

DECLARATION OF HOWARD DOE

I, Howard Doe, hereby declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746:

1. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge except where I have indicated otherwise. If called as a witness, I could and would testify competently and truthfully to these matters.
2. I was born in Honduras. I am 22 years old. I traveled alone to Mexico.
3. I went to the San Ysidro port of entry to seek asylum on Sunday, February 3, 2019.
4. I fled my home country because the Cartel del Atlántico threatened and tried to kill me. I worked as a refrigerator repair man, conducting home visits in Jutiapa, Atlántida. I was approached by a member of the Cartel del Atlántico who wanted me to start selling drugs in Jutiapa. I was saving money to pay for university. I told him that I did not want that kind of work and that I was happy doing the work I was already doing. The member of the cartel reacted angrily and threatened me. He told me that it was not my choice to make, that I needed to obey his orders, and that when he said to do something, I had to listen. I told him no, and I drove away.
5. That night, the same cartel member sent me a message by phone asking me whether I was going to work for him and telling me that I should keep in

mind the consequences of not doing so. I said no. The next day, I was on a motorcycle returning home from work and a *sicario* (hitman) shot at me four times. I was lucky that he missed all four shots, but the next day I received another message saying that I was going to die for having said no.

6. I want to make something of myself, and my parents always encouraged me to work hard. I have never been arrested in Honduras and I have no criminal record. I have always worked honestly, and I want to do the right thing. I have no criminal record.

7. If I am sent back to Honduras, I fear that the Cartel del Atlántico will kill me. They work closely with the police in Atlántida, and they have networks in the police departments across the entire country. I know that they have connections with MS-13, and 18 because they hire members of these gangs as hitmen.

8. I do not believe my government would protect me if I were to return to Honduras because the police work with the Cartel del Atlántico. The leader of that cartel, Jorge Galeano, was arrested by the national police and military police in 2016. He was accused of trafficking drugs. Three days later, he was released without any charges.

9. I first arrived in Tijuana in November 2018. Several days later, I learned about the list from friends who had signed themselves up. I was afraid to

put my name on the list because I did not know who might review it, or if it really had anything to do with requesting asylum. At the same time, I did not want to create problems with the U.S. government by trying to cross the border without inspection. I was also afraid to present myself because I had heard that Mexican immigration officials were working with U.S. immigration officials to prevent people like me from seeking asylum. Feeling that I had no other option, I finally put my name on the list close to four weeks later, in December 2018.

10. I waited over a month in Tijuana before my number was called. During this time, I stayed at the home of someone I had recently met, about thirty minutes from El Chaparral. I was afraid to leave the house because I had seen in the news that migrants like myself had been targeted. While I was in Tijuana, two young Honduran men were abducted, tortured and killed. I was also afraid I might be picked up by Mexican officials and deported because I did not have legal status.

11. In late January 2019, I started going to El Chaparral every single day to see if my number would be called. I was afraid every time I left the house, but I was also afraid of not being there when my number was called. I had to pay 40 pesos every day to get to and from El Chaparral.

12. On February 3, 2019, when my number was called, I showed my ID to Grupos Beta, and they took me with a group of about 40 people. We put our bags in the back of a Dodge Ram and then climbed into a cage in the back of a van.

13. Grupos Beta brought us to San Ysidro, where we waited for U.S.

immigration officers to tell us to pass. When they did, we entered the port of entry, and U.S. immigration officers took all of our clothes and belongings. They gave each of us a zip lock bag for our documents, as well as a paper with the name and number of the person who was going to receive us in the United States. I don't know why they took this information if they were planning to return us to Mexico. Then they walked us to another room where they searched us thoroughly. I asked for a phone call, and one of the officers yelled at me and asked me what my problem was.

14. The U.S. immigration officers brought us to a room where we sat in chairs and waited to be interviewed. When I was called for my interview, they asked me who I was, where I was going, and who was going to receive me, and they took my fingerprints. The officers took the information of the person who was going to receive me. I thought they were going to call her, but it doesn't seem like they did. We spent what felt like two hours in that room, waiting for all of the interviews to be finished. Each interview lasted about 5 minutes, and the officers gave us sandwiches while we waited.

15. From that room, we were taken to a cell around 1:00 pm. There were about 22 or 23 of us. While in the cell, a man told us that, the day before, one of the men tried to look through the window in the door. Another man told him not to do that because someone else had been taken away for 24 hours after trying to do the same thing. When the man came back, he had told the group that he'd been

taken to a small, freezing cold room and left there as punishment. None of us dared to look through the window after hearing that story. I had already been trying to follow instructions, but now I was afraid I might accidentally upset the officers.

16. The CBP officers left us in the cell until around 6 pm when they came back to get us for dinner. We were given about 8 minutes to eat small hamburgers, and then we were returned to the cell. We went to sleep on the thin mats with the shiny blankets the officers had given us. One member of our group had to sleep right next to the toilet. The officers did not turn the lights off all night. They came in once during the night to take attendance. During the night, U.S. immigration officers would enter every two or three hours and shout someone's name. We didn't know where they were taking people when their names were called.

17. Early Monday morning, around 3:00 am, the officers called me from the cell and took me to an interview with a CBP officer. The CBP officer asked me why I had left Honduras and other questions. During the interview, I told him that I had been kidnapped in Mexico by Los Zetas and had managed to escape after 15 days. The entire interview lasted about an hour.

18. The officer gave me documents and explained that there was a new law that meant that I might be returned to Mexico. I read one of the documents that said that I would have to fight my case from Mexico. I told the officer that I understood the document and that I could not go back to Mexico. I had already

explained that I'd been kidnapped and that I was afraid to be in Mexico. The officer told me that he wasn't going to decide whether I stayed or went back, and that I had to sign the papers. I told him I didn't want to sign them because I wasn't going to agree to be sent back to Mexico. He told me that I just had to sign them to show that I had received them. He told me that it wouldn't affect my case one way or another to sign the papers. He also said that an asylum officer would decide whether to send me back to Mexico. He kept pressuring me to sign the papers, so I finally did. Then the officer took the documents back, and I was returned to the cell.

19. I waited about six more hours for the next interview. At about 9:00 am on Monday, U.S. officials came back into the cell and called my name. I was taken to a very small room with a small table with a computer and a telephone; an interpreter was on speaker-phone. The asylum officer who was interviewing me was a woman. The interview focused on whether I was afraid of returning to Mexico.

20. I told the asylum officer that I was afraid. I explained that I'd been kidnapped for fifteen days by Los Zetas in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, and that I'd managed to escape. While kidnapped, they gave us very little to eat. The armed men would intimidate us with their guns and tell us that they were going to kill us and burn our bodies so that no one could find our bodies.

21. One night, our captors got very drunk. There was a nine-year-old girl

who had been kidnapped with her father and was locked in the same room as her father, me, and four others. We made a plan for the girl to ask to use the bathroom and see if she could find the keys. She managed to find the keys on the way back and brought them to the room. We waited until we couldn't hear the Zetas anymore and, hoping that they were asleep, we unlocked the door. There were other rooms with other people who had been kidnapped, but we didn't have time to open those doors. If the Zetas awoke, they all had guns and we knew they would kill us. The seven of us ran away. I don't know where the father and his daughter ended up, though I believe they escaped.

22. I told the asylum officer all of this. She told me that my statement would be analyzed to decide whether I should be sent back to Mexico.

23. I asked the asylum officer if I could call the person with whom I was going to stay in Chicago. She told me that it was up to CBP. CBP came and got me and brought me back to the cell around 12:30 pm on Monday. I stayed in the cell until Tuesday, February 5, 2019. During the time I was detained, CBP would take us out for four to eight minutes at a time for meals and so that they could clean the cells.

24. On Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at about 10:30 am, CBP officers came back to the cell and called us by name. They brought us to identify our belongings, handcuffed us with our hands behind our backs, hung our bags from our fingers, and walked us to a van while telling us not to look around. Throughout this whole

process, they didn't tell us where they were taking us. I thought they were taking us to San Diego or to another detention center.

25. U.S. immigration officials walked us from the van into a processing center. They turned us over to Mexican immigration officials without explaining anything. I wanted to refuse to go back to Mexico, but I was afraid that they might punish me for speaking up. I had already said many times that I was afraid to go back to Mexico, and nobody seemed to care.

26. The Mexican officials asked us how we had been treated, told us to be calm, and informed us that we would have permission to stay in Mexico until the day of our court hearing in San Diego. They told me that if I had another hearing after the first one, they would give me another permit. They didn't tell me whether I would have permission to work. I do not have any other legal status in Mexico. They offered to take me to a shelter, but I said no, thank you.

27. I am afraid that I might be kidnapped again while I am in Tijuana. On Wednesday, January 30, 2019, I was attacked and robbed by two young Mexican men. They pulled a gun on me from behind and told me not to turn around. They took my phone and told me that they knew I was Honduran and that if they saw me again, they would kill me. Migrants in Tijuana are always in danger, and I am especially afraid because the Zetas torture people who escape them. I have seen a video of what Zetas do to people who escape them, narrated by a member of los Zetas – they put people in barrels filled with something that looks like salt and

leave them there. Their bodies fall apart and at the end all that's left is a barrel full of something that looks like red salt and the body disappears completely. I am afraid that this will happen to me. They have informants all across Mexico, and I am terrified that they will find me.

28. I tried to explain my fear to the asylum officer, but she interrupted me to say that was enough and to ask me more questions.

29. I have friends in Chicago and in Philadelphia who were ready to support me and help me find an attorney. One of my friends in Chicago is a U.S. citizen.

30. In Mexico, I don't have anyone to help me with the legal process, and I don't know how I am going to find an attorney. I have about \$60.00 USD left in my savings. I don't know if it will last until my hearing. I don't know what I will do if I run out of money. I was not prepared to survive in Mexico for this long and am afraid of what will happen to me if I'm forced to stay here for weeks, months, or years.

31. Given the harm I have experienced in my country, I fear that if my identity and my status as an asylum applicant are released to the public, my life and possibly that of my family will be in danger. I wish that my identity not be publicly disclosed, and I wish to proceed with the use of a pseudonym in any federal action.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. This declaration was read back to me in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Executed on February 6, 2019 at Tijuana, Mexico.

Howard Doe
HOWARD DOE

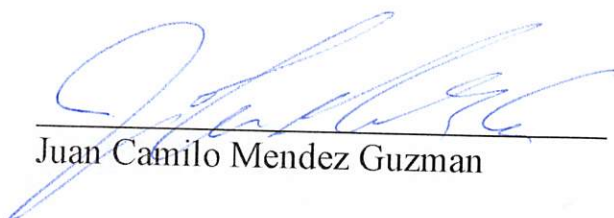
CERTIFICATION

I, Juan Camilo Mendez Guzman, declare that I am fluent in the English and Spanish languages.

On February 6, 2019, I read the foregoing declaration and orally translated it faithfully and accurately into Spanish in the presence of the declarant. After I completed translating the declaration, the declarant verified that the contents of the foregoing declaration are true and accurate.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on February 6, 2019 at Tijuana, Mexico.



Juan Camilo Mendez Guzman

February 6, 2019
Date