



Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League

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An undocumented immigrant's journey from a New York City homeless shelter to the top of his Princeton class

Dan-el Padilla Peralta has lived the American dream. As a boy, he came here legally with his family. Together they left Santo Domingo behind, but life in New York City was harder than they imagined. Their visas lapsed, and Dan-el's father returned home. But Dan-el's courageous mother was determined to make a better life for her bright sons.

Without papers, she faced tremendous obstacles. While Dan-el was only in grade school, the family joined the ranks of the city's homeless. Dan-el, his mother, and brother lived in a downtown shelter where Dan-el's only refuge was the meager library. There he met Jeff, a young volunteer from a wealthy family. Jeff was immediately struck by Dan-el's passion for books and learning. With Jeff's help, Dan-el was accepted on scholarship to Collegiate, the oldest private school in the country.

There, Dan-el thrived. Throughout his youth, Dan-el navigated these two worlds: the rough streets of East Harlem, where he lived with his brother and his mother and tried to make friends, and the ultra-elite halls of a Manhattan private school, where he could immerse himself in a world of books and where he soon rose to the top of his class.

From Collegiate, Dan-el went to Princeton, where he thrived, and where he made the momentous decision to come out as an undocumented student in a *Wall Street Journal* profile a few months before he gave the salutatorian's traditional address in Latin at his commencement.

Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League Details

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Shelter to the Ivy League Dan-el Padilla Peralta

From Reader Review Undocumented: A Dominican Boy's Odyssey from a Homeless Shelter to the Ivy League for online ebook

Marta says

Dan-el Padilla Peralta has lived the American dream. As a boy, he arrived in the United States legally with his family. Together they had traveled from Santo Domingo to seek medical care for his mother. Soon the family's visas expire, and Dan-el's father eventually returned to Republic Document . But Dan-el's mother decided to stay and make a better life for her sons in New York City.

Dan-el is my favorite character because he never gave up on his America Dream. He knows how hard it is to come to a new country and speak a different language.

This book motivates every parents that are undocumented to keep going strong and undocumented immigrants to work hard. And reach their goals.

I recommend this book to all the American Dreamers, who come to another country to have a better Education. To all the single parent who want a better life for them and their children. To all the people who won't give up on their American Dream.

Bri (girlwithabookblog.com) says

For more, check out <http://girlwithabookblog.wordpress.com!>

Undocumented is **a fantastic memoir that depicts one person's journey as an undocumented person living in America**. When Dan-El Padilla Peralta is a young child, he moved to New York from the Dominican Republic with his family. His family didn't acquire US citizen documentation and soon their travel papers expired and he and his mother were eventually living in America illegally. **Dan-El beautifully articulates the struggles that he encounters because he doesn't have documentation** – his mother isn't able to legally work so they had to move into a shelter when Dan-El is young and move frequently until they are able to find a more stable home thanks to public housing; he isn't able to "officially" work (on paper at least) when he is offered a mentorship job when he's in high school; he has no idea how to apply to college and if he will even be allowed to attend; and more struggles that are too numerous to list (and would also spoil some of his life story if I included them here).

It is so, so important that stories like Padilla Peralta's are captured and made available to the public. Moving to the US and overstaying your initial papers and eventually living in America illegally is more common than a lot of people think. You may even have someone in your life who is undocumented and you have no idea. **With Padilla Peralta's story of his life, he's able to share his experience with those who may not be aware of the realities that face being undocumented in the US, and also provide comfort to others who have lived those experiences**. I talked about this book with my friend who was undocumented for most of his youth and he said that it would have been incredibly reassuring to know a book like Undocumented existed because for a long time, he didn't know anyone else outside of his family who was undocumented. He told me that if he had been able to read about someone who shared his experience in some way, he wouldn't have felt so isolated about his status and his situation.

That said, Padilla Peralta is quick to remind readers that he doesn't have the answers for someone in similar

situations to him. He was able to acquire a lot of well-placed connections and a valuable support system based on his specific circumstances, which may not be widely available to everyone. His book isn't about teaching others specifically how to navigate their own situation, but purely serves to detail his own life experiences.

After the acknowledgments section of the book, there is a **glossary of Spanish terms** used throughout the text. Since I had an e-galley of this book, I didn't notice this until I had finished reading. There are hardly ever full sentences in Spanish within the book, and most of the Spanish terms are sprinkled into the text occasionally in a way that isn't distracting if you don't know Spanish. Thus, a glossary wasn't necessary to me, but some could find it helpful.

The only thing I would have changed about the memoir is the epilogue – it felt awkward to read and seemed as if it was hastily strung together. It's very vague about how many years had lapsed between the epilogue and the last chapter of the book and if there had been any development with one of the major plot lines of the book. I also wish there had been a greater call to action at the end of the book; Padilla Peralta speaks extensively about the DREAM Act and I felt like the epilogue could have included a request for readers to contact their local representatives about this bill or listed activism groups that they could either directly be involved with or contribute to if they desired. However, if you couldn't tell from the rest of this glowing review, **I definitely recommend reading this book**. It's well written and represents a perspective that I haven't read before. If you've read books that cover similar territory, please recommend them to me!

Disclaimer: I was provided with an Advance Reader Copy of this book for free from the Penguin First to Read program. All opinions expressed in the following review are my own and have not been influenced by Penguin.

Nicole Means says

When I first discovered this book, I was so excited. I had finished reading Sonia Nazario's "Enrique's Journey," which explored the trials of an Enrique, an undocumented man. So when I discovered "Undocumented," a firsthand account of Dan-el, I was so excited to delve even deeper into this important topic. However, a book that had so much potential, fell flat with lack of exploration into the political and social implications of being an undocumented person in the US. I have never been a huge fan of the memoir genre because the tone can be a bit self-serving and egocentric. Unfortunately, "Undocumented" was no different--the book started out quite strong, but as Dan-el never found his groove. In fact, his overuse of slang and lack of personal introspection caused his memoir to fall a bit flat. His writing style came off a bit immature for a many who is so intelligent. I am not sure if he chose to intermingle street slang with academic language to prove the point that his Dominican upbringing in East Harlem was just as much a part of him as his academic life at Princeton and Oxford, but whatever his intention, his memoir was a struggle to read in several portions. His intellect was not very apparent in his writing. Perhaps if he had incorporated statistics or facts beyond his own reality into the narrative, his story would have been a powerful platform to comment on the political decisions that caused such strife in his life.

Zachary Taylor says

Dan-el Padilla Peralta and I share many traits. We both love to read, we both are passionate classicists, we both have achieved academic excellence at premier American universities, and we both were raised Catholic. The similarities do not end at such an ostensibly superficial level, however. We share a love of Rome and its

monuments, for instance, and we both have uniquely close relationships with our mothers. Of course, at the same time, our worlds could not be more drastically far apart. Whereas I was raised in the relatively affluent white suburbs of Syracuse, New York, Dan-el endured the poverty and violence of Spanish Harlem as a child. Whereas I am an American citizen who does not think twice about the fact that I have a social security number, Dan-el is undocumented, thereby lacks a social security number, and faces persistent anxieties whenever he has to travel or secure employment. To be sure, I worked hard at university—I can confidently assert that I put in more study hours than anyone else in my class—yet almost all of my stress derived from my academic commitments and not much more. Dan-el, on the other hand, dealt with the cruel nativism of his peers coupled with an uncertain future career *in addition* to multiple theses. At an even more basic level, Dan-el is a black man in a racist society, while I am white.

These differences are obvious, I realize that; I only call attention to them because, as a classicist myself—and classicists tend easily to find common cause, I have noticed—I see so much of my own personality and interests in Dan-el, whom I deeply admire. The important point is, in the twenty-first century, not all classicists are white, not all of us are even documented citizens. Classics has broadened its horizons to welcome academics of all races and ethnicities, and yet it is still, despite this notable recent development, dominated by *blanquitos* like me. Dan-el Padilla's voice, then, is so critical, both for popular audiences and for classicists, who have a lot to learn from his remarkable story.

If Dan-el's story is exceptional, his memoir is not. While I appreciate his attempt to recreate in prose the vernacular he used at different times in his life and in different cultural contexts—he talked quite differently to his Latin teachers, for instance, than to his Spanish Harlem friends at Resurrection church—*Undocumented* is by no means literary, and only occasionally reflective at the deepest of levels. Fortunately, as was his aim, Dan-el successfully avoids the credit-to-the-race motif and by no means crafts his narrative around the look-at-him-he-made-it theme. He stresses that it was the confluence of fortune and the extraordinary efforts of many private individuals that allowed him to attend Princeton, then Oxford, and ultimately to pursue a Ph.D. in Classics at Stanford University with a hard-earned visa in hand. The main thrust of the narrative, it seems to me, is that undocumented persons have much to offer American intellectual, cultural, and political life. Dan-el says so himself at one point: “My hope for this book is that it will communicate a sense of the power of their potential contribution.” His life and those of many other undocumented Latinx people are a “testament to the exceptional potency of the American Dream that inspired our parents to surmount every obstacle in their quest to raise us here,” in the United States. I suppose that Dan-el achieves his aim. Yet he does so from a limited perspective—that is, he often fails to use his lived experience as a means to comment directly on the political circumstances that often made his life so miserable. I would have liked more of this, not at the expense of, but in addition to, his life narrative. The Joycean move from the particular to the universal—this is what makes for an excellent memoir, and it is for the most part absent in *Undocumented*.

I nevertheless enjoyed *Undocumented*. I was especially fascinated by how Classics drew in and enraptured Dan-el—how, for instance, he read the *Odyssey* and identified with Telemachus, who, like him, has lost his father and desperately seeks a relationship with him. I was also struck by his Princeton application letter, in which Dan-el writes, “Latin and Greek poetry have left an indelible impression on me precisely for these reasons,” that is, that lyric and verse can be “aids in times of anxiety and distress.” He continues: “They are embedded in how I have come to frame my personal responses to the world and have taken root in a kind of secondary consciousness I have of myself.” Above all, however, I found his response to Plato's *Crito*, one of my favorite philosophical texts, elucidatory. In the *Crito*, Socrates, imprisoned after his trial and condemned to death, refuses the opportunity to escape with his friend and thereby leave Athens. “He who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the State, and still remains” Socrates explains, “has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we [the Laws] command him,” no matter whether this contract and its associated statutes are ordered justly. Dan-el finds this notion preposterous. If the laws are unjust, what redemption is there in adherence to the punishment that they prescribe? In this moment, Dan-el once more solicited me to reflect on the vast difference between us as classicists. Whereas the evident seeds

of the Lockean idea of the social contract excited me when I first read the *Crito*, Dan-el immediately saw that its philosophical implications had direct influence on his life. We read the same text *so* differently. As a soon-to-be Latin teacher, I need to keep such disparate reader responses in mind.

In the end, I am so appreciative that Dan-el chose to share his experiences with us. How many Americans have absolutely no clue about what life is like for the millions of undocumented people in the United States? How many nevertheless espouse vitriolic xenophobic opinions about such people? *Undocumented* confronts such hatred head-on and seeks to show, via anecdotal evidence, that so many nativist assumptions are unfounded. It also demonstrates how Classics can both welcome and refuse people of color not attuned to its white-washed and patriarchal worldview of yore. We classicists should pay close attention.

Jennifer says

Really fascinating story. It reads a little too much like a love letter to Collegiate and Princeton though.

Tonya says

Undocumented is the autobiography of Dan-el Padilla Peralta beginning with his legal arrival in the United States with his family, through homelessness, prep schools, graduation from Princeton, and post-graduate studies at Oxford. It is the story of choices. Choices of Dan-el's parents to immigrate to America legally knowing that this country would offer the best future. Choices to birth a child in the United States for the purpose of receiving anchor baby benefits and entering the welfare system. Choices of his parents to separate and for Dan-el's mother to remain in the United States illegally after their work visa lapsed.

Choices have consequences, and Dan-el struggled with the consequence of being illegal and "paperless" from his primary to his post-graduate education. His choice to work hard at his studies, along with the fortuitous help of many people and the scholarships he received, propelled him along an impressive academic path.

While the book is well-written and Dan-el's story is noteworthy, there was a pervasive mindset of entitlement from his mother and himself which made the book a bit of a slog to read.

In addition, as his intellect rocketed upward, his character, unfortunately, did not. His attitude toward and discussion of women with his fellow scholars did not mature and was a source of disappointment as a reader.

It was also disappointing to realize that after all the educational and cultural opportunities afforded him in the United States, his attitude toward those whose opinions differed on immigration was, "I could bang hard on how shortsighted it was of my old roommate to get suckered into this niggerizing discourse about undocumented immigrants. Good-for-nothing, lazy, take-shit-from-the-hard-working-American coloreds: How deaf are you if you can't hear the whispers of 'Nigger nigger nigger!' in the background." And also a final word at the end of the book "to all the haters." It is regrettable that, despite his educational accomplishments, he cannot accept that an opposing viewpoint on immigration does not equal hate or the "n" word.

Dan-el's academic trajectory was achievable because he lived his educational years in the United States. Yet, he seems oddly indifferent to an honest examination of what is it about the United States that makes his

amazing story possible. Several principles and/or systems come to mind: adherence to a rule of law that allows citizens to live freely, pursue their dreams, and retain their private property; the taxation of 1/2 of the population for redistribution in the form of entitlements; the remaining vestiges of a free-market economic system that continues to support families, business, and government; and a mindset of charity of both time and money to help those in greater need. Without these (and more), Dan-el's story cannot happen, which is why his parents chose to come to the United States instead of Mexico or Brazil, or any of a hundred other countries.

So, I wonder when Dan-el ends the book with this paragraph: "Immigrant brothers and sisters: Of course, people will yell at you that America is not yours. That you have no stake in American, no place in America, no right to belong in America. You must not let them get off lightly with saying that. You must argue, remonstrate, shout back that your hands and feet and minds are as much a part of America as theirs are. Together we must fight to ensure that America remains not the dream of the chauvinistically minded few but the fulfillment of hopes for many. We are the ascendant. America is ours, and we must not concede otherwise." I wonder what laws I could break and raise my fist and shout a paragraph like this. To what country could I immigrate, flaunt the rule of law, and not be held accountable? Because, as a citizen of the United States, if I break the law, I am held accountable. I will suffer the consequences.

Intelligence does not equal wisdom, and an accumulation of birthdays does not guarantee maturity.

Vicki says

Dan-el Padilla Peralta at four years of age came to the US from the Dominican Republic with his parents legally to receive additional health care for his Mother who was dealing with a high risk pregnancy. A healthy brother was born; however only Dan-el's Father returned to the DR and as a result Dan-el and his Mother never were able to renew their papers and resided illegally in New York. Homeless for a time, along with constant stress about being sent back, and receiving a small stipend for the baby brother born in the US, the family gets by with stubbornness, sacrifice and faith.

Dan-el is a smart kid and with sponsors ends up going to a privileged school on the Upper West Side, while returning to Harlem for church and home.

Many references to the 'Dream Act' which was first proposed in the 2002 session of Congress which attempts to give illegal aliens amnesty was discussed; only to be stalled over and over again. While attending Princeton Dan-el still only told a select few about his citizenship status. He was more interested in changes in the law, rather than focusing on his individual story.

(Quote) Lives are forced into a waiting pattern of alienation and anxiety as the undocumented among us wait for news of comprehensive immigration reform--their talents and abilities suspended between the poles of constantly deferred hope on one end and ever-present fear on the other."

Amanda S. says

This book provided wonderful perspective as I work with international students on a daily basis as an ELL teacher.

Raquel says

I received a copy of Undocumented from the publisher via the Goodreads First Reads program.

When I saw the listing for this book I knew immediately I had to read it. I'm first generation American with immigrant parents. My mother is from the Dominican Republic. Nothing about my upbringing paved the way for my academic career except for my own natural curiosity, love of learning and literature and drive. So I was really curious to read about Dan-el Padilla Peralta whose upbringing was a lot more complicated and difficult than my own. Reading about how Dan-el made it to the Ivy League with sheer determination and some luck was really inspiring. He encountered many problems related to his status as an illegal immigrant as well as his poor financial situation. However this never stopped him from his dream of doing well in school, studying the classics and making it all the way to Princeton and beyond.

There were many things I liked about this book. It's very timely considering the recent conversation about immigration and what immigrants contribute to American society and the economy. Dan-el is a fine example of how living in the US provides much more opportunities for academic success. I put Dan-el Padilla Peralta up there with Junot Diaz as examples of the intellectual potential of Dominicans. We are often relegated to being recognized solely for our baseball skills.

I would have given the book 5 stars except for a couple of things. I couldn't connect with the author. He was born with a talent for academics and he had a lot of help along the way from good friends and mentors. I didn't have any natural talent or help whatsoever. This is not the author's fault but just my personal reaction. This is not to say the author's journey was easy. He had to work very hard to get to where he was and his story is very admirable because of that.

The cover is a poor choice and the book is a first-person memoir yet they chose a third-person subtitle for the book. Penguin, the publisher, should know better! I also was really confused at who the intended audience was. The author uses relatively simple language as well as lots of Dominican and street slang throughout the text. After I finished the book I re-read the letter at the beginning of the book to see if I missed some insight into the purpose of the book but it read more like a summary of his story.

I did give the book four stars because it was a very enjoyable read, I loved rooting for the author as I learned more about his journey and I think the book is incredibly important and timely. People need to read about the immigrant experience and they need to see that there is potential beyond what people relegate to immigrants. This book would be great for book groups who want to sit down and talk about immigration in America.

I read a galley of the book so it is not the final edited text that will be published. I hope the publisher will encourage the author to re-write his letter to the reader that appears in the front of the book. And maybe they'll change the cover when they put the book in paperback!

Kasa Cotugno says

At 4, Dan-el Padilla Peralta moved with his family from the Dominican Republic so his pregnant mother could have better healthcare for the impending birth. After his father's return to his homeland, his mother and he found themselves living in difficult condition in subsidized housing, but Dan-el discovered his intellectual reach at an early age through a book on the shelf of a shelter's library. His curiosity could be sparked by even the most everyday experience (wondering why Brooklyn subway stations were named as they were, he thrilled at the discovery that they were named after Revolutionary generals). Such began a remarkable life of study. And he wasn't even 8 years old. This special boy caught the attention of Jeff Corwin, a volunteer teaching art at the shelter. Impressed by Dan-el's interest in books and recognizing true academic curiosity, Jeff assisted in applying for scholarship admission to Collegiate School in Manhattan, his own alma mater.

This generous and important memoir lays out the family's difficulties due to the fact that without social security numbers or papeles (formal id's), they could not receive paychecks. Dan-el recognizes his luck in coming across the path of people willing to go the extra mile to help with his pursuits. His education, enviable by any yardstick, was hard won -- he earned the honors but doesn't make a huge issue out of it. He focusses instead on the roadblocks put up by the system. His whole story portrays someone of immense worth and contribution, and points out the value of privilege that should never be taken for granted by those lucky enough to have it.

I have enjoyed spending these past few days in Dan-el's company through his book. Highly recommended.

Barbara says

Padilla Peralta is an amazing success story. Brought to NYC on a tourist visa so his mother can get medical care, he, his mother, and infant brother born here, overstay their visa putting them immediately into undocumented status. His father choses not to stay in NY and returns to Santo Domingo. They quickly fall into poverty and eventually end up in a homeless shelter for a time. Dan-el, whose story this is, is a gifted boy who loves reading about ancient Rome and Greece. He wins scholarships to one private school and then another which is very elite. He goes on to an Ivy League college majoring in Classics.

I really enjoyed the Dominicanismos (phrases and words) in the book, most of which aren't translated. Dan-El never forgets he's Dominican, but above all he feels he's a New Yorker. His story provides insights into the many obstacles undocumented youth face. They can't legally work or even travel out of state without ID. They are not eligible for any federal aid including work study when they go to college. And there are very very few ways to regularize your status if you are "out of status" as Dan-El was.

Something to to keep in mind was Dan-El's parents were educated, middle class professionals. If they hadn't been, they wouldn't have gotten visas to the US. His mother pushed to get her sons excellent educations, and they excelled. His parents provided him with one step up that set him on his way.

The audiobook is effectively read by the author. I recommend this book for anyone interested in the situation of undocumented students.

Angie says

This is an amazing story. An immigrant without papers when he's four, Dan-el tells the story of his upbringing. He is on the wrong side of some unjust laws. His is on the right side of some incredible luck. Others help him to be the success he is. And he is smart and works hard, making those people's efforts both effective and worth while. It's a great story and I recommend it widely. It's a good read and not preachy. He tells the full story of a full life, although he is understandably frustrated by the extra layer of anxiety constantly surrounding him regarding his immigration status. There seems to be, more or less, a happy ending here.

But we all need to think about what this story means. It's remarkable because it's so unusual. He beat the odds, but the odds are still bad. Individual actions are so important, as evidenced by his experience. But couldn't we do better as a society? I'm glad his story is out there. Not many are in the position to share stories like his. I hope it helps to educate us as a people and that we can do something about it.

I got a free copy of this from First to Read.

Kristi Richardson says

“But I would rather run after the impossible than live as a string of labels: undocumented, hoodrat, Dominican, classicist. I am all of those things; no one or two of them define me.”

I was gifted this book through the Penguin First to Read program for an honest review.

This is not the typical book I choose to read, but I felt it was timely with all of the talk about immigration reform and now with the Donald denigrating immigrants to such a low level, I couldn't resist reading this book.

Dan-el Padilla Peralta is a young man from the Dominican Republic who came to America fresh out of kindergarten and whose mother decided she wanted her boys to grow up and be educated in America. She made the choice to not return and so they lived as undocumented aliens except for Dan-el's younger brother Yando who was born in America.

Dan-el was an exceptionally smart young man. He was able to get a full scholarship first to a Prep school called Collegiate, (JFK Jr. attended also) and then he went on to Princeton and Oxford and now Stanford. His story of a double life was heartrending at times and the stress he lived under and still was able to achieve everything he has is remarkable.

Dan-el Padilla Peralta tells his story honestly and it made me realize what a tragedy was averted because he was able to stay in this country to achieve so much. We truly need immigration reform and help these children of immigrants realize the American Dream that our grandparents were able to attain.

People who say Dan-el is an exception to the rule miss the issue in this book that everyone should have the chance to live in America and contribute. That is what makes our country so great. Let's not lose that message that we have always stressed.

“Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” Emma Lazarus

Shawna says

I came away from this book questioning if the author yet possessed the maturity and distance to fully explore the complexities of his situation. It seems to me that he was raised like a veal once his intellect was

discovered, and spent his boyhood and early adulthood, studying every moment of the day. This was completely his story, and it never delved deeper into any kind of universality of greater immigration issues, in my opinion.

One of my issues was that this kid never acknowledged that while he couldn't do things like junior year abroad because of his immigration status there are still millions who can't even go to college because they can't afford it. Price or debt never seems to factor into any of his considerations.

Frankly, I found myself bored and skimming chapters as he discussed his coursework and choosing classes and so forth. (Yes, I've been to college too, I know how that works.) There wasn't a lot of tension and injustice to stoke my outrage. He has friends that go to bat for him at every turn.

One element that surprised me, upon leaving the homeless shelter, his mother was allowed to browse for a low-income apartment, I thought that was pretty generous of the city, I didn't know someone in that situation got to shop around.

Another telling little detail -- his friend the priest paid off his shoplifting debt and let it go without telling his mother, and he never repaid him. He couldn't have used a little of that generous stipend money received?

Overall a bit dull and self-centered. And as smart as he obviously is, he came off as immature.

Kit says

He wasn't particularly eloquent. For a BA from the Ivy League I expected to be persuaded more. I was more pro-immigration reform prior to reading this.

I've become more ambivalent about the issue than I should be after reading a memoir of someone who went through it. His Dad went home. His Mom just decided to break the law.

I know he says that undocumented workers contribute to society. I believe it in most cases, but not their's. His mom took a spot. She lived off welfare. I hope that she switched to working for the Catholic Church eventually (and illegally). But that wait list that they complained about...those citizens that they bumped and would have benefited from the help...every complaint she had on behalf of her children disgusted me. That scholarship to a prestigious private school...that's a spot taken up that could have gone to the child of a poor mother and father who didn't break the law. That nearly full ride to Princeton, that could have gone to someone equally qualified.

It's hard to read with empathy. I would fully empathize with a refugee, or someone who was human trafficked here and abandoned. I would empathize with someone who was trying to get back to their country but was prevented through war, poverty, etc.

But someone who we were compassionate enough to let in to get necessary medical care then just essentially skipped the immigration line, and her amazingly talented children...it's hard to feel much empathy. It makes me worry that the 'fix' from less compassionate people would be to prevent visitors from coming here to receive quality medical care.

It's easy to pity the 8 yr old, but not the since grown adult who can't see that he has taken some of the best opportunities away from other equally qualified kids, and who doesn't seem to see how hard legal

immigrants and native born people had to work.

I do feel somewhat guilty for this opinion, but I can't seem to shake it. I don't think the immigration movement should use him as a spokesperson, yet. As a taxpaying member of this society, I hold the right to change my opinion of disappointment to gratitude if he ever actually does anything that enriches our society. Then I'll probably take it back. But here's a kid who's living my dream. Perpetual school...people believing in him at just the right moments to motivate him to develop his skills.

As it stands this memoir is an example of how someone might jump the line, and a reader whose against immigration reform would propose tighter control of government funding.

Was it always intended that illegal citizens would be given welfare because their kids were born here? I wouldn't want them to starve. But she's the one that put them in the position to starve here and I'm disappointed in her for doing it.

Sorry reader. I'm not happy with the above sentiment, either.
