William Gordon, November 23, 1948, file 05364, box 197, IE, USC-CAL.

58. Herman Kass to [Charley] Simonelli, June 9, 1949 and Alfred L. Mendelsohn to Charley Simonelli, June 9, 1949, file 12747, box 453, IE, USC-CAL.

59. Louis Mayer had lured Lamarr into the production with promises that it would be even bigger than the recent blockbuster *Samson and Delilah* (Paramount, 1949), which Lamarr had starred in. But *A Lady Without Passport* met with mixed reviews, and its box-office take was poor enough that MGM canceled its contract with Lamarr for two more films. Stephen Michael Shearer, *Beautiful: The Life of Hedy Lamarr* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, 2010), chap. 16, Kindle.

60. Quoted in Ruth Barton, *Hedy Lamarr: The Most Beautiful Woman in Film* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), 178. At least one other person at the studio, too, suggested that a few days of filming immigration authorities at work in Miami, and attending the court trial of a suspected alien smuggler, would produce excellent material for inclusion in the film. "'The Undesirables': Some Background and Facts," n.a., November 11, 1948, 14 and 32, f.L. 170, Turner/MGM scripts, MHL. It is unclear who authored this document (cited hereafter as "Background"). It may have been produced by the studio's research department. On the work of Hollywood's research departments, see George F. Custen, "Hollywood and the Research Department," in *Why Docudrama? Fact-Fiction on Film and TV*, ed. Alan Rosenthal (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 133-145.

61. MGM Pressbook, file "A Lady Without Passport," Core Collections Files-Clippings, MHL.

62. "Background," 15.

63. Ibid, 16.

64. "Smuggling Leader 'Shanghaied' to U.S.," *New York Times*, Nov. 6, 1951. In 1949, Simonovich seems to have been arrested by Cuban authorities in Havana, but US officials claimed that the Cubans had released him. "Alien Smuggling Leader Named," *New York Times,* June 24, 1950. The immigration officials in Florida may also have felt under particular pressure by changes that were reshaping the expanding INS, such as a recent reorganization that moved the agency's District 6 headquarters from Atlanta to Miami.

65. "Background," 4.

66. Ibid, 3. In the event, Hodiak's character in the film was a sort of amalgam of Fullilove and his boss, Frank Hornyak, described as "stocky, swarthy," and the Hungarian-speaking son of immigrants. Ibid, 4.

67. Edward W. Murphy to Samuel Marx, September 26, 1949, f.L 193, *A Lady Without Passport,* Turner-MGM Scripts, MHL. Murphy served ten months in the federal penitentiary in Atlanta for his smuggling activities, but was under indictment once again for similar exploits when he turned up dead in Lake Okeechobee—the very lake the smuggler's plane flies over in the film—in January 1953. "Smuggler's Body Found in Fla. Lake," *Schenectady Gazette,* Jan. 16, 1953. This is the very lake that his fictional counterpart flies over in the climatic chase in the film.

68. Barton, *Hedy Lamarr,* 61-64; Shearer, *Beautiful*, chap. 17; Diane Negra observes that Lamarr's roles often reprised the trope of benevolent male rescue. Diane Negra, *Off-White Hollywood: American Culture and Ethnic Female Stardom* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 22.

69. Barton, *Hedy Lamarr*, 1, 64; Shearer, *Beautiful*, chaps. 4 and 5. A recent documentary about Lamarr also explores this theme. *Bombshell*, directed by Alexandra Dean (Zeitgeist Films, 2017).

70. *Samson and Delilah* was 1950's top-grossing film. Barton, *Hedy Lamarr,* 174.

71. Negra, *Off-White Hollywood*, 104. On Hollywood's Production Code Administration, see Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood's Censor: Joseph I. Breen and the Production Code Admnistration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). If Lamarr was always pushing at the boundaries of the sexually permissible, with both her serial marriages and divorces and her devouring, delectable Delilah-ness a titillating aspect of her glamor, she never—thanks to the production code—was truly able to cross the lines of respectability.

72. Miami was the headquarters of the newly reorganized INS district 6. See https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/085.html. Filmmakers knew this. The author of MGM's research background for the film explained, "[District Director Walter Miller's] territory (Sixth District) covers our borders for 2,371 miles. It begins part way up the coast of Georgia and runs clear around Florida and west across the Gulf past New Orleans. It is the duty of Mr. Miller and his men to prevent all smuggling of aliens by any means, through air or water, across these boundaries." "Background," 2-3.

73. *A Lady Without Passport*, most of which takes place in Cuba, illustrated just how much border-guarding required the United States to move its policing into the international realm. Diane Negra makes the related point that Lamarr was a figure who helped to fashion a narrative of US interventionism in the postwar years. Negra, *Off-White Hollywood,* 107-09.

74. The background document for the film remarks on the challenge the INS District Director Walter Miller faced in his border-guarding operations for the Gulf region. "To do this work, he has a staff of 59 men." "Background," 3.

75. For more contemporary news coverage highlighting the unauthorized entry of Europeans, in addition to the coverage of Simonovich's activities cited in note 58 above, see, for example, "Aliens Smuggled in by Air at $500 Each; Ring Smashed," *Daily Boston Globe,* Dec. 7, 1949; "U.S. Hits at 2 Rings in Alien Smuggling," *New York Times,* June 24,

1950. News coverage also reflected fears that even many of the people entering under the new Displaced Persons legislation were "illegal." See, for example, "Half of D.P.'s in U.S. Called 'Illegal,'" *Washington Post*, Feb. 4, 1950.

76. For compelling readings of *Border Incident*'s portrayal—and interrogation—of the "illegal" status of the Mexican laborers in the film, see Auerbach, *Dark Borders,* 125-142 and Auerbach, "Noir Citizenship."

77. Hernández, *Migra!,* 172-82; Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Making of the US-Mexico Boundary* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 27-28; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects,* 89, 147-53.

78. Leonard Dinnerstein discusses postwar refugee advocates' and policy's focus on Europeans rather than Asians or Africans. Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust*, 124. On the general European-centeredness of postwar refugee policy, see also Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 5, 59, 86. Mae Ngai observes that Chinese immigrants, despite the World-War II era repeal of Chinese Exclusion, came to be seen after the the Revolution of 1949 as potential political threats. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects,* 203. On how and when Chinese migrants were defined as "refugees" post-World-War II, see also Laura Madokoro, *Elusive Refuge: Chinese Migrants in the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

79. Frank Hornyak to Officers, Miami Sector, April 14, 1948, 3-4; 7-8; Frank Hornyak to Officers, Miami Sector, May 11, 1948, 3-8; both appended to "Background."