909, 912 (9th Cir. 1987) (same). Abovian and his lawyer

Ladha v. INS, 215 F.3 7079, 899 (9th Cir. 2000). Our inter-

tion journalists and religious minorities were beaten by people linked to the government. See A.R. 282 (reprinting Amnesty Int'l, Armenia, Report 1996, at 78). The State Department also reports that "[s]ome members of the security forces committed serious human rights abuses," and that the Armenian Government had suspended an opposition political party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. A.R. 288 (reprinting U.S. Dep't of State, Armenia Human Rights Practices, 1995). Neither report suggests that the Russian KGB has infiltrated the highest levels of the Armenian Government, or that President Ter-Petrosyan engages in violent recruitment efforts on behalf of the KGB.

These reports do suggest that the Government of Armenia, like many other governments in the world, occasionally resorts to force in order to preserve its hold on power. But, under our law, a petitioner must do more than show that his home country is generally repressive in order to merit asylum; he must show that he was the object of oppression on account of the enumerated grounds. 2 Tn violentat "[s]o497 objeccs150.252 169.2 460.8 TDep6 re seri[s]o6.2 460.8

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mentary elections, which were allegedly rigged by the government. See A.R. 298-333. In ensuing political demonstrations, opposition demonstrators stormed Parliament and assaulted legislators, and the police fired into the crowd.

The only time the BIA may fault a petitioner for the absence

implausible, unless the INS chases all over the world and finds contrary evidence.

The majority opinion eliminates all incentive for a petitioner in our circuit to present corroboration, because anything he presents in addition to his own testimony could give the INS grounds for disbelieving him. See, e.g. , Akinmade v. INS, 196 F.3d 951, 955 (9th Cir. 1999). Far better for him to present nothing but his own testimony. So long as he can craft a story, plausible or not, see pp. 9150 infra, the BIA will be barred from holding it against him that he did not present witnesses, documents or other corroborating evidence, even where such evidence should be readily available to him. A rule of law that encourages parties to withhold relevant evidence is unwise. That this rule confliia.28 Tcssimmigborati A

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Job v. INS, 787 F.2d 1332, 1337 (9th Cir. 1986)). But the trier of fact doesn't deny relief because it believes the petitioner made up only the minor details. Rather, inadvertent contradictions as to details can give rise to the suspicion that the petitioner made up the whole story, and the minor inconsistencies reflect the difficulty in telling a good lie.

Details are the stuff of effective cross-examination. After a petitioner testifies on direct, opposing counsel tries to shake his story by asking him to recall specifics. Petitioner's counsel can't object to such questions as irrelevant. That's because cross-examining a witness on the finer details is a time-honored way of testing the veracity of the critical points of his testimony. While anyone can invent a story to support an asylum claim, cross-examination forces the witness to describe small details that someone would know right away from being there, but that a liar might stumble over when put d9potod lie.nevtitioner y croct up onlsameonorfter atc inain minor

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squad and taken shelter before fleeing to America. See 852 F.2d at 1142. Petitioner testified that the incident happened the previous year, yet his cousin testified it had happened three years before. See id. at 1143. In petitioner's account, they hid for one hour, but his cousin said they

In this case, Abovian wrote a lengthy application where he described the KGB's persistent efforts to recruit him, but he failed to 1 atiothatIn thiincludilemoherthan fifteento etingshe

The majority dismisses these as involving matters that were

situations in foreign nations.' " Kazlauskas v. INS, 46 F.3d
902, 906 (9th Cir. 1995) (quoting Rojas v. INS, 937 F.2d 186,
1987 11 (5th Cir. 1991)). By concluding that the BIA cannot

tioner established her eligibility for asylum where she first testified to being raped for a nondiscriminatory reason and only after coaching by her counsel said that she was also raped because of her ethnicity); Bandari, 227 F.3d 1160 (the IJ may not doubt petitioner's credibility after he made numerous inconsistent statements between his application and his testimony about how and when he was beaten by the police); Avetova-Elisseva v. INS, 213 F.3d 1192 (9th Cir. 2000) (despite the admission of petitioner's expert, the BIA lacked substantial evidence to conclude that Armenians in Russia were not subject to a pattern or practice of persecution). None of this has anything to do with administrative law, as that con-

anything to do with the laws Congress has passed and the Supreme Court has interpreted. I emphatically dissent.