

# Pencil it in

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DEC

13

8:00AM-12:00PM  
The Dallas Marathon in Downtown Dallas  
3:00PM-6:00PM  
Hanukkah Tailgate Party at Jewish  
Community Center of Dallas  
5:00PM-5:15PM  
Hanukkah Menorah Lighting at Galleria Dallas

DEC

14

6:00pm  
ICE! at the Gaylord Texan Re-  
sort and Convention Center on  
Lake Grapevine

DEC

16

8:00PM  
Jersey Boys at Winspear Opera House

DEC

22

3:00PM  
Hershel and the Hanuk-  
kah Goblins at Amphibian  
Stage Productions

DEC

22

2:00PM  
Mary Poppins at Granbury Opera House

JAN

3

1:30PM  
The AT&T Performing Arts  
Center presents Peter Pan  
360

JAN

10

11:00AM-5:00PM  
The Dallas Museum of Art  
presnts Jackson Pollock:

JAN

16

10:00am  
The Perot Museum of Na-  
ture and Science presents  
Creatures of Light

# Lou-Lou's

# Lemons

## DON'T FEAR THE VICTIMS

I am a sympathizer. I sympathize with my friend Mordi who brings back horror stories from Jerusalem and outlines the constant vulnerability of the U.S. I sympathize with my grandmother who reminds me each Shabbos of her nightmare of western civilization collapsing to the soundtrack of machine guns and suicide belts. But more so than with Mordi and Nana, I sympathize with the men, women and children trying to escape the very hell my interlocutors so desperately hope to keep away. And because of this, when I'm around these worried minds, I find myself partaking in debate rather than offering consolation.

While not representing the most extreme of the anti-refugee sentiments, my Friday night guests express a deep fear of continuing to take in refugees at the current rate – one that has accepted only 1,500 refugees so far in 2015 – and an absolute disdain for President Obama's plan to take in 10,000 over the next year. I'm constantly warned that if even a small percentage of those who make it over have malevolent intentions, the country will be devastated. For this reason, I'm told, the vetting process must be more comprehensive to ensure safety on American soil. And while I'm skeptical that the current system can detect every deceptive applicant for relocation, I can't imagine why terrorists would put themselves through the process.

The U.N. takes four to 10 months for its initial screenings and they, not the applicant, decide which country the displaced should take refuge in. If recommended for relocation in the U.S., they will have to check out in federal terrorism and criminal databases and pass interviews with the Department of Homeland Security. Making it this far qualifies them for another security examination and a thorough inspection of their documents. The whole process takes, on average, 18-24 months but can last up to three years.

When ISIS or Al-Qaeda wants to attack the U.S., I'm sure they'll favor a more efficient and reliable approach. These groups already have supporters in the West who, if not already in America, could surely plan a trip in less than eighteen months – one that would evade the scrutiny of federal and international agencies.

While it's dubious that terrorists hide among relocation applicants, it is certain that the people being denied entry into the U.S. are victims. They are families fleeing destruction, children without childhoods, humans struggling to survive. And, if they're lucky that is what they get – survival, not life. They go to refugee camps where a lack of funding translates to a lack of necessities. Tents pretend to be homes, packed together to withstand the strain of the desperate masses. And the inhabitants of these crude shelters wait. They wait (in immense lines) for food. They wait for the blistering sun or unrelenting cold to be replaced by tolerable temperatures. And they wait for the day they can stop surviving and return to living.

I'm told that mixing sympathy with politics will only make me soft, that my feelings only obscure a clear perception of harsh realities. But fear is also a feeling. And when felt with the intensity currently experienced in this country, it must be blinding.

by Louis Cohen