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## Comic Book Culture, No Laughing Matter

*Comic Defined: "Of, like or having to do with comedy; amusing or intended to be amusing; humorous; funny."*

– Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition

In December 2004 Mexico's Foreign Ministry officially released a comic book entitled *Guide for the Mexican Migrant*. It includes (a) safe ways to cross Mexico's northern border illegally, (b) a primer of illegal aliens' rights in the U.S. and (c) advice on living illegally under the radar in the U.S. In 2005 an official of Mexico's Foreign Ministry said some **1.5 million copies** had already been distributed to several of Mexico's central states that have high migration rates.

On December 1, 2005, <http://www.dallas.org> published an English translation of the 32-page comic book the Mexican government produced in Spanish in 1994. INFOMUNDO.US did the English translation used on the website, but the original Spanish version is online, as well.

By no means is the *Guide* an ordinary comic book nor is it intended for the entertainment of fun-loving children. Its targeted audience is adult and its content is no laughing matter. As a detailed how-to manual for illegal aliens, it includes a list of 22 Mexican Consulate locations and phone numbers in the U.S. and contact numbers for 23 U.S. major cities, such as Atlanta.

Mexican Consulates in the U.S. provide a *matricula consular*<sup>1</sup> ID card as documentation for applicants. Among other things, that card can be used to board a plane in the U.S. By January 2005, according to the Mexico City newspaper *El Universal*, 4.5 million Mexicans had *matricula consular* IDs that were accepted in 386 cities, 164 counties and 338 financial institutions in the U.S. and Mexico's stated goal was to have issued 6 million by that year's end. In 2005, ten states in the U.S. accepted the *matricula consular* as valid ID for issuing an American driver's license to replace the *matricula* as ID. *Matriculas* are so easy to get, it's not uncommon for American police to see individuals that have several of them in different names.

Corroborating that fact was Steve McCraw, Assistant Director of the FBI Office of Intelligence. In his June 26, 2003 testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims on Consular ID Cards, he said, "The Department of Justice and the FBI have concluded that the *Matricula Consular* is not a reliable form of identification, due to the non-existence of any means of verifying the true identity of the card holder." Then, he listed the following reasons for such skepticism:

- The Mexican government has no centralized database to coordinate the issuance of consular IDs, so multiple cards can be issued with the same name, address and picture.
- The Mexican government has no interconnected database to verify who has or has not applied for or received a consular ID card.
- The Mexican government issues the card to anyone who produces a Mexican birth certificate (easily forged) and one other form of ID. During a raid in September 2002, a huge cache of fake Mexican birth certificates was discovered in Washington State.
- In some locations, individuals without documents can obtain a consular ID.

<sup>1</sup> "Mexican matricula consular ID – Documenting illegal aliens," by D.A. King, *Marietta Daily Journal*, September 23, 2005

# Mexico's Official "Guide For The Mexican Migrant" By Allen Gwinn, Created 12/01/2005 – 08:00

Below are pages from the book, along with illustrations. INFOMUNDO.US. translated it from Spanish into English.

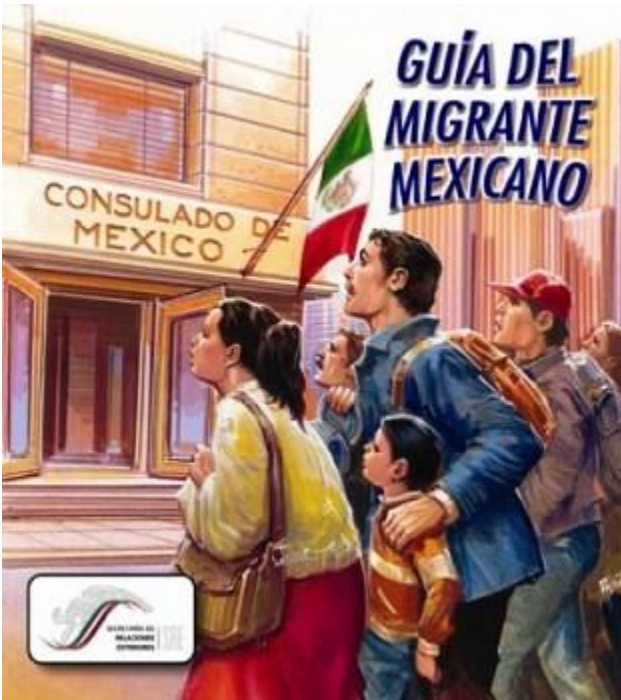
## INTRODUCTION, PAGES 0 - 1

Dear fellow citizen:

This guide tries to provide you with some practical advice that may be useful to you in case you have made the difficult decision to seek new work opportunities outside of your own country.

The safe way of entering another country is by first obtaining your passport, which is issued by the Delegations of the Secretariat of Foreign Relations, and your visa, which you request at the Embassy or Consulate of the country to where you wish to travel.

However, we actually see many cases of Mexicans who try to cross the northern border without the necessary documentation, crossing high-risk zones that are very dangerous, especially in desert areas or rivers with strong and not always noticeable currents.



## INTRODUCTION, PAGES 2 - 3

As you read this guide you can also learn some basic questions about legal consequences of your stay in the United States of America without appropriate immigration documents, as well as the rights you have in that country once you are there, independently of your immigration status.

Always keep in mind that there are mechanisms for you to enter the United States of America legally.

In any case, if you encounter problems or difficulties, remember that Mexico has 45 Consulates at its disposal in that country, whose contact information you also can find in this publication. Identify your Consulate and go to it.

## RISKS, PAGES 4 - 5

### DANGERS OF CROSSING IN HIGH-RISK ZONES



Crossing the river can be very risky, especially if you cross alone and at night.

Thick clothing increases your weight when wet and makes it hard to swim or float.

**RISKS, PAGES 6 - 7** If you cross in the desert, try to travel when the heat is not so intense.

*[For lack of space in this newsletter, pages 8 – 23 are not included, but they are available online. The final pages of the Guide (pp. 24 – 29) are on the next page.]*



## THINGS TO AVOID, PAGES 24 - 25



Do not pick up strangers.

If you commit some traffic violation and are detained by the police, place your hands on the steering wheel and do not get out of the car until the officer requests you to do so.

Avoid calling attention to yourself, at least while you are arranging your residence papers to live in the United States.

The best formula is not to alter your routine of going between work and home. Avoid noisy parties because the neighbors can get upset and call the police, and you could be arrested.

Avoid fighting. If you go to a bar or night club and a fight starts, leave immediately, since in the confusion you could be arrested even if you did not do anything wrong.



Avoid family or domestic violence. As in Mexico, it is a crime in the United States.

## [THINGS TO] AVOID, PAGES 26 - 27

Domestic violence does not consist solely of hitting others but also can be threats, shouting or mistreatment.

If you are accused of domestic violence against your children, your mate or someone else who lives with you, you could go to jail. In addition, Child Protective Services authorities could take away your children.

Do not carry firearms, bladed weapons or other dangerous objects. Keep in mind that many Mexicans have died or are in prison because of these things.

If the police enter your house or apartment, do not resist, but ask to see a search warrant.

It's better to cooperate and ask to speak to the nearest Mexican Consulate.

## CONSULATES, PAGES 28 - 29

The Secretariat of Foreign Relations has 45 consular representatives within the U.S and on its southern border, which are designed to help you. Remember: if you have been detained or are serving a sentence, you have the right to speak with the nearest Mexican Consulate. Always carry your "Guide to Consular Protection" with you at all times.



Get Near to the Consulate. Embrace Mexico. It's your home, fellow countryman!

[signed by] - Secretariat of Foreign Relations - General Administration of Protection and Consular Matters.

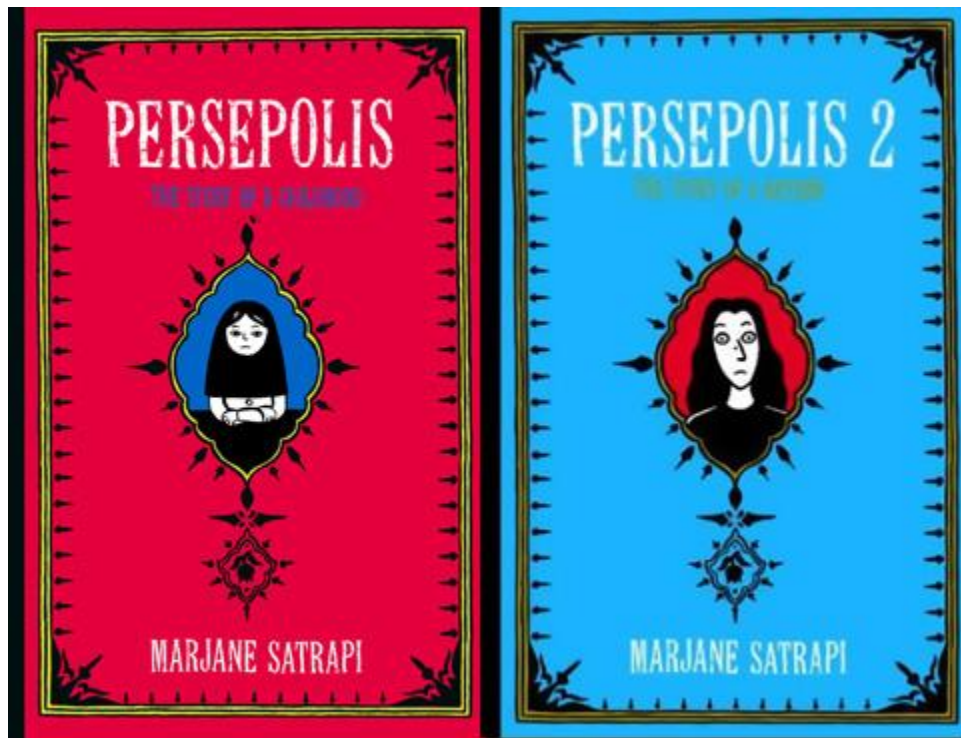
## CONSULATES OF MEXICO IN THE UNITED STATES [The last pages list Mexican Consulates' address & phones in U.S.]

**ACTION – Oppose amnesty. Ask Congress to close the border immediately and vote NO on amnesty. Georgia's U.S. Congressmen listed by district:** Kingston (R-1<sup>st</sup>); Bishop (D-2<sup>nd</sup>); Westmoreland (R-3<sup>rd</sup>); Johnson (D-4<sup>th</sup>); Lewis (D-5<sup>th</sup>); Price (R-6<sup>th</sup>); Woodall (R-7<sup>th</sup>); Austin Scott (D-8<sup>th</sup>); Collins (R-9<sup>th</sup>); Broun (R-10<sup>th</sup>); Gingrey (R-11<sup>th</sup>); Barrow (D-12<sup>th</sup>); David Scott (D-13<sup>th</sup>); Graves (R-14<sup>th</sup>). To be connected with your congressman, call toll-free 1 877 762-8762 and ask for your congressman's office.

## Comic Book Goes to College

2012 Summer Orientation  
Required Reading for  
Incoming Freshmen  
Georgia College & State  
University  
Milledgeville, Georgia

The impact of *Persepolis*, which is the autobiography of artist Marjane Satrapi, was not lost on Kristin Anderson of *The Oxonian Review of Books* of Balliol College, University of Oxford, who made the following powerful and appropriate observation: “While *Persepolis*’ feistiness and creativity pay tribute as much to Satrapi herself as to contemporary Iran, if her aim is to humanise (sic) her homeland, this amiable, sardonic and very candid memoir couldn’t do a better job.”



*Persepolis 2* combined 2 French editions and added results of Iran’s 2009 presidential election, is used in the U.S., where *Persepolis* series are published by Pantheon Books.

### Critical Facts from the Online Outline of *Persepolis*

*Persepolis*, published in 2000, was adapted as an animated film, won the Cannes Film Festival Jury Prize in 2007 and was nominated for an Academy Award as best animated feature in 2007.

**Marxism – Leninism.** In Section 2 of the book Marjane reveals her ambition to “become a revolutionary like Che Guevara,” an Argentine Marxist revolutionary against capitalism, who joined Castro’s 26<sup>th</sup> of July movement, went to Cuba, studied Marxism – Leninism and worked toward internationalism and world revolution to destroy capitalism. An aversion to capitalism explains Marjane’s embarrassment that her father drove a Cadillac, as recounted in Section 5.

**Communism.** Her well-educated grandfather who was mistreated as the king’s prime minister, became a communist and was sent to prison for life. In Section 8 she describes her hero, uncle Anoosh, as a communist revolutionary who went to the U.S.S.R. and married.

**Homosexuality.** After time in Vienna, Marjane stays in a communal apartment with eight homosexual men. After moving from there, she is confused when the man she is dating reveals his homosexuality, as well. Since she’s looking for a physical relationship, she turns to drugs.

**Drugs.** “Getting farther and farther into drugs,” she soon meets Markus, falls in love, procures more drugs and is known as a drug dealer. Markus cheats on her. She leaves, lives on the street for over two months, ends up in the hospital with bronchitis and, then, returns to her native Iran.

**ACTION** – Consider how college students are affected by such neutral presentations of Marxism – Leninism, communism, homosexuality, hooking up and drugs. Q. Why did Georgia College at Milledgeville select this book? A. Response: They select material “kids can identify with.” Some professors did ask freshmen whether they read the book before enrolling.

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