

OPINION

Victor Davis Hanson: The Ungrateful Immigrant

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON • March 17, 2026

Editor's note: This is a lightly edited transcript of today's video from Daily Signal Senior Contributor [Victor Davis Hanson](#). [Subscribe to our YouTube channel to see more of his videos](#).

Hello, this is [Victor Davis Hanson](#) for The Daily Signal.

I'd like to talk about a very controversial topic. I call it the ungrateful immigrant. You know, it used to be in the United States that immigrants were our great strength. We all saw maybe Elia Kazan's "America, America," the story of his uncle's struggles to get to the U.S., and how much he worshiped the country when he arrived here.

I just interviewed Max Nikias, he is the former president of USC. He came with nothing from Cyprus, and he has a new memoir out, "American Trojan," about how lucky he was to get here, and how he worshiped the United States.

That was sort of the general perception that we had of immigrants. Think of Silicon Valley. I mean, Tesla, SpaceX, eBay, Stripe, Sun Microsystems, I could go down the list. They're all created by these wonderful [legal immigrants](#).

But that's changing. And I'm not talking about the 500,000 illegal immigrants who were known to have come across with criminal records. I'm not talking about the truck drivers.

Thousands of them that were given licenses, even though they did not qualify for a driving competency test. Even though they didn't know English. Even though they had been involved

in a number of lethal accidents.

I'm not talking about [the Somali fraud](#). That's self-evident. Thousands of Somalis were involved as payback to arriving in America, and to us, their magnanimous hosts, they paid us back by what? Embezzling up to \$9 billion. I'm not talking about Rep. Ilhan Omar and antisemitic remark, "It's the Benjamin's baby," or labeling and vilifying the United States as trash. That's all self-evident.

What's new are legal immigrants and naturalized citizens. As if they become almost ... They have a schizophrenic idea. They hate the country, but under no circumstances do they want to leave it.

Just in an eight-day period: A week ago, we had in Austin, Texas, a Senegal naturalized citizen who went into a beer garden and opened fire. Killed three and wounded a lot of them. At Old Dominion University in Virginia, a naturalized immigrant from Sierra Leone came in, and he [shot the ROTC instructor](#) and yelled, "Allahu Akbar."

All of these were Islamicists. Although you won't find that very readily in the mainstream media. Out in front of the New York mayor's mansion, there was a protest against Islam and a counterprotest supporting Mamdani and two naturalized citizens, one an Afghan, one parents from Turkey, they [brought two IEDs](#) and tried to, they said, surpass the Boston Marathon bomber of 2013.

Remember them? The Tsarnaev brothers? They were Chechens from Russia. And we were very magnanimous in allowing them to come in. And how did they repay us? By trying to slaughter people. They injured dozens. Dozens. More than dozens in Boston.

And then, of course, we had the synagogue attempt by a Lebanese naturalized citizen. And he had ties with Hezbollah. His family were Hezbollah members. He tries to drive his car into a synagogue in Michigan and kill people. And the question is, why do they do that?

Maybe a better rephrasing it would be why don't they do it?

We have no civic education. We ask very little of the immigrant when they come to the United States. We don't ask them to have a high school diploma all the time. We don't ask

them to be fluent in English. We don't ask them to study the Constitution. We don't ask them to profess their greater loyalty and love to the United States.

Instead, we have open borders. Or we bring in thousands of students from the Middle East.

And what do they do? They protest, and they push Jews around, and they celebrate at a time when we're at war. As we saw in New York City recently, they celebrate our enemies: Hezbollah, Hamas, and Iran. They're on their side.

This is a far different phenomenon from the past when we had wonderful immigrants from Japan who were treated pretty badly, that many of them, most of them, went to internment camps, and yet they joined the 442 combat brigade in Italy. And they took horrendous casualties fighting for whom? The United States.

So, something's wrong, and what I'm getting at is this: These immigrants, whether they're temporary immigrants, they're illegal immigrants, they're legal immigrants, or they're naturalized citizens, or they're on student visa, they sense something.

They look at the Tsarnaev brothers, and they say, "Well, yes, they were Islamicists and yes, they killed a lot of Americans, but Rolling Stone put one of the brothers in a very photogenic pose on their cover as if he was a romantic type of person. Oh, I remember Fort Hood." That was Major Nidal Hasan. He shot 13 of his fellow soldiers and wounded over 30 of them.

And the Pentagon said, we're not going to attribute this to what? Terrorism. Even though he yelled, "Allahu Akbar." And, you know, I have nothing against then-Chief of Staff of the Army George Casey. But you remember what he said? He said one of the greatest tragedies of this shooting might be the injury to our diversity program.

No, no. It was not the injury to the diversity. It was the paradigm that was established that you can go in and kill people and not suffer public opprobrium and condemnation. It's almost as if anytime someone yells "Allahu Akbar"—citizen, illegal citizen, anybody—and you scream and yell, and you do something terribly, the first thing we say is, "Well, we don't want to condemn it. That would be Islamophobic."

But again, that sends a message. And all of these people, all 50 million people, who have come to the United States, many of them, some of our best citizens, but all of them have to

be reminded and are reminded, if we're doing our duty, that they chose to come here, and they need to become Americanized.

And a lot of them are not. And you saw that in the Immigration and Customs Enforcement riots in Los Angeles. What in the world were people doing who were here illegally from Mexico, and they were waving the flag of the country under no circumstances they wished to return to? While they're burning the flag of the country under no circumstances they wish to leave?

Where did they get that idea? Was it from the universities? Was it from the K-12 curriculum where we teach people that the story of the United States is sexism and racism and homophobia? Or is it when they look on TV and we see ICE people trying to enforce the law, and predominantly looking at the 500,000 criminals that came in.

And what happens to them? They're demonized by us as Gestapo, as Nazis.

How did we create this Frankensteinian monster of immigration? That used to be our great strength, and is still in some cases, many cases. But how did we create it? Where we're getting people killing us and yelling Islamic sloganeering and championing Hamas and Hezbollah and Iran at the same time we're at war with them?

Where did this come from? And the answer is: Dr. Frankenstein created the Frankensteinian Monster. We're the Dr. Frankensteins. We created this, and these people are taking advantage of our messaging. And their messaging says, basically, you get what you deserve. And boy, have we got it lately.

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