

POP & POLITICS WITH FARAI CHIDEYA
SECOND MIDTERM ELECTION SPECIAL: ARIZONA
"NEW VOTERS AND NEW CHALLENGES"
OCTOBER 28, 2010

Farai Chideya, host:

Chideya: I'm Farai Chideya. This election season, I went on the road - this time to Arizona. Immigration is front and center:

JIM LANG: IF YOU DON'T CONTROL THE BORDERS, YOU DON'T REALLY HAVE A NATION.

SHERIFF TONY ESTRADA: THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SECURE BORDER. THE BORDER WILL NEVER BE SEALED.

Chideya: From border concerns to economic ones...

KILLROY: WE'VE BEEN HOPED AND CHANGED INTO BANKRUPTCY AND INTO A NEAR DEPRESSION.

DAMON: THEY'RE BLAMING EVERY KIND OF BROWN PERSON POSSIBLE FOR THEIR ECONOMIC TURBULENT TIMES.

Chideya: Arizona and the nation are changing. Voters young and old are fired up for November.

MARY: IT'S PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION THAT WE'VE HAD IN MY LIFETIME. AND THAT'S A LONG TIME.

PEDRO: I'M JUST EXCITED BECAUSE IT'S GONNA BE MY FIRST TIME VOTING AND I JUST WANNA KNOW HOW IT FEELS.

Chideya: Stay with us for Pop and Politics. With me, Farai Chideya. On the road in Arizona from WNYC and American Public Media. First, the news.

SEGMENT A

<<road sound>>

Chideya: The rule of law means different things to different people. One state's struggle speaks to national issues.... Arizona.

<<music>>

Chideya: I'm Farai Chideya and this is Pop and Politics. We're on a different kind of road trip... a POLITICAL journey to see where America stands on the cusp of the midterm elections. Like Florida, which we visited earlier, Arizona is full of beauty, chaos and drama. One of the biggest issues dividing Arizonans is how stop unauthorized immigration.

Chideya: Nationally, immigration is one of those “wedge issues” that can drive people on both sides to the polls. In April, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed State Senate Bill 1070 into law.

BREWER: THOUGH MANY PEOPLE DISAGREE, I FIRMLY BELIEVE IT REPRESENTS WHAT’S BEST FOR ARIZONA.

Chideya: Immigration enforcement is generally the Federal government’s territory. But “SB1070” would allow state law enforcement to ask anyone to show documentation that they’re here legally, at any time. The President weighed in.

OBAMA: IF WE CONTINUE TO FAIL TO ACT AT A FEDERAL LEVEL, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SEE MISGUIDED EFFORTS OPENING UP AROUND THE COUNTRY.

Chideya: A majority of Arizonans... and Americans... support tougher Immigration laws...but there are plenty of critics.

ALMA: THEY NEED TO STOP THE SB1070, IT’S GOING TO HURT OUR COMMUNITY. IT’S GONNA HURT EVERYONE.

DAMON: THEY’RE BLAMING EVERY KIND OF BROWN PERSON POSSIBLE FOR THEIR ECONOMIC TURBULENT TIMES.

Chideya: Arizona continues to make headlines because of its laws... and its lawMAKERS.

PEARCE: ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AFFECTS EVERY ISSUE WE TALK ABOUT IN THIS ECONOMY. EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, CRIME, TAXES, ALL OF THAT IS IMPACTED. IT’S A NEGATIVE IMPACT. NOT A POSITIVE IMPACT.

Chideya: That’s Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce, who sponsored SB1070. In July, a Federal court put most of the law on hold. One issue at hand: whether the law authorizes racial profiling. Pearce strongly rejects that idea.

PEARCE: THAT’S AN ABSOLUTE LIE. HOW DEMEANING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT. HOW DEMEANING TO OUR HEROES IN BLUE AND BROWN THAT PATROL 24/7. THAT IS THE MOST ABSURD COMMENT BY THE LEFT THAT COULD EVER BE MADE. IT’S SIMPLY NOT TRUE. UNDER FEDERAL LAW, THERE IS NO PROTECTION FROM RACIAL PROFILING.

Chideya: For Pearce, the political has a tinge of the personal. In 2004, his son, a sheriff’s deputy, was shot by an immigrant here illegally. But he says that’s not why he’s fighting for tougher laws. He’s eager to see immigration used as a national litmus test.

PEARCE: WE HAVE WEAK-KNEED POLITICIANS WHO PANDER TO THE OPEN-BORDER CROWD, OR PANDER TO THE CHEAP LABOR CROWD, AND IGNORE THE DAMAGE TO THIS COUNTRY. WELL, A LOT OF THOSE AREN’T GOING BE EMPLOYED AFTER NOV 2010, AND THAT’LL BE A GOOD THING FOR AMERICA.

Chideya: Before going into politics, Russell Pearce was in law enforcement. For twenty-three years he worked for the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Department, and he himself was shot in the line of duty. But people who have to enforce the laws in Arizona TODAY -- including SB1070 -- don’t always agree on tactics. Tony Estrada is the Sheriff of Santa Cruz County, which lies right

on the Mexican border.

ESTRADA: MY FEELINGS ON SENATE BILL 1070 IS I'VE BEEN VERY ADAMANTLY AGAINST IT. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING I USED TO TELL PEOPLE, AND IT IS A NIGHTMARE. I DON'T CARE HOW THEY AMEND IT, OR HOW THEY TWEAK IT, OR HOW THEY DISGUISE IT. IT WILL LEAD TO RACIAL PROFILING.

Chideya: Sheriff Estrada says that if a new court ruling reinstates the more controversial part of SB1070...the one that permits stopping people for their ID...he'll enforce it. But he's willing to speak out about the law, and the realities of border enforcement.

ESTRADA: THEY MAY THINK THAT BECAUSE I AM AGAINST SENATE BILL 1070 THAT I AM FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION. I AM NOT. I THINK LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE DOES, I'M SURE, THAT PEOPLE SHOULD COME ACROSS THE BORDER LEGALLY. BUT THE REALITY IS IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. FOR A LOT OF REASONS. A LOT OF THE PEOPLE THAT ARE COMING ARE COMING FROM EXTREME POVERTY. THEY HAVE NO HISTORY, THEY HAVE NO BACKGROUND, THEY HAVE NO PAPERS, THEY HAVE NO CHANCE OF GETTING A VISA OR A WORK PERMIT. SO THEY ARE COMING HERE BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SURVIVE. SO AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IMMIGRATION PALES. THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WE HAVE AS A NATION ARE DRUGS.

Chideya: The Sheriff is in Nogales, Arizona, on one side of a border fence. Nogales, Mexico, is on the other. A series of tunnels run under the border... dug by smugglers of drugs, and of people. Sheriff Estrada wishes enforcement would focus more on drug crime.

ESTRADA: SOME OF THE POLITICIANS SAY THERE WILL BE NO IMMIGRATION REFORM UNTIL WE SECURE THE BORDER. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SECURE BORDER. THE BORDER WILL ALWAYS BE POROUS. WHY? BECAUSE THEY'LL EITHER DIG A TUNNEL TO GET UNDER IT, THEY'LL COME THROUGH THE PORTS, THEY'LL GO OVER THE PORTS. ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION IS A PHENOMENA, IT FOLLOWS A PATH OF EMPLOYMENT AND DEMAND. AND IT'S GONNA CONTINUE. THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN STOP IT.

Chideya: But in Phoenix, Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County has a different approach. He's made headlines for raiding shops, factories, McDonalds to find people here illegally. To some, Arpaio is a folk hero; to others, a man who's taken Federal law into his own hands. We visited the Sheriff in his office. Every inch of wall was covered with newspaper clippings about him; posters of him; photos. It's like a shrine.

ARPAIO I'VE BEEN IN UH A SHERIFF FOR ALMOST 18 YEARS. MY BIG JOB WAS WITH REGIONAL DIRECTOR IN MEXICO CITY FOR THE U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION INCLUDING TURKEY, THE MIDDLE EAST, TEXAS, ARIZONA. I TOOK AN OATH OF OFFICE, 18 YEARS AGO TO ENFORCE ALL THE LAWS. IT IS A VERY VOLATILE SITUATION, VERY CONTROVERSIAL, THIS ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION SITUATION. I'VE BEEN INVESTIGATED STILL AM I PRESUME BY U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS. 16 DAYS INTO THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION, THEY STARTED INVESTIGATING ME FOR ALLEGED RACIAL PROFILING, SO I ONLY SAY THAT BECAUSE I'M DOING MY JOB, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE A LITTLE TREND HERE OF POLITICS INVOLVED.

CHIDEYA: TELL ME ABOUT THE CITIZENS WHO YOU RECRUIT TO DO LAW ENFORCEMENT, WHO ARE NOT SHERIFFS, WHO ARE NOT PAID OFFICIALS. HOW DO YOU APPROACH THE IDEA OF CITIZENS PARTICIPATING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT?

ARPAIO: WELL, YOU KNOW, SINCE I'VE BEEN A SHERIFF, WE CALL THAT THE POSSE, HERE UNDER THE LAW I CAN SWEAR IN PRIVATE CITIZENS, WE HAVE ALMOST 3,000. FIFTY-SEVEN DIFFERENT POSSES, INCLUDING AIRPLANES, JEEPS, MOTORCYCLES. SAVES THE TAXPAYERS MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. THEY PAY FOR EVERYTHING. WE'VE NEVER HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE POSSES SHOOTING PEOPLE AND SO ON, SO I'M GOING TO FORM POSSE FIFTY-EIGHT, WHICH WILL BE A SPECIAL POSSE DEDICATED TO ENFORCING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION LAWS. MAYBE GET SOME PEOPLE THAT ARE WELL KNOWN IN THE MOVIE BUSINESS THAT ARE MEMBERS OF MY POSSE.

CHIDEYA: LIKE WHOM, SIR?

ARPAIO: I'VE GOT STEVEN SEGAL, HE'S ONE OF MINE. HE'S BEEN IN THIS OFFICE. I'VE GOT A MISSION IMPOSSIBLE GUY, THAT PLAYED IN THE SERIES, THE HULK WAS HERE I SWORE HIM IN. AND THEY ALL WORK FOR ME. FREE. THEY DON'T DO WHAT I SAY, I FIRE THEM, THEY DON'T GET MONEY ANYWAY, BUT THEY HAVE TO TURN IN THEIR BADGE.

Chideya: Maricopa County has one of the highest rates of being sued of any sheriff's department in the country. In a 1996 case, an inmate died while in a restraining chair after being beaten by officers. The inmate's family settled a wrongful death lawsuit for more than eight million dollars. Sheriff Arpaio says he wishes the lawyers hadn't settled the case. He also defends the tent city jail, a place where inmates have to live outdoors in scorching weather. The Sheriff exaggerates the temperature a bit.

ARPAIO: I HAVE ROOM FOR 2,500 HUNDRED PEOPLE IN THE DESERT, I PUT UP THE KOREAN WAR TENTS, OVER HALF A MILLION PEOPLE HAVE COME THROUGH OUR TENTS. I KNOW IT GETS HOT, LIKE 140 DEGREES IN THE SUMMER, DOESN'T BOTHER ME. AND, IF THE TENTS ARE SO BAD, WHY DID FOUR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES VISIT ME IN TENTS. WHY WOULD THEY STAND NEXT TO ME AND SAY WE LOVE THIS PROGRAM? I'M TALKING ABOUT SENATOR DOLE, RAN FOR PRESIDENT, HE CAME, PHIL GRAHAM OF TEXAS, GOVERNOR WILSON CAME, MCCAIN CAME. OF COURSE THEY ALL LOSE, THEY NEVER WIN WHEN THEY VISIT THE TENTS.

CHIDEYA: YOU SEEM TO REALLY LOVE YOUR JOB. WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT IT?

ARPAIO: THE PEOPLE. WHAT KEEPS ME GOING IS WHEN THE PEOPLE COME UP TO ME AND SAY, "THANK YOU SHERIFF. THANKS FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING." THEY CALL ME RACIST AND EVERYTHING. BUT I KNOW I'M NOT. I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY CALL ME. IN MY HEART, I KNOW I'M NOT.

CHIDEYA: IF YOU WERE PRESIDENT OBAMA, WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION?

ARPAIO: IF I WAS THE PRESIDENT, WHAT I WOULD DO? I KNOW HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM AT THE BORDER. NOBODY ASKS. WHY DON'T THEY ASK ME MY OPINION?

CHIDEYA: WELL I'M ASKING YOU RIGHT NOW. SO, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

ARPAIO: THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME. YOU ARE ONE OF THE FEW THAT WILL ASK. INCLUDING THE MEDIA. THANK YOU FOR DOING THAT. I KNOW WHERE THE BORDER IS. I'M THE GUY WHO SPENT SO MANY YEARS THERE. WE HAVE A BORDER 2000 MILES. WE HAVE VIOLENCE AT THE BORDER. LET'S SEND OUR ARMY ACROSS THE BORDER TO WORK WITH THEIR ARMY, LIKE I USED TO WORK WITH THEIR ARMY IN MEXICO. OH, THAT PROBABLY WILL NEVER HAPPEN. BUT WE SEND ARMIES TO IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, BECAUSE OF TERRORISM. I'M TALKING ABOUT BILATERAL NOW, NOT UNILATERAL, BILATERAL, WHICH MEANS WE WORK TOGETHER, THEY ASK US.

CHIDEYA: YOU WOULD OPEN UP ANOTHER FRONT, ESSENTIALLY ALONG THE BORDER. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? IS THAT PRACTICAL?

ARPAIO: NO, I WOULDN'T EVEN CALL IT A WAR. I'D CALL IT POLICE ACTION.

Chideya: As we headed out the door, the Sheriff told us to be sure and visit his tent city jail. He even told us to visit in the afternoon... when it was hotter. So we did.

<< SOUNDS OF PRISONERS IN TENT CITY>>>

PRISONER 1: WELL, PUT IT THIS WAY, IT'S VERY, VERY HOT.

PRISONER 2: IT'S ACTUALLY REALLY REALLY HOT

PRISONER 3: IT'S EXTREMELY WARM IN THE SUMMERTIME 108, 111 [DEGREES]. YOU LAY IN BED AT NIGHT. YOU SIT THERE AND YOU SWEAT. MAYBE YOU FALL ASLEEP MAYBE YOU DON'T

PRISONER 4: WE DO HAVE A FAN, BUT THAT FAN JUST BLOWS HOT AIR.

Chideya: The yard is packed gravel. Green tents house metal bunk beds with faded pink sheets. Pink towels hang off the rails of the beds. And the men are wearing pink boxer shorts... a deliberate choice by Sheriff Arpaio...explained to us by one of the prisoners.

PRISONER: THE REASON IT HAS PINK IS TO DEGRADE THE MAN. WE'RE MEN. WE KNOW PINK IS FOR THE GIRLS AND PINK IS FEMININE. SO, FOR ARPAIO TO DEGRADE US HE BRINGS US IN HERE TO WEAR THE BLACK AND WHITES, WHICH IN THE OLD DAYS, THE 1950S, THEY WORE THE BLACK AND WHITES, CHAIN GANGS. AND NOW YOU HAVE THE PINK IS TO DEGRADE THE MAN AND MAKE US FEEL LOWER THAN WHAT WE ALREADY ARE.

Chideya: That's right: the men are wearing classic black-and-white striped prison uniforms, straight out of a movie. There's even a guard tower with a flashing neon sign that says "Vacancy."

<<(sound of PA in Tent City) Yard three, Yard three come up for chow. make sure your shirts are tucked in. No towels>>

TENT CITY: CAN WE GET SOMETHING BETTER TO EAT?

TENT CITY: I HAD THIS LAST NIGHT, THIS AND THIS. DIDN'T EVEN TASTE LIKE FOOD, IT TASTED LIKE CHUNKY WATER. I WORK IN THE FOOD KITCHEN. IN THE FOOD FACTORY. WE CALL THIS SLOP IN THE FOOD KITCHEN. THIS IS STEAMED SPINACH I GUESS AND THIS IS I GUESS SOME LAME EXCUSE FOR MASHED POTATOES.

TENT CITY: I UNDERSTAND THAT JOE ARPAIO, ESPECIALLY A LOT OF SENIOR CITIZENS LOVE HIM BECAUSE THEY'RE TAKING ALL THE HOODLUMS OFF THE STREET AND WHATEVER AND THAT TYPE OF THING, BUT WHEN YOU'RE A NORMAL PERSON AND YOU COME THROUGH THIS PROCESS, YOU LOOK AT IT WITH A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE."

<<clank of gate at tent city>> <<music up>>

Chideya: We continue our road trip through Arizona after a short break. We'll tackle government spending with some members of the Tea Party movement, look into unemployment, and see how new voters are reshaping the political landscape.

PEDRO: I'M JUST EXCITED BECAUSE I JUST TURNED 18 AND IT'S GOING TO BE MY FIRST TIME VOTING AND I JUST WANT TO KNOW HOW IT FEELS.

RAY: IT'S GONNA BE MY FIRST TIME VOTING. I'M INTERESTED IN VOTING THIS YEAR. EVERY VOTE COUNTS, THAT'S WHAT THEY TELL ME.

Chideya: I'm Farai Chideya and this is Pop and Politics, a production of WNYC with American Public Media. You can find us online with videos, blogs and more at popandpolitics.com.

SEGMENT B

Chideya: I'm Farai Chideya. We're taking you on a road trip through American politics. In Arizona. Even though this state is known for changing the national debate on IMMIGRATION, the ECONOMY is still the number one issue on people's minds, here and across the United States.

Chideya: Yuma, Arizona, borders both California and Mexico. This is a city with a proud history as a commercial center of the Old West... and even now, it's renovated a historic downtown and filled classic buildings with new art centers and restaurants. There are multiple military bases in and around Yuma, and commercial farms. Yet the city is also suffering. Unemployment is always high here, but now it's through the roof -- at 25 percent when you adjust for seasonal work.

Chideya: We went to a local bar called the Mineshaft, just outside of town. On a Friday night, a country-western band played to a nearly empty dance floor. People we met were *frustrated*.

KILLROY: A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT OF WORK WITH THIS "HOPEY-CHANGEY" ECONOMY. WE'VE BEEN HOPE-AND-CHANGED INTO BANKRUPTCY AND INTO A NEAR DEPRESSION

TERESA: THEY'RE LOSING THEIR HOMES, THEY'VE LOST THEIR JOBS, AND IT'S SCARY, IT'S REALLY SCARY. CAUSE THEY SAY, OH, THE RECESSION IS OVER WITH? NO IT'S NOT.

ROBERT: WE ARE FAILING AS A NATION, AND IT'S JUST WRONG.

PAM: I'VE BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR A YEAR. IF YOU'RE NOT BILINGUAL THEN YOU CAN'T GET A JOB.

Chideya: So where do people go to find a job? Many of them end up at the Yuma Private Industry Council, or Y-PIC for short. It's a career resource center that sprawls out over several adobe buildings. When we arrived, people were working on their resumes and checking a bulletin board for new job postings.

<<ambi of people typing, bustling>>

TRAVIS: TRAVIS GREEN, I LIVE IN YUMA. JUST HERE TRYING TO FIND WORK. TRYING TO FIND A GOOD JOB RIGHT NOW. LABOR, SOME CONSTRUCTION. WORK OUTDOOR MORE. NOT THE INDOOR KIND OF GUY.

SUSAN: SUSAN FRENCH, JUST LIKE FREEDOM FRIES. OH RECEPTIONIST, ENTRY LEVEL BOOK KEEPING JOB. PART-TIME FULL-TIME ANY-TIME, WOULD BE FINE. I'D BE VERY HAPPY.

Chideya: More than 24 thousand people came to this center in the last year. But the issue is about more than raw numbers: it's real life, personal stories.

Chideya: Take Hazel Shaw, a woman who's all too familiar with YPIC's hallways. When we met her, she was wearing a t-shirt from the local elementary school and a small gold pin.

SHAW: IT'S ACTUALLY AN ANGEL, YOU KNOW? A LITTLE GUARDIAN ANGEL. THAT'S HER HALO UP THERE, HER BODY FELL OFF. AND I WAS DETERMINED SHE WASN'T WASTED BECAUSE SHE HAD WINGS AND SHE COULD FLY. SO I DID NOT THROW HER AWAY AND I WEAR HER EVERY DAY.

Chideya: Hazel is 58, African-American, and has a masters degree in public administration. She worked for the city of Yuma for twenty years. Last year, her father got sick. When her job refused to let her take a leave of absence--she quit. She figured with her education and experience, she'd find another job. But then, nothing. Months of unemployment and her retirement saving spent.

SHAW: IT WAS DEVASTATING. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT KINDA JUST SLAPS YOU IN THE FACE. THE DAY THAT EVERYTHING WAS GONE, AND I HAD TO MOVE OUT OF THE CONDO THAT I WAS RENTING AT THE TIME, CAUSE I COULDN'T AFFORD THE RENT ANY LONGER, AND ALL THE RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE WERE DRIED UP AT THAT POINT AND ALL I HAD WAS A SMALL UNEMPLOYMENT CHECK, I CALLED AROUND AND THE ONLY PLACE THAT WAS TAKING PEOPLE WAS THE FAMILY SHELTER WITH CROSSROADS MISSION. SO I MOVED OUT THAT SUNDAY NIGHT, I GOT EVERYTHING CLEARED AND CLEANED OF THE CONDO, SO PEOPLE COULD MOVE IN ON MONDAY, AND I, MY LANDLORD ACTUALLY GAVE ME \$40 BACK FROM THE RENT

IN ORDER SO I COULD GO BACK TO THE HOTEL ROOM THAT NIGHT AND TAKE A SHOWER AND FEEL CLEAN AND STUFF SO I DID THAT, AND SLEPT ON A BED, AND CRIED ALL NIGHT, AND THE NEXT MORNING AT 11 O'CLOCK CHECKOUT TIME I GOT IN MY CAR WITH ALL THE THINGS IN IT, PACKED UP AND I WENT TO THE CROSSROADS MISSION.

CHIDEYA: DID YOU EVER FEEL LIKE YOU'D END UP IN THIS POSITION?

SHAW: OH NEVER, IF ANYBODY TOLD ME EVEN IF SOMEBODY TOLD ME THIS FIVE YEARS AGO, I WOULD SAY YOU'RE ABOUT AS NUTS AS YOU CAN BE. I WILL NEVER END UP HOMELESS. BUT THINGS HAPPEN, YOU TRY TO MAKE THE VERY BEST OF THEM.

Chideya: Hazel's been through the ringer, and yet she still cares enough to vote. She voted for the President in 2008. I asked if she regretted it.

SHAW: NOT A BIT, NOT A BIT. IT WAS A HISTORICAL THING, FOR ME AND MY FAMILY, IN FACT I WAS IN NORTH CAROLINA WITH MY FAMILY WHEN THE INAUGURATION OCCURRED. AND IT WAS JUST SO WONDERFUL TO SIT THERE WITH MY FATHER AND WATCH THE INAUGURATION ON TV AND KNOW THAT HE SAW IT. AS FAR AS BUYERS REMORSE, WE DON'T HAVE ANY, I DON'T HAVE ANY...I BELIEVE THAT THIS AFRICAN AMERICAN PRESIDENT HAS EVERY RIGHT TO FAIL AT SOME THINGS AS WELL AS THE WHITE PRESIDENTS WE HAVE HAD IN THE PAST.

Chideya: Hazel's loyalty brings up the question of how much race shapes people's view President Obama. Of course, the President isn't running for re-election this year, but his standing could have a ripple effect on the Democrats. According to a September Gallup Poll, 91% of African-Americans still approve of the job the President is doing; versus just 36% of whites. Latino support splits the difference, at 55%.

<<music>>

Chideya: For an entirely DIFFERENT view of the President -- hit up a Tea Party event. One Saturday, we went out to Arizona Western College--a big silver, futuristic building up the street from lettuce fields. The Colorado River Tea Party was holding a candidate's forum.

USHER GUY: WELCOME TO THE TEA PARTY. WE DON'T HAVE ANY TEA, BUT WE GOT A LOT OF CANDIDATES FOR YOU.

Chideya: People -- most of them older, and white -- handed out fliers and signed up for mailing lists. At the beginning of the forum, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

<<PLEDGE OF ALLEG. AMBI>>

Chideya: Candidates running in various fall elections had just five minutes each to make their case. One big theme was making government smaller.

Chideya: So at a break, I talked Karen and Jim Lang. They wanted to cut government spending... but what kinds? I asked them about a variety of Federal programs, including two of

Yuma's biggest military bases.

JIM LANG: THE MARINE CORP BASE AND THE PROVING GROUNDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE ECONOMY OF YUMA. SO NO I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T WANT TO CUT THAT BACK.

KAREN LANG: ALSO I THINK THE BORDER PATROL IS CRITICAL TO THIS TOWN, WE HAVE VERY LOW ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS IN THIS AREA AND I CAN'T SEE HOW WE NEED TO TAKE ANY FUNDS AWAY FROM THEM.

CHIDEYA: IF THE BORDER PATROL AND THE MILITARY ARE NOT ITEMS THAT YOU WOULD CUT. WOULD YOU GO WITH CUTTING BACK SOCIAL SECURITY?

KAREN LANG: OH, THAT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT THING TO DO. PROBLEMS CONTINUE TO GROW, UNNECESSARY PROGRAMS BOTH AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL, AND SO I THINK THAT'S WHERE WE NEED TO CUT BACK. RATHER THAN PROGRAMS LIKE SOCIAL SECURITY WE NEED TO LOOK AT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT THAT MAY BE TOO EXCESSIVE.

CHIDEYA: POLITICS IS WHERE THE IDEAL MEETS THE PRACTICAL. HOW WOULD YOU, ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL, GO ABOUT MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE CUT?

KAREN LANG: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE, DEALING WITH FOREIGN ENTITIES, AND THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT. AND THE BORDER, MAINTAINING OUR BORDERS AND THE DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY. OTHER THAN THAT, EVERYTHING SHOULD BE MOVED BACK TO THE STATE LEVEL, AND IF WE GOT RID OF THOSE AREAS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THOSE PROGRAMS, WE WOULD SAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF MONEY.

CHIDEYA: WHAT KIND OF A WORLD DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN 10 YEARS FROM NOW?

JIM LANG: I DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN A GOVERNMENT-DIRECTED WORLD, WHERE YOU ONLY HAVE CHOICES OF A AND B. AND WE FORMALLY HAVE A CHANCE OF C AND D, BUT THOSE AREN'T SOME OF THE CHOICES THAT THE GOVERNMENT THOUGHT WAS VALUABLE. THE GOVERNMENT REALLY CAN'T JUDGE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL HOW WE WANT TO LIVE OUR LIVES AND WHAT WE WANT TO DO EVERY DAY.

Chideya: I talked to Lisa Replogle [REP-low-gul] organized the event:

REPLOGLE: WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SOME VERY TOUGH DECISIONS. SOME OF THOSE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BE THAT PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO HAVE ALL OF THE ENTITLEMENTS THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY DOING. WE CAN'T AFFORD IT. I THINK SOME OF IT WOULD HELP IF WE WERE ABLE TO CLOSE THE BORDER. AMERICAN IS A WONDERFUL, ALTRUISTIC COMPANY. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO HELP PEOPLE, BUT YOU ALSO HAVE TO HELP AMERICA. YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE.

CHIDEYA: THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT OF ANGER FROM MANY DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE IN THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. ALL SORTS OF EMOTIONS COME UP. IS THAT A BAD THING? SHOULD WE TRY TO TAKE THE EMOTION OUT OF POLITICS OR IF WE DON'T, HOW DO WE REMAIN CIVIL?

REPLOGLE: WE NEED TO HAVE EMOTION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, I BELIEVE, BECAUSE IT IS AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE. WE ARE LOSING OUR COUNTRY TO INCREDIBLE DEFICITS; TO A GOVERNMENT THAT WILL NOT LISTEN TO US. IT IS EMOTIONAL. PEOPLE FEEL VERY STRONGLY ABOUT THEIR PATRIOTISM AND THEIR LOVE OF THIS COUNTRY. SO, NO, YOU CANNOT TAKE THE EMOTION OUT OF IT.

MCCLUNG FROM STAGE: IT IS NOT AMERICAN TO BE TAKING AWAY THE FREEDOM OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY.....<<fade under>>

Chideya: Ruth McClung [mick-CLUHNG is running for Congress in Arizona's 7th district,

MCCLUNG FROM STAGE: AND MY PERSONAL PET PEEVE: THEY SHOULDN'T BE TELLING US WHAT KIND OF LIGHT BULBS WE SHOULD BE USING.

<<applause>>

Chideya: She's Republican, 28, and her slogan is "Maybe it *does* take a rocket scientist." She would know--she's an ACTUAL rocket scientist.

MCCLUNG: WE'RE GONNA TAKE BACK OUR COUNTRY. WE'RE GONNA TAKE BACK OUR COUNTRY. AND WE'RE GONNA TELL THEM THAT WE HERE, IN DISTRICT 7, WE IN YUMA, KNOW HOW TO RUN OUR LIVES BETTER THAN THEY DO IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT. (APPLAUSE)

<<applause fades to ambi of Sweet Home Arizona>>

Chideya: If you didn't catch it, that was Sweet Home ARIZONA. We checked in with Congressman Raul Grijalva [ra-OOL gree-HALL-vuh], McClung's opponent. He's represented the 7th district since 2003, and for the first time, he's not a shoo-in. He gets why people are so anxious.

GRIJALVA: PART OF IT IS OUR ECONOMY, THERE'S NO QUESTION ABOUT IT. PART OF IT IS JUST THE WHOLE SENSE OF THIS COUNTRY IS CHANGING AROUND ME, BOTH ITS CONTOUR, ITS FACE, ITS TENOR, AND I'M UNCOMFORTABLE WITH IT, I DON'T LIKE THE WAY IT'S CHANGING, AND YOU KNOW, IMMIGRATION, IN THAT MIX MAKES THE ANGER MORE VOLATILE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, ESPECIALLY IN ARIZONA.

Chideya: So, some people are getting nervous about how our population is changing. We asked a couple of analysts for the big picture, starting with Mark Lopez of the Pew Hispanic Center.

LOPEZ: LATINOS ARE A GROWING POPULATION AND A RELATIVELY YOUNG POPULATION, SO AS YOU MOVE FORWARD IN TIME WE'RE GOING TO SEE MORE AND MORE HISPANICS WHO TURN 18, WHO ARE U.S. CITIZENS AND THEN ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE AND WE'VE ACTUALLY SEEN THAT IN ELECTION CYCLES OVER THE LAST

FIFTEEN OR SO YEARS WHERE IN EACH AND EVERY ELECTION CYCLE MORE LATINOS VOTE, EACH AND EVERY ELECTION CYCLE MORE ARE REGISTERED AND EACH AND EVERY ELECTION CYCLE LATINOS REPRESENT A LARGER SHARE OF ALL VOTERS THAN THEY DID IN THE PREVIOUS CYCLE.

Chideya: The Millennial Generation is also gaining power, especially after turning out to vote in high numbers in 2008. Erica Williams is the Deputy Director of Progress 2050, a group that studies younger voters.

WILLIAMS: IN ABOUT 5 YEARS MILLENNIAL ARE GONNA MAKE UP, AND WHEN I SAY MILLENNIALS, I'M REFERRING TO YOUNG VOTERS RIGHT NOW AGE 18 TO 29, ARE PREDICTED TO MAKE UP MORE THAN A THIRD OF THE ELECTORATE. SO IT'S A HUGE GENERATION, AND THEN LOOKING AT THE TRENDS IN ETHNICITY AND DIVERSITY AND ALL THE DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH THAT WE'RE EXPECTING, BY THE YEAR 2050 THERE'S GONNA BE NO RACIAL OR ETHNIC MAJORITY IN THE UNITED STATES. SO IF YOU COMBINE THOSE TWO FACTORS, YOU'RE LOOKING AT AN INCREDIBLE INFLUX OF NEW VOTERS, PARTICULARLY FOR THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION THAT IS INCREDIBLY DIVERSE.

Chideya: I asked Erica whether these young, diverse voters still have faith in the political process.

WILLIAMS: YOUNG PEOPLE PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE LOOKING SPECIFICALLY AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME? WHAT POLICIES HAVE YOU IMPLEMENTED, SUPPORTED OR NOT SUPPORTED, THAT CAN AND WILL MAKE MY LIFE BETTER.

<<music>>

Chideya: That brings us back to Yuma, where we met a tall, baby-faced eighteen year old who's right at the intersection of the Latino vote and youth vote. We met Pedro Lopez at a church in a residential neighborhood. He was carrying a cup of split pea soup and fresh bread, a gift from one of the local families looking out for him. Pedro spent two months living in the Church basement, and working as a volunteer going door to door and registering new voters. He showed us his digs.

LOPEZ: AND THIS IS THE CHURCH, MISSION OUR LADY GUADALUPE, AND WE'RE IN THE PARKING LOT RIGHT NOW AND WE'RE HEADING TO THE OFFICE. IT'S A SMALL OFFICE, BUT I DON'T KNOW, I USE IT FOR WORK AND SLEEP AND FOOD AND EVERYTHING. IT'S LIKE MY HOUSE. I COULD HAVE STAYED IN A HOTEL BUT I JUST DON'T WANT TO, WE CAN USE THE MONEY FOR SOMETHING BETTER THAN STAYING IN A HOTEL BECAUSE IM ONLY GOING TO BE THERE FOR THE NIGH TS. IT'S NOT NECESSARY.

CHIDEYA: YOU KNOW, SOME PEOPLE WOULD SAY IT'S CRAZY FOR AN 18-YEAR-OLD GUY WHO HAS ANY NUMBER OF THINGS HE COULD BE DOING, ENJOYING LIFE, HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS, WORKING AND MAKING MONEY. YOU'RE HERE SLEEPING ON AN AIR MATTRESS. WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?

LOPEZ: BECAUSE I CARE FOR MY PEOPLE, MY COMMUNITY....WE'RE ABOUT HALF A MILLION MINORITIES, UNREGISTERED CITIZENS. HALF A MILLION WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED AND THEY'RE NOT TAKING IT SERIOUSLY. THEY'RE NOT EVEN TAKING THE TIME TO FILL OUT THE REGISTRATION FORM. SO IF THEY'RE NOT CONCERNED I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THEM OR TO THEIR FAMILIES.

Chideya: We went out with Pedro that afternoon to see what it takes to sign people up. The 29th precinct has a high number of unregistered voters.

LOPEZ: I'M JUST EXCITED, BECAUSE I JUST TURNED 18 AND IT'S GOING TO BE MY FIRST TIME VOTING AND I WANT TO KNOW HOW IT FEELS.

Chideya: The neighborhood was full of well-kept ranch style houses and the sun was beating down full force.

<<knock>>

LOPEZ: HOLA, COMO ESTA

WOMAN: MUY BIEN

LOPEZ: SOY UN VOLUNTARIO DE PROMESA ARIZONA Y ESTAMOS REGISTRANDO A PERSONAS PARA VOTAR. ES MUY IMPORTANTE....

Chideya: Even if Pedro gets someone to come to the door, that doesn't mean they're eligible to vote.

WOMAN: NO PUEDO VOTAR.

LOPEZ: NO PUEDE VOTAR?

LOPEZ: SHE'S NOT A CITIZEN YET AND HER HUSBAND, I THINK SHE SAYS SHE'S NOT SURE IF HE REGISTERED BEFORE. I DON'T GET DISCOURAGED BECAUSE THERE'S THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF DOORS. I JUST KEEP GOING. IF THEY DON'T ANSWER, GO TO THE NEXT DOOR AND THE NEXT DOOR. YOU KNOW IF THEY DON'T ANSWER, GO TO THE NEXT DOOR AND THE NEXT DOOR AND TRY TO FIND THE PEOPLE.

Chideya: Finally, after almost an hour in the heat, Pedro got lucky. At a house in the middle of the street, a young man answered the door--Ray Mandujano.

LOPEZ: IT'S ONLY GOING TO TAKE A MINUTE. WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IT?

MANDUJANO: UH, YEAH, IT'S FINE.

LOPEZ: DO YOU HAVE YOUR ID OR DRIVER'S LICENSE?

MANDUJANO: YEAH

Chideya: Like Pedro, Ray just turned 18. We asked him why he decided to register.

MANDUJANO: IT'S GOING TO BE MY FIRST TIME VOTING AND ACTUALLY I'M INTERESTED IN VOTING THIS YEAR. EVERY VOTE COUNTS, THAT'S WHAT THEY TELL ME.

Chideya: He needed a moment to figure out *why* his vote was so important. His lip quivered. He almost looked like he was going to cry.

MANDUJANO: IMMIGRATION...I DON'T REALLY LIKE WHAT'S GOING ON RIGHT NOW SO I'D REALLY LIKE TO HAVE A SAY IN THAT. MY DAD WAS IMPRISONED FOR A WHILE, SO IT'S FAMILY. IT WAS A TOUGH SITUATION. HE COULDN'T WORK SO THE FAMILY HAD TO START WORKING AND STUFF LIKE THAT. HE'S THE MAIN SUPPORTER OF THE FAMILY, SO WE DIDN'T HAVE INCOME FOR A WHILE. SO, YEAH, THAT'S BASICALLY IT.

Chideya: For Pedro, this was a win.

LOPEZ: IT FEELS GREAT TO HAVE SOMEONE THAT THINKS THE SAME AS WE DO. I DON'T KNOW, HE WANTS TO HELP OUT THE COMMUNITY, WE WANTS TO STOP INJUSTICES, HELP WITH IMMIGRATION AND HE HAS A PERSONAL STORY THAT HAPPENED TO HIS FAMILY SO THAT'S ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS THAT HE'S WILLING TO REGISTER. SO, I MEAN WE ONLY HAVE 1 AND IT'S 2:40 BUT IT'S ONE PERSON THAT WE'RE PRETTY SURE HE'S GOING TO GO OUT AND VOTE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THAT COMMUNITY. SO I'D RATHER HAVE ONE PERSON LIKE HIM THAN 10 OTHER PERSONS THAT THEY JUST REGISTER FOR DOING IT. SO IT'S SATISFYING, I FEEL LIKE I'M DOING MY JOB.

Chideya: The future of American politics lies with people like Pedro Lopez... and with emerging movements like the Tea Party, too. How do politically diverse groups forge a shared path for the country? One reason it felt so great to get out on the road is that meeting people quickly erases easy stereotypes about their lives. The question remains: Will America's diverse political constituencies learn to speak to each other, not just through voting, but through all the daily challenges that communities have?

Chideya: Next, we head to tribal lands in Arizona as part of an up close and personal look at the border.

WILSON: I THINK THAT BOUNDARY NOW, THE WAY THEY'VE PUT IT, HAS MADE IT SO, IT'S REAL EVIDENT IT'S TWO SEPARATE COUNTRIES NOW. WHEN I WAS GROWING UP IT WASN'T THAT. IT DIDN'T SEEM THAT WAY. I NEVER KNEW OR NEVER EVEN THOUGHT I WAS IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY. I JUST FIGURED I WAS IN O'ODHAM LAND.

Chideya: I'm Farai Chideya and this is Pop and Politics, a production of WNYC with American Public Media. You can find video and pictures from our travels online at PopandPolitics.com.

SEGMENT C

Chideya: This is Pop & Politics, I'm Farai Chideya.

<<ambi of driving>>

Chideya: When you're on a road trip in Arizona you have to pay attention to the scenery. The earth is burnt orange, and the week of my trip it was absolutely scorching, many days over a hundred degrees. The road was shimmering with water-like mirages.

Chideya: Going out with a team of reporters gave me a new perspective on day-to-day life in Southern Arizona. The state is filled with Border Patrol checkpoints. For example, you'll find one traveling from Route 90 from Huachuca City to Tucson. If you're pulled over, you stop, roll down your window, an agent asks some questions. It can be quick and painless... or intimidating.

<<ambi of driving>>

Chideya: On the way back from a taping, our radio producer, Suzie, was with a local videographer, Antonio. He's originally from Ecuador and he was driving his truck. So, here's what happened when they reached that checkpoint.

Chideya: They slowed down. The Border Patrol agent waved his hand. They both thought it was a "keep on going" kind of wave. But he wanted them to stop. And he was angry that they didn't.

BP AGENT: DO YOU ALL HAVE ISSUES STOPPING AT A STOP SIGN? NO SORRY. ARE YOU BOTH US CITIZENS? WHERE ARE YOUR PAPERS?

Chideya: Do you all have issues stopping at a stop sign?

Chideya: I didn't even wave at you.

Chideya: Are you both US citizens?

Chideya: Antonio told the agent, he's a permanent resident.

Chideya: The agent says "and that's even worse."

Chideya: Do you want to step out of the vehicle?

SUZIE: DO YOU WANT BOTH OF US OUT?

Chideya: No, just him, the border patrol agent said. Just him.

Chideya: Antonio got out of the car. A group of agents took him over to the side of the road and asked him questions. A few really tense minutes later, they let him get back in the car.

SUZIE: ARE YOU OK?

ANTONIO: YEAH.

SUZIE: HOW DO YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW?

ANTONIO: IT'S FUNNY, I DON'T KNOW. I THINK HE--HE WAS WAVING HIS ARM SO I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE HE WASN'T.

SUZIE: I SAW HIM WAVE. HE WENT LIKE THAT!

ANTONIO: YEAH THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT TOO! SO HE TOLD ME I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HEARD BUT THERE'S A \$10,000 FEE FOR RUNNING A STOP SIGN IN A BORDER PATROL CHECKPOINT AND I JUST WAS LIKE "OH MY GOD, I'M SO SORRY, I'LL NEVER DO IT

AGAIN." BUT I THINK HE WAS TRYING TO INTIMIDATE ME TO MAKE ME YOU KNOW, "OH HERE ARE THE DRUGS!" OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW? BUT YOU KNOW IT WAS JUST LIKE, I HAVE NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF SO. WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO, SEND ME BACK TO ECUADOR? OKAY. PAY FOR MY TICKET, I'M GONNA GO FOR CHRISTMAS ANYWAYS. THANKS A LOT.

Chideya: The Border Patrol agent had every right to stop Antonio. But this simple misunderstanding could have been much worse. it lets you know how tense everyday life in Arizona can be, even for immigrants who came here legally like he did. He says the immigration law SB1070 has changed things.

ANTONIO: I THINK THAT THE ORIGINS OF THE LAW...ARE VERY RACIST. YOU KNOW, I HAVE A FRIEND AND HE IS FROM ENGLAND AND HIS VISA RAN OUT AND I REMEMBER WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THIS LAW AND HE WAS TELLING ME THAT HE'S NOT WORRIED AT ALL BECAUSE THIS LAW IS NOT FOR HIM. HE'S WHITE AND HE'S FROM ENGLAND. SO THEY ARE NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO HIM. SO. BUT IT'S OK.

Chideya: Later, I spoke to a Border Patrol Agent from the The Tucson sector, which includes the checkpoint where Antonio and Suzie were stopped. I asked Agent David Jimarez how they choose who to stop.

JIMAREZ: OH WE DON'T...[laughs] WE DON'T PROFILE. WE LOOK FOR CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS AMONGST THAT VEHICLE. FOR INCONSISTENCIES. WHEN WE SEE SOMETHING INCONSISTENT ABOUT A VEHICLE OR THE WAY THAT AN INDIVIDUAL MIGHT BE DRIVING THAT MIGHT GO AHEAD AND RAISE SOME SUSPICION LEVEL ON THE OFFICER, AND MIGHT ACTUALLY GO AHEAD AND JUST ENCOURAGE HIM TO ACTUALLY TAKE A LOOK AT THAT VEHICLE A LITTLE BIT CLOSER.

Chideya: According to Agent Jimarez, the Tucson border patrol sector is the busiest in the nation. Has been for ten years.

JIMAREZ: LAST YEAR WE APPREHENDED 241,000 PEOPLE, OK? OUT OF THOSE 241,000 PEOPLE, MORE THAN 40, 000 HAD SOME FORM OF CRIMINAL HISTORY.

Agent Jimarez has been shot at while out in the field. In addition to people crossing the border to live and work, people carry drugs, sometimes in huge packs, over mountain ranges, on foot.

<<ambi of crunching earth on the border>>

Chideya: I traveled to the border, in the Tucson sector, to meet with Al Garza. He used to be the National Director of the Minutemen. Then he started his own organization called "Patriot's Coalition." Day and night, he goes out on patrol, watching for people crossing illegally. His group doesn't have the authority to apprehend people. They call Border Patrol if they see someone suspicious.

GARZA: NOW I'VE BEEN AT THIS NOW FOR 7 YEARS. I'M A RETIRED PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. I AM OF MEXICAN DESCENT. I'M FIFTH GENERATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

<<walking, truck starting its engine, "you okay, shorty?">>

GARZA: RIGHT NOW WE'RE GOING TO A PLACE CALLED HUACHUCA MOUNTAINS. THE HUACHUCA MOUNTAINS ARE VERY COMMONLY KNOWN FOR THE ILLEGAL ACTIVITY THAT WE'RE CURRENTLY FACING IN THIS NATION.

GARZA: WE'RE APPROXIMATELY ABOUT 45, MAYBE 50 MILES FROM THE BORDER. AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, AT ONE POINT IT WAS JUST LIKE THE BORDER BECAUSE THE TRAFFIC WAS SO IMMENSE AND SO INTENSE, THAT'S NOT THE CASE ANYMORE HERE BECAUSE WE DO EXIST HERE AS MINUTEMEN. BY THE WAY, OUR FUNCTIONS VARY FROM TIME TO TIME BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES, WE OBSERVE, SPOT AND REPORT. AND IT'S ALL WE DO, AND IT'S VERY EFFECTIVE.

GARZA: TO THE RIGHT, WE'RE NOW APPROACHING THE FORT HUACHUCA, AS I SAID BEFORE, AND OF COURSE WITH A LOT OF NOT ONLY ILLEGAL ALIENS NOW, YOU ALSO, WE KNOW FOR A FACT, THAT THERE ARE COUNTRIES OF INTEREST THAT ARE UTILIZING THESE DIFFERENT ENTRIES, IF YOU WILL, COUNTRIES LIKE IRAN, IRAQ, SOMALIA, THE LIST GOES ON. WE HAVE FOUND BY THE WAY QURANS, RUGS, TURBINS, FLIGHT TICKETS.

Chideya: When I talked to the Border Patrol spokesman, he hadn't heard of any Qurans being found in the desert. And even if they had, said the spokesman, a religious book is not necessarily a sign of terror, it's a piece of personal property. Yet Al Garza feels motivated -- by many things--to travel the border.

GARZA: ACTUALLY TO BE QUITE HONEST WITH YOU, IT'S BECOME A SPIRITUAL WARFARE. AND I'M A CHRISTIAN AND I'M VERY PROUD OF IT. I BELIEVE IN OUR PRINCIPLES, I BELIEVE IN OUR FOUNDATION, THIS IS WHAT GOT US THROUGH IT ALL FOR 200 YEARS.

GARZA: THE GOVERNMENT ISN'T DOING IT, WE'VE GOT TO COME OUT HERE. I DON'T LIKE SPENDING MY MONEY, GAS IS EXPENSIVE. WHY SHOULD I BE FORKING MONEY OUT OF MY POCKET, I'M DOIN' IT BECAUSE MY COUNTRY DEPENDS ON IT, ALTHOUGH A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT'S GOING ON.

GARZA: AT ONE POINT I WAS VERY PROUD TO SAY THAT I WAS OF MEXICAN DESCENT. I NO LONGER CAN SAY THAT. I DON'T FEEL THAT I'VE GOT THAT PRIDE ANYMORE BECAUSE OF WHAT I'VE SEEN, SO I'M ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS, BUT I AM FIRST AND MOST AND FOREMOST I'M ABOUT RULE OF LAW.

HERE IS ASH CANYON, WE ARE ALMOST THERE.

<<car signal ticking>>

<<sound of walking>>

GARZA: WE ARE HERE AT THE HUACHUCA MOUNTAINS. OUT HERE WE'RE COMMONLY KNOWN FOR CARRYING WEAPONS. I'M LICENSED TO CARRY ONE, AND IT'S CONCEALED. AND THE ONLY TIME THAT THING SHOULD COME OUT IS WHEN I'M EITHER CHECKING IT FOR SAFETY OR I'M GOING TO FIRE AT SOMETHING. IN THIS

CASE I WAS CHECKING FOR SAFETY. [LAUGHS] I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU.

GARZA: THIS IS A 10 MM WEAPON. MORE LIKELY THAN ANYTHING ELSE IT'S GOING TO BE FOR RATTLESNAKES AND THINGS OF THIS NATURE BECAUSE TYPICALLY YOU WON'T FIRE UPON ANYONE UNLESS YOU HAVE TO. A LOT OF PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? I DON'T KNOW. I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED IT, BUT I'LL KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT.

<<sounds of walking>>

GARZA: NOW WE'RE GOING TO TRAVEL DOWN A LITTLE BIT AND I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU SOME AREA THAT IS COMMONLY KNOWN ILLEGAL ALIENS, DRUGS, AND A LOT OF COYOTES. THE COYOTES I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM, NOT THE COYOTE THE 4-LEGGED ONE BUT THE COYOTE THAT ACTUALLY BRINGS PEOPLE IN.

GARZA: IF I POINT TO MY RIGHT WHICH IN THIS CASE WOULD BE SOUTHWEST THERE'S TRAILS, UH, THAT WE CAN SEE THAT ARE ACTUALLY WHITE, THEY LOOK WHITE IN COLOR. THOSE ARE THE AREAS WE LOOK FOR. TO MY LEFT, I SEE SOME SHINY OBJECT, THERE POTENTIALLY COULD BE SOMEONE SPOTTING US.

GARZA: WELL, HERE'S A SOCK THAT WOULD BELONG TO A KID, A BABY. THEY WILL STOP, FOR EXAMPLE HERE AND WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO PICK THEM UP, AND WHILE THEY'RE DOING THAT, THEY WILL CHANGE THEIR BABY AND THEY THEMSELVES WILL CHANGE INTO OTHER CLOTHING. SO THE IDEA HERE IS TO ONCE THEY GET TO THIS POINT AND AWAY FROM HERE, TO MIX IN WITH THE PUBLIC. WHAT BETTER WAY TO DO IT THAN WITH ANOTHER SET OF CLOTHES? THEY DISAPPEAR INTO THIN AIR, NOBODY KNOWS WHERE THEY WENT, NOBODY KNOWS WHO THEY ARE, UNLESS YOU CATCH EM IN THE ACT.

GARZA: SO REALLY WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT IT'S A RECONQUISTA MOVEMENT, IT'S A TAKEOVER, OF THE AMERICAN... WHOSE AMERICAN DREAM IS IT ANYMORE? WHAT ARE THEY DISCUSSING IN CONGRESS, ARE THEY DISCUSSING WHAT'S BEST FOR ME AND FOR YOU, I MEAN WE PAY THESE PEOPLE TO REPRESENT THE BEST INTERESTS OF AMERICANS. ARE THEY REALLY DOING IT? THEY'RE NOT.

GARZA: BEING A PATRIOT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU SIT ON THE COUCH EAT POTATO CHIPS DRINK BEER AND TALK ABOUT WHAT NONSENSE IS GOING ON. YOU ACTUALLY GET UP AND YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

<<music>>

Chideya: On this kind of a road trip, I went from experience to experience, sometimes so fast it was hard to take in all of the stories. And the scenery. I drove through the desert, towards Sells, Arizona, alongside stark mountains that looked like sentinels.

Chideya: This is land of the Tohono O'odham tribe. There's is the third-largest Native American reservation in the United States -- about the size of Connecticut. And, their tribe has been hit with some of the same problems of drug smuggling and crime that affect other regions.

Sometimes their own members have gotten involved. It's all part of a series of changes that have troubled people like Art Wilson.

Chideya: Art is a member of the tribe. He's 52. As he showed me around, he remembered how the border used to be much more fluid.

WILSON: IT'S REALLY EVIDENT THAT IT'S TWO SEPARATE COUNTRIES NOW. WHEN I WAS GROWING UP IT WASN'T THAT. WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, NEVER EVEN THOUGHT I WAS IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY. JUST FIGURED I WAS IN O'ODHAM LAND.

Chideya: A treaty between the US and Mexico in 1853 split O'otham lands in two. But it's only within recent history that the border fence and stricter enforcement have made it harder for people to cross.

Chideya: The day I visited the reservation was the second anniversary of Art Wilson's mother's death. He and his family were preparing for a ceremony to honor her memory. They were at a barbecue made out of an oil drum, cooking.

<<patting sound of dough>>

WOMAN: WE'RE MAKING TORTILLAS.

<<sizzle sound of grill>

Chideya: There have been conflicts along this border for generations. When Art's grandmother was 5, the US government came onto O'Odham lands and took the children away to boarding schools to be assimilated into American culture.

WILSON: I NEVER REALLY MADE THE CONNECTION OF THE TRAUMA OF IT ALL UNTIL, I THINK, WHEN MY DAUGHTER TURNED FIVE AND ONE TIME I WAS TELLING SOMEBODY THIS STORY AND SAID "GOD." I COULDN'T IN MY WILDEST DREAMS IMAGINE MY FIVE YEAR OLD BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM ME. I MEAN, I'VE ALMOST LOST HER AT FAIRS AND STUFF LIKE THAT, YOUR HEART DROPS AND YOU JUST LIKE...BUT THEY KEPT HER OUT THERE, SHE COULDN'T COME HOME. SHE WAS ABLE TO COME HOME I THINK SHE SAID AROUND THE AGE OF FIFTEEN. BUT JUST KIND OF UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEHAVIOR OF WHY SHE WAS SO BITTER AGAINST WHITES.

CHIDEYA: DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR GRANDMOTHER WAS ALLOWED TO SPEAK O'ODHAM?

WILSON: NO, SHE SAID THEY WOULD PUT SOAP IN THEIR MOUTHS IF THEY WERE CAUGHT TALKING O'ODHAM.

CHIDEYA: MOST OF THE YOUNGER PEOPLE HERE SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OR IS IT SOMETHING WHERE PEOPLE ARE LOSING IT?

WILSON: THE LANGUAGE IS BEING LOST AND I DON'T SAY IT'S LOST, IT'S STILL THERE. IT'S JUST THAT WE'RE NOT TEACHING IT. BECAUSE THERE'S NO NEED. I HAD TO SPEAK FOR ME TO COMMUNICATE TO MY GRANDFATHER BECAUSE HE DIDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH. MY GRANDMOTHER WOULD ALWAYS SAY THAT "YOU DON'T HAVE BLONDE HAIR, YOU DON'T HAVE BLUE EYES, SO WHY SO YOU NEED TO SPEAK

ENGLISH?" AND SHE WOULD SAY...

CHIDEYA: HOW DO YOU SAY THAT?

WILSON: (repeats in O'ODHAM)

CHIDEYA: YOU'RE IN CONGRESSMAN GRIJALVA DISTRICT, CORRECT? DO YOU FEEL THAT HE OR ANYONE ELSE IN THE US GOVERNMENT, NOT TRIBAL GOVERNMENT, IS DOING A GOOD JOB OF REPRESENTING YOU AND IS THERE A BIG PUSH TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED IN VOTING?

WILSON: I KNOW THERE IS A PUSH RIGHT NOW. THE TRIBE IS TRYING TO REGISTER NEW VOTERS AND I DON'T THINK GRIJALVA IS REPRESENTING AS WELL IN THE SENSE THAT, I MEAN THIS BILL WAS..

CHIDEYA: SB1070?

WILSON: SB1070, I KNOW IT'S GOT SOME MIXED FEELINGS, BUT TO US, I MEAN WHY ARE THEY MAKING SUCH A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT? I MEAN WE GO THROUGH THE SAME THING. I MEAN THEY PUT, THEY ASK US TO PULL OUT OUR TRIBAL ID'S, WE HAVE TO CARRY OUR ID'S WITH US, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? WHAT GET'S ME ANGRY IS EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE GOING INTO MEXICAN. YOU SEE RED, WHITE AND GREEN FLAGS AND I MEAN LIKE WE HAD TO ASSIMILATE, I MEAN WHY DON'T THEY HAVE TO? YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, IT'S KINDA THAT I SEE THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE MEXICAN PEOPLE HAVE BROUGHT TO US, BUT I ALSO SEE THE BAD THAT HAS COME WITH THAT.

CHIDEYA: SO WHAT DOES IT DO TO HOME WHEN YOU HAVE A BORDER, A NATIONAL BORDER RUNNING THROUGH IT?

WILSON: TO ME, IT WAS SAD THE FIRST TIME I SAW IT. I FELT LIKE CRYING BECAUSE IF SOMEBODY WERE TO COME INTO YOUR HOME, WHERE YOU LIVE RIGHT NOW AND TO SAY OKAY THIS PART OF THE HOUSE IS NOT YOURS AND YOU FEEL SAD BUT YET YOU ALSO FEEL POWERLESS BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO

CHIDEYA: SO IF YOU, THESE ARE NOT THE ONLY CHOICES, BUT IF YOU HAD TO CHOSE BETWEEN EITHER THERE WAS A SOLID FENCE RUNNING ALONG THE BORDER OR that THE LAND WAS OPEN ONCE AGAIN, THAT THE O'ODHAM PEOPLE COULD TRAVEL FREELY, BUT THAT THERE WERE MORE BORDER CROSSINGS, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

WILSON: YOU'RE ASKING ME A HARD QUESTION. [PAUSE] RIGHT NOW BECAUSE OF THE SAFETY ISSUE I WOULD SAY I WOULD SEE IT AS BEING SECURE, BEING SOLID, BUT MY HEART ALSO KIND OF CRIES BECAUSE IT'S THAT CUT OFF BETWEEN THE LAND I KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T GO BACK TO YESTER YEARS. SO IF ANYTHING I WOULD SEE THE SOLIDNESS BECAUSE OF THE DANGER THAT IS THERE, I GUESS THAT WOULD BE MY ANSWER.

<<song starts>>

Chideya: After Art and I talked, he invited me and my crew to join his family out in the desert for the ceremony honoring his mother's memory. As mountains turned pink from the sunset around us, I listened to them talk lovingly about her. They ended the ceremony with a song.

Chideya: Getting out on the road gave us a chance to find out how we live politics on a personal level. In just days, people will take all of their concern about the issues at hand... and the emotion that goes with it... and head to the ballot box. Will the balance of power change this election season? To find out, tune in with us next time when we talk about the RESULTS of the midterms... with guests Rosie Perez, Melissa Harris-Perry, Reihan Salam, John Ridley and Todd Zwillich.

Chideya: Please check out our photos, videos and blogs from our travels at www.popandpolitics.com. And follow us on twitter or facebook.

Chideya: Pop and Politics is produced by Nona Willis Aronowitz, Aaron Ernst, Nelli Black, Ave Carrillo, Suzie Lechtenberg, and Kerry Donahue.

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Chideya: I'm Farai Chideya. This is Pop and Politics, a coproduction with WNYC Radio and distributed by American Public Media.