

Coming to America

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It's late afternoon at the Latin Labor Solutions recruitment office in Monterrey, Mexico, and hundreds of prospective workers are crammed into the narrow alleyway between the office and the building next door, waiting restlessly in the 90-degree heat. They perch on duffel bags or lean against the stucco walls--older cowboys in straw hats and silver belt buckles, young city types in sunglasses and baseball caps. Many have traveled for days, with little sleep, from distant villages. In a few minutes they will discover whether the US Consulate has approved their application for temporary labor visas or if they must return home defeated.

Just when the smell of sweat has become unbearable and an impatient whistle travels through the crowd, Salvador Morales, the office's clean-cut, broad-shouldered manager, peeks his head out a door and begins to call names in a booming voice. The first lucky man staggers forward, tired but grinning. A cheer goes up as he takes his passport with the visa stapled to it, as paper-thin and precious as a winning lottery ticket in a country where success in El Norte is the ultimate prize.

These workers, along with more than 150,000 others from countries as close to the United States as Mexico and as far-flung as India and Thailand, are part of an army of foreign low-wage labor legally imported each year by American companies under a government program known as H-2. Created during World War II to provide workers of last resort for agriculture and other seasonal industries, the program has since grown dramatically amid rising demand from employers in a broad range of industries that were never envisioned when the program was created and that can only vaguely be described as seasonal. Guest workers make chocolate in Louisiana, staff hotel desks in Florida and mow lawns in Missouri. They toil in some of the country's most difficult and dangerous industries, from shipbuilding to asbestos removal to forestry.

While unfamiliar to most Americans, the program has become the template for an expanded guest-worker program now being hotly debated in Congress. Proponents of the plan argue that temporary labor visas give immigrants greater rights and protections while providing employers with a reliable labor force. Yet workers, labor organizers, lawyers and policy-makers say the history of the H-2 visa delivers a very different lesson. They charge that a program designed to open up the legal labor market and provide a piece of the American dream to immigrants has instead locked thousands of them into a modern-day form of indentured servitude. Congressman Charles Rangel has called guest-worker programs "the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery."

Brought in to work for specific companies on stints of up to a year, guest workers cannot legally leave their jobs even when their employers are abusive. While some earn enough to buy a house or open a business in their home countries, others accrue crushing debt to labor contractors who demand thousands of dollars in fees to connect them with US employers. The Labor Department does not enforce the conditions guaranteed by employers in visa petitions, and there is little recourse for those who are cheated out of promised wages or work hours. Often living in isolated communities where few people speak their language, guest workers rarely complain about mistreatment.

"Many guest workers have told us [their situation] is worse than being undocumented," says Mary Bauer, a lawyer with the Southern Poverty Law Center who has filed several class-action suits on behalf of guest workers. "The employer controls the worker's right to be in the United States. And that creates a dramatic disparity in power between the worker and the employer."

As labor unions and immigrant advocates agonize over whether to support a new guest-

worker program, many such workers' fates are being decided in court. Dozens of lawsuits accuse H-2 employers and labor contractors of abuses ranging from failing to pay minimum wage to firing visa holders when they become injured. Several of the suits emerged from Southern states where lax enforcement of labor laws and a small undocumented population have encouraged an influx of guest workers to perform jobs once largely held by African-Americans. Along the Gulf Coast, guest workers involved in post-Katrina reconstruction have formed a new group, the Alliance of Guestworkers for Dignity, to press for better working conditions and oversight.

But most of the people gathered at Latin Labor Solutions (LLS) today--the farmers from Veracruz, the construction workers from Michoacan--are not thinking about these large policy debates. They are thinking about their futures. If they receive visas, their journey north will be different from those of the estimated 400,000 Mexicans who enter the United States illegally each year. There will be no treacherous, throat-parching march through the desert, backpacks on their backs, bandits at their heels. Instead they will board air-conditioned buses that will deliver them directly to jobs in the United States, where they hope to earn enough to provide for themselves and their families. Monterrey is the first step. Here is where their dreams begin.

"Where we are there's very little work," Ana Maria Méndez, 25, tells me. She and a cousin made the eighteen-hour car trip from their small town in Veracruz, where most people subsist on homegrown corn and beans. Now Méndez fidgets nervously on a chair in the LLS waiting room, her short hair pinned back from her round face, wondering aloud whether she'll be allowed to take the \$8-an-hour job she's been offered with a landscaping company in Missouri, a place she's never been. To get there, she mortgaged the house where her husband and two children still live to pay \$1,000 in travel costs and fees.

"Even if they turn me back, I'm going to go," she says. "I would go illegally. I'm scared, but to come all this way and go back with nothing would be worse."

Méndez's debt is not unusual. If guest workers' dreams begin in their home countries, say advocates, so does the abuse. With visas in high demand, H-2 workers can pay recruiters thousands of dollars in fees for the privilege of being matched with a US employer. While some of that money covers legitimate expenses like bus fare and the \$200 government charge for visa applicants, the rest lines the pockets of middlemen. Guest workers from Asia have paid up to \$20,000 for their jobs; in Mexico, the going rate ranges from \$300 to \$2,000, according to local officials, just below the cost of hiring a coyote.

Here in Monterrey, a bustling hub of international commerce, a quasi-legal trade in cross-border labor is quietly thriving. There are high-tech outfits like LLS, with its new computers and six branch offices, and there are unmarked houses where cash changes hands in moldy back rooms. With little oversight, labor recruiters are free to make inflated promises and to charge whatever they choose for their services.

"There's always someone looking to commit fraud," says Alejandra Ocádiz, director of the Office of Migrant Assistance for the state of Nuevo Leon. In one among many cases of wrongdoing by recruiters her office investigated last year, one company, Aicotramex, placed ads asking candidates to submit their passports and \$650 for a "pre-authorized" appointment at the US Consulate. After dozens of people paid up, the company's office closed and its owners disappeared.

Recruiting agencies enjoy particular leverage because of the rules governing H-2 visas: Workers need a job offer from a US company before they can receive a visa. Once they get the permit, they must remain employed at that company only. Take a job somewhere else, and they're immediately considered illegal. Upset their boss--or that employer's agent--and they risk not being requested the following year.

At LLS, one of Monterrey's largest recruiting agencies, workers submit their names and

contact information to an electronic database. A kind of Match.com for low-wage labor, the program allows employers to view workers' photos and search by categories that, along with skills and home state, include gender and marital status. On the trip north, the company's chartered buses, equipped with GPS tracking units, send signals back to the computer system. Company owner Jeff West shows me a screen with a neon line indicating the path of a bus transporting agricultural workers to the Midwest. West, a former golf course developer from Michigan, invented the software himself. He hopes one day to add radio-frequency identification chips to workers' passports to monitor them in real time.

"If a worker gets off the bus to go to the bathroom, the employer will know," he tells me proudly.

Mexican law prohibits recruiters from charging workers for their services, but apart from the efforts of state officials like Ocádiz, the government doesn't do much to enforce the rule. And in an example of the difficulties of crafting transnational labor policy, the US State Department has no position on the law.

"They just tell us not to exaggerate," says Omar Santos, manager of North American Labor, a Monterrey recruitment firm. "Don't let your costs vary too much from the service you provide."

In the absence of government action, one union stepped into the breach. The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), a small, scrappy outfit, represents about 6,000 Mexican guest workers in North Carolina's tobacco and cucumber fields. In 2005 the group won a court ruling prohibiting farmers in the state's main growers' association, and their agents, from charging workers for visas or transportation.

At the union's Monterrey office I meet Santiago Cruz, a young Oaxacan with a ready smile who picked tomatoes and chilies on Ohio farms before becoming an organizer. Cruz and other FLOC staff spend hours talking to workers about their rights in the park outside the consulate, where visa seekers begin lining up at dawn and vendors ply the crowd with snow cones and fliers for cheap hotels. Originally opened to assist the union's members, their office was soon flooded with calls from nonmembers looking for a guide through the visa application labyrinth.

"The recruiters don't respect seniority," says Cruz. "If I've been working somewhere five years, and Juan comes in and it's his first season, they tell Juan, give me \$2,000--I'll send you instead."

Because recruiters have workers' addresses and information about their family members, Cruz says, even some unionized workers are afraid to complain. "The recruiters from North Carolina are more careful now," he says. "They know someone is watching them. But if the workers don't report [a problem], there is nothing we can do."

Back at the LLS office, Ana Maria Méndez is happily clutching her brand-new visa, preparing to board a bus to Missouri. She studies the letters on the white card carefully, as if trying to memorize every detail, then climbs the bus steps, the only woman in a group of dozens of men. Laden with its human cargo, the bus pulls away from the curb and rolls off into the night.

Like Méndez, Fernando Rivera had high hopes for his tenure as a guest worker. The 24-year-old law student from Mexico wanted to help purchase an \$11,000 operation for his mother, who has liver cancer. When a friend told him he could earn \$10 an hour slinging tacos at a restaurant in Louisiana, he jumped at the chance. But when Rivera arrived last October in Westlake, a two-street hamlet several hours west of New Orleans, he discovered that his employer was not a restaurant but a labor contractor named Matt Redd. Redd housed more than 100 workers in rat-infested apartments with eight people sharing a single bathroom, according to Rivera and other workers, confiscating their passports and hiring

them out to businesses in the area. He paid Rivera only \$6.50 an hour, Rivera says, and when the paychecks arrived, there were often hours missing.

"Matt Redd would sell us to the highest bidder," Rivera says. "The money passed through his hands and afterward there was never very much left." The only Latinos in a town of about 5,000, Rivera and his co-workers say they often endured racist slurs and were stopped several times by police demanding identification. When Rivera asked Redd to return his passport so he could prove his identity, Rivera says, Redd refused and threatened to call immigration.

"It was hell there, but there was nothing else to do but bear it," Rivera says.

Redd admits to taking away the passports but says he was unaware it was illegal. "When we go through this process and pay to get people here, with the attorney's fees and transportation fees, it was some collateral that we had to make sure they stayed and worked for us," he says.

He says any discrepancies in paychecks were mistakes that were soon corrected, and chalks up Rivera's other charges to jealousy of other workers. He believes he is providing an important service to Lake Charles County, which he says had a labor shortage even before Hurricane Rita. "The employers here, they're not getting cheap labor by any stretch of imagination, by the time we pay these people's workers' compensation and taxes," he says. "What they have is someone that shows up. They win, their customers win and the workers certainly win."

With thousands of new guest workers pouring into the Gulf Coast in the wake of Rita and Katrina, such conflicts have multiplied as the region has become a test case for the use of foreign temporary labor. If Congress passes an expanded guest-worker program, some labor experts believe, the patterns established here may spread to other states. Some already have. They include the rise of labor contractors like Redd--who import workers not for a specific job but to hire them out to other companies--and labor camps where employers exercise almost total control over workers' daily lives.

Those workers come not only from Mexico but from countries around the globe. Three-quarters of guest workers nationwide are Mexican, but in a process similar to factory outsourcing, employers skip nimbly from country to country in search of workers with high skills and low salary requirements. At one Louisiana shipyard, Mexican welders on H-2 visas share cramped FEMA trailers with guest workers from Honduras and Romania. In the past five years, while the total number of H-2 workers grew by about two-thirds, the number from Asia more than tripled.

Such workers often risk everything in lengthy and uncertain journeys. P. Subramanian*, a pipefitter from southern India, worked for thirty years on oil rigs in the Middle East before deciding to take his chances in the United States to better support his eighteen family members. He took out high-interest loans to pay \$20,000 in recruitment and travel costs for a job with Signal International, a marine and fabrication company with facilities in Texas and Mississippi. But Subramanian arrived in the country at precisely the wrong moment: Signal was locked in a high-profile labor dispute with a group of Indian welders, also guest workers. The workers had protested after the company cut their wages by a third and threatened to fire some, saying they were inexperienced. After one welder attempted suicide, Signal apparently decided it had had enough. So, Subramanian says, the company told him no new Indian workers were needed.

I meet Subramanian in New Orleans, where he is desperately trying to find work despite having no Social Security card, no transportation and only a few months left on his visa. He wears borrowed clothes, thick glasses and a stunned expression, and he carries a binder filled with certificates of merit from companies in Bahrain, Holland and Dubai.

"The companies can send us back, but they won't pay our \$20,000," he says. If he can't pay his debt, his creditors in India might go after his family, he adds, drawing his finger across his

throat. "It's the very worst condition in life. I cannot go back to India and I cannot stay legally. I feel like a street beggar."

Like Subramanian, a growing number of guest workers are filling skilled blue-collar jobs traditionally held by native-born workers. In 2006 the Labor Department certified requests for temporary steelworkers, electricians, automobile detailers and bus drivers. Signal declined to comment on its hiring of H-2 workers, but Greg Kenefick, a spokesperson for the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department, said American welders and pipefitters have become scarce on the Gulf Coast because of the lack of schools and affordable housing. Still, he says the council is concerned that companies have sought to fill the demand with "the cheapest wage possible." "The exploitation factor is obvious," he says. "They have a captive workforce, and [that] is the worst competition for union labor."

In order to hire guest workers, an employer must prove that there is a shortage of domestic workers. In agriculture, farmers and unions agree that American workers often prefer low-wage jobs in service and construction to grueling field work. Yet labor experts say employers also deliberately use the program to avoid paying market wages. "To low-wage seasonal industries, a shortage of labor is a lack of surplus labor," says David Griffith, an anthropologist who has studied guest-worker programs for thirty years. "They like a surplus because it keeps wages down." Jill Foutz, a manager at an Ohio landscaping company, is clear about why her business uses H-2 workers: "They're hardworking, they're dependable and they will work for less."

The Labor Department requires employers to document their efforts to recruit US workers, but department records reveal the lengths to which some employers go to deter them from applying. Farm labor contractors have ignored calls from US applicants or asked them to provide résumés--an unusual request in agriculture. And recruiting agencies sometimes help their clients find ways to sidestep the regulations. "We understand that you do not want to hire local workers," reads the website for Head Honchos, a Texas-based recruiting firm. "Head Honchos can instruct you on what to say during interviews and how to handle any questions that you might have regarding this step."

Not every guest worker has a bad experience. Every year, Alex González and his wife pack up their belongings and their two chihuahuas and travel from Mexico City to St. Louis, where they own a car and rent a two-bedroom house. There they spend eight months working side by side for the same landscaping company. González has learned English and says the \$12 an hour he earns there has helped him afford a new house in Mexico and even a few luxuries like designer eyeglasses. "My life is worth too much to risk it in the desert," he says. "When you go legally you have more opportunities."

Some unions and immigrants' rights groups point to stories like González's as evidence that a reformed guest-worker program could ease pressures on migrants. The Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, which includes community groups and unions like the Service Employees International Union, has joined employers in supporting a revamped H-2 program that would allow workers to choose their jobs and eventually attain permanent residency.

Having a temporary-worker visa "means you can cross the border without spending four days in the desert," says Harley Shaiken, a labor expert at the University of California, Berkeley. "If you run a stop sign, you don't risk being deported. It's a huge difference. But I suspect you're paying for that with tougher conditions and less mobility."

The typical guest-worker saga is probably not a nightmare like Rivera's or a success story like González's but a soft, slow bleed of resources from worker to employer. It begins with the worker paying visa and travel costs and continues through petty paycheck deductions for services like phone calls and van rides and labor law violations like the ones suffered by Miguel Angel Gómez, a landscape worker in Ohio. Gómez injured his chest at work and racked up \$1,000 in hospital bills. Though the work offer he signed in Mexico said he would

be covered by workers' compensation--required by US law--his employer refused to honor it because it was in Spanish. So Gómez struggles to pay a little of the bill each month, even as his work hours have fallen to twenty per week, another breach of his contract. "I could try to find another boss," he says. "But I would waste years going through all the paperwork. I just want to keep earning."

Yet Gómez is lucky in one respect: He came to the United States under a portion of the guest-worker program known as H-2A, which covers farmworkers and a few landscapers. On paper at least, H-2A workers enjoy benefits beyond the wildest dreams of most undocumented workers. Farmers must provide free food, housing, tools and transportation. To encourage growers to hire domestic workers, the government requires them to pay visa holders a premium known as the "adverse effect wage rate," which can reach \$10 per hour in some states. Like low-income Americans, they are entitled by law to free legal representation.

By contrast, two-thirds of guest workers are hired under another subsection, H-2B, created in the small-government Reagan years to fill non-agricultural jobs. H-2B workers exist in a regulatory vacuum with few rights and no access to legal services. Program regulations state only that workers must be paid the prevailing wage in their industry, and the Labor Department claims it lacks authority to enforce even that. While the department doesn't keep statistics on how many H-2B employers violate labor laws, public-interest lawyers point to several cases where companies were permitted to continue importing workers for years despite a pattern of abuse.

In a decades-long dispute that has become a symbol of the program's shortcomings, the Labor Department and state agencies repeatedly fined labor contractor Evergreen Forestry Services for housing Central American workers in tents during the winter, denying them toilets and drinking water, and paying them less than the minimum wage. Yet even while one agency within the department was writing reports identifying a "woeful history" of labor law violations at Evergreen, another unit, the Employment Training Administration, was certifying the company to hire more and more guest workers. Labor lawyers and even state regulators begged the agency to deny the company's petitions, to no avail. Their fears were confirmed in 2002, when fourteen Evergreen workers died after the van speeding them to their job thinning pine trees in the Maine woods plummeted off a bridge. The department fined Evergreen \$17,000 but continued to approve its petitions for guest workers as recently as 2006.

Labor Department spokesperson Matthew Faraci did not respond to specific questions about Evergreen but said that investigations in "low-wage, high-violation industries" were a department priority. He noted that the department's Wage and Hour division has pursued claims against H-2B employers under the Fair Labor Standards Act, in one case recovering \$36,000 in back wages. But both worker advocates and labor contractors say such investigations are rare, and the agency has no investigators specifically assigned to monitor conditions for guest workers.

"The Department of Labor does basically nothing," says Jeff West of LLS. "It's up to us," he says, to insure workers are not mistreated. The effectiveness of this voluntary system depends on the whims of contractors. LLS managers--who charge workers a relatively low \$165 fee--know many recruits by name and say they view their work as a ministry. Before boarding a bus to the United States, each LLS worker is offered a shrink-wrapped copy of the New Testament and a company flier. "God, Country, Work, and Family: LLS Shares Your Values," it reads, and encourages workers to call an 800 number with any problems.

Other recruitment agencies can be less forgiving. When H-2B workers at New Orleans luxury hotel chain Decatur Hotels spoke out against low wages and decrepit housing last year, the agent who processed their visas immediately visited the hotels, the workers say--but not to support them. "She said we should feel lucky to be here, that some people would give their lives to be here," says Maria Ramos*, one of the workers who met with the agent, Virginia Pickering of Accent Personnel Services. "It was very hard to hear." (Pickering declined to be

interviewed for this story.) Thus, workers are often inhibited from speaking out. Most of those interviewed for this article did not want their names published for fear of retaliation. A 1997 report by the US General Accounting Office found that the H-2A program's requirements were difficult to enforce because guest workers "are unlikely to complain about worker protection violations...because they fear that they will lose their jobs or will not be accepted...for future employment."

Fernando Rivera and his co-workers in Westlake are an exception. Within months of arriving in Louisiana, they began meeting with organizers from the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice. Dozens of workers just off their shifts would pack into an apartment in the wee hours, plotting how to get Redd to return their passports and visas. Rivera was especially motivated: His mother's operation was approaching, and as the only family member with the same blood type, he wanted to be in Mexico in case she needed a transfusion.

In February the workers issued a joint press release with African-American Katrina survivors, saying they planned to conduct a citizens' arrest of a local "slaveholder." With the police and press looking on, the two groups marched to Redd's office and demanded the release of the workers' documents.

They got the passports, but Redd escaped, and he continues to employ H-2 workers. Rivera was fired and returned to Mexico; in his four months as a guest worker he had earned about \$3,000.

The Westlake protest was a rare show of solidarity between two communities often pitted against each other in the immigration debate. "Guest workers are taking our jobs," says Curtis Muhammad, a former SNCC organizer who helped lead the protest, as we sit on the porch of his rickety duplex in flood-damaged Tremé, one of the country's oldest black neighborhoods. "But we're not going to fight them about jobs. Our struggle is to unite so that we're not hurt by the process."

I ask him how he justifies comparing guest work to slavery. "Do you know the story of the Middle Passage?" he asks. "In slavery, you send a slave catcher, they go to the chiefs and make a deal. They say, We're going to take your people to heaven, and they show them a few pretty things from heaven. You load them onto the ships and only when they get out to sea do they know they're slaves. You take them to one owner, and if they leave they're a runaway. Well, with guest workers..." He trails off, his meaning clear.

As dusk falls in Lockport, Louisiana, a few dozen men gather around plastic banquet tables in a nondescript warehouse, next to a yard strewn with rusty tools and the hollow hulls of half-assembled boats. The men, guest workers employed by a local shipbuilder, are complaining about their jobs to organizers from the newly formed Alliance of Guestworkers for Dignity. They are tired, they say, of paying close to \$400 per month to live "like chickens" in windowless dormitories and eat spoiled food. They earn only \$8 per hour, a far cry from the \$21.50 that unionized Americans at a nearby shipyard take home. "We keep on hoping there will be some justice," says Enrique Ceja, a welder from Veracruz. "This was our American dream, but we were fooled from the moment we were recruited."

Organizer Daniel Castellanos listens patiently. To get here, he slipped past a sheriff's deputy at the gate--there to enforce a strict no-visitors policy--as he has many times at labor camps like this one. A former guest worker from Peru, Castellanos helped found the Alliance last year after he and several co-workers sued Decatur Hotels, accusing the company of luring them to New Orleans with false promises and failing to reimburse them for up to \$5,000 in travel costs. The group now claims 500 members. In May it hosted a regional summit where visa holders from six countries drafted a statement urging that their voices be heard in any discussions about a new guest-worker plan.

"Bush says the guest-worker program is going well, but it's not going well for us," Castellanos tells the workers now, to nods from the crowd. "You come here supposedly with the same

rights as an American worker. But they give you the most dangerous jobs, and they pay you less."

Yet even as these workers begin to take action, the ground is shifting under their feet. The Senate is currently debating legislation, long sought by George W. Bush, that would add up to 200,000 more guest workers to the rolls each year. Modeled on the H-2B visa program, the Senate plan contains no mention of reimbursement for housing, travel or recruitment costs, and no opportunity for guest workers to become permanent residents. Guest workers could change jobs, but only to companies already certified to take part in the program.

The bill would ban employers with a history of serious labor law violations from hiring guest workers and increase the ranks of Labor Department investigators. But guest workers and their advocates say these protections do not go far enough. In a scathing new report on the H-2 program, the Southern Poverty Law Center argues that a new guest-worker visa should be completely portable, with employers paying all costs of recruitment.

The Nuevo Leon state government offered in 2005 to match Mexican workers with United States companies at no charge to the workers. About 300 Mexicans have found jobs through the initiative. But any Mexican government effort will have to work to escape the shadow of the infamous bracero program, a joint US-Mexico venture that brought more than 4.5 million farm laborers across the border during and after World War II. In the program, which closed down in 1964 amid public outcry over poor working conditions, both governments cooperated to deduct 10 percent from all the braceros' paychecks, supposedly to establish a retirement fund. But the money disappeared deep within the Mexican banking system, and most braceros never saw a dime.

Even if a system with stiffer worker protections is developed, employers accustomed to cheap unregulated labor might not use it. Research by the Arizona-based think tank ThinkAZ shows that in states with large undocumented populations, businesses avoid hiring H-2 workers, preferring the flexibility of an illegal workforce. Farmer participation in the H-2A program, with its housing requirements and wage guarantees, has remained almost flat in recent years. Meanwhile, the more laissez-faire H-2B system has flourished, with the government adjusting the cap several times to cope with skyrocketing employer demand.

"The tendency has been for the H-2 program...to devolve into a system that approximates the exploitative, illegal, underground labor market it was (in part) designed to replace," writes Griffith, the anthropologist, in his 2006 book *American Guestworkers*. "Indeed, there is some evidence that without this downward trend in conditions...legal guestworkers become less attractive to U.S. employers."

Whatever the outcome of the current Congressional debate, it's clear that the stakes are high, both for guest workers and for those who profit from the current system. Just two weeks after I left Monterrey, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's Santiago Cruz was found beaten to death in a pool of blood in the union's office. While the Mexican police investigate his murder, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has ordered protection for the union's remaining staff members in Mexico. Union leaders are convinced Cruz was killed for organizing guest workers

"There's a whole ring of opposition to us, from recruiters to growers to all the interests that take advantage of a low-wage workforce," union president Baldemar Velásquez tells me a few days after the killing. "We're cutting into their corrupt business, and they don't like it."