

The LA Times Is Apparently OK with Identity Theft

May 25, 2020 - A little over a week ago, the LA Times printed a public interest piece in its Sunday food section lamenting the plight of illegal aliens in the restaurant industry who now find themselves unemployed due to COVID19. The article was an attempt to tug at the heart strings of society by featuring an individual who was brought to the United States illegally at a young age his parents.

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var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];  
s.type = 'text/javascript';  
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';  
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);  
})();
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var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);  
})();
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The article highlights the personal tragedy of a single person who had fallen on hard economic times due to a virus that nobody has been able to control. In that sense, his story isn't much different than that of the 36 million Americans who have lost their jobs over the past two months. But it went on to try and make the reader feel guilty that the United States is providing no unemployment benefits to people who cannot be legally employed and who never should have been in this country in the first place.

At this point, you're probably either thinking that I'm heartless for taking this position, or that the Times' position is completely nuts, but wondering what any of this has to do with identity theft. Near the end of the article is a statement from its subject who tried to log onto the California Employment Development Department website to see what was involved in applying for unemployment benefits. He said, "The first thing they ask you is for a Social Security Number. So what do you do when the one you have isn't yours? Or you had to go down to MacArthur Park to buy it, because it was the only way you could get a job? What do you do then?"

Now you might think that a responsible journalist would have pointed out that using or purchasing another person's SSN is identity theft. Or that a responsible news outlet would force the author to add such a statement. But that didn't happen.

Regardless of your position on immigration, identity theft isn't a victimless crime. When someone uses your SSN to gain employment, at the very least it is likely to cause issues with the IRS. You could wind up being on the hook for taxes on income that you know nothing about. Or it could mean that you wind up losing a refund that you were counting on.

Aside from the fact that identity theft is illegal, if the person using your SSN applies for credit, or uses your information to obtain a rental property, you could find your credit ruined if the bills they run up don't get paid. It will be your responsibility to prove that those bills aren't actually yours and that you are a victim; a process that can take years.

The fact that that LA Times would print such an article is reprehensible, and the author and editors who took no issue

with the idea that it might be ok to commit identity theft under any circumstances should be fired.

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