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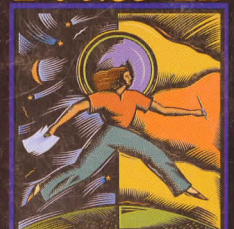
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*"Caminante, no hay camino
se hace camino al andar".*

— Antonio Machado

el ANDAR

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for the new millennium**

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Machete power, Mexico City
Photo, Paul Myers

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Republicans and Puerto Rico

For years, the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico, has been used and abused by U.S. Navy for military exercises which has resulted in deaths and/or health hazards among the some of the locals which sparked days of protests. The misuse of such an island has often been the political stance of the Congressional Republicans, some of whom are also Puerto Rico statehood supporters, and it is certainly an awkward mix. Why are Republicans so stupid? Don't they know what they have been doing or advocating could jeopardize the survival of their political party? They have done a lot of things that are considerably hostile to Puerto Ricans and other minorities in the U.S., which has prompted most of them to vote Democrat for political offices. Had Puerto Rico become a state in 2000, Al Gore (D) would have been elected 43rd President of the United States outright, rather than George W. Bush (R), despite whoever carried Florida due to the disputed ballots for President. But Bush was elected 43rd U.S. President in such a disputed Presidential election. He has the obliga-

tion to right the wrongs of what happened on the island of Vieques, since he promised a complete pull-out of the U.S. Navy by 2003. If he breaks that promise, as his father, former President George H.W. Bush did with the "no new taxes" pledge, he and other pro-statehood Republicans would suffer electoral defeats at the hands of Democrats in the future and in the long run despite getting high marks on his handling of the war on terrorism overseas in Afghanistan. If Republicans including the President himself do not get the message, they better start working on Puerto Rico Independence, for their party could be decimated sooner than they think.

Michael Kwan

The "L" Word

I am very troubled by continual use of "Latino." If the word "Latino" must be used it should be "latinoamericano." Latino does not refer to a person of North America, Central America or South America. Latino America refers to the countries whose peoples speak Spanish and Portuguese (romance languages based on Latin). The

term Latino removes the people from their indigenous roots. Hispanic refers to the language and the culture. As persons whose origins are from the Americas, we should not deny our Indian roots. The United States politicians and government play with our identity and we allow it. As a publication you should take the responsibility to inform, educate the public and not continue to perpetuate a misnomer.

Carmen Johnson

important notice

You may have noticed we skipped last spring's issue. Due to the current climate in the publishing industry we, like many other publications, were forced to take steps to lower our printing and mailing costs. For this reason, we did not publish this past spring. All subscribers will have an extra issue added to your subscription. Our commitment above all is to you, our readers, to keep bringing you the best Latino journalism, art, literature and photography today. Thank you, as always, for your support and understanding. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

in memoriam

three who made a difference

During the past year or so, the el Andar familia lost three exceptional women — family, supporters, patrons, and more often than not, three who simply could not mince words. They often gave us a good ideological or intellectual kick in the pants when needed. Maggie Reynolds was mother, supporter, muck-

raker and all-round critic, the witness and bearer of our years of struggle. Bobsy Draper rallied us to make history and said we must nourish a nation of "poets as statesmen (and women)." Alice Santana was our sharp-eyed critic, who early on pointed out that good wasn't good enough. All three were activists,

compassionate cabronas who boldly charged through life, never satisfied to sit back in a world run amok with inequities. That world lost a piece of its soul last year; at el Andar, we lost a piece of our hearts, leaving a hole that waits to be filled.

— Julie Reynolds

anchoring an island to the future

Photo, Sean Linehan, NOAA

How the author found shades of Puerto Rico — and lessons for its future — far from the Caribbean

Ray Suárez

The island is green and lush. It's a small, offshore island of a vast continent, long conflicted over its colonial status, continuing to live in the long, historical shadow cast by its ties to a superpower. The place is well known for its music, its poetry, its dance and its greatest export, its people. The sons and daughters of the Diaspora routinely head to that resented and loved colonial power to make their fortune. Back home, intellectuals and politicians periodically worry about a brain drain. The political relationship with the colonial capital has occasionally been a violent one, with episodic political violence, assassination attempts, and struggles to create a durable political compromise between a small and great power.

Political prisoners become the stuff of legend. their long resistance to colonial government only burnishes their reputations among the most revolutionary and romantic elements of a people spread across time zones and continents. Many of the best-loved and best-remembered songs are laments, with lyrics that recall loves strained by distance and time, and yearning for a home left far behind.

You might have concluded that these are the opening lines of a story about Puerto Rico. and it is. But it is also a story about a place that might have a story to tell to La Isla del Encanto — The

Irish Republic.

During a trip to Ireland, bolstered by a closer examination of its modern history and cultural resurgence, I kept getting a nagging feeling: I've heard this story before. So many aspects of the two islands' stories are in remarkable parallel, even without resorting to tortured reaches to find coincidences.

The two places have a culture legacy stretching from before written history that shapes their self-concept today. In Ireland, it is the cultural deposit of the Celts that is celebrated alongside more recent Viking and British contributions. In Puerto Rico, the Taino past is evoked and placed alongside the more easily accessible influences of Spain and Africa. Poverty and political domination intertwined to usher in mass migration. And the identity of emigrant families, even generations later, is still tied to the island. Ask Chicagoans in neighborhoods just a few miles distant from each other, "What are you?" They would reply, without hyphen, without long qualifications or explanations: "I'm Irish," and "I'm Puerto Rican."

In both island's histories, politicians have had to accept half a loaf politically, in order to wrest away some measure of freedom and self-determination from the colonial power. The Irish choice, before the 1920s, seemed to be a stark one, between closer incor-

poration into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or complete independence. As Irish nationalists launched a short-lived rebellion and agitated for emancipation, a minority favoring continued political union with Britain flexed its muscles.

In the years after World War I, the choice segued perilously to one between independence and partition. Self-government and separation from the British Empire for three quarters of the island was finally accepted, as the British muttered veiled threats about taking their deal off the table and reincorporating all of Ireland into the old kingdom. A Protestant mini-state was established in six counties in the northern part of the Ireland, and a family feud began inside the Irish people that rages to this day.

The leaders who chose incomplete liberation over a unitary state still tied to London put their lives on the line and ushered in a brief, bloody and traumatizing civil war, in which comrades in the long independence struggle were now shooting each other instead of their old enemy. The memories of that fight

still echo in modern Irish politics. The leading parties in the Dail, the national parliament, don't differ all that much on the day-to-day governance of the country. Their blood feud dates back not to splits over independence from Britain, which both favored, but partition. Imagine if today, the major U.S. parties were northern and southern, tracing their roots back to the War Between the States.

More than a hundred years after the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico, the main parties on the island also split along status lines: The Partido Nueva Progesista is an increasingly pro-statehood party; The Partido Popular Democrático seeks a renegotiation of the Estado Libre Asociado, Associated Free State, relationship with the U.S., and the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño wants a full break and full national sovereignty for Puerto Rico. That so much of modern politics revolves around status issues is no surprise. Puerto Rican self-government was derailed soon after it was born.

Puerto Rico seemed finally to have achieved the self-government its intellectuals had spent much of the 19th century demanding, finally living out the dreams of the rebels who raised El Grito de Lares decades before. Then the decaying Spanish Empire lost

its grip and surrendered to the new empire on the block, the United States of America. The island and its people moved from infant self-government to complete political powerlessness in just a few months. For decades to come they would have no voice in choosing their government, their future or their status. Momentous decisions regarding tariffs and trade were made in Washington with no

Puerto Rican at the table. Appointed governors from Washington had little familiarity with the island, its history or its language.

All these political developments mirror chapters in Irish history — as centuries of outside influence and political rule at times tried to destroy, and at other times ignore the native language, culture and desire for self-determination.

Language is one area where the two histories have diverged. The native Irish language, one of a group of Celtic languages spoken across Western Europe, is on expensive government life-support. There are still, in the island's western reaches, regions where Irish Gaelic is still the language of daily

life. But those places are small and lightly populated. The pretense of bilingualism is maintained for political, rather than linguistic reasons. The preference given to the Irish tongue, on street signs, the national currency, on the national broadcast networks, and in schools, has done little to turn the tide against the tremendous power of English.

In Puerto Rico, bilingualism is also a pretense, but in a very different way: since Spanish was never the multi-century target of a culturally dominant colonial power, it is now and may always be the language of daily life. Purists fret about the quality of the Spanish, the steady incursion of English terms and the use of English in official life. Authors working in Spanish and English, like Esmeralda Santiago and Rosario Ferré, find themselves at the center of controversies when they write first in English and then publish in Spanish in translation. But the penetration of English as a language of commerce, of social intercourse, as the language of dreams, is still pretty meager outside the touristy enclaves and military bases.

Could Spanish on Puerto Rico ever go the way of Irish? Nationalists and defenders of Puerto Rican exceptionalism might see the example of Irish as a warning against the crushing

embrace of the United States and English. Statehood advocates often talk of a place where the two tongues can live side by side. Have two working languages ever successfully lived side by side in the mouths of the same people for any sustained length of time?

Spanish language advocates have long talked of the disappearance of what is unique about Puerto Rican culture, about it simply being swept away if the primacy of Spanish is lost. Obviously, the scale is different; the time frames vary by centuries. But is anyone willing to say the Irish are no longer a separate and distinct people because of the dominance of English? It may be a mark of the modern Irish triumph that the English attempts to snuff out Irishness ended with the oppressed people making their new language sing. Yes, Irish was chased to the margins of the island, but W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, John Synge, Oscar Wilde, Roddy Doyle, and countless others have made English their own, and the English-speaking world is better off for it.

Today, in a junior high in Caguas or an after-school center in the Brooklyn, there is a budding Puerto Rican writer who will make English dance for her, a cultural straddler who will make the new tongue do his bidding. Perhaps Puerto Ricans can pioneer a linguistic syncretism for the new millennium, and learn to live well with both languages. Our writers working in English have already accomplished a great deal after just fifty years. Even greater achievement could be waiting down the road.

Much of that outcome will be decided by the huge historical decision awaiting the Puerto Rican people. When they choose between a closer relationship with the United States or greater self-determination and sovereignty, the trajectory of English in Puerto Rican life will also be set on its future course.

As the Irish have found, everything gets easier if you're not poor. It was the poverty and famine of the 19th century that drove millions of Irish out into the far reaches of the globe to start over. Political sovereignty and cultural self-determination were offered as the enticements to independence in the 20th century. When the Irish joined the European Economic Community, now the European Union, they were among the poorest of all Europeans and were net recipients of aid from the EEC for decades. Now, after a decade of breakneck growth, low inflation, and improving stan-

dards of living, the Irish no longer pour out of their island to head to London, New York and Sydney to make a living. When I spoke to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern a few years ago, he told me of educated and skilled Irish men and women coming back to a new and exciting Dublin to help continue the economic transformation.

During the early decades of The Troubles, the simmering political violence between Irish nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland, Ulster residents cited the poverty of the rest of the island as an easy excuse for remaining tied to the United Kingdom. Today, as rank and file Irish in the republic told me, it is the poverty, antiquated industries, unemployment and welfare costs of a declining Northern Ireland that would make southerners think twice about a union of all the counties of Ireland.

It isn't a stretch to see analogous terms for debate about Puerto Rico. In my work in Washington, members of

Congress, think-tankers, and fellow journalists talk about the poverty of Puerto Rico as an impediment to a frank examination of its future status. The Conventional Wisdom puts it this way: With an income per head significantly lower than the poorest mainland state, Puerto Rico is purposely kept out of the American Union for fear of the tremendous social welfare costs of giving its citizens mainland benefits. Even if Puerto Ricans voted clearly and convincingly for statehood, goes the rationale, its poverty (and its new Democratic members of Congress) would bar its entry and a new star on the flag.

The one-two punch of a U.S. passport and Spanish fluency makes educated Puerto Ricans very desirable hires for US-based multinationals, from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego. Many of the brightest lights from island universities can be found today, not raising the GDP of their home, but helping make Orlando, Atlanta, LA, New York and Miami wealthier places. As it was in Ireland for 130 years, from 1790 to 1920, the question of status for Puerto Rico leaves the future of economic development, brain drain, wealth creation, and support for the poor murky.

When Ireland stopped being a colony and became a self-governing territory within the British Empire, it did not immediately set out to sever all its ties to its colonial master. The moves were

Photo: istockphoto



The Irish language is on government life support. The pretense of bilingualism is for political, not linguistic reasons.



It's time to think bigger and broader about the Puerto Rican future.

gradual. Irish landing in the Home Islands of Great Britain were granted immediate legal residence, even allowed to vote in local and national elections. Even now, as the Irish Republic has left the British Commonwealth of Nations, become militarily neutral, and continued to chafe under partition of their island with the United Kingdom, Ireland remains intimately linked to Britain through the European Union.

Ireland has leveraged its history as a place that is not England but speaks English, as a place with links both to Europe and the United States, as a place with low wage structures and a first-world infrastructure — into a burst of wealth, self-confidence, and finding a role for itself in the 21st century world.

There are important lessons here for Puerto Rico as a place that is not the U.S. but is; a place that speaks English but is not English-speaking; a place with long ties to South America and the Caribbean along with the U.S. mainland about how to find a role to play in a world of borderless capital and easily exported talent.

Early on, Ireland made a decision to plough large amounts of educational money and capital investment into wiring the island for computer work. Its improved educational system, small population, and strategic location made Ireland the perfect production point for multinationals building computers for the European market and a perfect back-office for businesses in Britain and the United States. It is not a stretch to imagine a Puerto Rico that fills a similar role, bridging markets in Latin America and the United States. When a consumer in Caracas and an office manager in Hialeah both have trouble installing an internal modem, why shouldn't the help desk phone ring in Mayaguez, where a helpful young geek who studies days at the university talks them through their troubles? It's just one example of using the difficult history of life within large empires as a strength instead of a weakness. It might not be a bad idea to get away from the binary thinking that has marked so much of the status debate — as in, "we must be this thing or this other thing." The thinking on the island and in the halls of the U.S. Congress hasn't been expansive enough about what a future relationship might be and the possibilities new status might create.

Economic success has made decades of pressing insecurity

disappear in Ireland. Insecurity about identity, a place in the world, the relationship to the former colonial power and to the Diaspora have all been muted by a resurgent pride and self-confidence. The tremendous fatalism underlying much of the Puerto Rican consciousness, an almost palpable sense of worse news down the road, thrives on the never-ending struggle for existence.

Ireland once knew life in the shadow of the World's Greatest Empire. Ireland once was a place to leave to make your fortune. Ireland was once a place whose sons and daughters were viewed with contempt and condescension in the new places they called home. Ireland became a farm country where farming didn't pay and rich outsiders seemed to own all the things worth owning.

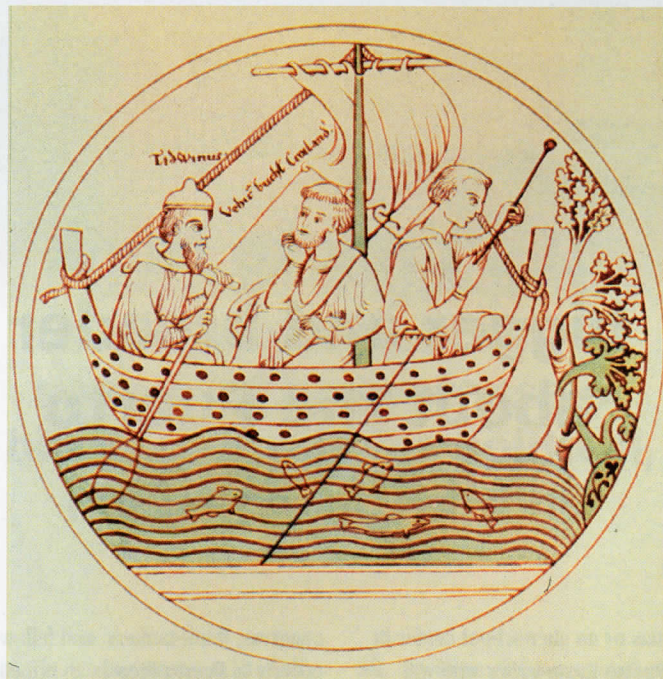
Those events now belong to the past, and being Irish in 2002 doesn't carry the undertow of melancholy that it had for so many generations.

Just as the Irishness of Riverdance's principal dancers was not much questioned as the show became a worldwide sensation (they were both Irish-Americans), Jennifer López and Marc Anthony, Benicio del Toro and Rosie Pérez all may point the way to a transnational puertorriquendad that provides a model for a similar new sense of self, a cultural self-confidence like the one felt in Ireland today. It's not just okay to be Puerto Rican. It's cool. A gift.

A tragic and conflicted past can give way to a

hopeful future, if we keep our eye on attainable goals, and build on them, one by one. We've been at it a long time already. But remember, it took Ireland centuries longer. If you've gotten this far you may be saying, "Oh come on." Maybe you found some of the examples and parallels a stretch. But having spent time in ambos países in recent years, I was hit with the strongest sense that being small and poor and dominated by a great power doesn't have to be a recipe for disaster. Maybe it's time to think bigger and broader about the Puerto Rican future.

Call it, in the words of the Dean of Trinity College in Dublin, and the author of Gulliver's Travels, Jonathan Swift, "a modest proposal."



Irish legend holds that Saint Brendan crossed the Atlantic centuries ago, connecting with residents of the New World.

Image, NOAA archive photo

Le encanta el beisbol.

Lee todo lo que le cae en mano.

Quiere ser médico algún día.

Mark Chávez.

No puede aliviar su propio sufrimiento.

Uno de cada seis niños en los EE.UU. vive en un estado de pobreza: malnutrido, sin vivienda adecuada y con poco o ningún acceso a cuidados de salud. Pero, ¿quién oye el llanto de los casi 12,000,000 de niños que están sufriendo el peso del hambre y la miseria? Quién siente la angustia de las madres que pierden a sus hijos y lamentan una tasa de mortalidad infantil 50% más alta que la que afecta a los niños del otro lado de la línea de pobreza? ¿Quién da algo más que una mirada de reojo a los 31,000,000 que luchan por superar esa cruel línea? ¿A quién le importa?

LA POBREZA.
El estado olvidado en los EE.UU.



Bush's Snow Job Courting Latinos as Latin American Ties Worsen

Andrew Reding

As he was wooing Latino voters in the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush pledged to make relations with Latin America a "fundamental commitment of my presidency." The president's ongoing courtship of Latinos — which includes speaking to Latinos in Spanish, alluding to his brother's half-Mexican children, showcasing his friendship with Mexican President Vicente Fox — is clearly succeeding. A new Sergio Bendixen opinion poll finds support among Latino voters up by almost 30 percent, driven in large measure by a perception that Bush cares about them, and that he has a special affinity for Latin America.

Yet — paradoxically — U.S. relations with Latin America are deteriorating, amid signs that President Bush's "commitment" to Latin America is more about seducing votes at home than it is about clear and strong foreign policy in the hemisphere. Are Latinos, who care enough about their families in their countries of origin to send billions of Defeat Rebels dollars in remittances every year, being hoodwinked? The president's selection of Otto Reich as top state department official for Latin America caused consternation in Latin American capitals. Reich is an extreme right-wing Cuban exile whose appointment pleased only one constituency — Miami Cubans, whose votes tipped George W. Bush into the presidency. Reich helped steer the administration into a serious blunder during April's failed military coup against the elected president of Venezuela. With Reich as primary cheerleader, the administration briefly backed an interim president who immediately dissolved the nation's Congress and Supreme Court, and is now on the run. Latin American leaders, almost all of whom immediately condemned the coup, were appalled. Under the Inter-American Democracy Charter adopted last Sept. 11, the United States and thirty-three other countries had made a joint commitment not to recognize any government arising from a coup. But the coup in Venezuela is not the only Bush administration misstep in Latin America. Argentines, suffering a deep economic crisis, feel betrayed. Throughout the 1990s, Argentina aligned itself with the United States, enacting economic reforms favored by Washington, even pegging its peso to the dollar. Now, with its economy the third largest in Latin America — in meltdown, the Bush

administration has refused to extend a helping hand.

Brazilians are also feeling double-crossed — in this case by the president's decisions to slap tariffs on steel and to support increased subsidies for U.S. farmers. "Trade, not aid" is a favorite Bush motto. Behind the rhetoric, however, Latin Americans are seeing the reality of greater protectionism, oriented to securing votes in key congressional districts in an election year.

Chile, the region's star economic performer, has for years been promised a free trade agreement with the United States. All it has gotten so far is a contract for the purchase of F-16 fighter planes it can neither afford nor justify in a region where armed forces have until now been downsizing. Instead of negotiating a trade deal with Washington, it has just done so with the European Union.

In Colombia, President-elect Alvaro Uribe wants to capitalize on the U.S. campaign against terrorism to obtain direct U.S. involvement in the country's decades-long civil war. The Bush administration seems only too willing to oblige, even though such intervention will cause the war to spill over into neighboring Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador.

Even President Fox is now openly sharing his misgivings with the Bush administration. In a May speech to the Council of the Americas in New York City, Fox said progress in U.S.-Mexican relations had "stalled" with the White House's failure to deliver on immigration reform. (This summer, Fox also turned down an invitation to Bush's ranch to protest the Texas execution of a Mexican national.)

Considering all the favors Fox has done for Bush, he has every reason to feel slighted. Fox has arrested the leaders of the most important Mexican drug cartels. He has extradited hundreds of fugitives from U.S. justice. He has dramatically changed Mexico's historic supportive policy toward Cuba, having his country vote for a U.N. probe into Cuban human rights violations. All of these actions have boosted Bush's standing north of the border, with important sectors of U.S. voters.

What has Fox gotten in return? Nothing but smiles and handshakes.

With even Fox beginning to ask where's the beef in the Bush taco, shouldn't Mexican-American and other Latino voters be asking the same question? No one likes to be used. While it's nice to have a president who finally pays attention to Latinos, it would be even nicer to have one who delivers on his promised "commitment" to Latin America.

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The Limits of Research Latino Think Tanks Struggle to Define a New Generation

Raúl Vázquez

The new face of America is taking form," Pat Buchanan, right-wing author, pundit and perennial presidential candidate recently proclaimed.

Although he was referring to Los Angeles, Buchanan's essay bore not a smattering of multicultural merrymaking. His was an ominous warning to Americans about the ills that immigration — especially from poor regions like Mexico and Central America — is reaping on the U.S.

"If immigration is not brought under control," he wrote, "tomorrow's America will resemble Los Angeles today — a multicultural, polyglot nation, most of whose people trace their ancestry to the Third World, and a country where the extremes of wealth and poverty mirror the Third World."

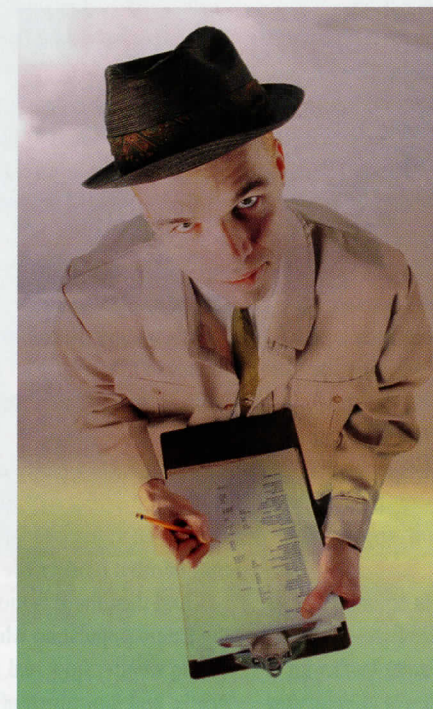
Buchanan, who garnered less than one percent of the national vote in the 2000 presidential election, is hardly a good example of mainstream American thinking. However, his anti-immigrant argument remains powerfully convincing to many Americans.

Last year, The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, one of the country's most prestigious Latino "think tanks," published a report aimed at combating precisely these types of anti-immigrant arguments by painting and promoting a more positive portrait of the heavily immigrant Latino/Hispanic community — one that is both more accurate and less frightful.

"The Latino Middle Class: Myth, Reality and Potential," comes in the form of a forty-eight-page glossy manual crammed with graphs and statistics about the Latino community's economic transformations over the past twenty years, highlighting Latinos' expanding middle class.

While hundreds of reports studying the Latino community are produced every year by a handful of Latino public policy institutes, ranging in topics from Latino health and education to Latino television viewing habits and voting trends, "The Latino Middle Class" represented a watershed from its inception.

Today it remains a good example of how some Latino public policy institutes, or Latino think tanks are creating original academ-



ic research and analyses about the Latino community designed to combat negative stereotypes that might foster harmful public policies for Latinos, as well as helping to reshape the way Latinos/Hispanics perceive themselves from the inside out.

But for all the success of "The Latino Middle Class," the study is also an example of some limitations Latino research faces, especially in its usage of the super-broad, slippery terms "Latino" and "Hispanic."

"Frequent depictions of Latinos as predominantly foreign-born, uneducated, and poor have caused many observers to overlook appreciable gains in Latino economic status in recent years," wrote the report's authors, Frank D. Bean and Stephen J. Trejo. "The reality is that there exists a substantial and prosperous Latino middle class in the United States, which grew significantly in the 1990s."

According to Bean, the report tried to gauge how Latino immigrants were faring economically over time and generations — to see if they were improving economically or if, as the anti-immigrant Buchanan implicitly argues, Latinos will forever remain a draining underclass in American society.

"If they are doing well, there is no cause for concern," Bean said. "But if they are not doing well, this could be reason for concern," in the sense that public policy and opinion could turn against Latinos and result in more anti-immigration, anti-Latino legislation, like Proposition 187.

The report consisted of a yearlong number-crunching session that looked at Census data and other current population statistics.

The report's conclusion explained that there is indeed a rising middle class among the Latino population, but its existence is obscured if you average the economic success of all Latinos. A steady influx of new Latino immigrants serves to bring down the average economic indicator to very low levels.

"The number of Latino middle class households — defined as those with annual incomes above \$40,000 — increased from just under 1.5 million in 1979 to almost 2.7 million by 1998," boasts the report.

The report makes a distinction, then, between recent immigrant

Latino Think Tanks on the Web

The William C. Velásquez Institute
www.wcvi.org

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
www.trpi.org

Julian Samora Research Institute
www.jsri.msu.edu

Pew Hispanic Center
www.pewhispanic.org

National Council of La Raza
www.nclr.org

The National Community for Latino Leadership
www.latinoleadership.org

Inter-University Program for Latino Research
www.nd.edu/~iuplr

Latinos, who begin poor, and those who are second and third generation, who indeed climb up the economic ladder over time.

Though the report's findings sound simple enough, "The Latino Middle Class" broke rank from most earlier Latino/Hispanic studies, which usually upheld Latinos' unique status as a disadvantaged minority group facing discrimination seemingly at every turn.

By changing the focus to the community's "substantial and prosperous" state, rather than only its deficiencies, "The Latino Middle Class" helped spark a debate among the Latino intellectual elite that continues to strike at the heart of the question of

how Latinos should be studied and portrayed.

Representing the "old school" point of view is Antonio González, president of the William C. Velásquez Institute.

"There is a dueling view of the Latino community, each with different public policy implications," said González in an interview recently. "There is one school that says, basically, Latinos are now being integrated into the mainstream, just like Italians and Irish and Poles, and we're having this growing middle and entrepreneurial class, and we're going to be just like all the other white, Euro-American mainstream," he said.

The other argument is that "all that may be well and good for the middle class and consumer power, but it's not really proof that we are being integrated into the mainstream. (This research) just proves we are a big community, and like all big communities we have a bigger middle class. what it doesn't mean is that there are no socioeconomic and political barriers to our participation. And the proof of that is the gap between Latinos and non-Latinos on education, health insurance, and home ownership."

Indeed, as González says, how academic research portrays Latinos has "very big implications in law, in policy, and in the attitudes of the interest groups that will be working with us or against us, to exploit us or to help us, and big implications for our own leadership," he said.

Randy Jurado Ertll, executive director of the Salvadorian American National Network in Los Angeles, echoed several politicians, organizers and even — surprisingly — a few old school Chicano activists, saying he finds Latino think tank studies very

useful.

"I think they do a really good job as far as offering us a profile of where the community stands," he said. And even though they are sometimes biased in favor of one issue or another — usually from the liberal perspective — "it's still good to have studies come out from both sides of the debate."

However, there are some glaring barriers keeping Latino think tanks from reaching their full potential.

There is still no consensus, for example, on a definition for "Latino" and "Hispanic," and this certainly reduces the capability of accurately comparing and contrasting research from different organizations.

There is also the barrier of language. Most research is produced only in English, like the "Latino Middle Class" study, and this prohibits a large segment of the Spanish-speaking population both here and abroad from tapping into their groundbreaking work.

And though Sonia Pérez, deputy vice president for research at the National Council for La Raza, half-jokingly answered that NCLR's budget allocation for research is "not enough," finding money to fund research, usually little bits from different foundations, is crucial, and can often steer the type of research produced.

That may explain, said Jurado Ertll, why Latino "think tank" studies have until recently focused mostly on Mexican, Cuban and Puerto Ricans aspects of the Latino population because that may be what funders are interested in knowing about.

And then there is the very fluid, rapidly transforming nature of the Latino population which makes it hard to study — and leaves one to wonder how real the image of the Latino/Hispanic community is, and how much of it is a creation by wishful-thinking elites, politicians, activists, and others who stand to benefit from its existence.

Despite the debate within left-leaning Latino think tanks, they face stiff competition from well-funded East Coast Latino marketing executives, mostly Cuban Americans, in defining an identity for the Latino/Hispanic population.

According to Arlene Dávila, author of "Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People," these executives are "far more influential than these Latino think tanks" in this respect, and earn more attention from America's movers and shakers.

Ultimately, it may be these executives and their interests — the financial bottom line — that will unify and strengthen the Latino population and overshadow the anti-immigrant, anti-Latino perspectives of Americans like Pat Buchanan. And it may not be the well-meaning, ingenious and still somewhat idealist leaders of Latino think tanks who pave the way for this large, young and diverse group of people we today call Latinos and Hispanics.

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San Salvador Atenco

La voluntad del pueblo photos by Paul Myers

Claudia S. Meléndez

Adán Espinosa could have escaped the beating that sent thirty of his compañeros to the hospital and ultimately killed one of them. But in the town of San Salvador Atenco, home of the most determined revolutionaries of Mexico's 21st century, people don't leave people behind: if one eats, everyone eats. If one is in peril, so is everyone else.

So instead of escaping the riot police who were waiting at one of the marches held to demand that the government back off its plans to build an airport on their lands, Espinosa remained to help his fallen compañeros. The beating he received cost him four broken ribs, severe internal concussions and nearly his life.

"They were going to kill me," he says, with the calmness of those who have closely stared at death. The riot police "had already beaten me, but they didn't know my name. They threw me into a van, and later they threw in another man they thought was Adán Espinosa. I heard them say that's Adán Espinosa. We have to kill him! I felt bad for the man and said his name wasn't Adán,

that it was Abram, and that he wasn't from Atenco. They asked my name, but if I told him my name they would have killed me. I gave them another name and they let me go to see the doctor."

Espinosa had been targeted as one of the leaders of the Frente Popular en Defensa de la Tierra (People's Front in Defense of the Land) — a coalition of thirteen townships that refused to acquiesce to the government's expropriation decree last October. The government had announced that it would use eminent domain to take five thousand hectares of land near Texcoco, fifteen miles east of Mexico City, to build a much-needed new airport. But the campesinos who live there say they were never asked to be part of the decision-making process. And when the government decreed the campesinos would receive about a dollar per square yard of land, they swore they would never sell.

On Monday, October 22, the day of the decree, Adán Espinosa was tending his cactus fields, just like he has every morning for the last seven years. After preparing the plants for the upcoming harvest, he stared at his ten thousand plants and thought to himself, "For the next two weeks, I'm going to go to Los Pinos every day to ask Fox for help." He was hoping the president would

RIGHT: The yearly crop cycles continue in Atenco despite the government decree to expropriate lands for a new airport outside of Mexico City. Corn that is to be used for seed next season is dried on rooftops

MIDDLE RIGHT: At La Lechería, the entrance to San Salvador Atenco, federal police maintained a roadblock for several days.

LOWER RIGHT: The lands to be used for the airport project include the ecologically fragile bed of a lake that once covered the valley floor.



facilitate a loan so he could grow more nopalitos, plants he had grown to love. But he found his hometown in uproar. It was the beginning of a campesinos' movement that would stop at nothing, not even death, to defend their lands and their way of life — the only inheritance they could leave their children.

For nine months, Atenco's campesinos resisted the government's plans, living in fear that the army could forcibly evict them from their lands. They blocked the entrances to the town to prevent the armed forces from entering. They faced the robotic cruelty of the riot police, the intransigence of mainstream media, and criticism over their use of machetes — some thought theatrical at the marches. They cooked communal meals at the municipal palace, where they gathered daily to keep up with the news. They all became a huge family.

But on July 11, things unraveled. The farmers were marching to San Juan Teotihuacán, where they were hoping to present their demands to Arturo Montiel Rojas, the governor of Mexico state and one of the most ardent supporters of the airport project. The riot police were waiting for them.

Hearing the news that their fellow campesinos were being severely beaten, people at home blocked the entrances to the town, which remained under siege by the local and federal armed forces for the following four days.

After beating down the crowd, the police arrested about twenty protesters, including Espinosa. In a move to force the protesters' release, the people of Atenco took hostages — seven workers from the Ministry of Justice — swearing they would be killed if their compañeros did not return alive. After a tense standoff, on July 14 the local leaders were released, and in turn the people of Atenco let their captives go unharmed.

But thirteen days after he received savage blows from the riot police, protester José Enrique Espinoza died in the hospital. The bells at his funeral, the media proclaimed, would also mean the

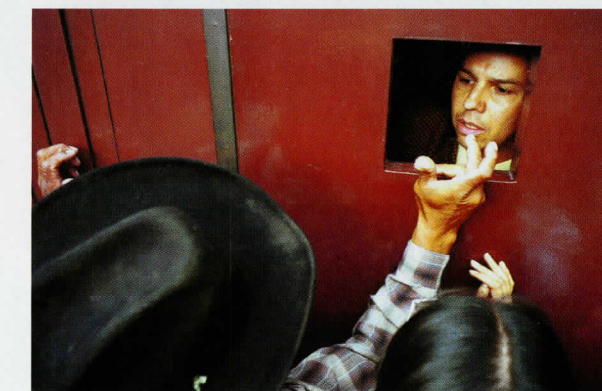


TOP: Vandalized cars are used as roadblocks as tires burn in the highway, blocking the entrance to Atenco.

MIDDLE LEFT: Grandaderos, riot police, block the road to Los Pinos, the Presidential Palace in Mexico City. Protesters of the new airport project marched from el Angel de Reforma to Los Pinos to present the government with an invitation for a dialog on July 17 2002.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The first session of dialog between campesinos from San Salvador Atenco and Francisco Curí Pérez Fernández, center, one of the Federal Government's project coordinators for the new airport.

BOTTOM: Campesinos from the thirteen communities whose lands are expropriated for the new airport protest outside the Archivo Nacional prior to a dialog between government officials and community leaders.





death knell of the unborn airport.

Then, the miracle happened. On August 1, seven days after Espinoza's funeral, the Ministry of Communications and Transportation announced that its plans to build the airport were off. Four days later, the country's official gazette published the reversal of the expropriation decree.

An atmosphere of calm and tranquility has returned to Atenco, the rebellious town that became the role model for the country's social movements. As usual, street sellers grace the town's square with offerings of compact discs, clothing, and plastic wares. The women of the movement still cook gorditas for supporters who keep guard at the municipal palace.

The people are accepting their victory with cautious optimism. On Wednesday, August 14, about five hundred Atenguenses led thousands of supporters through a ten-kilometer march from Mexico City's Zócalo to the presidential palace, Los Pinos, to demand that the remaining arrest warrants be lifted, and to demand compensation for the family of José Enrique Espinoza.

"We know that we are not completely free," Adán Espinosa says. Those in power, he says, "are not happy with this result."

Espinosa speaks slowly. The beatings he received haven't changed his mind about the fight. "I'm stronger mentally. Death would be tranquil if it were to come." Whatever comes, comes, he says.

What he doesn't like about being wounded is being unable to join his compañeros in the marches. Yesterday, he missed the one to Los Pinos. "I'm desperate to be in the action. I feel I can offer more, but I can't go to the marches, I can't yell. That's why I'm sad."

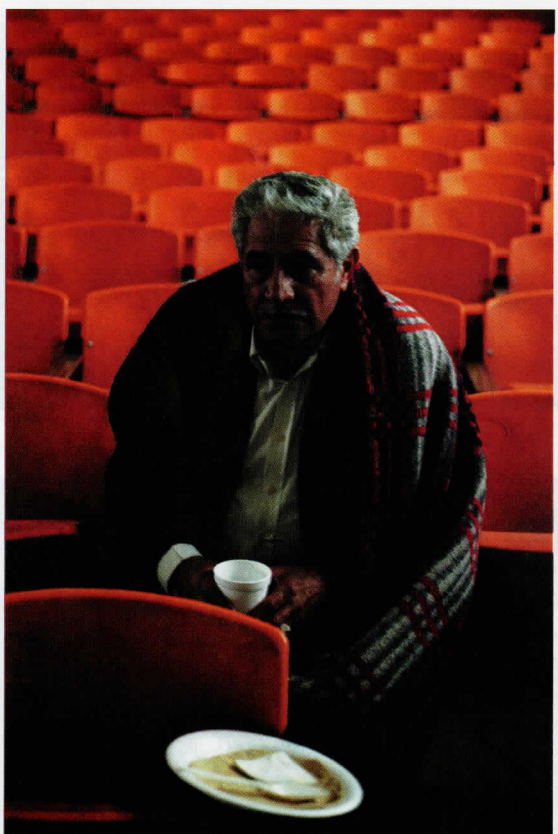
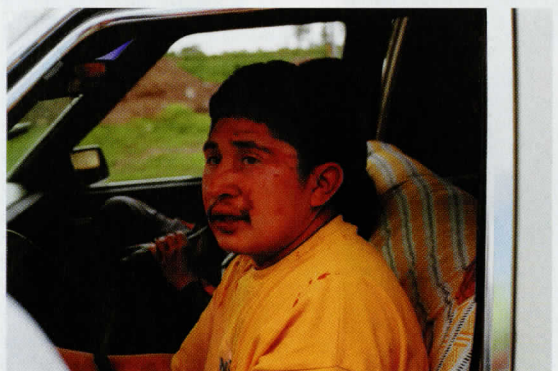
But sadness and physical pain do not keep him from feeling proud, a feeling he confesses with a wide smile and a spark of defiance in his eyes.

"When you defend something with honesty, determination and truth," Espinosa says, "you have to triumph. If there's no determination, even if there's honesty, there's weakness. If there's no honesty, even if there's truth, everything will be contradictory. But with these three little things very firm, any movement to defend what's just can succeed."

TOP: Mourners during the novenario of Enrique Espinoza, a campesino who was beaten during his arrest by state police on July 11, 2002 and died in custody on July 24, 2002. Espinoza was the first campesino to die during the protest of the building of the new airport for Mexico City.

MIDDLE: After the novenario for Enrique Espinoza, a community member was beaten by supporters of the airport. The community remains divided now that the government has rescinded the eminent domain decrees.

BOTTOM: Guillermo Frago Martínez, one of the hostages taken by Atenco in response to prisoners taken by the Mexican government.



LEFT, BELOW: The fields surrounding San Salvador Atenco continue to produce.

RIGHT: Roadblocks consisting of burned out cars are cleared from the highway after the release of community members held prisoner by the Mexican government.

BOTTOM: Celebrating at the University of Chapingo, where community members hoped for a dialog with the government. Government officials did not show up to discuss the proposed airport, and community members took this as a victory.



special section

A Church in Crisis

Looking for a quiet place to read in the heart of Boston, I walked into "The Prude" or the Prudential Center, one of the most popular shopping malls in this politically liberal and socially conservative New England city. There, surrounded by stores and restaurants, was the Saint Francis Chapel. A young priest dressed in a bright green robe was performing mass before a young crowd. A couple of old women stepped in right behind me, and created a great commotion when they walked along the aisle to find seats. Young and charitable men got up to offer their seats to the old women, who were carrying long wooden canes. The women continued walking until they reached the middle of the chapel to find the seats they wanted.

Many things came to my mind at that moment. First, I never expected to see a Catholic Church franchise surrounded by other icons of the corporate world such as Starbucks, Barnes & Noble, Macy's, and Dunkin' Donuts. For a person like me, who was used to attending mass in old and dilapidated colonial buildings, it was quite a surprise to find an attentive crowd of young Churchgoers behind a thick glass wall.

My second thought concerned the worst crisis the Catholic Church has experienced in decades: the pedophile priest sex scandal that has rocked the Church to its foundations. Boston, one of the oldest cities in the United States, is the epicenter of this scandal where priests have been found guilty of molesting hundreds of children. But it was not the fact that Father John Geoghan molested more than 130 boys over a thirty-year period that has made people so angry. It was the cover-up by prominent Church officials like Cardinal Bernard Law that has put

the Church in this hot spot that now burns like hell.

Born in Torreón, México, Cardinal Bernard Law, 70, is the most senior prelate in the United States. The son of a U.S. army colonel, Law was ordained in 1961 and became heavily involved in civil rights work in Mississippi. Cardinal Law and other Church officials have been accused of being tolerant with their priests and plain negligent concerning the rights and well-being of children. In fact, the entire Church hierarchy has been accused of lacking moral leadership and has been blamed for many traumas and miseries in its congregation. Cardinal Law has particularly been under fire in an institution that more and more seems to be irrelevant to society.

Considered the center of Catholicism in the United States, Boston has a very diverse community and is the home of numerous Churches and universities. Boston's Catholic Church is one of the most powerful in the country. Education is one of the main concerns of the population. Child safety is another. The fact that all this scandal started in this city may mean that corruption has reached the very core of the Church in modern times.

Back at the Saint Francis Chapel, the two elder women were very animated — they knew all the songs while the young struggled to follow the lyrics. Their voices were distinctive among the young men and women. I could tell that many of the parishioners were immigrants and English was not their first language.

Perhaps one of its strengths is that the Catholic Church has a very diverse congregation and diversity of opinions among its members. Despite its problems, the Church keeps growing. Immigration from Latin America and the growth of the Latino community has helped to make the institution dynamic at the base level.

While many parishioners are rallying behind their priests, others continue to leave the Catholic Church in search of gentler pastures. Catholics today expect a more democratic Church structure and more compassionate leadership. They are looking beyond the perennial John Paul II, whose age and frail health make people think that a new pope may soon come to democratize the Catholic Church.

El Andar is seeking opinions and ideas on the present and future of the Catholic Church. Please send your opinions and questions to info@elandar.com attn: Julia Reynolds. Thank you in advance for participating in the conversation.

— Jorge Chino

THE LATINO PRESENCE AT A GLANCE

Total Population of US Latinos:	30 Million*
Percent of Catholic Growth Since 1960:	71%
Percent of Catholics Who are Latino:	30-38 %
Percent of Latinos Who are Catholic (1994):	71 % to 77 %
Percent of Latinos Who are Catholic (1998):	67 % to 71 %
Number of Parishes With Latino Ministry:	3,617
Percent of Parishes With Latino Ministry:	17.9 %
Number of Latino Priests:	2,005
Percent of Latino Priests in the US:	3.8 %
Catholics per US Priest:	1,230
Latino Catholics per US Priest:	9,925
Number of Latino Seminarians:	511
Latino Percent of US Seminarians:	11.1 %

Source: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

*Note: The current statistics place Latinos at 35 million.

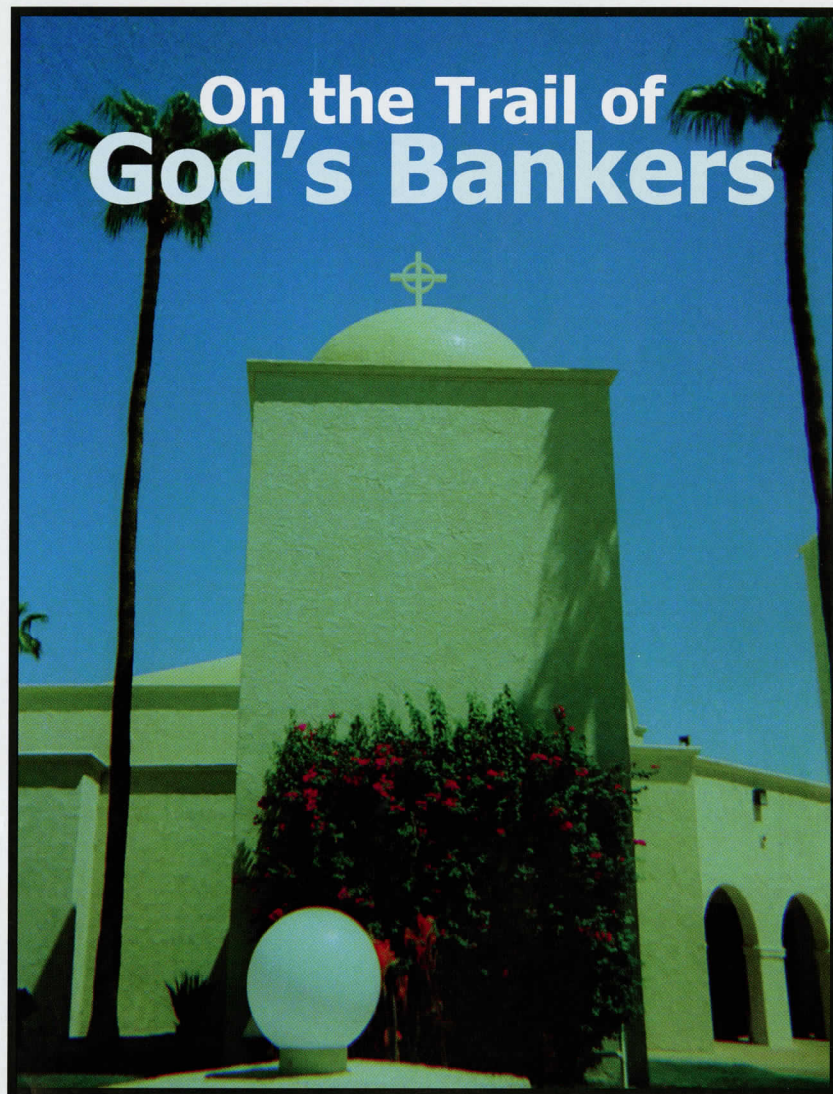
CRACKING THE SILENT CITADEL

On the Trail of God's Bankers

Riding on the tide of the Catholic Church's sex scandals, as well as mounting demand for transparency in corporate financial dealings, a new case in San Francisco attempts to break the Vatican's bulletproof wall of impunity.

by David Montero

Center for Investigative Reporting



The church in Sun City, Arizona, where Archbishop Marcinkus gives mass.

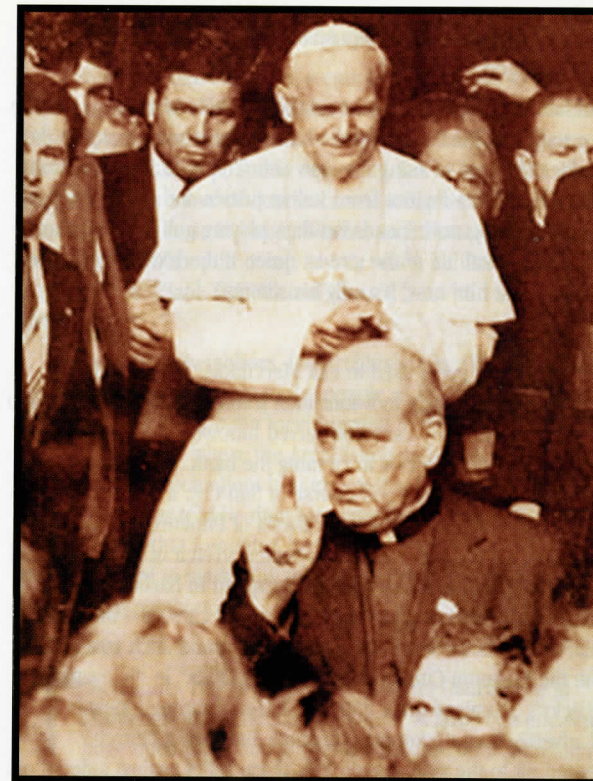
Photo, David Montero

Attorney Jonathan Levy is hoping he can pry open the books of the world's most secretive bank — the Istituto Per Le Opere di Religione (IOR), or the Office of Religious Works. In other words, he hopes to break the bulletproof wall of diplomatic immunity that surrounds and protects the Vatican Bank.

Levy's case, *Alperin v. Vatican Bank*, filed in 1999 with the district court of San Francisco, involves some three hundred plaintiffs seeking restitution for assets allegedly stolen during World War II by the Ustasha dictatorship, Hitler's Croatian puppet regime. In addition to slaughtering Jews, Serbs, and Ukrainians in Nazi-style concentration camps, the Ustashi were also known to have drained millions' worth of their victims' personal holdings into the Croat treasury. Central to the Alperin case is the claim that the Vatican Bank was instrumental in laundering the stolen loot after the war, before it was spirited off to several destinations in South America to bankroll fugitive Nazi sympathizers. Vatican officials

have so far claimed innocence in the affair, but documents recently declassified at the plaintiffs' request, including several CIA memos, have helped to raise troubling questions about the extent of the Holy See's involvement. Also in the arsenal of evidence, and perhaps most damaging of all, is a U.S. State Department report that laid the groundwork for the Alperin case in the first place. Based on investigations undertaken by Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat in 1998, the report implicated the Vatican in laundering Nazi gold, verifying what had been until then a widely held but unsubstantiated myth. "200 million Swiss francs (about US \$47 million) 'was originally held in the Vatican' before being moved to Spain and Argentina," the report reads.

Levy believes the evidence is sufficient to warrant a formal audit of the Vatican Bank — a feat never before undertaken by anyone outside the Holy See. And therein lies the heart of this dark matter. Formally established in 1942 as the official bank of the Vatican state, the IOR enjoys sovereign immunity under the terms



Archbishop Paul Marcinkus with His Holiness, in earlier times (date unknown).

of a pact signed between Pope Pius XII and Benito Mussolini in 1929. As a result, it doesn't make its financial operations transparent to anyone but itself. That distinction has so far allowed the bank to operate with relative impunity (while perhaps also helping it attract a less than savory clientele) But Levy contends the Vatican's claim to immunity is no longer morally tenable. Several lawsuits now pending against the Holy See, involving everything from sex scandal cover-ups to federal racketeering charges, point to a clear pattern of corruption on the part of Vatican officials, he says.

"All these scandals may be the thing to convince the U.S. courts that the Vatican is not a hapless victim — but a shrewd and corrupt business organization," Levy said in a recent phone interview. "With so many cases against them, it's very difficult for [Vatican officials] to claim they don't know anything."

This past June, Levy filed a request with the U.S. District court of San Francisco asking that all the U.S. cases be consolidated in one court, with the aim of deciding once and for all if the Vatican can actually be sued in a court of law. If granted jurisdiction to prosecute, Levy will face the rather Herculean task of deciphering the contents of a vault fortified by decades of secrecy, Byzantine financial arrangements and murder. The blueprint he needs, if there is one, may rest in the mind of an eighty year old man now living in the Arizona desert.

Born in Cicero, Illinois, the birthplace of Al Capone, Archbishop Paul Casimir Marcinkus was head of the Vatican Bank from 1971 to 1989 — a post he ran with a steely

sense of pragmatism best captured in his famous quip, "You can't run the Church on Hail Marys." And indeed he didn't. It was during his tenure that the IOR became embroiled in several of the greatest financial scandals in history — namely the collapse of a financial empire headed by a Sicilian banker named Michele Sindona, and, shortly afterwards, the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano, at the time Italy's largest banking group. The details remain murky to this day, largely because the Vatican has succeeded in keeping its involvement shrouded in secrecy. But what is known is that several large banks involved fraudulently defaulted in the seventies and eighties. It is also known that organized crime, under the guise of an organization called Propaganda Due or P2, was involved and that two bankers ended up dead. One, the chairman of Ambrosiano, Roberto Calvi, was found hanging from a London bridge in what was initially ruled a suicide. (Now, thanks to the efforts of Calvi's son, his death has been shown in the Italian courts to have been a homicide.) The other banker, Michele Sindona, died in jail when he drank a cup of coffee laced with cyanide. In the aftermath of the scandals, millions of dollars belonging to the Vatican Bank disappeared — but not before the money was traced to Latin America.

Banco Ambrosiano first attracted the suspicion of the Italian Central Bank in 1981, when it began booking hundred million dollar loans to a series of companies registered in Nicaragua, Panama, and Perú. Upon closer investigation, the Italian authorities made a curious discovery: the Vatican in fact owned the companies, between ten and twenty in number, most of them little more than an address. Although officials of the Holy See initially denied any knowledge of ownership, it turned out that the IOR had earlier, under the authority of Paul Marcinkus, issued "letters of comfort" for the companies, using the Vatican's patronage to vouch for their credibility. It has since been established that the Vatican did own the companies, but very little has been discovered about them or the fate of the money they were loaned. Soon after the loans were identified, Calvi fled Italy and turned up dead in London. Recent forensic analysis suggests that he may have been murdered according to the rites of an early Mafia ritual, whereby the neck of a victim is bound to his hands and feet, causing him to strangle himself as he struggles to escape. Bereft of its chairman and besieged by scandal, Banco Ambrosiano quickly disintegrated, sending shockwaves throughout the international market. The paper trail was lost in the maelstrom.

Ambrosiano's offshore loans have been the center of controversy ever since. Some claim the money was pocketed by Calvi himself, others that it was used to pay off the Mafia. Still others say it went toward funding the Contras or was used to purchase missiles for Argentina during the Falkland Wars. According to Carlo Calvi, the late Roberto's son, the money could have been used for all these things. In a recent interview from his office in Montreal, Calvi described the Latin American companies as an "offshore center" that the Vatican lent out for laundering schemes of various kinds, from paying political bribes to funding right-wing propaganda movements throughout the region. Some of the companies belonged to the Vatican, he said, others only seemed to. "The whole point was to be ambiguous and incomprehensible," Calvi asserted, "so that only those inside IOR and Ambrosiano who needed to understand, could." What wasn't

Although Marcinkus was born in Illinois and lives in Arizona, his Vatican passport even protected him from U.S. prosecutors.

ambiguous, he continued, was that the Vatican was making a profit from the transactions. Although Marcinkus has consistently denied any knowledge of the Panamanian companies, Calvi says such a claim is impossible. "There were just too many transaction, over too long a period, for Marcinkus not to have known anything," he said. "This worked well for them, and for a long time." That is, until the whole scheme finally came crashing down.

When it did, the only one who emerged unscathed was the Archbishop Marcinkus. Ensnared behind the walls of the Vatican, he remained in hiding for seven years, evoking sovereign immunity to dodge the prosecutorial efforts of the Italian magistrates. The Italian Supreme Court finally upheld the Archbishop's immunity claim in 1989, effectively freeing him from prosecution. His good fortune has raised suspicions — none ever substantiated — as to his own role in the deaths of Calvi and Sindona. The official Vatican record, however, asserts that Marcinkus and the IOR were themselves hapless victims of the intrigue.

Outside observers agree that the Archbishop, while centrally involved in cultivating relationships with risky businessmen, was probably unaware of the full implications of his actions. "He took advice from a Wall Street crowd that was far, far over his head," says John Loftus, author of "UnHoly Trinity," a historical exploration of the links between the Vatican, the Nazis, and the Swiss banks.

Penny Lernoux, who wrote one of the classic accounts of various 1980s banking scandals, "In Banks We Trust," may have summarized Marcinkus best: "The kindest thing to be said of Marcinkus is that he was extraordinarily naïve — not a quality one hopes to find in the sole keeper of the Vatican's purse strings." According to Carlo Calvi, "When [Marcinkus] came to the bank, the relationships with Banco Ambrosiano and Sindona were there already. But he cultivated them further — he intensified the relationships."

Jonathan Levy considers Marcinkus the "key" to unlocking the secrets of the Vatican Bank. Although the Archbishop postdates the time period of the laundered Nazi loot, Levy believes he may be the only one who can speak intimately about the bank's operations and what may have been contained within its vaults. Marcinkus would be a star witness because the historical operations of the bank are bound by "a continuing course of conduct," Levy asserts. "It's all connected. Marcinkus is aware of it." Some of the money used in Marcinkus' dealings, Levy speculates, may even have been derived from the Nazi loot. Retired in Arizona since 1990, where no one has heard from him, the Archbishop is also the only former Vatican bank official not "still hiding out in the Vatican."

"That's why we want to depose him. He's the first person we'd want to question," Levy said.

But doing so will likely prove difficult. While Marcinkus may be the custodian of the Vatican bank's secrets, he also personifies the difficulties involved in suing the Holy See. There's a reason that the Archbishop, once a fugitive from Italian justice and a man of international notoriety, now spends his days playing golf and living an otherwise pastoral life of the utmost quiet. If there's anything conspicuous about him now, it's only his silence.

The Italian press used to call Marcinkus "The Gorilla" because of his six-foot-four-inch frame and his burly Chicago mannerisms — traits that served him well in his service as the Pope's bodyguard prior to running the bank. According to public records, he lived on a golf course in Sun City, a suburban retirement enclave just twenty miles northwest of Phoenix. The road out to Sun City cuts through a mostly forsaken stretch of land, bounded on one side by cinderblock warrens wrapped in barbed wire, on the other by junkyards piled high with rusted cars. The only sign of human activity is the kind one might expect amid such roadside blight: the Platinum Club advertised "Baby Dolls" in the evening. Mr. Lucky's promised nude dancers. A sign standing lonely in a field advertised an upcoming gun show. But then a church appeared off to the side, standing in sharp relief against a depot of yellow school buses lined up in rows like a field of corn. Incongruously, the dust on the side of the road swept into red dirt, and from red dirt into grass. And then the walled communities began to appear, sprouting just like the oases in the desert they were intended to be. Finally a sign: "Sun City. Founded in 1960. The City of Volunteers."

When I imagined the Archbishop, I pictured him always in dark chambers shut out from the light, large halls with sonorous marble floors tucked away in some part of the Vatican that no one was ever supposed to see. So I was surprised when I pulled up in front of a nicely appointed home of blaring white bricks, on an ordinary street adorned with well-kept gardens. A large "Welcome" sign hung just to the side of his door, in plain view for all the world to see. I pressed the doorbell and prepared myself to meet the man. But I was suddenly distracted by a rustling at my feet. When I looked down, I discovered a wounded bird fluttering by the doorstep. From the amount of feathers piled around him, and his near inability to fly, it seemed to me the bird must have been there for some time. I was just thinking that when the door opened.

And then there he was, the Archbishop, epicenter of mystery and controversy, the priest whose secrets no one outside the Vatican has ever known. He stared directly at me. "It seems you have a wounded bird at your doorstep, sir," came out of my mouth. The words seemed to put the Archbishop at ease. "Yes, I know," he replied, staring down at the fledgling bird, before smiling back up at me. I explained that I was a reporter. His face did not collapse into anger. Instead, all the shift of emotion happened in the background, behind his eyes. His smile straightened to just above a frown, and he leaned back slightly to say, "About what? What's this about?" Apparently in the middle of this senior paradise, where golf carts are as common a mode of transportation as Cadillacs, it had

been some time since he had said anything like this.

I explained that I had just a couple of questions to ask him. "Oh no, you've got the wrong guy. I know that guy. He's not here. Besides, he never talks. He told me he never talks," he parlayed. It was the Archbishop, and he appeared just as he had in photos, only twenty years had of course carved more wrinkles and caused the veins in his nose to bulge. When I said that no one had heard from the Archbishop in nearly twenty years, he interjected, "That's a good thing. Thank God no one's heard from him in a long time."

According to neighbors, the Archbishop is a humorous, well-liked man, and very close to the people of the town. They say he makes regular trips to the local hospital to visit the sick. At the Sun City churches where the Archbishop still gives mass, no one wanted to say much about him except that he was "marvelous." Otherwise, I was told he didn't do interviews, that there was nothing to be said that I couldn't hear from the man himself, and that no one wanted to get him in trouble and therefore they weren't going to say anything.

The Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. District Courthouse in Phoenix is an architectural wonder. A glass box encasing a huge open plaza and a cylindrical courtroom piercing its ceiling, it occupies an entire block of downtown Phoenix. A spray of water falls from the upper levels to cool inhabitants below, creating a mist that adds to the overall futuristic aura of the place. Among the voluminous cases filed there, one under the name Paul C. Marcinkus has sat unnoticed since 1994. The file originally piqued our interest because it involved a court in Geneva, Switzerland, leading us to speculate that the Archbishop might keep money in a bank account there. Not so. Although the Archbishop has retired from the Vatican Bank, the Ambrosiano scandal, it seems, refuses to be retired.

Beginning in June of 1993, a civil court in Switzerland tried to depose Marcinkus regarding his knowledge of monies transferred between the Vatican and one of the Ambrosiano banks involved in the financial scandal. Letters rogatory, or letters requesting an accounting of his affairs while president at the bank, were forwarded to his address in Sun City, along with fifteen pages of pointed questions. These include: "Can you confirm that the relations between the IOR and the Ambrosiano group started in the 1960s?" and "Weren't IOR's assets at that time higher than US \$2 billion, value 1969?"

Much of the information in the file was already widely reported, but of particular note (and unnoticed by the press) was the outcome of the case: it was dismissed, by order of the State Department no less, and Marcinkus was never questioned. Also of interest are letters from the Vatican stating that the Archbishop, although retired from the Holy See, is still considered a "member of the Consulta of the State of Vatican City in the capacity of Consultore" and is therefore privy to "functional immunity" — a privilege that may stay with him for the remainder of his days. The paper trail revealed by the file is also most interesting: after being forwarded to the Department of Justice, the Vatican's letters were sent to the U.S. State Department, which evidently weighed in and

upheld the Vatican's claim for immunity. On February 23, 1994 the case was closed. Although Marcinkus was born in Illinois and lived in Arizona, his Vatican passport even protected him from U.S. prosecutors in this case. The U.S. District Attorneys involved did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

The Vatican's record of stonewalling inquiries may not bode well for Jonathan Levy's case. In fact, the Holy See has filed a request with the U.S. State Department to have the Alperin case thrown out — once again, on the grounds of sovereign immunity. Surprisingly, however, that request has yet to be acknowledged, let alone fulfilled — a positive sign in Levy's eyes. It's his contention that the State Department, having itself raised the issue of the Vatican's involvement with Nazi gold, will want to see the matter through to trial. Levy is confident that when the State Department does weigh in on the matter, they will grant him jurisdiction to prosecute. "And when they do, Marcinkus will have to cooperate."

That evening around dinnertime, the Archbishop didn't want to talk about the Swiss case. He kept up the third-person routine. "I've been very nice now, and I told you he just doesn't talk. I understand what you're trying to do, but I've already told you, he doesn't give interviews," he said. After more pressing, he insisted with a shrug of his long arms, "Aw, forget about that guy. Nobody cares about that guy anymore." Asked about his famous golf habits, the Monsignor replied, "A fella plays a couple of games of golf and he gets a reputation. If we played one game a week in Rome it was a lot." Then he began closing the door, but stopped to ask, "Do you play golf?" I told him that I tried, to which he replied, "Well, it's like I always tell him," motioning with his head to the inside of the house, "Hit 'em straight, hit 'em long, and keep on trying." I thanked him for the advice. "God bless," he said before closing the door.

The Archbishop's life now seems a stark contrast to the scandalous Ambrosiano days. He stands today as one of the few Americans ever to have attained a position of such authority within the Holy See. Still a practicing clergyman, he draws a large crowd to his Saturday afternoon mass at St. Clement of Rome, a Catholic church in Sun City, which lists him in its brochure as "Retired Clergy Assisting." On a Saturday afternoon, his crimson vestments hanging loosely on his shoulders, he could be seen walking among the pews in the minutes before mass, talking with the most elderly of the parishioners sitting in back. He focused on the nature of faith that afternoon, reading the story of Peter from Matthew, in his Chicago-tinted drawl. Afterward, he met with parishioners just outside the entrance to the church, his tall frame jutting above a ring of children who swarmed eagerly around him.

Meanwhile, Jonathan Levy waits to see if the Archbishop will be called forth from his desert parish to illuminate the workings of his highly secretive employer, that restitution might finally be served.

This article was produced in collaboration with the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco, www.muckraker.org.

A Brief History of the Celibate Priesthood

Until the 11th Century, the Catholic Church did not ban marriage among priests. Surprisingly, there are even several dozen married Roman Catholic priests in the US today.

The call is rising for the Vatican to loosen its celibacy rules especially since the origins of those rules may have had more to do with money than Godliness.

Robin Krieger Mejía



Photos: istockphoto

Until the Roman Catholic Church entered its current crisis, many of us had forgotten — if we ever knew it — that priestly celibacy was never required by God, only by his servants at the head of the Church.

However, for many men and women, this fact has defined their most important choice in life. These people are the approximately 20,000 priests who have left their church positions to marry in the past three decades and the women who are now their wives. For years they have advocated that the Church return to its roots, arguing that marriage is a sacred act that supports, rather than denigrates, their service.

“The early Church was family-based,” says John Schuster, a vice president at Celibacy is the Issue (CITI), an organization of married priests. A cursory look at Church history supports his assertion.

For the first dozen or so centuries of the Church’s existence, not only priests, but also bishops and popes married and raised families. As the Church expanded from the Middle East into Europe, many changes occurred. Interaction with Greco-Roman culture impacted Church views on sex and marriage. At the same time, the Church’s power grew and wealthy landowners began donating more property to parishes. Many priests viewed these gifts as personal and would sometimes bequeath them to their heirs, upsetting the Church hierarchy.

By the eleventh century, shifting cultural views, which included the recognition of celibacy as a valuable religious choice, were used to support practical considerations. First, Pope Benedict VIII made it illegal for priest’s children to inherit property. Then, in 1139, the Second Lateran Council made celibacy an official requirement for priesthood.

Many Catholics believe that decision was a purely practical one, designed to better control the priesthood and maintain Church assets. After all, while celibacy has a history as a valid religious choice, it was never a scriptural requirement. In fact, the Eastern churches, which split from the Roman Catholic Church during this period, have maintained a married clergy through today, even in branches that look to the Pope in Rome as their spiritual leader.

C. Russell Ditzel, vice president of CORPUS, the National Association for an Inclusive Priesthood, explains that throughout Church history “there are pragmatic things that happen. . . and over time they overlay a theology on top to make it look nicer.”

In the centuries following the Second Lateran Council, attempts were made to reintroduce marriage to the Catholic clergy, but none were successful and the Council of Trent officially reaffirmed the requirement for priestly celibacy in the sixteenth century.

So it certainly surprised me to learn that there are a few dozen Vatican-sanctioned married priests serving in Roman Catholic parishes in the US today. John Schuster and Russell Ditzel are not among them; they were forced to leave the clergy in order to marry, along with about 20,000 other priests over the past three decades.

However, even while maintaining a general requirement of celibacy, Pope John Paul II has, since 1980, allowed married Episcopalian clergy to convert and become Catholic priests. About a hundred married Episcopalian ministers have taken up the offer, becoming the only Church-sanctioned married Catholic priests in the U.S. today.

At the same time, some married Catholic priests who were forced from their parish have converted to the Episcopal Church in order to maintain an active ministry.

Others, like Schuster and Ditzel, choose to stay with what they still see as their Church and advocate for change from within. And many Catholics turn to these married priests for support and services, even though they are not officially recognized by the Church. Schuster and Ditzel both hold down full time jobs but minister and perform weddings in their evenings and weekends, as do many other married priests across the country.

“I am a priest. I have the heart of a priest. If someone needs my help, I won’t say no,” says Schuster. He explains that while the church has stripped him of his clerical role, ordination for priesthood is for life.

Both Ditzel and Schuster serve Catholics who either are not eligible for Church services or no longer feel connected to the Church. Schuster, for example, performs weddings for Seattle-area servicemen who wish to marry before shipping out for duty. Often, military schedules prevent Catholic servicemen from receiving the six months of premarital counseling the Church requires.

In talking with both men, it’s easy to understand why many Catholics believe a married ministry would healthy for the Church. Marriage seems to have given them an understanding of the conflict felt by many who consider themselves religious Catholics but are unable to support Church positions on some issues, and perhaps an appreciation of the role women play in life and in the Church.

“Married priests can offer a much more rounded, mature ministry,” says Schuster. Ditzel cautioned against generalizing, but then noted that in CORPUS “by and large, our experience is that marriage has transformed us to an appreciation that the Church will not be whole until our daughters as well as our sons are viable candidates for ordination.”

When will that be? While no one expects Pope John Paul II to change the rules, many are hopeful for change under the next Pope. And, strangely enough, practical considerations seem to be on the side of married priests this time around. While thousands of married priests are currently barred from service, the priesthood is shrinking and seminary enrollment is low. With church membership up in the United States, some priests have to work a circuit, rotating through multiple parishes each week to provide services.

Activists say that allowing married priests to serve would alleviate the current shortage and bring much-needed perspective to Church processes. And the change may well happen if the next Pope listens to the ever-louder calls for democratization of Church governance, for the Vatican’s conservative stances are not mirrored in parish pews. Even before the current sex scandals, a 1992 Gallup poll found that more than sixty percent of Catholics support both the ordination of women and allowing priests to marry.

Ditzel is among those who remain hopeful that change is coming. For whatever his differences he may have with Rome, he has no desire to leave his Church: “It’s my home. It’s my religious tradition.”



Photo, Janjaap Dekker, el Andar

Puro Cuento: The Second Coming of SANDRA CISNEROS

Sandra Cisneros has finally given birth to “Caramelo,” her first novel since “The House on Mango Street.” The baby is healthy and strong, around 441 pages, filled with the good stuff of life, such as street vendors in Mexico City selling tamales, elotes and raspados; abuelas, uncles and *healthy lies*.

The baby’s mother, a Chicago native now living in San Antonio, is fine and robust. Sandra Cisneros has matured as a writer: “Doubt begins like a thin crack in a porcelain plate. Very fine, like a strand of hair, almost not there,” she writes.

“Caramelo,” published by Alfred A. Knopf, is also a collection of minicuentos, tapas that make succulent reading; mini-dishes that you can grab at any moment you please. The book, due in stores on September 30, jumps from Chicago to Mexico City to San Antonio while chronicling the quarrel-filled caravan of the Reyes family. The trips to Mexico City and Acapulco especially seem like a train filled with characters, anecdotes and tribulations.

As many readers know, Sandra Cisneros burst onto the scene in 1983 with “The House on Mango Street,” a set of interrelated vignettes evoking her upbringing that inspired generations of Latino youth. “The House on Mango Street” has sold more than a million copies and has been translated into more than ten languages. “Caramelo” promises to travel the same road as *House*.

For a number of years now, Cisneros has been giving us small portions of what was to come as she gave readings in places like San José, Los Angeles and New York.

At one such reading in San Antonio, Cisneros read the section titled “Recuerdo de Acapulco.” The protagonist and her siblings sit in the back seat, singing tunes from their favorite television shows and movies. At the end of the chapter, the parents get into a fierce argument while a crowd begins to circle them. The quarrel is so intense that the crowd seems to be watching a championship boxing match or a favorite telenovela. The author sent her audience home wanting more of this tale of the Reyes family.

“Caramelo” is a cultural experience filled with recuerdos, memories, words like la capirucha, canciones de amor by María Grever, fotonovelas, mole, rebozos, cielitos lindos, camas matrimoniales, mariachis, chiles and muchachas bonitas.

Enhorabuena por Sandra Cisneros. El Andar is honored to publish this excerpt from “Caramelo” for the first time.

—Jorge Chino

The Detour That Turns Out to Be One's Destiny

by Sandra Cisneros

Till the end of his days Eleuterio Reyes had the nervous habit of clenching his eyes into tight stars as if he had soap in them. But that was because of what his eyes remembered. A murder. Yes, a murder! A long time ago, in his other life, when he still lived in that country of his birth...

In that Seville of his times, not ours, more dusty, less tourist-filled, yet just as blindingly hot, the young Eleuterio Reyes worked the bars playing piano tunes that made the patrons alternately happy and sad. As often happens on days of murder, it was a payday, and again as often happens, the murderer and the victim were friends. They had been laughing and hugging each other, buying each other drinks, and then, just as Eleuterio was beginning a cheerful mazurka, the two leapt at each other like cats, rolled, danced, and sparked across the room, burst out the door like a flamenco act, and tumbled onto the cobbled street with a trail of chairs, tables, and glass crashing behind them.

Everyone else had the good sense to duck or run for help. Only Eleuterio watched transfixed as a sleepwalker; he was by nature a nosy man. This was why all his life he was able to remember so clearly the murderer's face. He had seen it all, from the beginning embrace, from the round of drinks, the jokes, the laughter, the sudden explosion of anger, the startling glint of the knife blade, the dark blood the color of autumn dahlias bubbling from the nose and mouth.

It was only when a crowd of onlookers began to gather that Eleuterio came to his senses and, like an injured animal, suddenly had the instinct to run. But it was too late, the police arrived.

Who did this? Did anyone see anything?

No, said the wise. I don't know nothing, I saw nothing, don't even ask me.

But Eleuterio, who was not gifted with wisdom, spoke up. Yes, it was him, pointing to the one who had done it, because by now the murderer had come back and was standing there among the curious. In an instant the police were on the fellow, forcing him into horrible contortionist positions and adding a few extra *thumps* to his body, that human drum, for good measure. Then they



ordered Eleuterio to accompany them to the station, since he was the star witness.

There was a lot of commotion, everyone walking over to the police station, the murderer, Eleuterio, the police, and a huge crowd, since by then it was like a parade, and by the time they arrived to the chaos of the station house, Eleuterio, who was simply a musician, was so terrified by the prospect of being yanked into history, his mind began to panic and then doubt whether this man was truly the murderer, and this frightening thought brought on a fierce urge to pee.

As providence would have it, at that very moment two women entered the station who had been hauled in for fighting, one still grabbing the other by the hair, and the other without one shoe, and an even bigger mob had come in to watch these two, because two women fighting are more exciting to men than two *pobres* killing each other, and with the excitement and commotion of all those people, the murderer and Eleuterio took advantage of the situation and ran out without anyone noticing.

And that is why my great-grandfather Eleuterio could no longer live in Seville, you see, but to be fair to the truth, I must explain his other motive. He had married into a family too good for him. His first wife, a woman of exceptional memory, was especially adroit at reminding Eleuterio of his humble origin and his subsequent mediocrity. It was with no regret and only the clothes on his back that Eleuterio abandoned this wife, Seville, and that life without life. I'll be right back, I'm going for cigarettes. Then, like countless partners who have gone out for cigarettes before him, he marched to where the land met the sea, boarded the first vessel headed across an ocean, and began his life anew.

His destination Tierra del Fuego, the end of the earth, where no one would ever find him, or at least to Buenos Aires, where everyone has a past they'd just as soon forget. But it was Eleuterio's destiny to stop first at Veracruz, Mexico, to work a little and raise funds. Eleuterio was not proud. He worked at what he could find, playing the piano in the "cabarets of the bad death" and the houses of assignations. The *carpas*, too, he knew, accompanying a mismatched chorus line of ladies with short legs and wide tree-trunk waists outfitted in terrible costumes little Mexican flags, coconut shells, strings of *papel picado* getups so cheap and pathetic they gave one *lástima* to look at. Once Eleuterio even accompanied an indecent version of the *jarabe tapatío* performed with a Tenancingo *rebozo* the colors of the Mexican flag, a hermaphrodite, and a *burro* a filthy finale that brought down the house.

Like all immigrants, Eleuterio Reyes did what he had to do, working the worst shifts in the roughest parts of towns at public bars and private parties where someone was sure to die, though no one would notice till the next morning when they came to clean. And so with necessity prodding him forward, Eleuterio meandered his way through the sleepy provincial villages, some mere mirages of civilization so forgettable and forlorn there was only one



way to enter and one way to leave.

Eleuterio Reyes was not a handsome man, but he was born under a good star. He had a fine little mustache that twisted up nicely when he thought to wax it, and small, even teeth, as tiny and square as if he were still a baby. The hands, too, were sweet and childlike, even though the rest of him was huge and rumped, as if the clothes he wore were not his, or as if he roomed in places without a mirror, which often was the case. This is not to say Eleuterio Reyes was without appeal. Women like men like this, to tidy and take home for improvement. So it was with this lumbering flour-sack body and his soft piano player's hands that Eleuterio Reyes made his way finally toward that city in the middle of the world, halfway between here and there, between nowhere.

The move to the capital raised his social standing. By the time he finally sent word to brothers in Spain as to his whereabouts, he held the respectable position of teacher of music at an elementary school. He became a family example. Younger unsuccessful siblings, good-for-nothing cousins, and layabout godsons were sent in hopes the New World would allow them to begin their lives over again. So that when Narciso Reyes was born, there were already several rotten branches of the family Reyes scattered across the Republic of Mexico, some reminding los Reyes too much of their lowly beginnings. Say what they say, their blood was Spanish, something to remember when extolling their racial superiority over their mixed-blood neighbors. And even if these ne'er-do-well Reyes had not inherited anything but an overdose of pride, the family Reyes was still *española*, albeit mixed with so much Sephardic and Moorish ancestry, all it would have earned them in an earlier Mexico was a fiery death at the Plaza del Volador.

So, as is always the case, a detour turns out to be our destiny. That is how Eleuterio Reyes arrived in Mexico City, where he taught at an elementary school and once played the national anthem when the president dictator, who had elected himself to office eight times, came to the inauguration of a new building. Except the descendants would remember it wrong and say it was at the Presidential Palace that great-grandfather Eleuterio played, though he wasn't a brilliant composer and had only mediocre skills as a musician. Like all chronic *mitoteros*, los Reyes invented a past, reminding everyone that their ancestors had been accustomed to eating oysters with mother-of-pearl forks on porcelain plates

brought over on the Manila galleons.* It was a pretty story and told with such fine attention to detail, neighbors who knew better said nothing, charmed by the rococo embroidery that came to be a Reyes talent.

** The truth was they only recently learned to eat with knives, spoons, forks, and napkins. Their ancestors had eaten food cooked with sticks, served on clay dishes, or on that disposable plate, the tortilla.*

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Photo, Notimex

the new *flamenco*

joaquín cortés

Flamenco, as we know it today, is only around two hundred years old. But newer forms of the traditional dance have emerged that have the purists writhing. Performers of the New Flamenco may incorporate hip-hop moves, ballet and jazz dance techniques. Or Indian dance, which many feel is the birthplace of flamenco's Gypsy roots. They have formed all-male or all-female companies and have expanded the basic guitar, palmista, singer and dancer to full orchestras and bands.

Joaquín Cortés has probably inspired more controversy than any flamenco performer today. Loved, reviled, scorned, he is the genre's biggest superstar, presenting touring shows like "Pura Pasión," a kind of flamenco Riverdance-y performance with costumes by Armani, or a recent one-man show, "Joaquín Cortés Live." Critics occasionally alternate between screaming in agony over Cortés's bastardization of the dance and sighing with pleasure at his sensual innovations.

You may have already seen his splashy style on film: he first appeared in Pedro Almodóvar's "La Flor de mi Secreto (The Flower of my Secret)," and later in Carlos Saura's "Flamenco."

Cortés, who is one of the highest-paid flamenco performers ever, dismisses his detractors. "I am anti-critic," he says, "One shouldn't dance for the critics but for the people and for oneself." His work, he says, is all about "advancement, experimentation, fusion."

Belén Maya is another rebel. Her ensemble performed last year in LA's New World Flamenco Festival, and she told the LA Times, "Flamenco is very limited. It only talks about certain feelings: anger, loneliness, jeal-

ousy and sadness. That's why we try to use these techniques contemporary and Indian dance — and try to put some of the feeling of them, very humbly, as I understand them, into my dancing."

Maya was born in New York when her dancer parents, Carmen Mora and Mario Maya, were on tour. It is her silhouette that graces the poster for Carlos Saura's "Flamenco." She's also performed in Madrid's "Mujeres al borde de una bata de cola."

A few years ago, Maya put together an all-female ensemble,

a feat that stunned the flamenco establishment. "At that moment," she said, "I wanted to do a show that was completely full of female feelings, of emotions. People were shocked because they never saw only women on stage. They had this idea of the bullfighter, the torero, fighting for the woman."

"My generation, we don't dance that. We dance more on feeling, the feelings that women feel, sadness and loneliness. For women, flamenco is really a tough world."

belén maya



Photo, Ricky Dávila, Photogalería

Still Life on Brown Tablecloth

Joe Loya



BROWN, THE LAST DISCOVERY OF AMERICA
Richard Rodríguez
Viking, 2002

Richard Rodríguez asked a painter what were the brownest paintings he could think of. The Cubists, said his friend. In Rodríguez's new book, "Brown," he suggests that the 21st century person should deconstruct the old black and white racial categories, then recreate his or her identity in radically fragmented Cubist fashion. Make it art, not politics, that will reconcile us to our multiple subsidiary selves.

I was serving an eight-year prison sentence for bank robbery when I first saw Mr. Rodríguez's face on TV. He was an essayist for the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour on PBS. Onscreen, his face was dark brown, indio, like mine. But no matter the tribal resemblance, I felt more kinship with the ambition of his sentences, the virtuosity of his language. So I wrote him a letter, and we became friends.

In our letters he described how Mexican-American students at Harvard or Berkeley would interrupt his lectures to tell him that he was screwed up, not representative of the Mexican-American experience at all. (They did not notice the irony of their ivory tower castigations.) Mexican-American students in Eugene, Oregon booed him and raised their placards that read, "RICHARD RODRÍGUEZ IS A DISGRACE!"

Rodríguez was an early beneficiary of affirmative action, but over the years became one of its more vocal critics, fond of displaying the calamity of identity politics, of being labeled Hispanic in his case: "In the white appraisal," he submits, "brown skin became a sort of disadvantage, which was my advantage. Acknowledgement came at a price, then as now. (Three decades later, the price of being a published brown author is that one cannot be shelved near those one has loved. The price is segregation.)"

Linking affirmative action to segregation is the sort of provocative concept that turned him into what Clarence Thomas is to the African-American-Studies set, the Uncle Tom whipping boy for the New Latino Left.

But he has always been perceived incorrectly. He has simply been more radical than the perceived radicals. (Radical stems from the Latin and means "of or having roots.") For years the orthodoxy of post-modernism has taught us that we should replace the dominant history with the history of the disadvantaged. In "Brown," Rodríguez has out-posted post-modernism with the suggestion that we pursue all histories equally and let the muddiness reign. Mud is nothing if not brown.

In our letters, I tried to find the hidden likenesses between Rodríguez and me. He was a gay Catholic, he told me, but didn't know what that meant, because he only understood gay as a political word. "Clinical-homosexual" he supposed himself. All the angst about labels found resonance with me. I have sometimes responded to my ethnicity as if it were a violent accusation. And I was discouraged with myself when I imposed ethnic distinctions on others.

In our correspondence, we were more interested in the

improvisation that occurs in the space between the tightly scripted, cruelly constrictive labels of class, ethnicity or race. We swore that we would never lock each other into a single identity.

To Rodríguez's mind, race has always been a word associated with the clear-cut, historical method of keeping tabs. ("One side won: one side lost. . . Children closed their eyes to memorize dates. . . only the score is remembered.") Rodríguez chides the "orderly sensibilities" of history's recorders and their readers who never allow for the paradox of the winners sometimes being the losers and the losers sometimes being the winners.

Brown's central thesis is that we should replace the word race with brown. ("Brown, not in the sense of pigment, necessarily, but brown because mixed, confused, lumped, impure, unpasteurized. ") America has been obsessed with viewing race as a black and white issue, literally and figuratively. Rodríguez wants us now

**The paradoxical
thought that
something
muddy can
clarify
is a BROWN
historical
perspective.**

to see things more mixed, "as motives are mixed, and the fluids of generations are mixed and emotions are unclear, and the tally of human progress and failure in every generation is mixed."

To extol one's racial impurity is to be in possession of a brown faculty. "Public admissions of racial impurity are fresh and wonderful to me," he exclaims, after he tells us about meeting a young woman from San José who tells him that she is the daughter of a New York Jew and an Iranian Muslim. "That is what I want to know. That is what I want to hear about — children who are unnatural to any parish because they belong to no precedent."

To do this, he illustrates, we need only understand the implication of the science of DNA testing. "We now are able to scope DNA, and we do so as if we are looking backward through a telescope. We find the course of American history muddies considerably by that reading. And this is clarifying."

The paradoxical thought that something muddy can clarify is a brown historical perspective. So he sets out for a new kind of his-

toriography, to found a new mode of apprehending the tougher more ambiguous evidence of ourselves.

In the black and white appraisal, I am simply a Latino.

In the brown appraisal, I am a pugilistic essayist, vicious ex-bank robber, sweet husband, previous student of fundamentalist Christian theology, generous son, Cubist artist, loving brother, Quaker pacifist, raised by a Mexican mother for my first nine years, an Irish mother for the next four and half. I am a chronic sufferer of depression who never learned accurate Spanish, but was taught to read Greek and recite the Hebrew alphabet, raised in the East Los Angeles housing projects listening to Mario Lanza singing Neapolitan love songs and John Denver extolling his rocky mountain high, while Nelson Eddy and Jeanette

**in the BLACK AND
WHITE appraisal
i am
simply a
LATINO
in the BROWN appraisal
i am
many things**

MacDonald sang about enchanted evenings when I read Kafka and the Bronte sisters in the ninth grade. It is these unpursued scenes that Rodríguez speaks of as “constituting brown history.”

If we now understand the human psyche as far from being unified—fraught with emotional contradictions—then Rodríguez insists that we think about race as utterly convoluted and foggy-bottomed. Definitely not the black and white thing Halle Berry would have us believe it is.

Her 2002 Oscar night acceptance speech exemplified the dominant black and white anti-Brown — take on racial identity. She declared herself a descendant of the early black women in films, Dorothy Dandridge, Lena Horne and Diahann Carroll. The implication being that she has been at a disadvantage for being appraised as black by a white world.

While she spoke of her black disadvantage, the screen divided in two and showed her white mother's emotional face next to hers. Rodríguez would call that a brown moment. “Brown forms at the border of contradiction (the ability of language to express two, or several things at once, the ability of bodies to experience two or several things at once.)”

She chose to only highlight her status as a race victim, when she could have equally noted the contradictory evidence that she was mostly the victim of an abusive black

father, and that the white world's appraisal of her Revlon beauty was more to her wealthy advantage. Brown history would pursue the scenes of her life as she parlayed a successful modeling career (based in white appraisal of her looks) into celebrity and connection that eventually got her off the hook for a hit and run several years ago.

Rodríguez proposes that we see ourselves like a Cubist painting where a face is depicted as a radically fragmented object, several sides seen simultaneously. Where one's racial identity is broken up, analyzed, and reassembled in an abstracted form. People as pastiche, not unified wholes.

This is how Mr. Rodríguez has chosen to survive — by turning his life and work into art. “My cubist life: My advantage. .to reconstruct myself in some eccentric way — my pipe protruding from my ear, my ear where my nose should be — attempting to compose myself in a chair that slants like a dump shovel.” A still life on a brown tablecloth.

The powerful colors and brushwork in Van Gogh's paintings are said to be a translation of his emotional state into visual form. In place of color or brushwork, Rodríguez translates his emotional state into a literary style by turning his idiosyncratic syntax into Cubist art, constructing sentences and chapters like the forms on a Cubist surface.

Rodríguez is a polychronic personality. And like Eco, Joyce or Updike, he'll start many ideas in one paragraph, or in one chapter, teasing them out so that the thread of thought is almost cut—pure tension in the development of an idea—only to eventually merge things together to form a continuous interconnection.

We can't possibly attend to the plethora of our discrete identities. But Rodríguez believes that the awareness that we have multiple, fluid subsidiary selves should give us pause when we want to talk about our identities (race or otherwise) with any iron sense.

Halle Berry was not aware of the brown (Cubist) moment the viewer was privy to on the split screen. Her white mother's face didn't overthrow Halle's assertion that she is black, but it does dispel the notion that black is only ever black, or only ever a disadvantage.

Rodríguez no longer wants to write about race, or race in black and white. That's what he means by, “I write about race in America in hopes of undermining the notion of race in America.” He divides the world differently. Either you are brown (improvisational with your racial identity), or you are black and white (cliché) This is the only black and white he wants to write about, and that is what he would call thinking brownly.

■



argentina

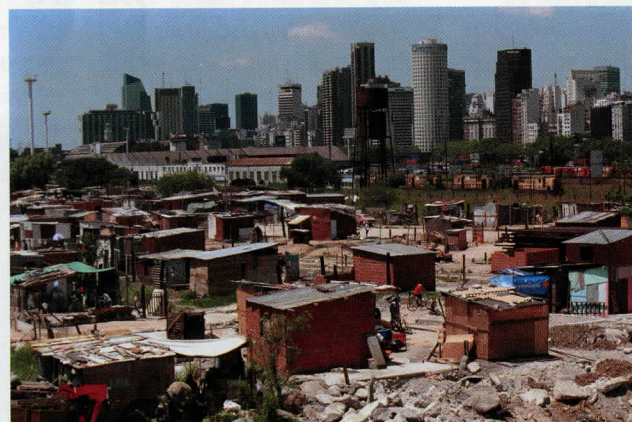
Joseph
Rodríguez



Above left, the footbridge across the Porto Madero, an example of the extravagance under former Argentine President Menem, which is regarded to have contributed to the nation's current economic downturn. Above right, armed guards stand watch as angry Argentines demonstrate outside their Supreme Court.



Above, in the midst of their nation's economic crisis, a wealthy Argentine family relaxes in Punta del Este, Uruguay, a resort town that caters to wealthy Argentines.



Left, Barrio Inmigrante, otherwise known as the Villa Miseria, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Traditionally where poor arrivals from Argentina's countryside have settled, the slum's population has increased as many former middle-class Argentines have found themselves among the ranks of the poor.



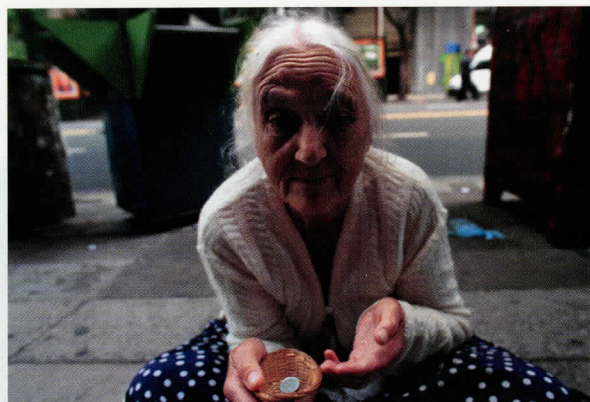
A month after I returned from photographing the war in Afghanistan, I was sent to Argentina to look at a different kind of drama. When I got to there, I could see that this wasn't the "poor Indian" story we have seen coming out of Latin America for so long, it was about the rise and fall of a middle class, something I found very surrealistic. After years of what the Argentine people have seen as government mismanagement, the economic situation there has finally exploded.

What struck me the most was the general sense of disillusionment among the Argentine people, especially the middle class. Part of the reason this was so interesting is the fact that Argentina has such a large middle-class population, unlike most other Latin American countries. For the past twenty years, after so many dictatorships, the Argentines have been living under a stable democracy, a situation that is very different from many of their other Latin American neighbors.

Because the government has seized the people's money, that democracy has been totally undermined. Argentines of all classes no longer trust their government. Some are moving out, and worse, many are moving their money out. For the time being, most Argentines are planning their next move, and trying to make it to the next day. Those Argentines who are



Above, a woman demonstrates outside the "Pink House" in the Plaza de Mayo, where the president's offices are located.



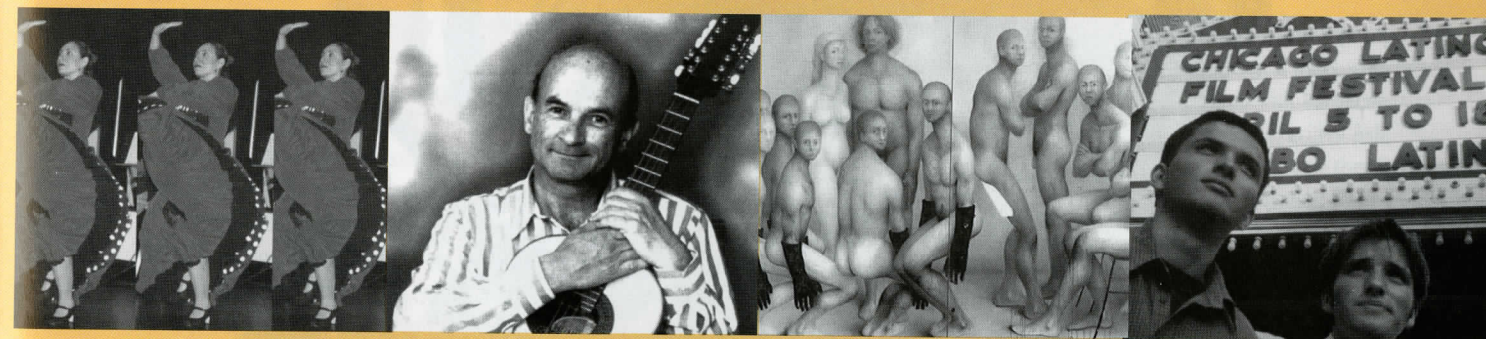
rich or lucky enough to have kept their money out of the Argentine economy in the first place can sit back and watch.

As I sat on the plane on my way home trying to make sense of all this, I wondered, What will become of this country when the people refuse to invest in it personally and financially? And if democracy failed Argentina, as many people here see it, what are the chances of it taking hold and working for the rest of Latin America?



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beaujolais backstory

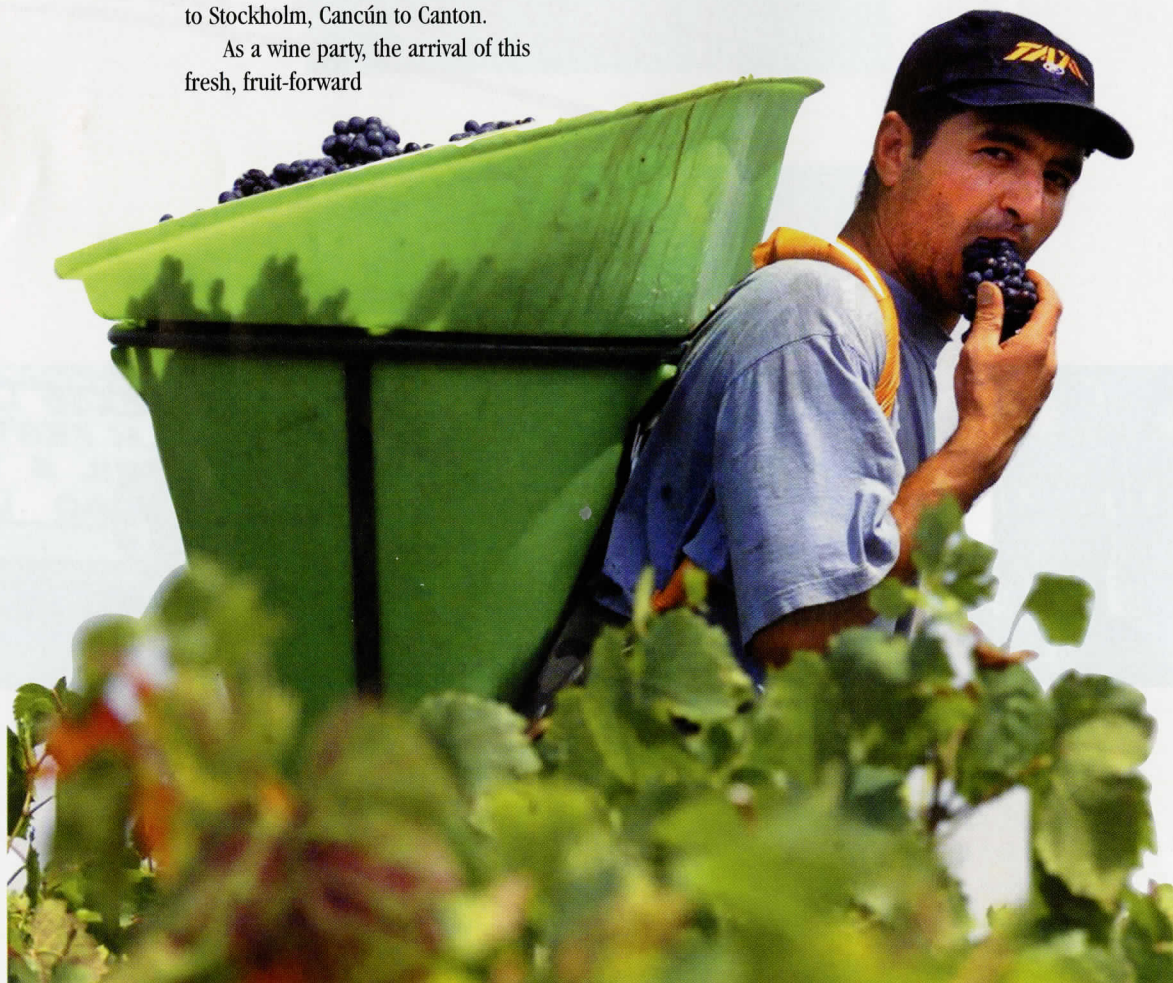
What do people think when they hear Cinco de Mayo, Día de los Muertos, or quinceañera?

If you're of Mexican descent, you know what these passages represent. If you're not (if you're, say, Anglo), you probably associate these holidays and events with unbridled margarita swilling, collecting skeleton masks and the odd habit of Mexican girls donning elaborately gaudy wedding dresses years before their actual elaborately gaudy weddings.

And that's okay if all you want to do is make uneducated assumptions about traditions (although any holiday that calls for unbridled margarita swilling is fine by me). The point is, we're all guilty — and ignorant, to some degree — about most customs, traditions and religious observations outside our own ethnic sphere. For every Oktoberfest, running of the bulls and powwow there are centuries of fascinating, provocative history. In short, every celebration has a backstory.

In France, the arrival of Beaujolais Nouveau is one such celebration that begs closer inspection. Originally a post-harvest festival by local winemakers in the small towns of the Beaujolais region (near Lyon in eastern France), the celebration of the first young wine — a mere ten weeks after pressing — has now gone global. On the third Thursday of each November, at exactly a minute past midnight, the sound of Beaujolais Nouveau corks can be heard popping from Stockton to Stockholm, Cancún to Canton.

As a wine party, the arrival of this fresh, fruit-forward



A harvester eats grapes at Salles-Arbussonnas in the Beaujolais region in France during the grape harvest. AFP /GERARD MALIE

red wine ("Le Beaujolais Nouveau est arrivé!" is the evening's battle cry) provides the perfect opportunity to imbibe in cheerfully inexpensive quaffing stuff. The wine, only a few months old, would never be confused with the more notable offerings from Burgundy. It does, however, provide wine drinkers with a tasty hint of the more prestigious wines to follow and the more serious efforts of Beaujolais.

And there lies the fun backstory of Beaujolais Nouveau.

Most Americans wrongly assume that all Beaujolais is the young, "new" Nouveau variety. When casual wine drinkers hear Beaujolais, the typical mental connection made is to a wine that, while deliciously fruity, lacks any type of body, complex structure and richness.

That is the chief misunderstanding about Beaujolais. It is the one bummer that spoils the good party buzz. Beaujolais Nouveau, while well and good, overshadows the deeper intentions of Beaujolais. It's Anna Nicole Smith blocking the way of brainier bottle blondes. It's Adam Sandler movies towering over Woody Allen comedies. It's Applebee's muscling out Wolfgang Puck. There's nothing altogether wrong with Anna Nicole, Adam and Applebee's, but getting beyond them takes an investment of time and energy. In the case of Beaujolais, though, it's worth it. What you'll find behind Nouveau is a world of lusciously rich wines that express the true flavors of Beaujolais and show the Gamay grape (the only variety used for Beaujolais) in its best light. Within the region there are three major appellation ranks: Beaujolais, Beaujolais-Villages and Beaujolais Cru.

Beaujolais-Village is made from the vineyards of a select group of small villages, but it is the cru Beaujolais that you find the most interesting offerings. Within this top level, you will find wines named and labeled for one of ten specific crus (vineyard areas), including the better known Moulin-a-Vent, Brouilly, Morgon and Fleurie.

Some of these crus — you'll see them in wine stores under the names of Georges Dubeouf, Louis Jadot, Joseph Drouhin and Chateau de la Chaize — produce lush, well-structured, flavorful wines that are good for aging. Some even possess a plummy earthiness that is usually associated with Pinot Noir. Think of a Beaujolais Cru as a poor-man's Burgundy.

"I think the crus are super," said wine authority Andrea Immer, author of "Andrea Immer's Wine Buying Guide for Everyone" and "Great Wine Made Simple." "In a French restaurant, Beaujolais (cru or Villages) is usually the best value and the most food-versatile of the choices. The oyster person and the omelet person and the salad Niçoise person and the steak frites person can all be happy with that one choice of wine. That's pretty great, huh?"

Great, indeed. If consumers can get past the Nouveau complex that somewhat tends to taint Beaujolais.

"It's got a reputation as a fad wine which it really doesn't deserve," said Robert Fairchild, owner of Maison Prosper Mafoux, a Burgundy producer of excellent Beaujolais-Villages and

cru Beaujolais.

"There is an assumption that Beaujolais has no measure of quality," said Delphine Boutier, brand manager for Louis Jadot, which instead of making Beaujolais Nouveau, concentrates on beautifully-crafted cru Beaujolais. Both Fairchild and Boutier agree that November's Nouveau gets wine drinkers' feet in the door of Beaujolais; it's their job to get them to frolic through the better stuff from the region — the Beaujolais-Villages which are released the following February or March and the crus which are ready for shipping in early summer.

Fairchild said he likes to think of cru Beaujolais as perfect year-round wines. "It's very flavorful, very ready and pleasant to drink," he said. "Unlike Cabernet or other grape varieties, [Gamay] doesn't have the heavy tannins that have to be softened out with years of aging. The charm of Beaujolais is its freshness and fruitiness. You can easily afford to have a bottle or two of it as opposed to spending \$50 or \$60 bucks on a bottle." And perhaps that's one of the discreet charms of the Beaujolais. Cru bottlings usually sell in the \$15 to \$25 range. Try getting a good Zin, Cab or Pinot Noir for that.

In a recent article, wine authority Anthony Dias Blue groused about inflated wine prices versus real wine values. "Skip the fat, oaky Chardonnays. Get into Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Pinot Gris. Don't be afraid to order the \$18 Beaujolais; it will go better with your grilled chicken than that \$65 Napa Cabernet."

Amen.

Because Beaujolais Nouveau arrives so close to Thanksgiving, you often see it on the turkey table. And that's okay: it pairs wonderfully with turkey. Beaujolais wines also go well with barbecue, Asian and Mexican cuisine, as well as quiche, salads, grilled fish, roast chicken, pork, pasta and mild cheeses. And because they're best served slightly chilled, they provide an easy transition from summer whites to winter reds.

In the past two years, wine drinkers have done Beaujolais a good turn by looking past Nouveau and discovering Beaujolais-Villages's lovely expressions of Gamay and the more complex, colorful experiences offered by cru Beaujolais.

"Beaujolais Nouveau is great to have fun with but you're not going to reach for it six months later," Boutier said. "We're interested in getting people to understand Beaujolais by getting beyond Beaujolais Nouveau concept. The wine aficionados are already open to it." Are you?

morago



on wine

a horseman's tale

Frank Garza's School for Jockeys

Photography and reporting
by Janjaap Dekker



If you ever want to learn to race horses, you either clean stalls till you get a lucky break from a jockey who will mentor you, or you go to Frank Garza's school. Hidden in Southern California's tiny town of Somis, Garza runs one of the only boot camps for jockeys in the United States.

Training five or six students at a time, six days a week, Garza says he will teach only those who are seriously committed to learning. He's proud of many of his former students, such as Francisco Duran who is now riding at Bay Meadows raceway in San Mateo, California. The Ventura County Star calls Garza, who won his first race when he was eleven, "one of the finest trainers of championship-quality jockeys in the world."

On a hot summer day, Garza told his story to *el Andar*.

I was adopted when I was about a year and six month old. If you go back on my real mom's side, there's no horse people. On my real dad's side there are either detectives or sheriffs, doctors, lawyers, whatever. And on my dad's side, the one that raised me, that's Frank Garza Sr., well, he was around horses all his life. And I grew up around them, since I was a baby. Since I was a little kid I was crawling under them and everything.

Where I was growing up at Cruz and Juanita Estrada's ranch in Aguadulce (Texas), they had a lot of horses. And can you imagine my friend Noel, the son of one of the owners of the ranch, he and I were always getting in trouble with the horses, getting on a mare called La Pinta. We'd be chasing the cows down the



road, just having fun. I got a little older and then I told my dad, "I want to be able to ride races." My mom, the one that raised me, she didn't really want me to ride races, she was scared. I rode and I fell off a lot of times. But I tell you what, I would fall off then, and I would bounce back up like a basketball.

My dad was my teacher. And this young man, Oscar Estrada, one of the sons of the owners of the ranch in Aguadulce, he was my teacher. My brother was already riding in California or New Mexico, my uncles were all over there riding, and they worked also for a big farm named the King Ranch in Kingsfield Texas, where they had a lot of good thoroughbreds.

When I came here to California, I had a 1966 Mustang, and I had twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents in my pocket when I arrived in Chino at my sister's house. My brother-in-law, who's always been very helpful to me we call him Cugi right away he said, "You want to go to Sacramento?" He said "I already got you lined up with my uncle Joe." Joe trained racehorses too, quarter horses, so I said yeah. My sister gave me some more money to have in my pocket. Now I remember I think I only had one or two pair of pants with me, a couple shirts. I followed uncle Joe Moreno to Sacramento from Chino, with the horses and everything, to the old fairgrounds in Sacramento.

And I'm gonna tell you that I already was experienced riding race horses, but when you come to California from some other state and you're starting up, you got to start all over. That's what I did I had to walk "hots," I had to



On April 7 1957 Frank Garza Jr., who had just turned ten the day before and weighed 42 lbs., won his very first race, at the Estrada Ranch in Aguadulce, Texas. He earned ten percent of a purse of \$1,500, riding a quarter horse owned by Lalo Montalvo of Rio Grande, Texas, who named the mare María Cristina, after one of his daughters.



clean stalls, and I slept in a little stall like this. We call it the tack room that's where they hang their saddles, their bridles, and I had no blanket, cold, and I'm lying down there on the floor. But this is something I wanted to do. I would get up in the morning and exercise horses early in the morning, early morning. If you didn't exercise horses you didn't get to ride. Later in the race, instead of you getting to ride the horse, some of the top jockeys would ride them. To be able to ride against them, it was just an honor for me because they were the best. And I would ride one race today and then the next day I wouldn't ride and then the next day I might ride two horses.

Then one morning uncle Joe Moreno came early and I was still sleeping in the tack room. He didn't know I was staying there. He opened the door and he called me, "Mijito." That was his word, mijito, and he wanted to know why I was staying in there. And he says "You're not gonna stay here." So he and his son-in-law Jack Bentley took me up to a little hotel. Stockton Inn was the name of that hotel, close to the track there, and he got me a little room, with a little kitchenette. I think it was twenty-five dollars a week, and he paid for about a month.

I started getting on more horses and started doing pretty good. And then a horse, I'll never forget it, December



"He needs a good horse 'cause he's a good old man," says Frank of his friend John Weisz.

15, 1967, I fell off, got run over. It fell backwards on top of me and broke my leg, my ankle, broke it in pieces. Right then the meet was gonna be over. I was going to go to Santa Anita to start riding thoroughbreds.

I talked to Henry Moreno and he said, "Get well, and come and we'll try and see what you can do." He had wanted me to come, to make a change, you know, and make a better living. So as soon as I got my cast off, I went to Santa Anita, and started with Henry, exercising in the mornings.

I got my big break at Hollywood Park. I started riding for some of the good trainers back then. I rode some nice horses and won some nice races there. That's where I met my wife, at Hollywood Park. Then we went to Del Mar, and rode pretty good and then we went to Bay Meadows and did pretty good. Then I got hurt again a little bit and was laid up. I went back to Texas. I was thinking of marrying my wife, so I wanted to get away for a while to decide. Had nothing to do with her, I wanted to make sure I was ready. I didn't want to ruin her life. So I went back to ride quarter horses again.

From 1970 to 1973, I was the number one jockey in the whole state of Texas.



When I got married to my wife her name is Priscilla I think that's the best thing that ever happened to me. She's been to me my best friend, my wife, my mom. Yeah, let me put it that way, she's been a wife and a mom to me. I love her to death and we've been through a lot. We've struggled a lot, but she stuck

right by me. We've been married thirty years.

When we first got married, my younger sister said to her, "You poor girl, you won't be married three months!" You know, I was a little wild when I was young, I really was. I didn't really go out and party and all that, but you know I really liked girls, and I had a lot of girls knocking on my door. I was young and riding races. But like I said, my wife's the best thing that ever happened to me, she's completely turned my life around and I really think that she has a lot to do with me being where I'm at. Now we have a grandson and that's changed my life even more.



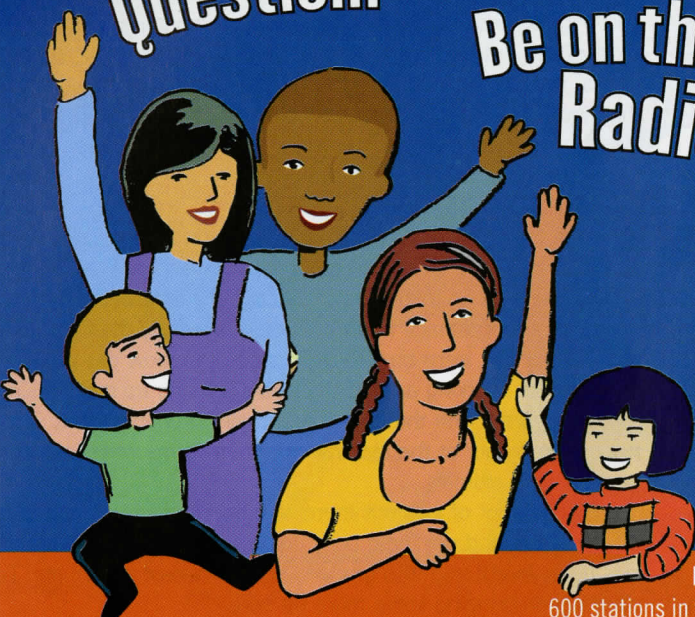
What I'm looking forward to doing is working with problem kids. People that are out on the streets, you know. They don't actually have to be teenagers, they can be a little older. Get them off the street and teach them the horse business, the farm business. Come and learn how to clean stalls and mow the yards around here, working around the tracks, picking up rocks, fixing fences, working with the horses and they'll probably like it. I can place them either at the racetrack or other farms where they can go work with animals.

There's a lot of kids out there who get in trouble get them off the street and get them busy doing something. I've had a few kids here, fourth and fifth graders, some troubled youth, and I'm planning on bringing some more up here.



Frank Garza's students: on pages 44 and 45, Cheryl Charleton; this page, Xochi Flores.

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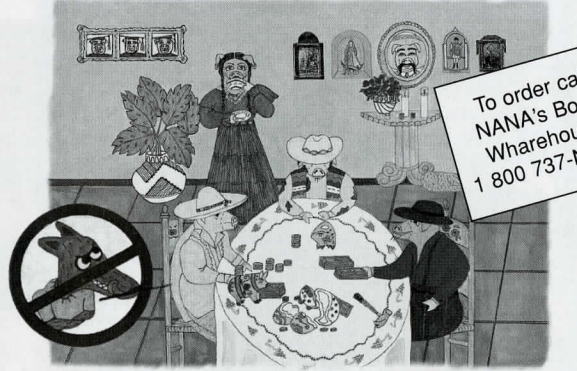
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Again, hundreds of submissions came in. The stories and poems reflect many aspects of Latino life from people of varied backgrounds — Dominican, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Mexican, Jewish, Irish — telling stories of families, of friends, enemies, struggles and doubts. This year, *Spanglish* reigned, in a natural, conversation-over-the-fence way. Choosing the winners was tougher than ever.

The ground rules: First, we made sure that no names appeared on the pieces. Judges never knew who the authors were. Readers with experience in each category (Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry and Young Writers) read every single submission and culled the top pieces in each group — these became our finalists.

The finalists' pieces were sent to judges who chose the winners. Again this year, there was no prize winner in creative nonfiction. Where appropriate, some pieces submitted in this category were also judged as personal memoir. El Andar would like to thank all the readers and judges, as well as our sponsors and donors who made this year's prize a high-quality and impressive honor.

Special thanks to our readers and judges:

Consuelo Alba-Speyer
Soledad Anatrone
Elizabeth Bourget
Juanita Contín
Lucille Gasperini
Bill Hafferty
Claudia Meléndez
Barbara Mes
Julie Reynolds
Mandy Spitzer
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Yolanda Venegas

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Winners

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POETRY	THE PAULA AWARD FOR YOUNG WRITERS	FICTION	PERSONAL MEMOIR
FIRST PLACE \$1000 John Olivares Espinoza, <i>CA Redemption</i>	FIRST PLACE \$1000 Brandi LaDonna, <i>The Wedding Coat</i>	FIRST PLACE \$1000 Christine Granados, <i>The Bride</i>	FIRST PLACE \$1000 Susana Chávez Silverman, <i>Anniversary Crónica</i>
SECOND PLACE \$200 Carmen Castillo, <i>Gustavo</i>	SECOND PLACE \$200 Malinalli López Arreguín, <i>Ghetto Fabulous</i>	SECOND PLACE \$200 Francisco X. Stork, <i>In The Lion's Den</i>	SECOND PLACE \$200 Susan McKinney de Ortega, <i>Tales of my Disappearance</i>
HONORABLE MENTIONS Julián G. Castro, <i>Tiempos perdidos, Tiempos viejos, Tiempos de un Chicano</i>	HONORABLE MENTIONS Paloma Martínez, <i>Un Pensamiento</i>	HONORABLE MENTIONS Paul Hughes, <i>Hit Him Until He Dies</i>	HONORABLE MENTIONS Michelle C.N. Formoso, <i>California-Cuban</i>
Janessa Mari-Diego, <i>Después de la inmigración</i>	Raúl Quetzumoc Alcaráz, <i>Tenochtitlán</i>	Virginia Castro, <i>El Toro Viejo</i>	Stephanie Elizondo Griest, <i>The Half-breed</i>
		Emma Oliver, <i>El Otro Lado</i>	Verónica A. Gutiérrez, <i>El baile de los pescados</i>

first place

CA Redemption by John Olivares Espinosa

I'm tossing out my *Time*
Magazines and kitchen trash
And see a Mexican waist deep
(Or is it just waste deep?)
In the mouth of an orange Dumpster.
He's wearing a green soccer jersey
The color of old lettuce leaves,
His player number is lucky seven
And maybe he had a nickname then,
Like *La Pata*, The Foot,
Maybe he played with my uncle?
Now he's ripping through
Plastic grocery bags,
Sifting through vegetable pudding,
Used tampons and condoms
Wrapped in toilet paper,
His chinos soaking in chicken grease,
On his aluminum hunt.
The thick smell of stale cola
Reminds me of recycling with Mom
Every other Saturday at Lucky's
When I was a kid:
Two cans for five cents,
And the vending machines
That sucked and crushed cans
Down to colorful hockey pucks
And how exciting it was
To press the blinking redemption button,
And watching the nickels and dimes
Pour like metal rain
Inside a small slot.
I remember getting older
And embarrassed
For relying on recycling
To eat lunch.
So I left Mom alone,
Patiently recycling grocery bags
Full of soda cans
One by one.

The soccer player sees me
And quickly looks downward
At his feet and pride
Sinking among trash bags
I tell him there's a few
Soda cans in my trash
And walk back upstairs
To grab last night's Bud Light cans
And stale Little Debbie
Coffee cakes
To give him.
He's still there, stomping around,
And he accepts them
As he would a smile
On this Monday,
Martin Luther King's Day,
Not that it matters
Because the shrubs are freshly trimmed,
Which tells me the gardeners
Didn't get the day off,
Which means my Dad
Is putting in ten hours
Across the lawns.
The soccer player
Walks away
With a white plastic bag
Weighed down by
The worth of an empty six-pack:
A few hard earned cents
That will preserve him
In the light of the world
For one more day.

second place

Gustavo by Carmen Castillo

Gustavo in a black silk guayabera
from Guadalajara has clean hair
slicked back, cowboy boots, the voice

of a pall bearer, tells me of his best friend's
wedding, the trip to Mexico for a charro outfit,
silver medallions from lapel to cuff,

sombrero like an eclipse of the sun. He tells me
he spent his youth perfecting his low rider.
His mother left him alone, so many friends

shot to death cruising Roseland,
his father working so hard.
I understand you, friend,

there is so much living, it goes on and on,
one brutal moment after another. Things we make,
low riders, poetry and love, are ways to surrender.

While sweet smelling young brothers,
wear la Virgen de Guadalupe on their backs,
the Aztec stone, map of the universe,

enormous hearts entwined in thorns. These
brothers fight each other, conquer, perform
human sacrifices every goddamned Saturday night.

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The Bride by Christine Granados

fiction

When the month of June rolls around I have to buy the five-pound bride magazine off the rack at the grocery store. The photographs of white dresses, articles with to-do lists, and advertisements for wedding planners remind me of my older sister Rochelle's wedding. She had been planning for her special day as far back as I can remember. Every year, since she was a child, Rochelle dressed as a beautiful, blushing bride for Halloween. She sauntered her way down the hot, dusty streets of El Paso accepting candy from our neighbors in her drawstring handbag. The white satin against Rochelle's olive skin made her look so pretty that I didn't mind the fact that we had to stop every three houses so she could empty the candy from her dainty bag into the folded, ripped brown paper sack that I used for the journey. She had to drag me along with her — a reluctant Casper — because Mom made her, and because I could hold all her candy. Her thick black hair was braided and she wore the trenzas in an Eva Perón-style moño. She spent hours in the bathroom with her friend Prissy fixing her hair just right, only to cover her head with a white tulle veil. As she did this, Mom would prepare my costume. Tired and ready for some rest after a long day at work, Mom, spent and uninspired, would drape a sheet over me and cut out holes for eyes. It happened every year without fail. The fact that I couldn't make up my mind what it was I wanted to be for Halloween exasperated my already exhausted Mother even more. In a matter of minutes I listed the Bionic Woman, a wrestler, a linebacker, a fat man all as potential get ups before it was time to trick-or-treat. Ro, on the other hand, had her bridal dress finished days in advance, and she'd wear it to school to show it off. When people opened their doors to us they would say, "Ay qué bonita la novia, and your little brother un fantasma tan scary." I'd have to clear things up at every house with "I'm not a boy." They would laugh and ask Rochelle if she had a husband. She would giggle and give them a name.

When she got too old for Halloween, she started getting serious about planning her own wedding. She bought bride magazines and drew up plans leaving absolutely no detail unattended. When it finally did happen, it was nothing like she had expected.

Rochelle was obsessed. Because all those ridiculous magazines never listed Mariachis or dollar dances, she decided her wedding was going to have a string quartet, no bajo, horns, or anything, no dollar dance, and it was going to be in October. It was going to be a bland affair outside in a tent like the weddings up North in the "elegance of autumn" like she read in the thick glossy pages of the magazines. I wasn't going to tell her there is no "elegance to autumn" in El Paso. Autumn is either scramble a huevo on the hood of your car hot, or wind so strong the sand it blows stings your face and arms. In the pictures all the people were white, skinny, and rich. All the women wore linen or silk slips that draped over their skeletal frames, and the men wore tuxedos or black suits and ties. She didn't take into account that in those pages there was no Tía Trini, who we called Tiny because at five-foot-two she weighed at least three hundred pounds. The slip dress Rochelle wanted everyone to wear would be swallowed in Tiny's cavernous flesh. And I never saw anyone resembling Tío Lacho, who wore the burgundy tuxedo he got married in, two sizes too small, to every family wedding. The guests in the magazine weddings were polite and refined with their long-stemmed wineglasses half full. No one ever got falling down drunk and picked a fight like Pilar. He would get so worked up someone would have to knock him out with a bottle of El Presidente. He was proud of the scars on his head, too. Showing them off just before the big fight started. Rochelle wanted tall white boys with jawbones that looked like they had been chiseled from stone to be her groomsmen, never mind the fact that we knew only one white boy, and he had acne so bad his face was blue. She also wanted her maid of honor to be pencil thin, although she would never admit it. Still she was always dropping hints, telling her best friend Prissy that by the time they were twenty all their baby fat would be gone and they would both look fabulous in their silk gowns. Never mind the fact that I, two years younger than Rochelle, could encircle my sister's bicep between my middle finger and thumb, and Prissy rested her Tab colas on her huge stomach when she sat. My sister was in denial. And it wasn't just about her obese friend but about her entire life. She thought that if she planned every last detail of her wedding on paper she could change who she was, who we

were. Her lists drove me crazy.

She kept a running tally of the songs to be played by the band adding and deleting as her musical tastes changed through the years. She carefully selected the food to be served to her guests. She resolutely decided what every one in the family would be wearing. She even painstakingly chose what her dress would look like down to the last sequin. But in order to marry she needed a groom. And she was just as diligent about finding one as she was about the rest of the affair.

Every night before going to bed she would pull out her pink wedding notebook and scratch a boy's name off her list of potential husbands. She went through two notebooks in one year. She was always on the lookout for husbands. One time, Rochelle and I spent an entire Saturday morning typing up fake raffle tickets to sell to Mike, who lived two blocks over. Ro had never met Mike but she liked his broad shoulders — thought they'd look good in a tuxedo. So she made up a story that she was helping me sell raffle tickets for my softball team. Ro didn't let little things like truth get in the way of her future. All the money raised would go into our travel budget. She even made up first, second, and third place prizes. First place would be a color TV, second place was a dinner for two at Fortis Mexican food restaurant, and third was two tickets to the movies. She said Mike was going to win third place and when she delivered his prize she was going to suggest he take her to the movies since she was the one who sold him the winning tickets. I thought my sister was a genius, until we got to the door and knocked. When Mike answered Ro delivered her lines like she had been selling raffle tickets all day long. When he told us he had no money we were shocked. Ro didn't have a plan B. Then when his older brother came to the door and offered to buy all ten of the raffle tickets we were speechless. All we could do was take his money, give him his stubs, and wish him luck. Ro was so upset her plan was a failure that she let me keep the ten dollars. Needless to say, Mike got scratched off her list.

Her blue notebook was where she compiled her guest list and either added or deleted a name depending on what happened in school that day. I got scratched out six times in one month: For using all her sanitary napkins as elbow and knee pads while skating, for wearing her real silver concho belt and losing it at school, for telling Mom Rochelle was giving herself hickeys on her arms, for peeking in her diary, for feeding her goldfish Hughie so much that it died, and especially for telling her the truth about the food she had planned to serve at her wedding. That final time kept me off the list for two months straight. She wanted finger foods like in Anglo weddings — sandwiches with the crusts cut off.

"Those cream cheese and cucumber sandwiches aren't going to cut it, Ro," I said through the cotton shirt I was taking off.

"My wedding is going to be classy," she yelled at me from across the room sitting on top of her bed smoothing lotion on her arms. "If you don't want to eat my food then you just won't

be invited."

I laughed Her nostrils were flaring pretty steady, and she was winding her middle finger around her ponytail. Then she reached under the mattress for her notebook, and my name, Paty, was off the list just like that.

"I wouldn't want to go spend hours at some dumb wedding when I was half starving anyway. Everybody's going to faint before the dollar dance starts." She stopped writing. "There isn't going to be a dollar dance," then she wrinkled her wide nose, "too gauche."

When I came back into the room after I looked up the word, I told her, "I'm telling Mom you think she's tacky. You're carrying your Gringa kick too far." Before shutting the bedroom door I poked my head in and yelled, "I'm glad I'm not invited. I don't want to go to no White wedding." Later, I asked her how she expected to go on her Hawaii honeymoon without a dollar dance. "You plan on selling the cucumber sandwiches at the wedding?"

She wiped the sarcastic smile off my face when she said, "No, I'm going to have a money tree." I told her that she was ridiculous and that she was going to be a laughing stock, not knowing how close my words were to the truth.

She didn't care what anyone thought. She said her wedding was hers and it was one thing no one could ruin.

She kept up her lists as usual but then stopped physically adding to them in tenth grade. Dropped and discarded as "too childish." I knew that by then the list was committed to memory, and she mentally scratched ex-friends and -boyfriends off of it. Lance, Ruben, Abraham, Artie, Oscar, Henry, Joel, and who knows who else were all potential grooms.

It turned out to be Angel. He was beautiful, too, the Mexican version of the blond grooms in her magazines, right down to the cleft in his chin. He was perfect as long as he didn't smile because when he smiled his chipped discolored front tooth showed. Rochelle worried about it all the time. She'd pull out photographs they had taken together and the ones he had given her, to study them, trying to figure out the right camera angle that would hide his flaw. Any time she mentioned getting it capped he would roll his large almond shaped eyes and smile. They would kiss and that would be the end of the discussion. I knew this because Rochelle always had to drag me along on her dates. It was the only way our Mother would allow her out of the house with a boy. I was a walking and talking birth control device. When we got home I would replay the night's events for my Mother. Funny, Ro loved to relish in the details of her wedding but she never could stand for my instant replay of her dates. She would storm out the room when I would begin, and slam the door to our bedroom shut. I usually had to sleep on the couch after our dates.

On prom night Rochelle was allowed to go out with Angel alone, and she was so excited she let me watch her dress for the big event. Tía Trini came over and rolled her hair, Prissy was

there with her Tab in hand for moral support, and Mom was making last minute alterations to her gown. It was a salmon colored version of her wedding dress. After she was teased, tweezed, and tucked she looked like a stick of cotton candy from the top of her glittered hair down to her pink sling back heels. When Angel saw her he licked his lips like he was going to devour her. Because her birth control device wasn't in place during this date the two got married when she was only a junior in high school, and she was four months pregnant. Rochelle and Angel drove thirty minutes to Las Cruces to get married by the justice of peace, with Mom in the back seat bawling. Even though Rochelle didn't get her elegant autumn wedding, she stood before Judge Grijalva in her off-white linen pantsuit that was damp on the shoulder and smeared with Mom's mascara, erect and with as much dignity as if she were

under a tent at the Chamizal. It didn't matter to her that the groom wore his blue Dickie work pants with matching shirt that had his name stitched in yellow onto the pocket. She looked at him like they were the only two people inside the closet-sized courtroom. She didn't even blink when a baby began to wail in her ear during "Do you take this man..." And she never took her eyes off Angel when the woman behind them next in line to get married, who was dressed in a skin-tight leopard print outfit said, "Let's get this show on the road already. Kiss her, kiss her already." And it didn't bother Rochelle that after Angel kissed her he looked at his watch and said, "Vámonos. I need to get back to work," because he needed to get back to Sears before the evening rush.

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first place Anniversary Crónica by Susana Chávez Silverman

For JHS, in memoriam

For JCS

and for Willem J. Lindeque

Crossing the Riachuelo in a smudge-windowed bus, over into Avellaneda. Provincia de Buenos Aires. Roof patios, si se les puede llamar así (porque de encanto y relax tropical no tienen nada), sprout hanging rags on sagging clotheslines, como en "Walking Around," mi poema favorito de Neruda, not drying in the icy, wet, near-winter air. Casi your birthday Saúl, Marissa, Brett. Almost summer allí en el norte donde están, almost winter here in the south. Paso slums, "villas miserias" they call them here, aquí en el sur. El sur de la ciudad. Corrugated tin shacks (coño, I sound like Chrissie Hynde, or like an Elvis song), carcasses of abandoned cars. Too-bright paint y crumbling brick blur by, y nos detenemos en el fare booth en un "Telepeaje" to La Plata, donde nos recogerá Gustavo en la estación.

Moving again. Sauces, pampas grass (So this is what you are named for, you transplanted creature! Antes sólo te había conocido small and contenida, in individual pots, "for large outside ground cover" aconsejaban los signs, en el Garden Center de Home Depot), leaden sky. Otro flat sprawl de villa miseria, just outside Avellaneda, just minutes from Puerto Madero. That riverside, all-brick, Ghirardelli Square-lookalike construction de lofts and fancy restaurants, donde visiting dignitaries like el Tiger Woods y Bill Clinton are taken when they grace Buenos Aires with a 48-hour visit. That monstrously incongruous neoliberal spawn, emblematic of Menem's pizza and champagne-filled reino.

Lonely caminante solitario in the early-morning industrial dark. Down in that villa, al lado de esta moderna carretera, pasa el colectivo (bus) 134. Mangy dog slinks along. Sign for Sarandí, the once middle-class now hardscrabble Avellaneda barrio, birthplace de Alejandra Pizarnik. On the other side of el Río de La Plata. Yo fui. Yo ehtuve. Yo conocí.

¿Se puede decir—ever—yo conozco? ¿Quién se

atreve? And after how long?

Conocí el otro día a un periodista Latino, reportero for the *Los Angeles Times*. Hot-to-trot for his new field assignment en Latinoamérica. 3-5 years en Buenos Aires, all expenses paid. Pero creo que él no ve mucho.

The Avellaneda garbage dump. It's huge. Como de película. Como en esa película neocelandesa "Smash Palace" (la que vi con mi phony press pass en ese International Film Festival en Johannesburg: you had to be "foreign press" para ver esas peligrosas, uncensored foreign films entonces) in which el main character trabajaba in a huge, broken-down car graveyard. Pues it's big, this garbage dump, just like that one. Carrion birds wheel and flock overhead. La working class, self-taught poeta, Gladys Cepeda, dice que la están poisoning, right here en Avellaneda. Que de niña no era asmática ni tenía allergies ni skin problems pero ahora. Casi no puede comer nada. Sólo carne. Red meat and lots of it. (Y Andrea Gutiérrez, alérgica al chicken. Can you imagine? Who could possibly be allergic to chicken? Un mal argentino) A un pasito de downtown, del famous and phallic Obelisco, de la Calle Corrientes, de Puerto Madero, este stinking, ponzoñoso trash heap. A un paso de la wide-open pampa.

El Latino journalist, Tobías, dice que quiere salir, get his kids out of Los Angeles. Lo siente anesthetized. Too much TNT and Gameboy. Does he think this Latinoamérica, well, I mean Argentina, well OK, I mean Buenos Aires is some sort of escape? (Acabamos de pasar un huge road sign que dice así: "Do you Yahoo?") Y luego, él teme. I can smell his fear. Seguro se irá a vivir a Beccar, out in the northern 'burbs, pero not so far out he hits the villas miserias. Or to San Isidro, where the national TV stars "recycle" colonial mansions or build American-style, sprawling ranch houses. Tobías vivirá en una casa, seguro. Donde no tendrá que presenciar a los neighbors que suicide-jump, from the sixth floor, al vacío del mediodía just two blocks away. Like he just saw on the way over to my apartment in Palermo. Pondrá a sus hijitos en el Lincoln International School en La Lucila (armed guards

at the ready, outside the gates), all expenses paid by the *Los Angeles Times*.

¿Qué carajo va a ver? Sobre cuál argentinidad will he report back? ¿De cuál "experiencia anestesiada" se va a escapar? Si se ve right away que es un Latino-yuppie, que teme el peligro. El contagio. ¿Cómo se le ocurre llamarse journalist, I muse, pensando en Carlos Ulanovsky (el cousin-by-marriage of Alejandra), en el controversial firebrand Miguel Bonasso. Thinking of so many others no longer here. Tortured, asesinados or desaparecidos during the Dirty War. Or in exile, por el furor y la insistencia de su mirada. De sus palabras. Ay utópica, girl. You still believe? Y... [pausa porteñísima] sí. "Siempre habrá," la poeta Paulina Vinderman writes, "una historia que contar."

The moist reddish dirt. Burritos and kids and smoke-belching factories. A curving wash, a sluice (como el que teníamos en Los Angeles, behind our house in the Valley, al cual, decíamos — to scare my little sister — la muy martinimbibing Mrs. Jean Haynes from next door bajaba de noche para verse con un amante, o al que bajaba también, muy entrada la noche su hijo, John — ahora probably aerospace engineer, like his dad Bill — para coleccionar saber-tooth tiger bones). Garbage piled detrasito mero de los tiny brick and tin hovels. Looks like Soweto too I realize, sobresaltada.

No writing now. Dejate sin palabras. Sin apuntes. Grábatelo. Now just look. And remember

Pampa on the left side of the bus, leading down toward el Río de la Plata. Caballos, little clusters of tin shacks y factories del otro lado. Tierra adentro. Hacia la ciudad. Deso/lado. Desolate and it reeks. ¿Cómo puede oler tan mal entre all this green? Palmeras. Black dog. Lonesome, faded laundry. Hombres de overall y casco stand next to abandoned industrial maquinaria, buscando trabajo. "¿Disponible?" pregunta otro roadsign.

"Los Ombúes de Hudson: Barrio Privado", reads still another sign. ¿Aquí? Sería el equivalente de vivir en un gated community right off Interstate 10, I guess. Bien pero bien metidito en the Evil Empire (así le digo al oxymoronically named "Inland Empire", área de mi homestate que hace diéz años desconocía, pero... now I live there), surrounded by rusted traintracks, pale Califas desert dust donde antaño había naranjales y palmeras milenarias. Trailer parks now. El olor a grama sube, llega, penetra al "Rápido a La Plata." Off to the side unpaved, muddy roads. Es sábado. Cannas, my cannas, como en L.A., growing pero aquí unchecked and enormous in the rich southern red dirt.

Approach to La Plata, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dirt roads. Where am I? Small, compact, South African-looking colonial houses. Si me quito las (innecesarias, casi ridículas: it's freezing and overcast) sunglasses and look with my blurred-edge vision, podría estar en otra parte. Podría

estar, casi, casi en ese otro sur, just outside Pretoria in South Africa. Dogs. Red dirt. Even the same southern aloes in huge, shocking, winter coral bloom. Even soldiers by the roadside, pointing big guns. ¿Dónde estoy? ¿En qué año estamos? Villa Elisa, reads the sign. "Talabartería El Gancho." "La Casa del Freno y del Embrague." I love these words. Ahora entran a mi mente, salen de mi boca without translation. Car words. Leather words. Me asombro de mí misma. Es la vivencia, I sigh. Sólo así. Don't use it, you lose it. Así les decía a mis estudiantes en California. Ah, pronto ya no estarás aquí: will this all fade away?

16 junio, 2001: Saturday

"Mañana. Día del Padre" Another roadsign. Ay, Daddy, why did you leave me? Hoy tu aniversario de boda.

Y nunca pudiste venir a ver nada de esto, mamá. Y ahora que estás enferma, nearly paralyzed, you never will. A ti, que te fascinaba viajar. Viajar y vivir lejos. Equivocarte de palabras o de pronunciación (con tus nuevomexicanismos in Spain) y luego reirte a más no poder. Y ay, todo ese papelón, the scandal we caused en el famoso concierto de Sofía Noel en ese fancy Madrid theater! Twisting our hankies in our laps, laughing, papá furioso. El público chistándonos y no podíamos. Stop laughing. A ti, estos painted signs "fileteados" te habrían encantado. No mom, nothing to do with filete de ternera. It's not food at all, sino a frilly, 19th-century Italian immigrant calligraphy. Hasta esos trendy, PoMo músicos, los "Fabulosos Cadillacs," use it en un recent album cover. Y todo este strange léxico porteño. Mamarracho (an abomination of bad taste, tacky as hell), for example. Isn't that the MOST hideously perfect word? Casi casi that byzantine roll-on-the-tongue Argentine mouthful even outdoes bombachas (chonies, panties) Sounds like a cross entre fireman and a strange vegetable. O pollera (skirt, falda) ¿Te habrías reconocido en algo aquí, como yo me re-conozco? Would you recognize me here, mom? ¿Y a tu nieto, mi hijo Stevie, que vino a la Argentina de child y volverá a Califas de teen: cambiada la voz, pobladas las cejas y hablando un "cahteshano aporteñado"? Pero... ¿qué te pasa, nena, he likes to ask me, con ese cerrado, whiny, slightly northern-barrio porteño accent I've grown to recognize instantly, to abhor, to adore.

English Tudor. Tiny hibiscus. Aloe everywhere. Spanish-style. My dream house, siempre digo. Pues dream on, baby. On your teacher's sueldo, yeah right. Rejas. Lavender trumpet vine. Just like mine.

La Plata is small, low, provincial. Bonito. Se parece, y mucho, a las afueras de Pretoria, South Africa. Precisamente a Cullinan. Teensy Afrikaner diamond mining town in the Transvaal donde caí al nada más llegar de California. And where I was so desperately unhappy. Tan apasionada. Pero tan contenida. Por ese pueblo. Por Howard. Su familia. Ese país. Donde por poco causé un accidente de tránsito por caminar

down the main street, de día, in shorts. Ver esto, estos outskirts de La Plata, me recuerda (me hace acordar, they correct me, here) aquello. No lo había podido remember so clearly en años.

A sudden McDonald's on a corner y todo cambia. No se parece a nada. O se parece, de repente, a todo. Y con este ugly, global-twist, Camino Centenario could be just off a Califas freeway. Cierro los ojos, desapointeada, horrorizada. Luckily, al abrirlos, it's disappeared. Estoy en la Argentina again. Lajas, bougainvillea. Ah, alivio. Vuelve Argentina. Wet, wet. La diferencia entre esto y Pretoria, those searing, arid plains. Pero he aquí que no puedo mantenerme en mi reverie semi-esencialista: porque damn, Wal-Mart rears its ugly head. Y no. No puede ser. Pero it is.

Mini African Reverie

Remember, Wim. Onthou jy? It's June 16th and I'm in the south again. Today, hoy, vandaag: forever my parents' aniversario de boda, linked en la historia and in my memory al aniversario de la masacre de los estudiantes en Soweto. Amandhla, Wimmie. Remember the "Park Five Saloon" in Johannesburg? Donde íbamos a bailar, gyrating with hot, dangerously multiracial crowds, to township jive, todos los week-

ends? Te acuerdas del concierto en Soweto, sponsored by the "Park Five" y nosotros tan volados, en pleno apartheid, imagine, navigating that huge American station wagon into Soweto, y con tanto miedo pero then, entonces, you were a man in uniform. Un policía, carajo. You got us through. Y ahora, oh how could you be doing this, you sexy beast: casi un cura! Oh, how could you be a polisie then? How could you be a Catholic priest-in-training now?

Oh get me through. Through this in-between: países, lenguas, razas, religiones, vivencias. Smash (me) through este looking glass que a veces se (me) vuelve funhouse mirror. Oh, quiero estar someplace. Algún lugar mi lugar y no esta siempre intersticialidad que me corroe, me lleva out past the break-point me nutre me exalta washes me up extenuada onto playa de nadie dónde mi playa y Santa Cruz Santa Mónica Port Elizabeth Sea Point Durban Venice banks of el Río de la Plata. Soon, nena, me digo. Soon you'll be. Ah pero it's too soon and you know it. No quieres eso de verdad, admítelo. No quieras eso. Dejate estar dejate. Callate ahora y ehcucha estas wild plants, este icy wind, este tu sur.



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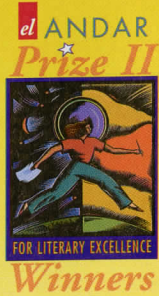
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first place

The Wedding Coat by Brandi LaDonna

Before I could read, I would sneak
a la casa de mi abuela.
The gray stones nodded like a
heavy paintbrush over the hill,
quite a haul, but I liked color,

siesta I hid in a back
room while visitors prodded her
hands for snips of death or love, she
was a cultural florist, you see,

cracking like a rook and bored, I
often traipsed out to the den and
balked, pooling my eyes at photos,
hints of me, ethnic auras on

the mantle, mysterious and
dead as Latin trimmed in white-paper
stasis, the frames were story-less,
and cryptic as library cards,

black eyes crawled out at me, swarming
ants, speaking in pairs, señoritas,
(I think), precise and wild, torrents
of darkness fell from their ears, the

men had short hair and leather coats,
capping out dignity like stamps,
no inscriptions, no definitions,
questions gusted in me as leaves,

resolute, a chimney, I
determined as I grew to puff
out the answers to visage, un-
packaged and sealed with steady

names, and jaws I recognized when
drawing my bath water, constant,
a retrospection of waves,
my mind, in limbo and ashless,

digging, unpadded as a knife,
my hands flew like dirt and years among
immigration offices and
pictures, sighing barns and recipes,

peppers filing in by german
cattle, islands, moccasins,
and pasta, cut-off, the ends
of my nails found jalapeño

in my stomach lying down there
like an old wood chip, I hear it
sticking to my ribs when I breathe,
somehow a bitter clang, a cold

steeple ness, hollow as a root
in winter, but spicy, so I
am left to choose my cloak and guess
at the heart of customs. Morena.

My comb holds it, the sun dotes on
it like a mirror in June, and
when I marry I will have red
flowers in my hair to prove it.

■

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second place

Ghetto Fabulous
by Malinalli López Arreguín

A place where all my dreams
can be made true,
like fat laces in tennis shoes
the ghetto can be sumptuous
with words I cut through
like steak.

My heart,
concrete steps that fold
when ghetto cadence like earthquakes
shake my banquet of dreams
food for my soul simmering
against everyday realities.

In the ghetto,
poet's lyrics wrap themselves around my tongue
with which I run like a happy fugitive.
I don't waste time with pretty men
that stand and stare and call me slim
transmitting nothing but

BAD rap
bought with money from a
BAD job
waiting for
BAD friends
they call homeboys
to be home.

My tongue,
merciless as a dictionary
of diamond studded words
I can afford.
Flipping and searching for
cool jeweled truth,
invincible and not begging
on any street corner anywhere.

■



Security Guards Paul Myers

In the lobby of the Hotel Montecarlo in Mexico City, 4:15 a.m. Myers recently won the 2002 New California Media Award for photography.

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