

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Abandoned: the betrayal of America's immigrants</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Human Rights Watch Film Festival</i>
Date	2000 Jun 16
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Abandoned: the betrayal of America's immigrants, Belle, David,

## ABANDONED:

# THE BETRAYAL OF AMERICA'S IMMIGRANTS

(WORLD PREMIERE)

*David Belle and Nicholas Wrathall, US, 55m (16mm, doc)*

Born in Panama and brought to the US at the age of five, Joe Velasquez has been a legal resident of this country for 41 years. In 1980 he was given five years of probation for a drug conviction. Eighteen years later he was re-arrested for this old crime and sent to Hudson County Jail to await deportation to his country of origin. Thousands of US residents face similar deportations, caught in the wake of the harsh new immigration laws passed by Congress in 1996. The film takes a close look behind the official facade of the immigration detention system to reveal a multimillion-dollar prison industry and how it benefits by "specializing" in such cases, which are billed at almost twice the price of housing regular inmates. Through intimate, often passionate interviews, and shocking footage of detainees' treatment behind bars, filmmakers Belle and Wrathall build a powerful argument for the urgent need to reform immigration laws before more lives are ruined and more families torn apart.

