

# STRANGERS BECOMING US

## HIGH SCHOOL EDITION

### CD TRANSCRIPTS

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**STRANGERS BECOMING US - HIGH SCHOOL EDITION**  
**SCRIPT**  
**PRESENTED BY DR. MORTON BEISER,**  
**PRODUCED BY DAVID CARROLL**  
**TRANSCRIBED MARCH 9, 2001 - ELLEN GARFIELD**

**INTRODUCTION**

The following transcript forms part of an educational resource kit from the program *Strangers Becoming Us* brought to you by Classroom Connections. This program explores issues relating to immigration. The transcript accompanies an audio CD and Classroom Ready Activity Guide for High School Students. The text of the audio CD and transcripts were developed by Dr. Morton Beiser, a recognized expert on Immigration issues. The format of the audio CD is documentary style with Dr. Beiser acting as both interviewer and commentator. Students will listen to the CD, then refer to the transcript which is divided up into separate programs like a radio show. They will hear and read about students of different backgrounds and cultures and others speaking about their own experiences and views on a variety of issues including their own thoughts and feelings about being Canadian. The text of the transcript will then be referred to when working on activities found in the Student Activities Guide.

## IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES - PROGRAM 1

My name is **AMANI** and I'm from Columbia,  
My name is **GEORGIRONA** and I'm from Jamaica  
My name is **ARMANDO** and I'm from Nicaragua  
And you're listening to *Strangers Becoming Us*

I affirm

This is *Strangers Becoming Us*.

**JUDGE:** I affirm

**COURTROOM:** I affirm

**JUDGE:** That I will bear true allegiance

**COURTROOM:** That I will bear true allegiance

**JUDGE:** As a Canadian citizen

**COURTROOM:** As a Canadian citizen

**JUDGE:** Congratulations, please be seated.

**MORTON BEISER:** Everyone in this courtroom came to Canada as an immigrant or a refugee from somewhere else. When they first came they were strangers. Today they're becoming Canadian citizens. They aren't strangers anymore - they're us.

My name is Prescol

My name is Simona

My name is Rashid

My name is Milosho Sivocmara

My name is Sash

My name is Magid

### **MORTON BEISER:**

Today Canada welcomes at least 200,000 immigrants and refugees every year. Most of the 200,000, in fact about 180,000 of them, are immigrants. Immigrants choose to come here because they're looking for opportunity for themselves - for their children. Canadians like to think that we admit immigrants to Canada to be nice. But the fact is we're more interested in what they can do for us than what we can do for them. With refugees though, it is a matter of compassion. We admit 20,000 refugees into Canada every year. These are people who are often running away from wars, or fleeing countries where they were being persecuted for religious or political beliefs. By letting them into Canada we may be saving their lives. Now let's go back and talk a bit more about immigrants. First of all, why is it that immigrants want to come to Canada?

### **MAN FROM HONG KONG:**

It's because I work in Hong Kong for the company over 23 years. So for the past 23 years nothing changed, so I want to change something.

**CARLA ROSARIO:**

I know that I have a better future here. And that the universities here are great. The research centres are probably the top in the world and that's what I want. I don't want to just be a doctor, but I want to be a good doctor and the best of the doctors - do you know what I mean?

**MORTON BEISER:**

O.K. that makes sense, people want to come here for jobs, and for a better education, but remember I said that we are more interested in what immigrants can do for us. Well what is it that immigrants can do for us?

**STUDENT:**

Well, increase the work force and boost the economy for one. More jobs. There would be more workers. There would be more businesses.

**MORTON BEISER:**

The argument is that immigration helps our economy. With more on that, here's the economist, Professor Donald De Voretz at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

**DONALD DE VORETZ:**

There are two major myths about immigration and none of them are true. First that immigrants use treasury resources. Over their lifetime in Canada the representative immigrant pays between 50 and 70 thousand dollars more into the treasury than they use in services. So, to that extent it subsidizes the rest of us. The other issue is - do immigrants take jobs? Well some immigrants do. They compete for unskilled jobs, low wage sector. On the other hand the highly skilled immigrants create jobs. So that is an issue where it's a clean wash. The number of jobs that are created just equals the number of jobs that are substituted for.

**MORTON BEISER:**

O.K. new skills - good for the economy. That's one reason to get immigrants in. Anything else? Well, there's something called the demographic argument. Think about this: How many sisters or brothers did your great grandparents have? How about your grandparents? Your parents? You? If you look on down the line, you'll probably find your family size has shrunk over the generations. That means there are fewer and fewer young people in every generation. Add to that the fact that we live longer today than we used to and suddenly we've got an aging demographic. This puts what economists call the "dependency ratio" out of whack.

**DONALD DE VORETZ:**

The public treasury is suffering from a shortfall. Not so much now but in the year 2030 we'll have a lot of people trying to collect their pensions. And we don't have the youthful labour force now to support that.

**MORTON BEISER:**

Did you get that? The point is that it's young people like you who work and pay for the pensions and health costs of older people like me. The more older people there are to support and the fewer young people there are working, the worse the dependency ratio. And the harder it is for this country to go on paying for our social programs. But wait a minute. Immigrants tend to be young. And they tend to have more children than native born Canadians. Maybe immigration can help nudge Canada's demographics back into balance.

**DONALD DE VORETZ:**

So we need younger immigrants to make contributions to the treasury so that when all of us, including those in high school, age – we'll have a balanced population.

**MORTON BEISER:**

Now some skeptics aren't convinced by the economic or demographic argument. They say that the only real reason we have immigration in Canada is because we like calling ourselves a country of immigrants. We enjoy the food and the dancing and the flavour that immigrants bring here. One of these skeptics is the journalist and author, Daniel Stoffman.

**DANIEL STOFFMAN:**

What has always bothered me is that there are so many bogus reasons trotted out and we referred to economics and demographics. Those are the bogus reasons. I called it the "eat your spinach" form of immigration. You don't want it, you hate it but you better have it cause, cause it's good for you. In fact, they go even farther than that. You better have it because you're going to get sick and you might even die if you don't have it. What I'm saying is we should see immigration as an "eat your ice-cream" situation rather than "eat your spinach." Ice cream tastes good, it's fun, it makes us happy - if we don't have too much of it. But if we have too much of it we get a stomach ache.

**AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL:**

This is (*sound effect*) airport information - Mike. (*sound effect*) approach runway 2-6 left - Roger -

**MORTON BEISER:**

There's one thing you should know. It's not easy to become an immigrant. Canada has tough admission policies. I was lucky enough to be born here. But one day I started wondering. What if I came from another country. Would I be able to get in? Let's see. Canada has 3 immigrant categories. Independent, Family Class or Refugee. I'd automatically try for the Independent Class. The kind of person Canada thinks will be good for the country. You can check this category out by going to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada web site. You'll find there that it says Canada is looking for – and I quote: "People seeking new opportunities and challenges. People able to contribute to Canada's social and economic well-being." Well I'm a guy who likes a challenge, and I'm sure I can contribute to the country's social and economic well being. To get in though, I have to convince the immigration department of that. The first step in that process is to