



IMMIGRATION

"ENRIQUE'S JOURNEY," MAJOR SIX-PART SERIES CHRONICLING THE LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLES OF LATIN AMERICA'S CHILDREN IMMIGRANTS RUNS SEPT. 29 - OCT. 7

LOS ANGELES--(HISPANIC PR WIRE - BUSINESS WIRE)--Sept. 25, 2002--The Los Angeles Times will launch on Sun., Sept. 29, a major six-part series, "Enrique's Journey," documenting the plight of Enrique, one of the thousands of Central American children who every year make harrowing journeys on the tops and sides of freight trains through Mexico to reunify with parents -- usually mothers -- who left them behind to find higher-paying jobs in the United States.

During their journey, most of these Central American children -- some as young as 7 -- are robbed, beaten or raped by bandits, street gang members deported from the U.S., and corrupt police and immigration officials. Some children are murdered. Others are killed or maimed falling off trains.

Experts estimate that about 48,000 children enter the U.S. from Central America and Mexico each year, illegally and without either of their parents. Many of them are looking for work while others flee abusive families. Most of the Central American children seek to be reunited with a parent -- 75% of them a mother.

Enrique's Journey: The Series

The 30,000-word series culminates two years of research and investigation by Times staff writer Sonia Nazario, whose reporting chronicles Enrique's 8,900-mile journey that lasted more than 120 days, including eight attempts to reach his mother. Nazario and photographer Don Bartletti spent three months retracing Enrique's steps from Tegucigalpa, in southern Honduras through Guatemala and Mexico to the United States.

Each chapter chronicles one stage of Enrique's journey:

- Sept. 29 -- Leaving a troubled childhood behind
- Sept. 30 -- Cheating death aboard the rails
- Oct. 2 -- Facing "The Beast" in Chiapas, Mexico
- Oct. 4 -- The kindness of strangers
- Oct. 6 -- At the border
- Oct. 7 -- Beyond the Rio Grande



A comprehensive online multimedia package will complement the print version of "Enrique's Journey." Available at www.latimes.com/enrique, the package will include:

- Daily video introduction by Nazario
- Spanish-language translation of the series as published in the print edition
- Sidebar stories exclusive to the Web site
- Daily Flash presentation of some of the more than 100 photographs taken by Bartletti
- Additional story background and statistics about Latin American immigration
- At the series' conclusion, a Flash presentation: Enrique's journey through the eyes of a photojournalist

The Story Behind "Enrique's Journey"

In May, 2000, Nazario found Enrique in Nuevo Laredo, located in northern Mexico just south of Laredo, Texas. She and Bartletti spent two weeks with him there and rejoined him at the end of his journey in North Carolina. Based on Nazario's extensive interviews with him in Mexico and during three visits to North Carolina, she and Bartletti reconstructed the route Enrique had followed.

Between May and September 2000, Nazario and Bartletti worked their way north through 13 of Mexico's 31 states, traveling exactly as Enrique had. The pair rode atop seven freight trains on which street gangs controlled the immigrants' passage, circumvented immigration checkpoints where bandits preyed on migrants, and hitchhiked with truckers through northern Mexico. They interviewed and photographed villagers, smugglers and others Enrique had encountered, along with dozens of other children making the same journey.

As part of her research into children's immigration from Latin America, Nazario conducted interviews in the U.S., Honduras, Mexico and Guatemala with immigrant-rights advocates, shelter workers, academics, medical workers, government officials and police officers as well as priests and nuns who minister to immigrants. At four INS detention centers in California and Texas and two shelters in Tijuana and Mexicali, Mexico, Nazario interviewed children who had made journeys similar to Enrique's.

The Los Angeles Times, a Tribune Publishing company, is the largest metropolitan newspaper in the country and the winner of 27 Pulitzer Prizes. The Times publishes four daily regional editions covering the Los Angeles metropolitan area, Orange and Ventura counties and the San Fernando Valley, as well as a National Edition.

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