



Border Crosser: One Gringo's Illicit Passage from Mexico into America

Johnny Rico

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Johnny Rico is back. After risking his life as an Afghanistan stop-loss soldier, an experience he described in the cult phenomenon **Blood Makes the Grass Grow Green**, he now dares to embed himself on both sides of America's most dangerous domestic conflict—the war for and against illegal immigration—in an exhilarating new exercise in immersion journalism.

The gonzo author—part Hunter Thompson, part George Plimpton—explores a seemingly insoluble issue by getting his hands dirty and his boots on the ground. As a “typically spoiled American” who doesn't speak a lick of Spanish, he takes it upon himself to try to cross the Mexican border into the United States illegally.

Eager to tell the story from all sides—or simply to get good material for his book—Rico also travels treacherously with the Border Patrol, meets extreme immigrant advocates who publish maps for illegals, visits a modern-day “underground railroad” in Texas, and hunts for miscreants with angry vigilantes.

In such hot spots as the Tecate Line, a forty-five-mile stretch of hills on California's southern fringe, and Arizona's Amnesty Trail, the single busiest part of the U.S. border, Rico encounters Los Zetas, the paramilitary group that has taken over Mexico's drug cartels, interviews the volunteer Minutemen, who believe in an imminent and apocalyptic Mexican invasion, and tries to recruit coyotes (human smugglers, usually fortified by meth and cocaine).

In his heedless and openly opportunistic style, Rico unearths more truths about this explosive subject than most traditional reporters could ever hope to. *Border Crosser* is another knockout from this new-generation journalist, at once a concerned citizen, courageous spy, and unparalleled author.

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