

Speech: "Recipe for an American"

Performed by [Jerry Hughes](#) of the Accent Radio Network.

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What makes an American? What are the qualities -- the "ingredients," if you will -- that distinguish Americans from Germans, Mexicans, or the French?

Why is it that we feel a special right to be proud of who we are and what our country stands for? It's not just that we live in the most prosperous land on earth. It's not just that our country is a superpower, capable of imposing its will on smaller nations. It's not just that we enjoy the widest, most sparkling array of consumer goods ever known on the planet Earth.

No. Being an American is something more than all that. An American is made, not merely born into a powerful country.

The problem of illegal immigration has been on everybody's

minds these days. While immigrants give America cultural richness, new entrepreneurs, and hard-working laborers, some immigrants also bring crime, cultural disruption, and a drain on public services that's weakening our economy.

Many people want to build walls to keep illegals out. They want to militarize the border with enormous deployments of soldiers, razor wire, and surveillance equipment, not realizing just how vast our borders are. We have 7461 miles of borders in all, land and sea. Close one section and the tide of illegals will channel into another.

If it's impossible to keep drugs out of heavily guarded prisons, how will we fortify any border well enough to keep out millions of desperate human beings? And what kind of country will we have when we're surrounded by one huge "Berlin Wall"? 2 edge sword

Walls aren't the answer. But neither, ultimately, are guest worker programs or any other political proposals.

When you're facing a problem you can't solve, it's often because you're asking the wrong question. The question isn't "how do we close our borders?" The question is "what makes an American?"

Illegal immigration is dangerous to this country. But not for the most obvious reasons. It's dangerous because so many of the people flooding in don't understand what being an American is. They come from corrupt, oppressive, over-governed countries. They want better lives. But they don't grasp what actually makes a country better.

Many come here looking for material wealth. Yet they don't understand that material wealth is only a bi-product of freedom.

Many come here looking for opportunity. But they don't understand that opportunity is also a bi-product of freedom.

Others come here looking for a free ride (for themselves or their children) on America's vast and growing train of "free" social services. But they don't understand that all those "free" government programs are destroying freedom -- and ultimately will destroy even the prosperity they seek.

Freedom is what makes America different from all other countries. Individual liberty, individual responsibility, a shared

language and individual initiative have made Americans an awesome force for more than 200 years. Millions of the illegals pouring across our borders don't understand that.

They come from countries where only corrupt politicians and their agents are "allowed" to use firearms. So they think it's natural for ordinary people to be disarmed and helpless.

They come from countries where justice is unknown, so they think it's natural for people to be denied their rights.

They come from countries that have never valued individual liberty. So they think getting "free goodies" from government is a blessing rather than a subtle form of enslavement.

That's the real problem with "illegals." They want the results while rejecting the causes. That's impossible. The result: freedom is destroyed by the very people who hunger for what freedom produces.

Problem is, millions of people born here are no better. Most people who call themselves Americans think "freedom" means nothing more than having a 60-inch plasma TV or a new car every few years. Or being allowed to vote for pathetic and parasitic politicians pre-selected by power brokers. These native-born numbskulls also want the government to provide cradle-to-grave "freebies" for themselves and their children. And just like too many illegal immigrants, they don't understand that the individual right to bear arms is the dividing line between free people and oppression.

I started this talk by asking, "What makes an American?" Well, the "recipe" for making an American -- that is, for making the kind of person that can help keep this country great and strong and prosperous -- is very simple:

Take one human being of any age, gender, religion, national origin, or color. Teach that person to truly love and be responsible for individual freedom, and you have an American.

Without the love of liberty, you don't.

And individual liberty exists only where government -- the most powerful collective force on earth -- is limited.

America has something that no other nation has -- an official document whose whole purpose is to say, "Government, keep out."

It's called the Bill of Rights. Four hundred seventy-two words that say, "Government, keep out. We'll run our own lives." Four hundred seventy-two words that spell out what government is forbidden to do.

Government, keep out of our homes, our finances, and our businesses.

Government, keep out of our religion. Keep your hands off our free speech.

Government, you can't railroad us into guilty pleas and self-incrimination in court.

Government, keep out of all the limitless rights that belong only to individual people and to the states. Government, your role is strictly limited. Trespass and the people have every right to protect themselves against you.

Illegal immigrants -- and too many native-borns -- don't understand that "government, keep out" is what makes a free country. And only that form of freedom leads to lasting prosperity.

As a consequence, government is taking over. And freedom is dying.

Not long ago, immigrants who came here wanted to be part of the real America -- an America with endless opportunity -- and responsibility -- for individuals. Grown men coming into New York Harbor, seeing the Statue of Liberty, would fall on their knees and cry like babies. Their first taste of freedom. They came here, worked hard, and learned about what made us special in all the world.

And they became Americans. The problem of immigration isn't that some in-comers don't have government paperwork. Most of our ancestors didn't. The problem is that too many migrants -- and too many native-borns -- don't have a clue.

What makes an American?

An American is flesh and bone. But so are all other people. An American is also an idea in action. The idea of individual freedom. Everyone who shares that ideal enhances America. Everyone who fails to cherish that idea fails our nation.

For a copy of the Bill of Rights, in 15 different languages, visit the website jpfo.org

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