

ILLEGAL WTC WORKERS MAY BE OVERLOOKED RELATIVES OFTEN KEEP QUIET OUT OF IMMIGRATION FEARS

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Body

An anguished call came to New York City Councilman Guillermo Linares' office two days after the World Trade Center attack. Between heaving sobs, a woman explained that her brother, a janitor, was missing.

But the **illegal** Dominican immigrant had worked under someone else's name -- and that person was on the missing lists.

"She was crying, hysterical," said Linares' chief of staff, Mimi Minier. "She was afraid and didn't know what to do. She **kept** saying, 'He's got papers, but that's not him. I don't know what's going to happen to that other person, because that's the one they're going to think is dead.' "

The caller told how her brother had hopped a raft from the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico. Sept. 11, she said, was his first day at work in America.

The woman promised to come to Linares' office, but never appeared.

Countless newcomers

Those who work closely with immigrants **fear** that perhaps countless newcomers who lived alone and worked illegally or under aliases have disappeared, too.

As New York and federal officials compile a mounting list of people who vanished when the Twin Towers came down, immigrant advocates are taking their own inventory: the busboys, delivery **workers**, restaurant staff and window washers they **fear** no one will notice have disappeared.

"These people will die like they lived: invisibly," said Brother Joel Magallan, with the Tepeyac Association, a New York social service agency for Mexicans.

Magallan is working closely with restaurant **workers** and labor unions to tally the missing. Last week, he met with various area business owners. But in a city where many immigrants do not appear on payrolls, employers were hesitant to admit they illegally paid people off the books.

Immigration status data

Responding to **fears** that some missing undocumented **workers** would go unreported because their families **feared** the **Immigration** and Naturalization Service, officials announced Friday that they will not seek **immigration** status information that is collected during the rescue effort.

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Rosa Vargas, a former cashier at Akbar's Greenhouse Cafe, a restaurant in the mall under the towers, has been working the phones and Internet for nearly two weeks trying to track down her former co-workers. From her home in Puebla, Mexico, she has accounted for everyone except one, a delivery man named "Humberto."

"I will tell you something: The families who live in New York or anywhere in the U.S. will not come forward," Vargas said. "I dare to report it, because I'm back in Mexico. But if I was still living and working in New York, I'd do the same thing -- I'd keep quiet, and nobody would report Humberto missing."

The Mexican consulate in New York City said 16 of its nationals are among the missing. The number seems low to those who worked in the area.

"There are hundreds of us down there," said Luis, a fish delivery man who narrowly escaped. "Mexicans are afraid. We give fake names most of the time, and a different last name a lot of the time. Those people will be lost. No one will ever know what happened."

Notes

ATTACK ON AMERICA

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