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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1980

Extracted on Mar-28-2024 10:31:15

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CBS NEWS
524 West 57 Street
New York, N.Y. 10019

[[image]]
[[caption]] ED BRADLEY...CBS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Ed Bradley was named a Principal Correspondent for CBS REPORTS in September 1978, after serving as a CBS News White House Correspondent since November 1976. In addition to CBS REPORTS, Bradley is anchorman of the "CBS Sunday Night News" on the CBS Television Network, and has been with the broadcast since November 1976. [[/caption]]

CBS Reports: "THE BOAT PEOPLE"
Examines Flood of Refugees from Vietnam

Documentary with Ed Bradley Features Exclusive Look at Refugee Camps

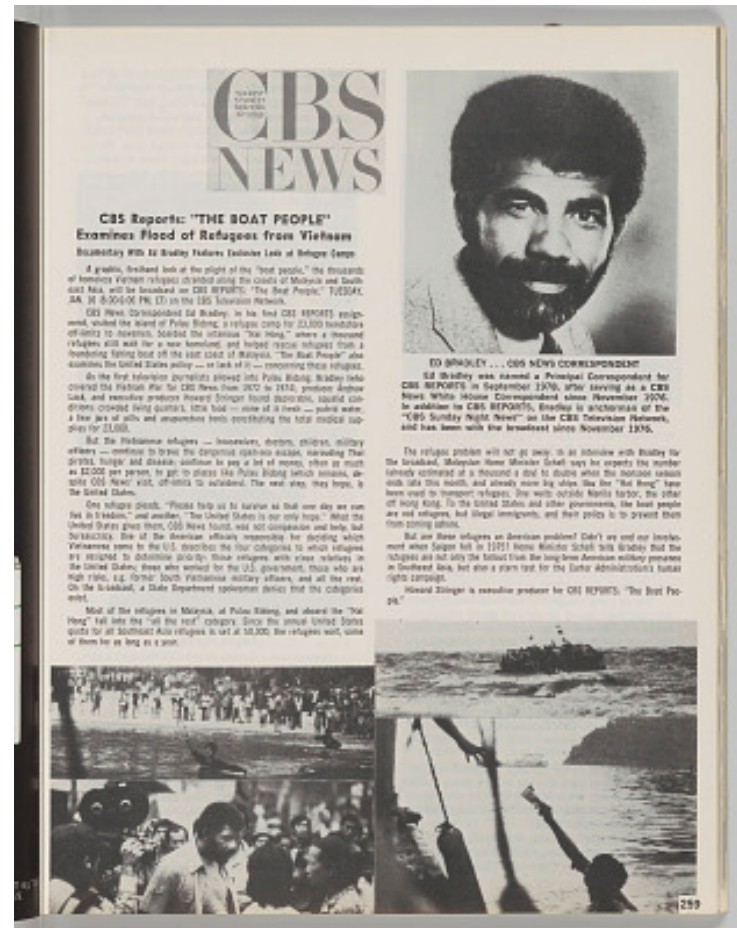
A graphic, first-hand look at the plight of the "boat people," the thousands of homeless Vietnam refugees stranded along the coasts of Malaysia and Southeast Asia, will be broadcast on CBS REPORTS: "The Boat People," Tuesday, JAN. 16 (8:00-9:00 PM, ET) on the CBS Television Network.

CBS News Correspondent Ed Bradley, in his first CBS REPORTS assignment, visited the island of Pulau Bidong, a refugee camp for 23,000 heretofore off-limits to newsmen, boarded the infamous "Hai Hong," where a thousand refugees still wait for a new homeland, and helped rescue refugees from a foundering fishing boat off the east coast of Malaysia. "The Boat People" also examines the United States policy — or lack of it — concerning these refugees.

As the first television journalists allowed into Pulau Bidong, Bradley (who covered the Vietnam War for CBS News from 1972 to 1974), producer Andrew Lack, and executive producer Howard Stringer found deplorable, squalid conditions: crowded living quarters, little food — none of it fresh — putrid water, a few jars of pills and acupuncture tools constituting the total medical supplies for 23,000.

But the Vietnamese refugees — housewives, doctors, children, military officers — continue to brave the dangerous open-sea escape, marauding Thai pirates, hunger and disease; continue to pay a lot of money, often as much as \$2,000 per person, to get to places like Pulau Bidong (which remains, despite CBS News' visit, off-limits to outsiders). The next step, they hope, is the United States.

One refugee pleads, "Please help us to survive so that one day we can live in freedom," and another, "The United States is our only hope." What the United States gives them, CBS News found, was not compassion and help, but bureaucracy. One of the American officials responsible for deciding which Vietnamese come to the U.S. describes the four categories to which refugees are assigned to determine priority: those refugees with close relatives in the United States; those who worked for the U.S. government; those who are high risks, e.g. former South Vietnamese military officers, and all the rest. On the broadcast, a



State Department spokesman denies that the categories exist.

Most of the refugees in Malaysia, at Palau Bidong, and aboard the "Hai Hong" fall into the "all the rest" category. Since the annual United States quota for all Southeast Asia refugees is set at 50,000, the refugees wait, some of them for as long as a year.

The refugee problem will not go away. In an interview with Bradley for the broadcast, Malaysian Home Minister Schafi says he expects the number (already estimated at a thousand a day) to double when the monsoon season ends late this month, and already more big ships like the "Hai Hong" have been used to transport refugees. One waits outside Manila harbor, the other off Hong Kong. To the United States and other governments, the boat people are not refugees, but illegal immigrants, and their policy is to prevent them from coming ashore.

But are these refugees an American problem? Didn't we end our involvement when Saigon fell in 1975? Home Minister Schafi tells Bradley that the refugees are not only the fallout from the long-term American military presence in Southeast Asia, but also a stern test for the Carter Administration's human rights campaign.

Howard Stringer is executive producer for CBS REPORTS: "The Boat People."

[[three images - photographs from the video report]]

259

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