Summary

In May 2001, a group of twenty-six men attempted to cross the Mexican border into the desert of Southern Arizona, led into the deadly region known as the "Devil's Highway" by 'Coyotes'. Luis Alberto Urrea delivers an investigative report of what happened to these men on this harrowing journey, where only 12 made it safely across. He takes us back to the small towns and unpaved cities south of the border, where the poor fall prey to dreams of a better life and sinister promises of smugglers. We meet the men who will decide to make the crossing, and learn about the circumstances and events that prevent them from reaching their destination. Urrea's story is a well-crafted mix of first-person testimony, geographic history, cultural and economic analysis, and poetry. His story reminds us that immigration is a complicated and pressing moral, socioeconomic, and political issue.

The Author

Luis Alberto Urrea on Facebook

Luis Albert Urrea web page
author bio, books published, press (articles, interviews)

NPR Fresh Air interview with Terry Gross
podcast, March 2019

The Answer, and Then the Question
TEDx talk by Urrea about the injustices of children at the border.

Between Two Worlds - Life on the Border
Interview with Bill Moyers, May 2012
El Camino del Diablo: The Devil’s Highway

For over 1,000 years, travelers have used El Camino del Diablo to cross the Sonoran Desert between settlements in what is now the state of Sonora in Mexico and the Colorado River in what is now Yuma, AZ. The name is Spanish for the Devil’s Highway and alludes to the dangers travelers face along this route.

El Camino del Diablo Basics - Wikipedia

El Camino Del Diablo - Desert USA
Some history and photos.

The Forbidding Reputation and Hypnotic Scenery of the Devil’s Highway
A New York Times photo essay, April 2019

Visas & Immigration

Travel & Immigration in the U.S.
Links to Immigration & Citizenship including how to enter the U.S., how to apply for citizenship, losing or renouncing citizenship, and deportation, as well as visas for visiting, studying, or working in the U.S.

Visas - U.S. Dept. of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs
Information on obtaining a work, study, temporary, or immigrant visa. "A citizen of a foreign country who seeks to enter the United States generally must first obtain a U.S. visa, which is placed in the traveler’s passport, a travel document issued by the traveler’s country of citizenship."

Working in the United States
A listing of the various visas required for temporary workers, permanent workers, student and exchange visitors.

Visa Statistics - U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs
The Visa Office annually reports statistical information on non-immigrant visa issuance by consular offices.

U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services

Immigrant & Non-immigrant Visa Ineligibilities 2017
Grounds for refusal under the Immigration and Nationality Act

Last edited on 5/5/2020
U.S. Border Patrol

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Official website of the Dept. of Homeland Security

Border Patrol History

Careers: Border Patrol Agent

U.S. Customs & Border Patrol Statistics FY2019
A summary of CBP enforcement actions related to inadmissibles, apprehensions, arrests of individuals with criminal convictions and individuals who have been apprehended multiple times crossing the border illegally.

More to Explore

Immigration in North America
From Migration Policy Institute. Includes reports, fact sheets, policy briefs, and articles. Includes United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Mexican Immigrants in the U.S.
Migration Policy Institute Report, Oct. 2018

What We Know About Illegal Immigration from Mexico
Pew Research Center report, December, 2018

Border Security
From Migration Policy Institute. Includes information on border enforcement, smuggling & trafficking, and technology/infrastructure.

This Is What the US-Mexico Border Looks Like
A photo essay from CNN politics.

Mexican Migration Project
An interdisciplinary team of researchers working to further understanding of the complex process of Mexican migration to the U.S. A bi-national research effort supported by University of Guadalajara (Mexico) and Princeton University. Includes a variety of data files.

Mexico: Events of 2018
From Human Rights Watch World Report 2019

What It Costs to be Smuggled Across the U.S. Border
New York Times, June 30, 2018

When the U.S. Government Tried to Replace Migrant Farmworkers with High Schoolers

Last edited on 5/5/2020
The Devil’s Highway – Luis Alberto Urrea

Disclaimer: these links are not maintained or updated

Related Books

A small selection of titles available through the Clarkson Libraries at the time of this common conversation. There are many more texts to explore on this topic.

Beyond El Camino Del Diablo (Eugene Sierras)

Last Water on the Devil’s Highway: a Cultural and Natural History of Tinajas Atlas (Bill Broyles, et al)

Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Border (Joseph Nevins)

Mexican Migration to the United States: Perspectives From Both Sides of the Border (Harriett D. Romo, Olivia Mogollon-Lopez, eds.)

Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol (Kelly Lytle Hernandez)

Coyotes: A Journey Through the Secret World of America's Illegal Aliens (Ted Conover)

National Insecurities: Immigrants and US Deportation Policy Since 1882 (Deirdre M. Moloney)

Border Crosser: One Gringo’s Illicit Passage from Mexico into America (Johnny Rico)