



# Dying to Cross: The Worst Immigrant Tragedy in American History

By Jorge Ramos

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On May 14, 2003, a familiar risk-filled journey, taken by hopeful Mexican immigrants attempting to illegally cross into the United States, took a tragic turn. Inside a sweltering truck abandoned in Texas, authorities found at least 74 people packed into a "human heap of desperation." After months of investigation, a 25-year-old Honduran-born woman named Karla Chavez was found responsible for leading the human trafficking cell that led to this grisly tragedy in which 19 people died.

Through interviews with survivors who had the courage to share their stories and conversations with the victims' families, and in examining the political implications of the incident for both U.S. and Mexican immigration policies, Jorge Ramos tells the story of one of the most heartbreaking episodes of our nation's turbulent history of immigration.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

On the night of May 14, 2003, on a highway outside of Victoria, Texas, 19 people died of asphyxiation, dehydration and heat exposure inside of a locked, double-insulated trailer truck. The dead were among 73 Latin Americans who were trying to start a new life in the United States and who had paid a coyote to smuggle them into Houston. In this dramatic recounting of the headline-grabbing events, Emmy Award-winning Noticiero Univision anchorman Ramos weaves together interviews with the survivors and state officials, reports from police and government agencies, court records, medical research and his own speculations to tell the story from various points of view. Ramos prefaces his book by telling readers that the "facts presented here have not been modified for literary or any other kind of dramatic effect," which is to say readers should not expect the narrative unity of a true-crime novel. Nonetheless, he has crafted a page-turning history, ordering vignettes, testimonials and facts to create suspense at every turn. Scenes of dramatic desperation unfold: men drinking their own urine, supplicants calling out to Satan as well as to God, hands beating out the trailer's tail lights in an effort to circulate air. Unfortunately, these details create the bulk of the book's impact and overshadow Ramos's other prefatory promise: to make plain the culpability of U.S. and Mexican immigration policies in these deaths—an interesting argument that isn't fully developed in this book.

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### About the Author

Jorge Ramos has won eight Emmy Awards and the Maria Moors Cabot Award for excellence in journalism. He has been the anchorman for Univision News for the last twenty-one years and has appeared on NBC's *Today*, CNN's *Talk Back Live*, ABC's *Nightline*, CBS's *Early Show*, and Fox News's *The O'Reilly Factor*, among others. He is the bestselling author of *No Borders: A Journalist's Search for Home and Dying to Cross*. He lives in Florida.

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Jorge Ramos ha sido el conductor de *Noticiero Univision* desde 1986. Ha ganado siete premios Emmy y el premio Maria Moors Cabot por excelencia en periodismo otorgado por la Universidad de Columbia. Además ha sido invitado a varios de los más importantes programas de televisión como *Nightline* de ABC, *Today Show* de NBC, *Larry King Live* de CNN, *The O'Reilly Factor* de FOX News y *Charlie Rose* de PBS, entre otros. Es el autor bestseller de *Atravesando Fronteras, La Ola Latina, La Otra Cara de América, Lo Que Vi y Morir en el Intento*. Actualmente vive en Miami.

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