

## **Magical ICE Goggles**

The Army may have powerful night-vision goggles, but did you know the folks at ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) have magical “illegal alien” goggles, enabling them to detect at a glance whether the person in their sights is a) an alien, rather than a U.S. citizen, and b) unlawfully present in the United States?

It’s true. Just read almost any ICE press release, such as the one dated Oct. 9, 2008. The operative language: “Yesterday’s enforcement action resulted in the administrative arrests of 331 illegal aliens (123 females, 208 males).”

But lacking full (uncoerced) confessions from all 331 arrestees, or formal findings from an Immigration Judge or other federal magistrate, how does ICE know the citizenship and immigration status of the 331? Dude, it’s the goggles!

Most editors in the mainstream media have the same goggles, on loan from ICE. Open any newspaper or news website and you’ll see the familiar banner: “ICE arrests [insert number] illegal aliens.”

One recurring and pesky problem, of course, is the U.S. citizens and lawful green-card holders arrested and even deported “by mistake” in ICE sweeps. In February 2008 Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Cal.) presided over a congressional hearing investigating this chronic failure of the magic goggles. A witness at the hearing, attorney James J. Brosnahan, stated: “The illegal deportation of [U.S. citizen] Peter Guzman was not an innocent mistake by ICE officials or agents, but rather the predictable consequence of policies, practices and procedures which rely upon racial and ethnic stereotypes to presuppose undocumented status and lack even rudimentary safeguards against erroneous determinations.”

The witness for ICE, Gary E. Mead, swore the goggles work just fine: “At no time did ICE knowingly or willfully place a U.S. citizen in detention.” Yet University of California, Santa Barbara law professor Jacqueline Stevens has “identified 31 cases from across the country of U.S. citizens who were held as aliens for as long as five years. Of the 31, five remain in detention and 14 were deported.”

But I’m an American, and therefore an optimist. We put men on the moon, so I’m sure we can fix our magical goggles.

Daniel M. Kowalski  
Editor-in-Chief, *Bender’s Immigration Bulletin*  
October 10, 2008