Waiting for Jose: The Minutemen's Pursuit of America. Harel Shapira. Princeton: Princeton UP., 2013. h/bk 200 pp. ISBN 978-0-691-15215-8. Price $27.95.

Ethnographic studies can sometimes contain either controversial approaches or be somewhat dry. The reasons for these approaches or linguistic distance can be author bias, or political, ethnic, and sociological stances in the groups being studied, or in society. Harel Shapira, on the other hand, takes a decisively apolitical but personal approach with his ethnogrWaaphic analysis of a hyper-political group and topic — that of the Minutemen, an organization and grassroots movement of the post-9/11 period in the United States. Shapira accomplishes his objective stance on such a subjective ethnography by focusing on some of the individuals of the group rather than trying to generalize about the group's politics. In the introduction of the book, Shapira states that in order to answer the questions about who the Minutemen are, and what they stand for, "instead of focusing on the Minutemen's beliefs and attitudes — their ideology in the broad sense — we need to focus on practices" (3). This theme is repeated many times throughout the book, and Shapira keeps his writing focused on the practices of several members of the Minutemen, and their motives, in addition to their activities.

The Minutemen were a hot news topic over several years in the mid-2000s, when America was trying to recover from a collective societal trauma produced by the 9/11 New York disaster, and several related news scares that followed, such as anthrax and home protection; then the Iraq war soon began. The news headlines at the time regarding the Minutemen told about a popular vigilante movement whose purpose was to help an undermanned Border Patrol keep dangerous or unwanted aliens from crossing the southern United States border. As mentioned in the book, President George W. Bush once gave tacit approval for the Minutemen and their activities.

Shapira instead emphasizes the individual natures of the persons involved in the Minutemen, and demographics of the group, and its practices — rather than the cause they are promoting, and the border crossings they were supposedly trying to prevent. Throughout the book, Shapira downplays the politics and the superficial appearances of vigilantism or conservatism. The group demographics are also of key importance in this

study. The vast majority of Minutemen were older males, and ex-military. This is significant, because the Minutemen were more focused on lifestyle than with substance or politics. To them, their lives were nearly over, with their best years, and best skills used in the past during their military service. The group was organized and ran patrols like military, giving the members a feeling of usefulness and importance. The military was the life they missed, but they were not allowed to re-enter the military to fight in Iraq, because of their ages. Shapira makes the point that although the stated goal was to keep out illegal aliens, the real intrinsic purpose was to enable these individuals to live a military-style life, and to assert their idea of protecting an America that was at risk of being lost: traditional, conservative, and isolationist — the Jeffersonian democracy and libertarian way of life. The lifestyle also includes the carrying of guns, but they are probably never used except for target practice only mentioned once in the book. Most of the men wear guns on patrols.

Shapira repeats the theme of practices being more important than politics many times through the book. Such repetition might become tedious if not supported with varying and distinct authoritative evidence. Shapira indeed provides both detailed minutia of his own observations, and citations of well-known scholars of sociology — all of which provide solid support about why the Minutemen were not merely conservative vigilantes, but people with a dream to improve themselves and the country they love, even if they do this with misguided and inappropriate methods.

Shapira was fortunate to have a family characteristic that may have opened up some of the Minutemen volunteers to his ethnographic research: his father was a military officer in the Israeli army. In his initial interviews, Shapira provided full disclosure that he was writing a PhD dissertation for a Sociology study. His first day at the Minutemen camp, he was practically kicked out, because he was perceived as a liberal student. Then the next time he came back, he wore his dad's army jacket, which blended in with the typical army fatigues that most of the Minutemen volunteers wore at the camp. When asked by his first interview that day if the jacket was his, he said truthfully that the jacket was his father's, given to him, and that he had gone on patrol once with his father in Israel. After this, Shapira was warmly welcomed as a friendly interviewer by several of the Minutemen he interviewed. Even though not an insider, over the months and years, author seems to take on sympathetic attitudes towards the Minutemen.

The reader might sense a certain amount of pretending on his part, or becoming more like the informants in his study, but Shapira seems to handle this with high integrity. Although he writes sympathetically about the friends he made, he always reverts back to a more objective and clinical view in all of his chapter conclusions. He always asks permission to interview, and keeps his main contacts informed of his other activities when appropriate. Near the end of the book, Shapira decides to meet and spend time with the Samaritans, an opposing group to the Minutemen. The Samaritans main goal is to offer food and water to immigrants crossing the border. Shapira asked the camp leader of the Minutemen if he would mind if Shapira interviewed the Samaritans, and the answer was affirmative. There are a few instances, however, when the writing comes close to ridiculing some of the group or individual practices, because of the outrageousness of what is happening. Two examples come to mind; one is when a Minuteman who was not a veteran and had no experience with guns ends up buying and carrying many guns in his vehicle when on patrol. For the most part the book is fair and objective, with a few exceptions such as these.

The temptation to sensationalize extremist movements, such as the Minutemen is certainly evident in the popular press by the large number of such sensational books published every year, even from purported scholars. However, Shapira resists this urge, and keeps his study honest, ethical, and even somewhat clinical — as is appropriate for any good sociological ethnography. At the same time, he gets his hands dirty, and becomes like an insider, living with the Minutemen for many months over a period of years. The result is not only an absorbing ethnography, but an incredibly entertaining good read with a nice spot of humor throughout, offset by a high dose of sincerity. Shapria's balanced approach is quite rare, because he spends much time revealing close details of a conservative movement that was a precursor to the Tea Party; and he accomplishes this by writing with a level of empathy, balanced with professionalism that is refreshingly rare in today's political climate. *Waiting for Jose* would be a very suitable supplemental textbook for any Sociology or Political Science course dealing with issues of immigration on the United States southern border.

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