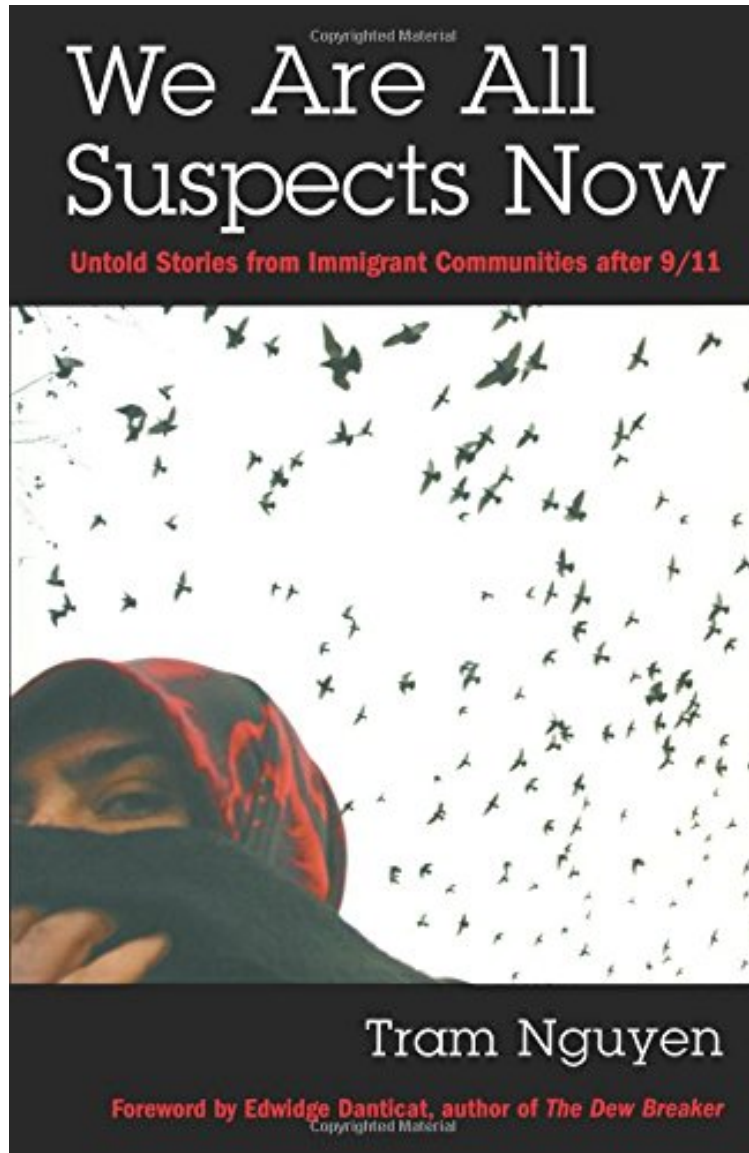


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We Are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories from Immigrant Communities after 9/11

Tram Nguyen

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Tram Nguyen : We Are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories from Immigrant Communities after 9/11 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We Are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories from Immigrant Communities after 9/11:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Open Your MindBy Darla H. SchultzI have always been one of

those individuals that was openly prejudice against certain ethnicities after 9/11/2001. I wanted this book because I wanted to know how the individuals I was feeling prejudice toward were feeling and what really happened to them after 9/11/2001. This book has changed me. I try very hard not to be prejudice toward people just because of their origin. I realized that as I say, "you do not belong here, you are not an American", I also am not a true American. In reality I am a second nation as North American Indians are first nation. Everyone needs to read this book.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Easy, Yet Informative Read
By Courtney A. Brownson
In her book, *Tram Nguyen* claims that there is very little room left for any infraction by someone without the legal status to be here in the US due to a post-9/11 national climate of fear and growing intolerance. She argues that there is little room left for immigrants in America to become anything more than "cardboard cutouts" simply playing a role to please their suspicious neighbors and ever more watchful government. She claims that the American political imagination has shifted so far to the right that people without status who have a certain profile must work harder and harder to earn and deserve their place in society: they must prove to everyone else why they should not be suspected, jailed, and eventually shipped away (in other words, guilty until proven innocent). Not only that, the book also discusses how recent security concerns have been used as a justification for the US government to display increased racial and cultural discrimination in areas of long-standing concern to civil rights advocates; such as housing and jobs. There are no exceptions to the argument presented, any and all immigrants, and especially communities of immigrants have been affected in the post-9/11 national security frenzy. Somalis, Haitians, Pakistanis, Mexicans, and more, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have all been targeted by recent policies. While several scholars and others have so far explored the legal and constitutional ramifications of the war on terror, this book takes a different, ground-level, view of how these national and local policies affect the individuals, families, and communities themselves - the real effects of such policies on our neighbors. Most importantly, the author argues that with hindsight, racial and ethnic scapegoating in response to crisis is by and large viewed as unjust and inexcusable. The author asks readers: Will the war on terrorism redefine the meaning of who belongs in America? The claim that America has been putting every immigrant and foreigner in the USA under suspicion post-9/11 is backed up in this book by several firsthand stories and conversations. Also, at the end of the book there is an appendix which is titled "2001-2004: A time line of major events and policies affecting immigrants and civil liberties", which briefly describes over 100 policies and events which have directly affected immigrants, their families, and their communities since the September 11 World Trade Center attacks. Policies and events included are Secret Proceedings, the USA Patriot Act, Military Tribunals, Indefinite Detentions, INS Restructuring, and the new Department of Homeland Security, among others. The firsthand stories alone are not enough for me to deem this book effective in its claim that all immigrants and foreigners are living a suspected and frightened existence in America. However, the time line appendix in combination with these stories does make it an effective and worthwhile portrait in my mind. This book was not made to dryly describe policy and legalities, it was written to get readers, fellow Americans, to feel sympathy and outrage at what has been going on to our immigrant neighbors. To me, I did end up fully feeling this sympathy and outrage to the fullest upon finishing the book. The author points out alternative arguments in a few instances that the attack on immigrant civil rights is not new in the post-9/11 era, but only grossly exaggerated and magnified. She cites the war on drugs which racially profiled men and women of color in the 1980's, as well as the continued conflict over the US-Mexico border in the southwest, especially California, throughout the 1990's and today. Other evidence cited that the new post-9/11 policies are just magnified excuses for increased racial profiling and suspicion enacted by policies of the last two decades, including the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which both expanded grounds for deportation to include over fifty categories of crimes and made detention and deportation mandatory minimum sentences (both signed by Clinton in 1996). These are just a few instances painting a picture of what the author feels is wrong with the United States immigration policy and treatment in general going back much further than the crisis following September 11, and will keep going on much longer afterward. Closing with: "What the detained and deported have to teach us is the lesson of the most disenfranchised of this state. How we treat the people nobody wants to defend, America's least wanted, tells us much about the ability of this system to uphold a free and democratic equal society", *Nguyen's* book was the most convincing argument I have read since 9/11 that shows me the injustices of a society living in fear of "terrorists", which I just see as a fear of different cultures. The Civil Rights Act may have been passed in the 1960's, but now it seems as if we are just a nation going back in time and breaking promises that have been made for civil liberties for all inhabitants of our country. The book has opened my eyes ever wider to the fact that old and discredited ideas about race, ethnicity, and culture are rapidly rising. The narratives and interviews pulled at my emotions, making me ask myself over and over again, "How can we treat people so inhumanely?" While the ending time line made me ask "How did these policies all get passed without any sort of a public outcry for justice?" Overall, *We Are All Suspects Now* has earned my respect as being a wonderful and straightforward book that can pull in and eventually open anyone's eyes (even those who normally don't like to read) to the current culture crisis which is now facing the US.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. We are all suspects now
By Cortney Merten
In the book *We are all Suspects Now* written by *Tram Nguyen*, she explains the untold tales of immigrant life in the United States after what happened on September 11th. People of

Somali, Muslim, Arab, and South Asian decent tell their stories of detainment, deportation, and discrimination through out all areas of North America crushing their hopes and dreams of a better life for many immigrants in this country. Nguyen begins her focus of *We are all Suspects Now* by explaining the happy lives most immigrants had living in the United States. She further explains that many immigrated to the U.S. fleeing poverty and harsh treatments in their homelands or for a better life. The U.S. is where they could fulfill the American dream. Many immigrants came just to work and send money back to their families across sea. Others found good jobs and a safe place to raise their families. These stories of their "dream" land continued on until September 11th. This crises threw the U.S. into a period of discrimination and racial slander not only from ordinary American citizens but also from American government. From then on immigrants lives have been changed and mainly not for the better. Within a period of about two months after the 9/11 attacks, more than 1,200 immigrants were unfairly detained as "suspects" to the attack with no proof to even convict them. The way that Nguyen explains how these immigrants were detained was very disturbing to me because I was not aware of many of the actions taken, or situations these people were put in until after I had read his book. For example, Nguyen gives details of how they were not even told most of the time that they were being detained or even given the right to an attorney. This lead to many people just "disappearing" in the eyes of their family members and friends. Next the U.S. government took this process a step further by requiring men 16 and older to register in order to find out which immigrants had been living in the U.S. illegally with no green cards or visas. I believe that Nguyen is an inspiring writer because of the many issues she talks about. She rises above many people by telling these immigrants stories, including people such as Mohommad Butt who have died during this struggling period in American history. Mohommad Butt was the first person to die during detainment and Nguyen recognizes that in her book by making him a hero along with other immigrants of their time. She also includes tales of immigrant leaders who rose above to guide other immigrants to do the right thing in order to prevent deportation and detainment. She even included the harsh trips to Canada when fleeing the United States and how they were sent right back after spending their lives savings to reach this "safe haven." Nguyen uses these examples along with many others to explain the tragedies occurring to US immigrants after September 11th. She tells her story in such a way that it is almost unbelievable what happened to many of these immigrants. Nguyen not only uses facts against the US but also sympathizes somewhat for the US, giving the reader a better understanding of both sides of the story. To do this she explains that many of these immigrants that were deported had legitimate reasons to be according to United States laws. Many of them were illegal immigrants or had expired visas. Immigrants may have gotten away with this for some time, but it was against the US law so the government was in many ways just enforcing these laws in a stronger way. Nguyen only went so far with this idea because in her writing I believe people are able to understand that these situations could have been handled in a better way. Nguyen also makes us aware that many people were fleeing the borders of Mexico into the United States causing many problems with drug dealing and violence. The people living there, American or not, had to deal with these issues in a very uncomfortable manner including encounters with minutemen and small citizen made "militias" attacking not only the trespassers in their front yards, but them as well. Nguyen is a very strong writer because of her truthfulness as shown above. In my opinion I feel like Nguyen is a very convincing and relatable writer. She uses very realistic and relevant information throughout her book, which after reading I felt like was not exaggerated or overwhelming. When I first started reading this book I thought it was going to be similar to a dull history novel, but after I started reading more into it, I began to enjoy it more and learned a great deal about the subject of United States immigrants. I thought it was mainly going to be about things I had already known about 9/11, but everything I learned was new to me. For example, I did not know that the government was being so harsh and racist against these groups of people and was shocked by most of it. These people were just trying to support their families and strive for a better life while America was racially discriminating against them just because of their race and culture. I believe that Nguyen is trying to get this point across in her writing so more people can be aware of these situations and they do not happen again in the future. Over all, this book was very informative and interesting to me. I learned a lot of information about immigrant life in America. I was very much appalled at the way in which the United States citizens and government handle situations after September 11th. From the stories Nguyen explained I realized that I was somewhat naive and unaware to these situations as I'm sure many others were too.

In an ironic reversal of the American dream, a staggering 20,000 members of the immigrant community of Midwood, Brooklyn (known as Little Pakistan), voluntarily left the United States after 9/11. Tram Nguyen reveals the human cost of the domestic war on terror and examines the impact of post-9/11 policies on people targeted because of immigration status, nationality, race, and religion. Nguyen's evocative narrative reporting-about the families, detainees, local leaders, community advocates, and others living on the front lines-tells the stories of people who witnessed and experienced firsthand the unjust detainment or deportation of family members, friends, and neighbors. Tram Nguyen reveals the human cost of the domestic war on terror and examines the impact of post-9/11 policies on people targeted because of immigration status, nationality, and religion. Nguyen's evocative narrative reporting-about the families, detainees, local leaders, community advocates, and others-is from those living and suffering on the front lines. We meet Mohammad Butt, who died in detention in New Jersey, and the Saleems, who flee Queens for Canada.

We even follow a self-proclaimed 'citizen patroller' who monitors and detains immigrants on the U.S.-Mexico border. *We Are All Suspects Now*, in the words of Mike Davis, "takes us inside a dark world . . . where the American Dream is fast turning into a nightmare and suggests proactive responses to stop our growing climate of xenophobia, intimidation, and discrimination." In the fall of 2004, I, too, suffered a devastating Department of Homeland Security-related loss, joining the post-9/11 suspect community in a way I had never expected or imagined . . . We are indeed, all of us, suspects." --from the Foreword by Edwidge Danticat

About the Author Tram Nguyen is the author of *We Are All Suspects Now: Untold Stories from Immigrant Communities after 9/11*. She lives in Oakland, California.