

From Chris Cleave
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Dear Lawyer

Please allow me to add my voice to The Manuel Bravo Project's invitation to their presentation on November 8th. I know you're very busy, so I'll keep this brief.

I wrote my novel *The Other Hand* in part because I was inspired by the story of Manuel Bravo, who I believe was failed by the UK's immigration system. It's not a bad system compared to that of many other countries, and the staff who run it aren't bad either, but since a lot of the people it deals with are poor and without family support, they are sometimes let down unless represented by good lawyers working on a pro bono basis.

Thank you for considering doing that.

There are two points I'd like to make. First, that getting involved with refugees and asylum seekers is more interesting and rewarding than just another charity commitment. These are real people with fascinating stories and unusual outlooks, and one learns a lot by spending a bit of time with them. I feel that my contact with refugees has helped me as well as them.

Second, I want to stress how important it is to see that refugees and asylum seekers are treated fairly under the law. They are the weakest and most vulnerable people in our society, and I would argue that we can judge our country according to the fairness it affords to the weakest as well as to the most powerful. If it bothers you to see the way asylum seekers are scapegoated by the media and by elements of the political right, then you might consider getting a fair deal for them to be a healthy act of citizenship.

Thank you for your time, and I hope I'll have the pleasure of meeting you at the event on the 8th of November.

Kind regards,

Chris Cleave