

Analysis of Border Patrol Activity in/around Forks, WA

Forks Human Rights Group

January 2012

Forks Human Rights Group (FHR) shared its first analysis of Border Patrol activities in Oct 2010, which covered events from April 2008 to September 2010. FHR is now sharing its second analysis of Border Patrol activities in the Forks, WA area. This analysis covers 84 encounters with Border Patrol agents and 82 additional sightings of Border Patrol in our town that have been reported and/or witnessed by the community from October 2010 to mid-January 2012. In these 84 encounters, 54 community members were detained, 17 people were temporarily detained and an additional 42 were questioned but not detained. This is only a snapshot of what is going on in our community. In order to protect individuals' identities, Forks Human Rights Group has done a simple content analysis of these stories to provide a summary of what the community has shared. These numbers underestimate the actual occurrences of these events. Some community members do not have contact with FHR, others are deported before they can share their stories and others are afraid to share their stories for fear of retaliation against them, family members or friends if identified. In addition, not everyone provided details on all of the themes below, also contributing to lower numbers in this report than actual occurrences.

Of the 54 community members that were detained:

- 18 were detained while working in the woods (33%).
- 11 were detained through traffic stops (20%).
- 10 were detained through ICE detainers at the police (19%). These detainers are places on our community members at the moment they enter the jail, not after they are convicted of a crime.
- An additional 4 community members were approached by Border Patrol after pulling up at their destination (with no reason given for questioning) (7%).
- 3 community members were detained (5.5%) and one died through interpretation at a non-criminal stop, such as "not coming to a full stop at a stop sign".
- While in a store or business, 3 community members were approached and detained (5.5%).
- Two community members (with no immigration history) were detained in their own house without a warrant (4%).
- Two community members were detained in town (unspecified location) (4%).
- One community member was detained from the side of the road after having an accident while driving in bad weather (2%).
- *At least 25 were parents of minor age children (46%) and 50 children were left without a parent.*¹

Of the 42 community members that were questioned but not detained:

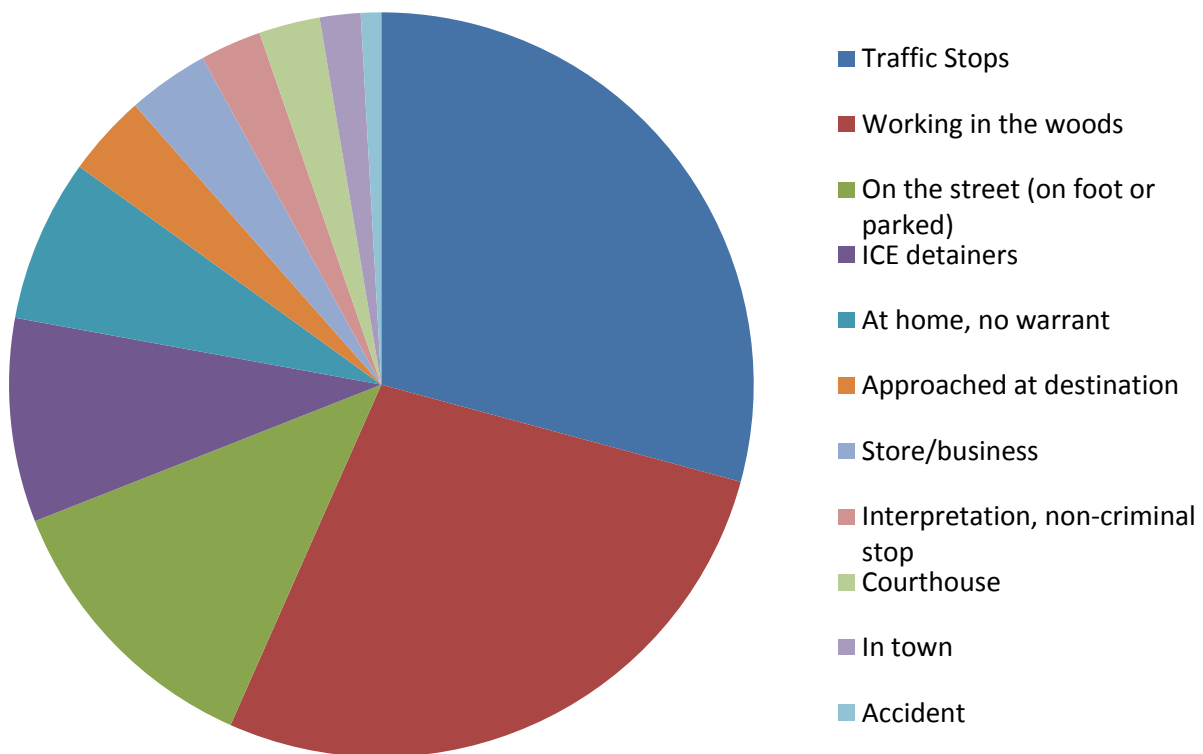
- 15 were questioned at a traffic stop made by a Border Patrol agent (36%).
- 11 were questioned while working in the woods (26%).
- 7 were questioned while walking on the street (17%).
- 6 were questioned at home, on their own property (14%).
- 2 were questioned leaving the courthouse (5%).
- 1 was questioned at a business, on private property (2%).

¹ People did not regularly report or record if people detained were parents, so this number is greatly underestimated. Our data is incomplete in this area.

Of the 17 community members that were temporarily detained (required by a Border Patrol agent to stay at the site of the stop, at times placed in a Border Patrol vehicle and at other times even taken to the Port Angeles office):

- 7 people were temporarily detained through traffic stops (41%).
- 5 people were parked on the side of the road when they were approached (29%).
- 2 people were walking on the street (12%).
- 2 people were working in the woods (12%).
- One person was leaving court (6%).
- 11 of those temporarily detained were US citizens (65%).
- 3 people were permanent residents (17.5%).
- 3 people are legally in the United States through other permission (17.5%).
- 3 of these individuals were held in the Port Angeles office all day until the agents could determine if they had legal status here (17.5%). In one instance, Border Patrol agents refused to talk to the men's boss, which would have clarified the situation at the moment.

How Were Community Memebers Approached (detained or questioned)



Themes that repeated themselves through the community's reports included:

- Dangerous driving by Border Patrol agents is one of the largest complaints outside of unwarranted stops. Some of the common behaviors which put our community members in danger are: Border Patrol agents approaching cars at high speed and driving *extremely* close to cars, having their high beams on at night making it very difficult to see, and passing on a double yellow line in a non-emergency situation. Community members repeatedly report that they feel driving practices by Border Patrol agents put their children and family at risk.
- Beginning in August 2011, community members started reporting Border Patrol agents threatening to arrest them and/or take away their legal permit/status if they find them with undocumented immigrants in their vehicles. This has become increasingly common, especially with people that work in the woods. It has resulted in one community member, who has been a legal resident for over 20 years, being arrested and placed in removal proceedings because he was traveling to the mechanics with a friend, who was undocumented, in his car.
- Community members being followed by Border Patrol cars for extended amounts of time, at times us to up to one hour (41 reports).
- Border Patrol agents specifically making a U-turn behind a vehicle to follow it (13 times).
- There are 13 incidents where community members specifically talk about a Border Patrol agent's extreme anger. This includes actions such as yelling, cursing and kicking people's cars.
- There are 12 reports of community members being harassed by agents while legally and peacefully documenting Border Patrol actions. This includes behavior such as Border Patrol agents taking pictures of our community members and their vehicles, yelling, and threatening to detain or temporarily detaining people.
- There are 11 reports of Border Patrol trespassing onto private property without a warrant or letting the property owner know. In most of these cases, the owner has specifically told Border Patrol that they must have a warrant and present it to the manager at time of entry.
- In four stories, community members reported vandalism by Border Patrol agents (such as going through belongings, damaging personal belongings, etc.).
- During these incidents, 10 minor-aged children were left without any parent for an amount of time. Usually pro-bono legal help was able to expedite the process to have the parent released with a pending court date. This took from a few days to a week or more.
- Border Patrol agents are often reported parked on the side of the road watching people as they pass by. There are a total of 91 such reports. Locations where agents park include: the side of the highway (33 reports), generally around town (18), the grocery store, Thriftway (12), Alder Grove, a trailer park with many Latin families (agents have been reported to enter on foot and in car and are also reported outside of the gate) (10), gas stations (7), church (4), private property (without permission) (4), and at the public transportation center (3).
- Border Patrol was reported in town 166 days over this reporting period.