

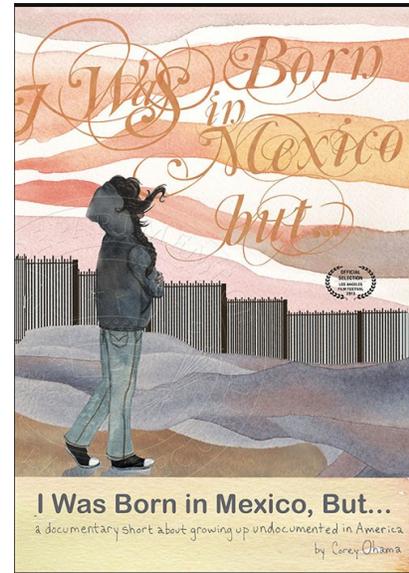
I Was Born in Mexico, But...

Genre: Documentary
 Length: 12 minutes
 Release: 2013
 Director: Corey Ohama
 Official Website: www.dreamerdoc.com

Film Background

I Was Born in Mexico, But... tells the personal story of an undocumented young woman who was brought to the U.S. as a child. For fear of deportation, she did not want to appear on camera.

The interview was done before DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) was implemented.



Questions for Discussion

1. How did you feel after watching the documentary? Was there anything you found hopeful or inspiring?
2. What are some of the challenges that the subject faces?
3. Why do you think the subject says, “I am born here. I was born in Mexico but I was born here”?
4. Discuss the use of educational films, newsreels and advertisements in the film. Do you think that added or detracted from the overall effect of the documentary?
5. The subject says, “I’m not guilty. I’m not guilty living here without papers. It’s not my choice.” What are the pros and cons of providing a path to citizenship or lawful permanent residency to undocumented young people?
6. This interview was done before DACA was implemented. Study the provisions of DACA and discuss how it would help the subject.
7. The Trump presidency has brought increased insecurity for undocumented people. Talk about some choices that undocumented people have made, in terms of being visible and vocal or for example, in this case choosing not to appear on camera. What would you do in that situation? Discuss the strategies the subject uses to cope with her circumstances.

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Immigration Reform glossary

DREAM Act: The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act was proposed legislation that would provide a path to citizenship and access to higher education for undocumented immigrant youth brought to the U.S. as children. It was first proposed in 2001 and most recently, in 2007. It failed to pass.

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals): On June 15, 2012, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said it would refrain from deporting certain undocumented young people who came to the U.S. as children. Through an application process, they could be granted temporary permission (called “deferred action”) to stay in the U.S. They could also apply for an employment authorization document and a social security number. DACA is not a law; a grant of DACA is temporary (renewable every 2 years), and does not provide a path to lawful permanent residency or citizenship. The DACA program can be terminated by the president at any time.

DREAMers: the young people who could benefit from the DREAM Act if it were to pass, and who qualify or potentially qualify for DACA. There are an estimated 1.4-1.8 million DREAMers in the U.S.

Additional Information

Higher education: There is currently no federal financial aid for undocumented students, even those who have DACA. 17 states now have laws or provisions permitting in-state tuition at public colleges for certain undocumented students. Some states and universities have financial aid for undocumented students. 3 states have a ban or a restriction on access to public colleges for undocumented students.

Driver’s licenses: 12 states plus DC now have laws allowing undocumented immigrants to get driver’s licenses. Young people who have employment authorization and a social security number through DACA can get a license in all 50 states.

Sources

National Immigration Law Center: nilc.org

American Immigration Council: americanimmigrationcouncil.org

Additional Resource

Define American Immigration Fact Sheets: defineamerican.com/factsmatter/