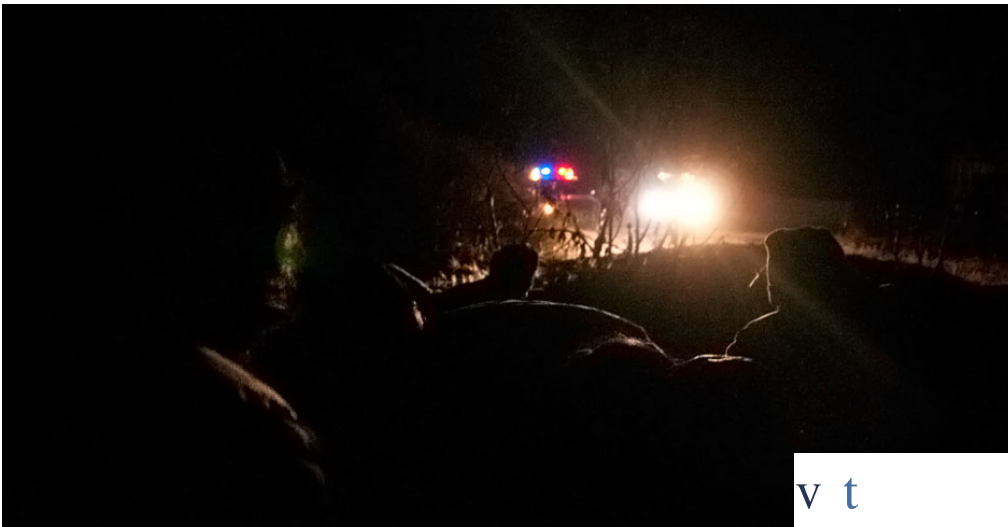


# There's a Park in Mexico Where Tourists Can Brave a Pretend Border Crossing

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There's a tourist destination that lets you re-enact illegal border crossings from Mexico into America. A four-hour long evening activity, it includes a coyote guide, potential threats from wildlife, and even being chased by authorities with dogs.

It might sound like a LARP (live action role-playing game) gone too far, or the plot of a bad reality TV game show. In actuality, it's a program developed in order to lower the rate of people emigrating from Mexico by showing how dangerous attempting to cross the border unlawfully can be.

In 2012, the Department of Homeland Security estimated that there were **11.4 million unauthorized immigrants** living in the United States, with 59 percent of them from Mexico. The Hñahñus community in El Alberto, Mexico, was concerned about the amount of people leaving their area. So, in July 2004, they decided to offer a new service at Parque EcoAlberto, the park they operate.

The Caminata Nocturna, or Night Walk, costs 250 pesos to take (about \$20). The [park's website](#) is quick to state that it is not intended as a training ground for those wanting to cross into the US. Rather, it exists as an awareness campaign and a way to encourage the locals to stay local.

The walk originally came about as a way to create jobs for the Hñahñus community, which remains highly dependent on wages sent back from family members who've crossed to the US.

The park, being about 700 miles from the US border, is an [eco-tourist destination](#), however, and as a result the walk has become something for tourists to do. In March of 2014, *This American Life* [did a segment on the walk](#), with James Spring giving a detailed description of what it was like. However, according to a [PBS article](#), the majority of the attraction attendees are students.

While on the surface, the attraction may sound gimmicky or even like a joke, the Hñahñus hope that those who attend will see that crossing the border is far from a walk in the park.



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Congress and the White House are working for better immigration practices in the US that will serve both incoming immigrants and American citizens well. But in light of the danger faced by people trying to cross the border, we need to rethink the way we talk about immigration. Click the red button to learn about how you can fight for better immigration policies, and share this story to Become the News!



