



Bryan White &lt;zebrafactcheck@gmail.com&gt;

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**Re: Ocasio-Cortez, parking lots, roads & tents**

1 message

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**Bryan White** <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>  
To: truthometer@politifact.com

Fri, Jul 26, 2019 at 4:59 PM

Dear Truth-O-Meter,

Your July 22, 2019 fact check of whether Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez cried over an empty parking lot was certainly guilty of taking parody as statement of fact, but beyond that it contains misleading reporting.

I direct your attention to the summary section of the article (bold emphasis added):

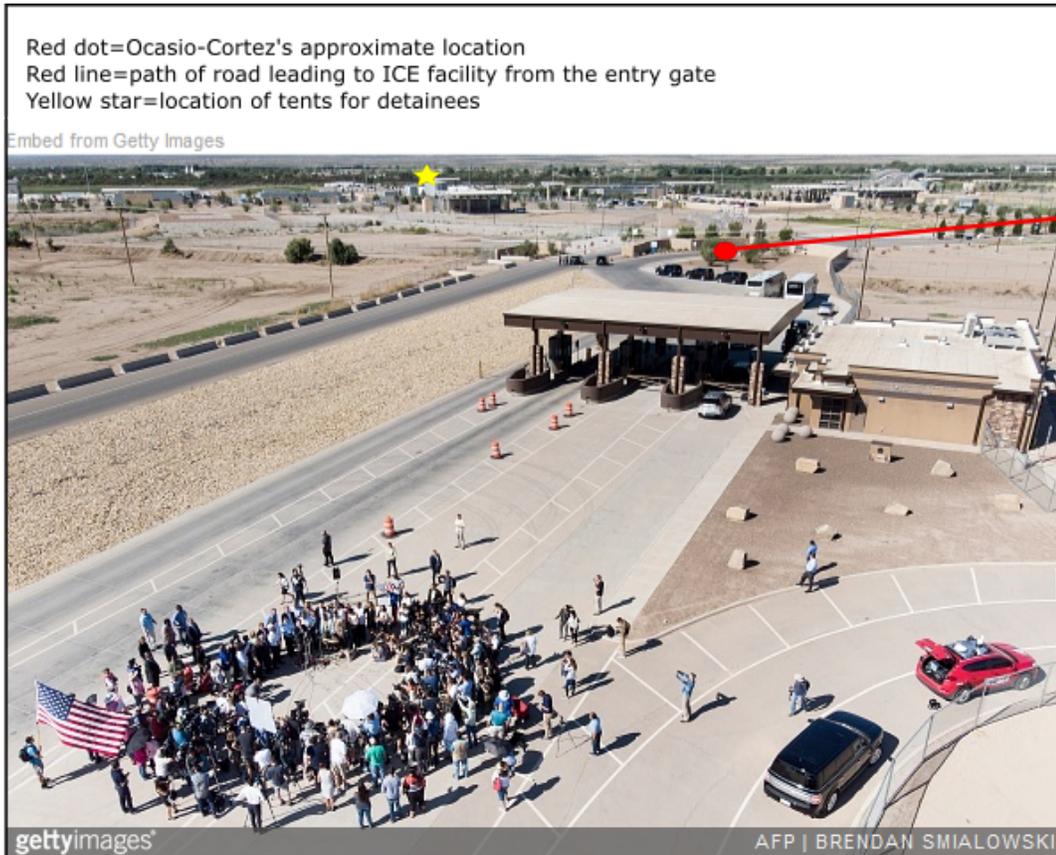
A viral image of Ocasio-Cortez at a 2018 demonstration at a Texas town on the U.S.-Mexico border includes the caption, "AOC weeps over empty parking lot."

Photographers at the scene who took photos of Ocasio-Cortez say she was not facing a parking lot. Rather **she was just beyond the toll plaza for the Tornillo facility, and she standing on a road that led to the Tornillo tent complex, which was in the line of her gaze, as she stood at the fence.** Pictures by other outlets also confirm the location.

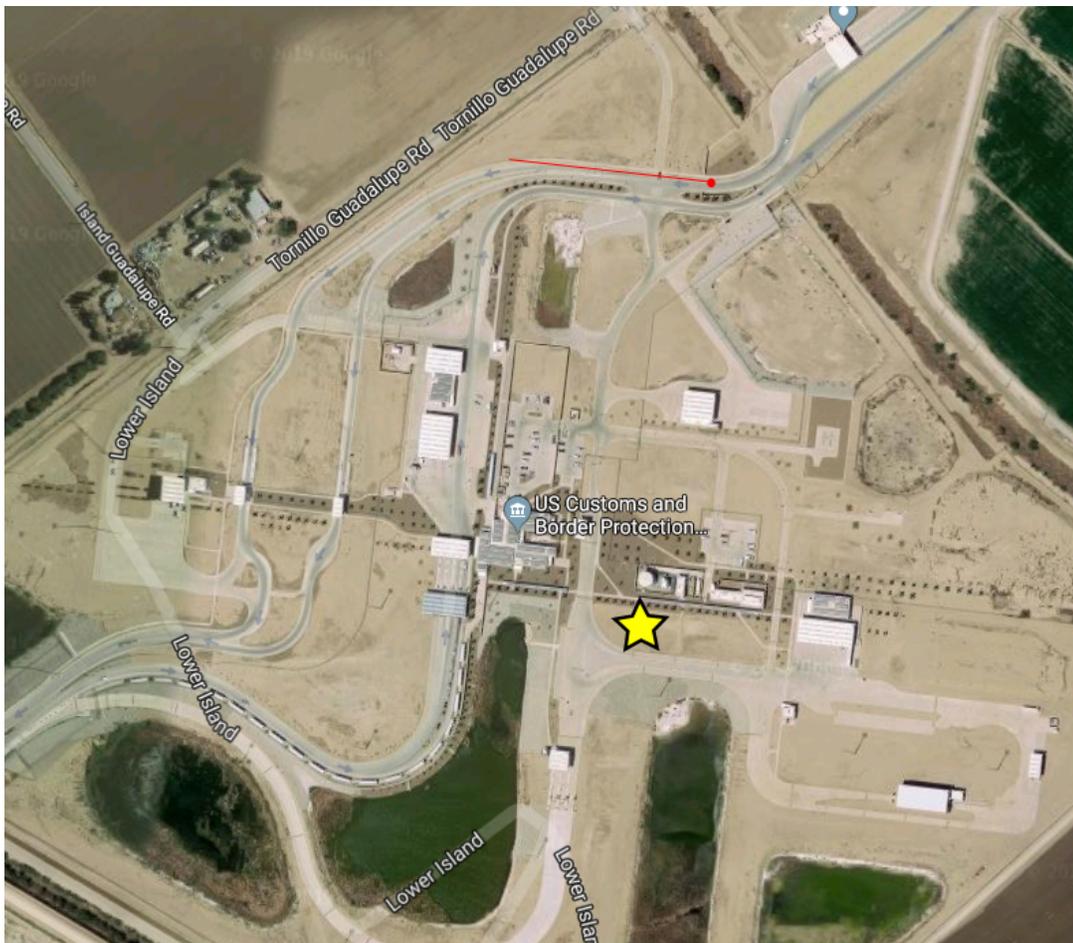
We rate this claim False.

The portion highlighted in bold supports the misleading notion that the "tent complex" was in line with Ocasio-Cortez's gaze. The statement is technically true, for the tents were south of the entry gate, and some of the photographs show Ocasio-Cortez looking south. But she would have been looking at a wall a few feet away, not distant tents containing ICE victims. If her gaze aligned with the road, however, then her line of sight was almost 90 degrees off from the tent complex.

I've annotated the picture used in the PolitiFact story to illustrate:



Google's satellite view helps make clear the challenges presented to Ocasio-Cortez's line of sight:



Finally, here's a close-up of the entry gate area including a yellow-shaded cone approximating the area where it might be said the tents were in Ocasio-Cortez's line of sight. Most of it, as noted above, is obscured by a wall. Attempting to peer through the gate one would note the nearby trees standing in the way. And the original photographs show the problem with trying to look through chain-link fence to one side or the other: the more severe the angle in relation to the fence, the more one sees fence instead of what's on the other side.



It's worth noting that standing at the exit gate instead of the entry gate allows one to gaze in the direction of the tents without the gate and the wall obstructing the view. But even in the elevated view included in the fact check one would be hard-pressed to identify a tent in the distance.

Summarizing, it is implausible that Ocasio-Cortez had an unobstructed view of the facility's tents from the entry gate where the infamous photographs were taken. PolitiFact's summary conveys the opposite impression and is therefore misleading.

I recommend a clarification or correction to make clear the road leads in one direction while the tents lie in a different direction, as well as making clear that PolitiFact has no good evidence that Ocasio-Cortez could see tents from where she was shown in the photographs.

**Bonus material** (Ocasio-Cortez would be located far off to the right of the featured image).

Fixing this won't fix your mistake of failing to see the point of the PJ Media story lampooning Rep. Ocasio-Cortez for getting emotional when she couldn't really see anything (acting for the camera). but at least it will keep you from misleading people into thinking it's plausible she was breaking down while looking at the tents. "In line with her gaze" implies she was looking at tents while she was photographed. The evidence does not appear to support that claim.

What you'd need for that is substantiating photographs of the tents taken from the entry gate.

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10/13/2019

Gmail - Re: Ocasio-Cortez, parking lots, roads & tents

Sincerely,

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