



Local Author writes book about being The Other in America

BY ANDREW CAVETTE

Oakland writer, Patricia Marino, has written a memoir that hopes to address our long-standing tendency to label other people as "The Others."

Her new book, *We Have All Been The Others* (Rose Press), is about the struggle of all immigrants to be accepted in America and how the label of *Other* is a bit absurd when contextualized in American history. Ultimately, her book is a reflection on what she learned from her parents.

"It started out more for my own family," Marino said. "A lot of the people I had grown up with were long gone before my kids came along."

Marino was born in Chicago. After college, she taught high school history there and later in

San Francisco. She is a philanthropic consultant who has worked with the Boys and Girls Club in San Leandro, among other organizations.

As she got deeper into her family research and continued writing her book, she found experiences that had not been included in those history lessons she herself had taught.

"There were real prejudices against Italians. I was looking at what (my father) had to face and what he had to fight against," Marino said.

Her book is mainly about her father, Alexander Francis Marino. Born in America to immigrant parents, her father was one of 10 children. He became a Chicago police detective and was active for 30 years through to the early 1960s. He was "an incredible character, larger than life," according to Marino.

"He was a man of his time... and I'm not saying he wasn't prejudiced," Marino said. "But he had a real empathetic core. He saw the human in the stereotype. He knew a lot of people and helped a lot of people. His funeral was hugely attended."

One lesson Marino learned from her father was "speaking truth to power." Marino said that how her father got things done was not ideal. The causes he fought for, however, were important, and those were the lessons she learned.

She recalled a story where her father grabbed the monsignor of their Catholic church "by the throat," arguing on behalf of another family. He objected to the monsignor's adherence to strict church rules regarding divorce and remarriage, even when the children of this other family were being negatively impacted. Marino's father then threatened to cut off funding to the parish:

"You need money for this parish to keep going, and I know everybody here," her father told the monsignor, according to Marino.

"He saw the greater good... I saw him stand up," Marino said. "Just because there's a law, doesn't mean it's always right. That's something I took from him: questioning what the structure is and who's behind it."

Marino said her father would have hated what is happening to families at the U.S. border with

Mexico: children being separated from their parents, just because of a rule. While she was investigating her father's story, Marino's research and memoir morphed into reflections on immigration.

"I began looking at the issue of immigration and why some groups have assimilated much more readily," Marino said. "How we are connected to what we think of as 'The American Dream' and the Constitution, where we are now, and the polarization that has occurred."

Marino's book argues that many groups—now counted as "real Americans"—had once been ostracized in our short, collective history. Viewing certain groups as *The Other* is happening today in the same patterns as in the past.

Citing former President Trump's rhetoric, Marino said Latinos and Muslims are being vilified in the same ways that Italians, Irish, Polish, Germans, and Scandinavians had been in the past. In her research, she came across an article from 1875 in the Chicago Tribune that deeply lamented all sorts of immigrant groups populating a certain neighborhood—immigrants from everywhere, including the aforementioned European countries. The neighborhood description ended with: *...and some real Americans.*

"I don't know who constituted the *real Americans*," Marino said. "Each new immigrant group has had to sort of fight against the previous immigrant group."



Marino thinks that amid small, cultural differences, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are what really bind all Americans. "I know that sounds really esoteric," Marino said. "The Constitution and what it supports... that makes us American. The ideal is the integration of everyone."

She recalled seeing a story during a recent election news cycle about a Muslim man, a soldier in the U.S. military who had died. The soldier had been vilified by some presidential candidates, but the father of the soldier carried a copy of the Constitution in his pocket.

"...And that said everything to me," Marino said.

Her book, *We Have All Been The Others*, can be purchased as a paperback or Kindle eBook through Amazon.com, but bonus material is available if you buy directly from the publisher, Rose Press (Print: \$23.95, eBook \$6.99).

The book can be purchased at patriciamarino.com.



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