

**NYC Migrants are Forced to Work ... Illegally**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4cZbgyP9aU>  
**Transcript: <https://dontveter.com/newyork.pdf>**

There they are, the illegal mopeds in front of the Roosevelt Hotel.

This right here is the asylum processing center in New York City and are these here by accident or is there a connection?

Outside the Roosevelt Hotel you'll find dozens of scooters parked without papers or permits.

To work, many migrants rely on food delivery jobs to help feed their families.

They are everywhere and I am so terrified.

Police impound illegal mopeds on West 71st and Broadway.

At the Starbucks and McDonald's corner it's like a big issue.

Most migrants are not legally working right now because of how cumbersome the asylum process is.

You look like a youtuber. You're Cash Jordan. What's up man?

There's a lot of people riding these things illegally, right?

Is that because they don't have a plate? Is that how it works? Yeah.

That's what I'm doing my story on today. Oh you don't have a plate either?

There's definitely a connection, and once you learn what it is, you're gonna have a whole lot of questions.

Do you know how long these mopeds have been here?

Ever since it opened.

Ever since it opened.

Did they show up like right after it opened or did it take like a few days?

I don't remember but I know they showed up quick.

Yeah, okay, thank you.

It's no secret many migrants are working as food delivery workers.

That's right, but because they're not legally authorized to work in the US yet, they have to go through some extra hurdles to be able to do that.

So these bikes in front of the hotel are being used by asylum seekers so that they can work.

But why is it so many of them don't have license plates?

And how do you get one if you just got here?

How does that happen? How does it all work?

Jesus and friend are from Venezuela and arrived with the children two months ago.

The two are renting out scooters from friends to deliver food.

Jesus says he pays about \$300 a week to rent out a scooter.

\$300 a week, that's twelve hundred dollars a month, so that explains why the bikes are there.

It's a business to rent one out to someone who doesn't have one but how do you sign up as a delivery driver and get paid if you can't work?

All these delivery things are app based, you have to put in a valid social security number or it won't even let you sign up.

There's an answer to that, but to understand why this is all happening in the first place, it's important to know that it takes about six months, according to Google, to get valid work authorization and that might even be taking longer now since so many people are applying all at once.

They tell me they pay an additional \$140 every two weeks to borrow friends' Uber Eats food delivery account and be able to make a living.

Again, there's no way to sign up with a company like Uber Eats or Grub Hub or Seamless if you don't have valid work authorization from the federal government.

You need a bank account, you need a valid ID, and a valid SSN, all stuff that most people who just got here don't have and won't have for a long time.

And this has essentially allowed an underground market where digital identities are rented to flourish right here in the middle of Manhattan, New York City.

And this secret digital identity market, it puts people who need to access it in a tough spot because they're not the ones getting paid for the work they do, somebody else is, not them.

And a situation like that opens the door to possible foul play, especially when you find out what the difference is between the purchase price of one of these and what they're being rented out for.

This little e-bike company here, they're probably the most popular place to get yourself an electric motorcycle, electric scooter, electric bike.

Look at that, right there, \$1199, comes in blue, 30 mile an hour top speed.

So as it turns out owning one is the same as renting one for a month because twelve hundred dollars is the rental fee, \$1199 is the purchase price.

The people renting these things out, they're the ones making money because after one month they broke even and now they're making a profit.

And this is probably why so many of the scooters parked in front of the hotel look like they're in relatively good shape, maybe even brand new.

Now obviously none of this is the company's fault and whether you're an asylum seeker or a native New Yorker everyone needs access to a low-cost transportation method, and that's it.

Look, this one right here, \$1100, looks fantastic and when you consider that the unreliable Subway costs over fifteen hundred dollars a year if you buy monthly passes, this is cheaper.

And you're commuting on your own terms, not the MTA's.

The father of three says when he's paid rent on the scooter and pays to borrow the Uber delivery account, he takes home about five hundred dollars a week.

Now if the gentleman in the video is making 500 a week, after a month, he'd be able to buy his own scooter but he'd still be in a position where he needs to pay for access to somebody else's account in order to use it.

So part of the system goes away, the scooter rental, but the other part, the digital identity component that stays with him the entire time, until he gets his own work authorization.

And that makes it very difficult to climb an economic ladder if you're always kind of stuck.

And the situation is far from ideal.

He tells me one of his scooters was recently confiscated by police since it was not registered.

Now according to the state of New York these are all considered limited use motorcycles and since all these bikes have a 30 mile an hour top speed, you have to register it, you need to have the headlight on at all times, you need to wear protective equipment, and look at that, you need insurance.

Now there's nothing illegal about owning one of these scooters it's just that if you want to operate it on a public road there's certain rules that you have to abide by, and that seems to be where there's a problem.

And that's where the issue is, if you're riding one of these things and you injure somebody and you don't have any insurance you both could be in a world of hurt financially because nothing is going to be covered, you might even get sued.

But confiscating these is not easy. They weigh over a hundred pounds and if you're a police officer and you confiscate that one, there's two more on the other side of it.

What are you gonna do now? You have to stand there holding on to it until some truck comes to tow it away.

This is like, 700 pounds of metal right here, good luck!

Having a plate on one of these makes it basically impossible to rent out.

New York City's got red light cameras, stop light cameras, if you do something on one of these bikes and it's not yours, the owner is going to face repercussions for that possible speeding tickets, fines, prosecution if there's some sort of accident or something, God forbid.

But that's likely the reason why an unregistered bike is the only one that you could rent out to somebody else.

Here they are everywhere and I am so terrifying [terrified] that one day I'm gonna get get hurt.

So we've got a situation where these things are pretty much everywhere.

They were everywhere in New York City before this crisis even unfolded and every couple of months you'd hear about a police crackdown but it's definitely not a regular thing, you see them all the time, very common.

This building right here is the Stratford Arms Hotel, it's currently being used as housing for those who need it in New York right now, and you see how there's only two mopeds out front, one of which has a plate.

They confiscated four mopeds, nine bicycles, one motorcycle and arrested a woman who slapped a police officer while her bike was being taken away, the incident happening just feet away from the Stratford Arms Hotel, now a migrant shelter.

Apparently there were a whole bunch of bikes out front here and it was a similar situation to the Roosevelt Hotel, but for some reason the police attended to this area and not the area downtown.

While some West Side residents are pleased the cops responded to their complaints and impounded the bikes, the migrants say it's the only hope of getting on their feet.

As you can see, next to the hotel it's residential. We're in the upper west side right now and this is another area where asylum seekers and residents are not on the same page.

Most people who I speak to who don't ride a bike already hate the presence of bikes.

Anyways, this situation is just more fuel for the fire that they already have.

And we've all seen someone on a bike or a scooter go blasting through an intersection but when you account for the fact that these are unregistered, person riding may not have a license, I can understand how some residents might be upset with that.

At the same time if you're one of the people who just got here and you need to work, what other choice do you have? You don't really have one.

Selling churros and water bottles, Elvia Kaisa says everything she does is for her two sons.

I can make a hundred or sometimes a hundred and twenty dollars a day.

She came here from Ecuador three months ago, making the journey like so many other recently arrived migrants.

It's hard to hear a story like that, regardless of what you believe, and not feel bad for that specific person and for their family. This is not a good situation for anybody.

On a hot Friday, she sells as much as she can before the daily afternoon police sweeps.

And, interestingly enough, New York City is experiencing a hiring crisis just as they have a shortage of work authorizations for the people that are here now and need it.

You have a lot of job openings and you have very few people to fill them.

One of the restaurants in the article claimed to have scheduled interviews with 60 plus people and only two actually showed up for the interview in person.

And at the exact same time we've got people who are able-bodied, healthy, and willing to work but just can't do it yet, living in a hotel right down the street from these restaurants.

And the question that needs to be answered is, what, if anything, is being done about this?

The city council, the mayor, and Governor Hochle have all come out recently saying that they are pushing the federal government to expedite these work authorization permits.

The mayor says there are thousands of jobs in the city waiting to be filled.

Okay, now at the end of the day, work authorization in America, it's not up to New York City it's not up to the mayor, the governor of the state even. It's something that happens with the federal government.

The Biden Administration says it's working with the city and state this month to streamline the process for eligible migrants to get jobs.

And if it's going to take eight months to get work authorization, everybody who's here now in September might be waiting until February or March to get started.

And in the meantime, you're entirely reliant upon government help to get by.

And according to the New York Post, the new Randall's Island Mega Center is costing ten thousand dollars a month for every single person at the center.

That's insane. That's like a five thousand dollar apartment and 5 five thousand dollars of spending money every single month if they were to just write checks.

But it just shows you just how expensive it is.

And what's crazy is with all of these apps on your smartphone, you don't even need to speak the language of the country you're in to immediately be employable.

The phone speaks your language, all the delivery instructions are in your language, you can text people you don't know and have their speech translated into your language.

If you've got a bike and work permission you can start working right now.

That's incredible! That's never happened before in human history and people don't have to be the wards of the state they are.

They don't have to be, but in the meantime, hundreds of migrants pour into New York City every day which could mean the number of illegal bikes they rely on to bring in money goes up.

Okay, so the short-term prediction is that this is only going to grow as more people come to New York.

And the problems that prevent them from integrating into society remains.

He says all he wants is to be able to legally work and make enough money to move his family out of the Roosevelt Hotel.

Do you think this is the fair way to treat asylum seekers?

Should they be allowed to work legally? Should they have to wait just as long as everybody else? Should things be sped up to kind of alleviate the pressure that's on New York.

Let me know what you think. Let me know if I missed anything.

I will see you in the next one and thanks for watching.