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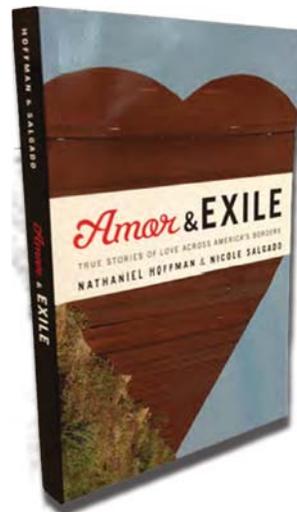
by Teresa A. Statler

'Love in the Time of Deportation' and Many More Heart-wrenching Stories

In [Amor & Exile: True Stories of Love Across America's Borders](#), former Boise, ID, reporter Nathaniel Hoffman and expatriate American Nicole Salgado show us the current immigration law's detrimental effects on U.S. citizens and their undocumented foreign spouses. The stories of true love and true frustration contained in this book ring familiar to any immigration lawyer in the United States who handles family-based matters. However, the American public, and more importantly, many members of Congress, likely do not know or understand how U.S. immigration laws can keep families separated. Hoffman opens the book with a chapter titled, "Love in the Time of Deportation," in which he introduces the reader to six bi-national couples, all of whom are struggling with the daunting logistics and inhumanity of the unlawful presence bars. Nicole Salgado and her husband are one of them.

A Personal Account

In several chapters, Salgado describes her life in exile in Queretaro, Mexico. Her husband is subject to the permanent bar, so he must wait for 10 years before applying for a waiver. He has two more to go. Salgado tells of their financial struggles in Mexico and the difficulty in integrating with her husband's large family. Salgado has networked with other "families in exile" in Central Mexico, co-founding the online activist group, Action for Family Unity, to work for change in U.S. immigration laws. Salgado movingly speaks of her own and of other Americans' "disenfranchisement" and exile abroad due to the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. The reader senses her frustration and, indeed, her anger, that her country has forced her to live in Mexico, rather than letting her and her husband choose where they will live.



**Amor & Exile:
True Stories of Love
Across America's Borders**

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She believes, however, that she is a "better person for all that I've endured—stronger, more resilient."

Amor & Exile also tells the story of J.W. and Gabriel, a gay couple who also now live in Mexico, having left Texas before Gabriel would have been eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. J.W., active in Texas Republican circles, has "conservative Republican friends"—Hoffman reports—who are "willing to make exceptions to their personal philosophies [regarding illegal immigration] and seek status for his undocumented boyfriend because J.W. is 'people like them.'" Anticipating the [nullification of the Defense of Marriage Act by the U.S. Supreme Court](#), Hoffman sees some hope on the horizon for same-sex couples, which has seemingly now come to pass.

Throughout the book, Hoffman tells of American friends and family of the six couples who are astounded that the immigration laws are so harsh. He quotes many who are surprised that legal status is not "automatic" after marriage to a U.S. citizen. Hoffman's legal information is very accurate, →



thanks to several AILA members with whom he consulted while writing this book. However, other attorneys mentioned in the book—usually someone who was sought out by one of the six couples—come off as borderline incompetent for completely missing the issue of the permanent bar during consultations, among other reasons. Ever the optimist, Hoffman points out that the re-enactment of INA §245(i) would help several of the couples in the book, and that INA §245(i) and the DREAM Act “are two well-established ideas that would enjoy popular support” from the American people. He also pulls no punches and says that President Barack Obama, when compared to former presidents, is the “Deporter-in-Chief.”

Limited in Its Scope

Although Mexicans are by far the group of immigrants most likely to be subject to the unlawful presence bars, there are

people of many nationalities barred from the United States who have other serious immigration legal issues keeping them apart from their spouses. The book would have been even more compelling had Hoffman broadened his focus to tell us about at least one of them. A lay reader might think that only Mexican spouses of U.S. citizens are subject to harsh immigration laws.

A copy of *Amor & Exile* was delivered to each senator and member of the House of Representatives this year. Let us hope that in this time of potential immigration reform, members of the House especially read these gripping personal stories of immigration and feel moved to make changes in the law that are long overdue. ▼

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