7-25-1997

Abusing Deaf Immigrants and Hearing No Evil

Editor
One of the less flattering human characteristics is the penchant to develop unflattering attributions towards people perceived as different—e.g., manifesting different religious practices, social behaviors, physical characteristics. Take the deaf. In some parts of the world the deaf are viewed as possessed by evil, reaped by the evil sown by their parents, causing discomfort for "normal" people, worthy of ridicule, unintelligent, less than the "good" normal people of the community.

A related unflattering human characteristic is to take advantage of those who are different—to cheat them, trick them, threaten them, abuse them. So the recent expose of deaf immigrants from Mexico being smuggled into the United States to be economically used and in many ways abused merely supports an unfortunate and timeless aspect of the human condition. However, there is one aspect of the Mexican immigrant case which has not received due notice—the controllers, the abusers, the masterminds of the criminal enterprise also were deaf. There were deaf con men (and women), deaf smugglers, deaf thugs, deaf liars. Even among the victims there were those who were deaf victims of their own greed, there were deaf physical, emotional, and, perhaps, sexual abusers of deaf women.