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SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Border: Immigration and the B.O.P.
Richard Alevizos
BookSurge Publishing
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Two Stars (out of Five)

Americans who don't live in a state adjoining Mexico might have opinions about immigration, but only those formed through a haphazard combination of news reporting, television, books, and movies. In *The Border: Immigration and the B.O.P.*, Richard Alevizos offers a personal view of the issue, recounting his own harrowing experiences after being caught smuggling a Mexican immigrant across the border into the United States.

The book's title is a bit misleading in that the bulk of *The Border* consists of Alevizos' prison anecdotes, with a smaller percentage of the text devoted to immigration and the B.O.P. (Bureau of Prisons). Alevizos is a college graduate who spent much of his time in prison using his writing skills to assist other inmates. He offers fascinating insights about prison society, but any connections he makes between those insights and the issue of immigration seem tangential. Alevizos does give a valuable perspective on recidivism rates, based on his experiences and those of other inmates.

Alevizos is no journalist, nor does he claim to be. When he assails the current system and the policies that have created it, his attacks are often expansive. However, a glaring lack of documentation reduces the effectiveness of his opinions. When discussing what he sees as profiteering, Alevizos claims that "the Keefe company … is supposedly partly owned by the Bush family. One need only look at the company's list of corporate shareholders and or charter to see who the owners are." But there is no proof to be found in the pages of *The Border*, only the option for the reader to do his or her own research. More controversially, Alevizos writes, "Should a war ever reach American soil, supposedly part of FEMA's national emergency procedures is to gas all federal inmates to death immediately." He then offers a disclaimer that he has not checked the validity of this statement.

Alevizos doesn't deliver the entire story about what drove him to break the law until near the end of the book. It is a stylistic choice that heightens the dramatic nature of the full revelation, but it also hampers the reader's ability to understand Alevizos' perspective earlier on.

And along with his frequent invectives against the Bush family, one might expect to find the author's opinion of the Obamas, but none is offered within these pages.

As a probing treatise on the Mexican border and immigration, *The Border* is somewhat lacking. Perhaps it should be read only to put a face on the problem of illegal border crossings, as well as the provocative account of a man speaking from a unique vantage point.

Peter Dabbene