



Being Alive

Evolutions in Being P.O. Box 4008 Chelmsford, MA. 01824 Eibeing.com 978-256-0438

*And The Oscar Goes
To Immigrants*

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The 98th annual Academy Awards airs Sunday, with vampire thriller “Sinners” and Shakespearean-period drama “Hamnet” poised to break Oscar records. “Sinners” could conceivably become the most decorated film in history, having notched a record-breaking 16 nominations, while a directing win for “Hamnet” would mark the first time a female director has won the award twice (and only the fourth win by a woman overall).

But these films also share a common thread that is hardly a historical anomaly: the notable contributions made by immigrants, who have been instrumental to Hollywood’s success since the days of Charlie Chaplin (who [emigrated from England](#)) and the birth of the studio system that cemented Los Angeles as the global capital of moviemaking (all five major studios were [founded by immigrants](#)).

This year, more than one-third of the nominations (6) for Ryan Coogler’s “Sinners” went to immigrants, including individual nominations for supporting actress, supporting actor, and original score. Its cinematography nomination went to the child of an immigrant, **Autumn Durald Arkapaw**, who has discussed how her [Filipino background](#) helped shape her vision.

Among the four nominations that went to Americans for the British film “Hamnet,” all are immigrants. **Chloé Zhao**, a [Chinese-American filmmaker](#), was nominated for best picture, best director, and best adapted screenplay, which is shared with U.K.-author [Maggie O’Farrell](#). [Polish-American stylist](#) **Malgosia Turzanska** is up for best costume design.

In all, nearly one in five nominations for this year’s Oscars (22 of 125, or 17.6%) went to immigrants. The figure does not include international artists not living in the United States, who have also garnered a significant number of the nominations as academy membership expands globally and international films increasingly receive greater recognition.

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Given that immigrants comprise 11.2% of the workforce in the U.S. film industry, according to the American Immigration Council analysis of the 2024 [American Community Survey](#), this year's Oscars represent an especially strong showing.

The nominated immigrants hail from 17 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, England, France, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, and Sweden.

Of the 10 films that received the most nominations (a combined 80), 28.8% went to either immigrants (15) or the children of immigrants (8).

Most of the nods for "Frankenstein," which was filmed primarily in Scotland, England, and Canada, went to international artists. Of the remaining four, all went to immigrants living in the United States, most notably two individual nominations for [Mexican-American director](#) Guillermo del Toro, for picture and adapted screenplay. Also nominated are [U.K.-born makeup artist](#) Mike Hill (shared with two Canadians) and [sound engineer](#) Brad Zoern, [who is from Canada](#).

More here: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/oscars-2026-immigrant-nominees-winners/?utm_source=everyaction&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=twii-260313&emci=bbfef43b-1b1f-f111-9a48-000d3a14b640&emdi=c564b45e-9420-f111-9a48-000d3a14b640&ceid=10369296

Great Windstorm

A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

Mark 4:37-40

Remember that song: **SOMEBODIES ALWAYS WATCHING ME...**

Homeland security is increasing the use of undercover techniques to infiltrate and interact with social media users in order to collect intelligence and target individuals, documents leaked to me reveal.

The new program, called “masked engagement,” allows homeland security officers to assume false identities and interact with users—friending them, joining closed groups, and gaining access to otherwise private postings, photographs, friend lists and more.

A senior Department of Homeland Security official tells me that over 6,500 field agents and intelligence operatives can use the new tool, a significant increase explicitly linked to more intense monitoring of American citizens.

For years, homeland security has been conducting what it calls “Open Source Intelligence” (OSINT) collection, using social media to enhance general “operational awareness” and for investigating targets in a criminal, civil, or administrative context. Each DHS component defines the level of use, which were previously limited to the following practices:

- “overt research,”
- “overt monitoring,”
- “masked monitoring,”
- “undercover engagement”

Masked monitoring allows officers at agencies like ICE and Border Patrol to use alias accounts to passively observe public online activity. Crucially, this level of monitoring bars DHS representatives from interacting with other users directly. Under masked monitoring, officers are not allowed to ask an admin for entry into a private group or to “friend” a target to see non-public posts.

1. But with masked engagement (separate from masked monitoring), that firewall has now been dismantled. The only restriction imposed on masked engagement is that the DHS official not the threshold of “substantive engagement”—a term the rules leave conveniently ill-defined.
2. The new practice of masked engagement allows for operations where a federal government employee or contractor uses fake identities or credentials that conceal their official affiliation. It is a step down from “undercover engagement,” a highly controlled status that is only allowed on a limited and intermittent basis.

You can compare the old vs. new DHS policies in the two screenshots below.

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Homeland Security

Privacy Impact Assessment Update
DHS/CBP/PIA-006(e) Automated Targeting System
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January 2, 2015, the **Operational Use of Social Media** is defined as: “[the] use of social media to collect PII for the purpose of enhancing general operational awareness, investigating an individual in a criminal, civil, or administrative context, assist in making a benefit determination about a person, assist in making a personnel determination about a CBP employee or contractor, assist in making a suitability determination about a prospective CBP employee or contractor, or for any other official CBP purpose that has the potential to affect the rights, privileges, or benefits of an individual or CBP employee or contractor. Operational use does not include the use of search engines for general Internet research, the use of social media for professional development (e.g., training and continuing education), or the use of social media for facilitating internal meetings, assigning or trading work shifts, or other internal administrative efficiencies.”

The operational use of social media is broken down into the following five categories requiring differing degrees of access and supervisor approval: **Overt Engagement** – logging in to social media using DHS/CBP-branded credentials or otherwise indicating an official agency presence and engaging or interacting with individuals on or through social media; **Overt Research** – collecting information from social media without logging in or otherwise interacting with individuals through social media. Overt research does not include creating identities or credentials on social media, nor does it include concealing a government affiliation to conduct research or general, operational awareness (e.g., non-DHS affiliated IP address); **Overt Monitoring** – logging in to social media using DHS/CBP-branded credentials or otherwise indicating an official agency presence, but does not include engaging or interacting with individuals on or through social media (which is defined as Overt Engagement, above); **Masked Monitoring** – using identities or credentials on social media that do not identify a DHS/CBP affiliation, or otherwise concealing a government affiliation, to conduct research or general, operational awareness. Masked monitoring includes logging in to social media, but does not include engaging or interacting with individuals on or through social media (which is defined as Undercover Engagement, below); and **Undercover Engagement** – using identities or credentials on social media that do not identify a DHS/CBP affiliation, or otherwise concealing a government affiliation, to engage or interact with individuals on or through social media.

Screenshot of old DHS policy

(U) Masked Monitoring:

(U//FOUO//LES) Use 1: USBP uses secured web-browsers and managed attribution platforms, that do not identify a DHS/CBP affiliation and otherwise conceal any government affiliation for operational security purposes, to conduct basic open source research. There are instances when researching non-US based websites, available content is modified or blocked altogether from any Internet Protocol (IP) address traffic originating from within the US.

(U//FOUO//LES) Use 2: USBP may use identities or credentials that, for operational security purposes, do not identify a DHS/CBP affiliation, or otherwise conceal a government affiliation, to access PAI and social media platforms that do require a login. USBP uses these identities and credentials for general access to conduct open source research and situational awareness related to current or planned operations.

(U//FOUO//LES) Use 3: USBP may access web-based, commercial open source research platforms using CBP managed licenses to search against a platform's data holdings to include any PAI or social media data they may have. Some platforms offer advanced options for users to provide social media credentials that help facilitate and automate the access, analyzing, and processing of data for open source research and analysis. These platforms do not allow any engagements.

Leaked copy of new DHS policy of “masked monitoring”

A Customs and Border Protection document I obtained, titled “Component Plan for Operational Use of Social Media,” defines the shift:

“The Operational Use of Social Media using identities or credentials that...conceal a government affiliation, to engage with other users on a limited basis for the purpose of accessing Publicly Available Information...For example, Masked Engagement would include logging in to social media and joining a group, or friending, liking, or following an individual.”

By labeling this a “middle ground” between monitoring and full-blown undercover work, the DHS allows agents to infiltrate private digital spaces without the rigorous internal approvals and legal checks required for a formal undercover “sting.”

“CBP’s expansion into what they’re calling ‘masked engagement’ is cause for real concern, Rachel Levinson-Waldman, Director of the Brennan Center’s Liberty and National Security Program, told me when reached for comment.

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She added: “this new capability is being shoehorned in one step below undercover engagement (which already allows for a lot of overreach), it appears CBP believes that friending someone, following them, or joining a group is not as invasive as directly engaging or interacting with individuals.”

Levinson-Waldman called the policy is “insidious” because it might seem to the federal government that it is not particularly invasive but could yield huge amounts of information about one’s social network and preferences. And all of this would be happening imperceptibly to anyone in a group chat, unaware that the information is even being shared (unlike with undercover operations).

“In addition, doing so through an alias account—an account that doesn’t reveal the user’s CBP affiliation, and pretends to be someone else—will weaken trust in government and weaken the trust that is critical to building community both online and off,” she added.

When I pressed the DHS press office for a definition of “substantive engagement,” they retreated into the administration’s usual swaggering non-response.

“DHS has utilized its Congressionally directed undercover authorities to root out child molesters and predators for years,” the DHS spokesperson (no name included—apt for a story about masking!) told me in an email. “We will continue using every tool at our disposal to protect the American people as our agents and officers Make America Safe Again.”

The “tools” they’re referring to are increasingly sophisticated. The document that first flagged “masked engagement” for me was produced by Silo, a cloud-based web isolation platform created by Authentic8.

Silo is like a digital mask for federal agents operating on social media. It allows them to browse the web from an “air-gapped” remote server, masking their government IP addresses and spoofing their hardware profiles. To a Facebook admin or a Signal group moderator, the federal agent appears as a local user with a standard smartphone. This technical capability, called “managed attribution,” ensures that while the agent is “engaging” with you, the government’s digital footprint is completely invisible.

According to documents I’ve reviewed, homeland security is using other commercial and proprietary apps and software to conduct managed attribution monitoring, with codenames like GOST, Shadow Dragon, Gecko, Jemini, Axis, and Creepy, which has to be my favorite.

Edgar Cayce

Saturday, March 14

"What one IS speaks so loud, what is said means little."
Edgar Cayce reading 3289-1

Wednesday, March 11

"Think twice before you speak once - for there's only ONE tongue
but two eyes."
Edgar Cayce reading 241-31

Tuesday, March 10

"Seek what is BEST in those you meet every day. LIVE
peace and harmony within, and you will bring peace and
harmony to those you meet."
ECRL 281-56

Evolutions in Being

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