

be armed. They prefer to attack someone who can't shoot back. Enrique and the gangsters ran past a group of Mexican men standing by the tracks, machetes at their sides. The men looked at them intently but did not move or attack.

This time, Enrique is alone. He focuses on the thought that will make him run the fastest: I cannot miss the train. If he misses the one he just left, he knows he will be waiting for days in the bushes and tall grass until another one comes.

Enrique races so fast he feels the blood pounding at his temples. Long, wet grass coils around his feet. He stumbles but never stops running.

Enrique crawls under a barbed-wire fence, then under a double strand of smooth wire. It is electrified. At night, locals who live along the train tracks hear the piercing screams of migrants who have been electrocuted by this wire. "Help me! Help me!" they wail. These locals have also found train riders who have lost arms, legs, or heads along the tracks, migrants who were injured as they tried to outrun the agents and get onto and off of moving trains.

He reaches the Cuil bridge, which spans a stream of murky brown water. The bridge, migrants and Grupo Beta Sur officers say, is the most dangerous spot. Bandits hide in trees, waiting to pounce on migrants. They use children as look-outs; in exchange for a coin or a piece of candy, the children race ahead on their bicycles to tell the bandits when migrants are drawing near. As migrants near the bridge, the bandits drop down and surround them. Other robbers hide along the tracks on the bridge and below it—an area thick with bushes