1. EL CORRIDO DE HERACLIO BERNAL (ca. 1888) sung by Dueto Adán & Eva with Mariachi Guadalajara
2. MARIANO RESENDÉZ (ca. 1890) sung by Timoteo Cantú & Jesús Maya
3. NIEVES HERNÁNDEZ (Jose Pérez) (ca. 1890s) sung by Los Satélites (Fidencio Ayala & Toño Borrego)
4. CORRIDO DE MIER (ca. 1922) sung by Peña & Tijerina
5. LOS TEQUILEROS (1920s) sung by Jesús Maya & Timoteo Cantú
6. CONTRABANDO DE EL PASO (1920s) sung by Luis Hernández & Leonardo Sifuentes
7. CONTRABANDO DE EL PASO - Part II
8. LA COCAÍNA (1920s) sung by Pilar Arcos
9. LA MARIHUANA (1920s) sung by Trío Garnica-Ascencio
10. CORRIDO DE JUAN GARCÍA (Homero Morales) (1931) sung by Los Pingüinos Del Norte
11. GARCÍA Y ZAMARRIPA (1930s) sung by Los Hermanos Chavarría
12. LOS PATEROS (Tomás Ortiz) (1920s/30s) sung by Los Alegres De Terán
13. CORRIDO DEL HAMPA – Part I (ca. 1935) sung by Flores & Durán
14. CORRIDO DEL HAMPA – Part II
15. LA CANELA (ca. 1934) sung by Los Alegres de Terán
16. POR MORFINA Y COCAINA – Part I (1934) sung by Manuel C. Valdez & Juan González
17. POR MORFINA Y COCAINA - Part II
18. EL CONTRABANDISTA – Part I (1934) sung by Juan Gaytán & Francisco Cantú
19. EL CONTRABANDISTA - Part II
20. CARGA BLANCA (Manuel C. Valdez) (ca. 1948) sung by Los Cuatesones (Manuel C. Valdez & Andrés Alvarez)
21. EL PROFUGO (Juan Gaytán) (ca. 1950) sung by Juan Gaytán & Frank Cantú
22. CORRIDO DE JUAN MENESES (1946) sung by Las Hermanas Guerrero with Jimmy Morgan's conjunto
23. FRANCISCO MARTÍNEZ (late 1940s) sung by Juan Gaytán & Félix Solís
24. TRAGEDIA DE LOS CARGADORES (early 1950s) sung by Frank Cantú with Conjunto Topo Chico
25. LA CADENA (Manuel C. Valdez) (1934) sung by Los Cuatesones (Manuel C. Valdez & Andrés Alvarez)
26. EL REY DE PIPA ROJA (1970s) sung by Los Monteños

Name in parenthesis after the title indicates composer where known. The year in parenthesis after title and composer indicates the year or period in which the event took place.

Transcriptions & translations by Professor James Nicolopulos
Edited by Professor James Nicolopulos & Chris Strachwitz
Thanks to the Arhoolie Foundation for their assistance on this project.

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THE ROOTS OF THE NARCOCORRIDO

Introduction

The narrative ballads known as *corridos* emerged in their present form during the nineteenth century in what Prof. Américo Paredes calls Greater Mexico (including the present day territory of the Republic of Mexico and large parts of the United States that have substantial populations of Mexican origin). The role of the corrido as a medium of popular expression—often in opposition to or contradiction of official pronouncements and/or interpretations of events—became significantly enhanced in the context of two great, defining struggles that dominated the Mexican cultural experience during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: 1) the vast social upheaval of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1940); 2) the ongoing collision and the concomitant, frequently conflictive, dialogue between traditional Hispanic political, economic, and socio-cultural norms and those of the aggressively advancing Anglo-American colossus of the north. It is precisely in these contexts that the "heroic" corrido became consecrated as one of the purest expressions of Mexican national identity.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the unprecedented flourishing of the so-called "narcocorrido" in the commercial media from the early 1970s on to the present day has provoked such consternation and dismay. This particular type of ballad presents its characters as moving in the world of illegal drug trafficking, and increasingly—as the decades slip by—has celebrated the trafficker as a heroic figure, and even come to glamorize the drugs themselves. The purpose of the present collection of corridos, far from attempting to articulate an apology for either the drugs or those who traffick in them, is, on the contrary, to place the phenomenon of the narcocorrido in its historical and cultural contexts. It is our hope that in this way we will be able to promote a more informed understanding of how an activity so harmful to society—and those who profit from it—have come to play such a compelling role in the popular imagination.

Because we are primarily concerned with the "roots" of the drug-trafficking corrido, rather than its post-1970s blossoming, this collection contains only one representative ballad from that decade (#26, "El rey de la pipa roja"), and concentrates on the years between c. 1880 and c. 1960 (for a detailed description of the post-1970s narcocorrido see Elijah Wald, *Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas* [New York: HarperCollins, 2001] and the complementary Fonovisa SDCD 6161). Our collection opens with a version of the ever-popular corrido "Heraclio Bernal." The historical person upon whose life and death this corrido is based was actively involved in armed resistance to the dictator Porfirio Díaz and spent his best years devoted to the systematic pillaging of the foreign-owned mining concerns of his native state of Sinaloa and the neighboring mountains of Durango during the 1870s and 1880s. Although Bernal insisted on styling himself a revolutionary—complete with political manifestos, etc.—the government relentlessly categorized him as a common bandit. Be that however it may have been, in the majority of the traditional ballads about Bernal he is portrayed as a "Robin Hood" figure who robbed the rich in order to help the poor. Although Bernal was betrayed—for a considerable reward—and killed, probably around 1888, versions of his corridos continue to form an active part of the national repertoire to this day. At this point one may well ask: what does a "pre-revolutionary bandit" like Bernal have to do with trafficking in contraband?

The answer is of key importance to the understanding of the underlying logic of this collection. Heraclio Bernal is the best-known and most representative example in Mexican folklore and popular culture of what the scholar E.J. Hobsbawn has called the "social bandit." Guillermo Hernández summarizes Hobsbawm's formulation of the typical features of the social bandit as follows:

a) A man becomes a bandit because he does something which is not regarded as criminal by his local conventions, but is so regarded by the State or the local rulers.

b) The population hardly ever helps the authorities catch the "peasants'" bandit, but on the contrary protects him.

c) His standard end—for if he makes too much of a nuisance of himself almost every individual bandit will be defeated, though banditry may remain endemic—is by betrayal.

d) The peasants in turn add invulnerability to the bandit's many other legendary and heroic qualities.

(quoted from Guillermo E. Hernández, ed. *The Mexican Revolution: Corridos about the Heros and Events—1910-1920 and Beyond!*, pamphlet accompanying Arhoolie/Folklyric CDs 7041-44 [El Cerrito, CA: Arhoolie/Folklyric, 1996]: 19.)

The relevance of the concept of the social bandit in the context of the celebration of the smuggler in folklore and popular culture becomes immediately apparent if we pass on from Heraclio Bernal to a near contemporary, Mariano Reséndez. Américo Paredes has identified the "Corrido de Mariano Reséndez" as the earliest and most durable of the smuggling ballads that he was able to collect during his many decades of extensive research along the Lower Rio Grande Border. In many ways, "Mariano Reséndez" establishes the conventions that continue to give shape to the representation of the smuggler as a heroic figure on up to the present day. Crucial to the comprehension of this is the fact that the historical Reséndez occupied himself with smuggling contraband from the United States into Mexico, and not the other way around. In folklore, especially, he is portrayed as a trafficker in luxury items, particularly fine imported textiles. Given the exaggeratedly high customs duties imposed by the Mexican government on such articles, it is easy to comprehend why many Mexicans came to see him as a benefactor. This is reflected in many of the ballads that were—and are still—sung about him, where he is portrayed in terms that are strikingly similar to those used for Heraclio Bernal and other social bandits of the period. In fact, a smuggler like Reséndez fits Hobsbawm's requirement that the community not disapprove of his technically illegal activities even more neatly than a highway robber like Bernal. Furthermore, like Bernal, Reséndez participated actively in the political opposition to the Díaz dictatorship, and thus his flouting of the import regulations was seen by many as part and parcel of a more general program of resistance to an oppressive and illegitimate regime.

These qualities of the smuggler, not only of social bandit or "Robin Hood," but also of symbol of struggle against officially sanctioned oppression, become intensified during the years of Prohibition in the United States, when border smugglers—while never giving up their trafficking into Mexico—re-oriented much of their activity towards the smuggling of alcoholic beverages from Mexico into the U.S. Not surprisingly, it is during this period of the 1920s and 1930s that the immediate antecedents of the drug trafficking corridos can be found. The contraband ballads of this era can be divided into two basic types: a) the "heroic" corridos where the smuggler is presented as protagonist of intercultural conflict—thus continuing the Border tradition of earlier ballads such as "Gregorio Cortez" and "Jacinto Treviño;" b) ballads that fall within the category known in international ballad studies as the "prisoner's lament." This collection presents a range of excellent examples of both types, delineating a chronological progression that takes us up to the Repeal of Prohibition in 1933, and not too surprisingly, the first corridos to mention explicitly the traffic in illegal drugs as well as alcohol as early as the following year of 1934.

The final selections illustrate how these two currents continue to develop concurrently during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s with a gradual preference for the heroic type where the trafficker is seen as a hero of intercultural conflict. The fullest, most explicit expression of this trend can be seen in our final selection, "El rey de la pipa roja"—a little-known but powerful corrido from the southern Mexican state of Guerrero that marks the culmination of the process of transformation from social bandit to drug-trafficking hero of intercultural conflict even more unequivocally than the contemporary hits by *conjuntos* such as Los Tigres del Norte that are commonly credited with initiating the current popularity of the so-called narcocorrido.

(Prof. James Nicolopulos - Berkeley, CA – August 2004)

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1. EL CORRIDO DE HERACLIO BERNAL

sung by Dueto Adán y Eva (Recorded in Mexico City 5/2/1953 – P 4154)

As indicated in the "Introduction" to this collection, the "Corrido de Heraclio Bernal" is the best example of the representation of a late-nineteenth-century outlaw in terms of what E. J. Hobsbawm would call a "social bandit." Nicole Giron, whose study *Heraclio Bernal: ¿bandido, cacique o precursor de la Revolución?* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1976) remains the fundamental resource for the study of Bernal and his ballad cycle, has identified at least thirteen distinct versions of this corrido, and there are doubtlessly many more. These ballads are divided in their perspectives on Bernal, some taking a more officialist line and concentrating primarily on the relief felt by certain sectors of society at his demise, but most also making some reference to his Robin-Hood-like qualities. In general, the briefer and more commercial the version, the less of the "social bandit" elements remain explicit in the text. Nonetheless, as ballads recorded in the 1990s such as "Tragedia de Heraclio Bernal" and "Corrido del Mono" (Arhoolie CD 9050 / Cass 3026) demonstrate, the informed corrido audience remains aware of the broader version of the legend even when the text at hand omits many or most of the relevant details. The version offered here, although tending towards the more commercialized, Plaza Garibaldi mariachi treatment, still retains important oral-traditional elements such as Bernal's boasting from horse back (stanzas 5 & 9), the reward-induced treachery on the part of one of his followers (stanzas 3, 6, & 7), and a direct reference to the Robin Hood motif (stanza 9). Finally, in contrast to the, perhaps ironic, relief expressed in the refrain, in the one stanza (#10) devoted to reactions to his death, it is all the young women from the Pacific beaches of Sinaloa at Altata up to the high mountain mining country of Durango (Mapimí) who will mourn his passing, as is only fitting for a romantic outlaw hero of the late nineteenth century.

1.El Corrido de Heraclio Bernal

1. Año de mil ochocientos
ochenta y ocho al contado,
Heraclio Bernal murió, por el gobierno pagado.
2. La tragedia de Bernal
en Guadalupe empezó,
por unas barras de plata, que dicen que se robó.
3. Estado de Sinaloa,
gobierno de Culiacán,
ofrecieron diez mil pesos, por la vida de Bernal.
4. (Estribillo)
¿Qué dices mano,
qué dices pues?
Ya están los caminos libres, vámonos pa' San Andrés.
5. Heraclio Bernal decía:
—Yo no ando de robabueyes, pues tengo plata sellada
en Guadalupe Los Reyes.—
6. Decía Crispín García
muy enfadado de andar:
—Si me dan los diez mil pesos,
yo les entrego a Bernal.—
7. Le dieron los diez mil pesos,
los recontó en su mascada,
y le dijo al comandante: —¡Alístenme una acordada!
8. estribillo
9. Qué bonito era Bernal
en su caballo jovero,
él no robaba a los pobres,
antes les daba dinero.
10. Lloran todas las muchachas
desde Altata hasta Mapimí,
ya mataron a Bernal,
ya no lo verán aquí.
11. Vuela, vuela palomita,
vuela, vuela hacia el olivo,
que hasta don Porfirio Díaz, quiso conocerlo vivo.
12. estribillo

1.The Ballad of Heraclio Bernal

1. In the year of 1888,
exactly in that year,
Heraclio Bernal died, his death paid for by the government.
2. The tragedy of Bernal
began in Guadalupe (Guadalupe de los Reyes, Sinaloa),
on account of some bars of silver, that they say he stole.
3. The state of Sinaloa,
from the capital in Culiacán,
offered ten thousand pesos, for the head of Bernal.
4. (Refrain)
What do you say, brother.
well, what do you say?
Now that the roads are safe, let's go to San Andrés!
5. Heraclio Bernal was saying:
"I'm no cattle rustler, I have plenty of silver minted
in Guadalupe de los Reyes."
6.Crispín García was saying,
very tired of riding as an outlaw:
"If you give me the ten thousand pesos,
I'll hand you over Bernal."
7. They gave him the ten thousand pesos,
he counted them up in his bandana,
and he told the commandante: "Get a posse ready for me!"
8. (Refrain)
9. How fine looking was Bernal,
mounted on his paint horse;
he didn't rob the poor,
on the contrary, he gave them money.
10. All the girls are crying now,
from Altata all the way to Mapimí,
now Bernal's been killed,
now they'll never see him here again.
11. Fly away, fly away little dove,
fly away, fly on to that olive tree,
even Don Porfirio Díaz, wanted to meet him while alive.
12. (Refrain)

2. MARIANO RESÉNDEZ

sung by Timoteo Cantú y Jesús Maya (recorded in Nuevo Laredo, Tamps. ca. 1948 – Ideal # 162)

The features and attributes associated with the ballad portrayal of the late-nineteenth-century social bandit such as Heraclio Bernal provided a verbal template, as it were, for the development of the characterization of two increasingly dominant figures in the Mexican popular imagination. The most recognized, socially "acceptable," and well-understood of these is the military hero of the revolution—Pancho Villa, for instance—who like his pre-revolutionary "bandit" predecessors is typically described as astride his magnificent charger, pistol in hand, shouting insults and defiance at his more numerous but craven enemies. The major difference, according to Guillermo Hernández, is that the revolution fully legititimizes the hero's actions and imbues him with an elevated social status relative to his foes. The full

realization of this particular offshoot of the social bandit would have to wait several decades, however, for the events of 1910 and beyond to provide the appropriate socio-historical context. In contrast, the other major derivative seems to have developed contemporaneously with ballad heroes from interior Mexico such as Bernal, although at first only along the Río Grande border, including South Texas, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas. The border provided the necessary conditions, of course, because this particular variation of the social bandit type was the successful, large-scale cross-border trafficker in contraband.

The earliest known and most durable of these smugglers in the popular imagination was without doubt Mariano Reséndez. Although there is some disagreement about his precise dates, all authorities agree that he was the scion of a wealthy landowning family and that he engaged in large-scale smuggling from the U.S. into Mexico in defiance of the Díaz government. Frequently accompanied by as many as one hundred armed riders, Reséndez did not shy away from engaging in running gun battles with the customs officers when the usual combination of bribery and intimidation failed to open passage for his "merchandise." There is also evidence that he was very deeply involved in anti-Porfirian proto-revolutionary activity, including supplying arms to local, Texas-based resistance leaders such as Catarino Garza, although that aspect of his career does not seem to have been celebrated in the known ballads about him. When Porfirio Díaz and his main henchman in Monterrey, General Bernardo Reyes, finally lost patience with him, Reséndez was captured by surprise at his hideout at the El Charco ranch, not far from Méndez, Tamps., by trusted porfirian officer Colonel Nieves Hernández. As all known versions of the corrido relate, after being handed over to troops from the state of Nuevo León by Colonel Hernández, Reséndez fell victim to the notorious "ley de fuga"—which is to say he was allegedly "shot while trying to escape," and thus did not survive to confront charges against him in Monterrey.

The corrido(s) about Mariano Reséndez exist in a number of versions, as attested to by field recordings from the living oral tradition by Américo Paredes, Francisco Ramos Aguirre, and others. Paredes offers the longest variant—no less than thirty-eight stanzas—which he speculates may be the result of the conflation of two or more different ballads about distinct aspects of Reséndez's career. Curiously, however, for reasons about which we can only speculate, no two-part commercial recordings were made of "Mariano Reséndez" during the heyday of the 78 rpm disk when it was fairly common to release versions of corridos with up to twenty or more stanzas. The version included here, performed by the seminal *norteño* duet of Timoteo Cantú and Jesús Maya and recorded in the studios of Radio XEDF in Nuevo Laredo, Tamps. by pioneer Tejano independent record impresario Armando Marroquín of Discos Ideal ca. 1948, is very probably the first commercial recording of this border classic. Although recorded many times subsequently, by a whole gamut of conjuntos—including, most notably Los Alegres de Terán—all are similarly truncated texts that begin with Nieves Hernández's seige of El Charco—stanza #25 in Paredes's variant. All post-war recordings similarly abbreviate the series of farewells to the various law enforcement agents who will no longer have to live in dread of Reséndez—three stanzas in Paredes, stanza #6 below—one of the textual features that most closely links the cycle of Mariano Reséndez—known to this day along the border as "El Contrabandista"—to that of the social bandit Heraclio Bernal. Yet another key element for the appreciation of the generic affinity of the earliest smuggling corridos with those of the social bandit, the series of boasting or defiant speech acts such as "Entrenle, guardas cobardes (Come on, you cowardly Border guards)" [Paredes #10] which recall not only those of Heraclio Bernal but also the archetypical "Entrenle, rinches cobardes" of the classic corridos of intercultural conflict along the border such as "Gregorio Cortéz" or "Jacinto Treviño" are also omitted here. These elements are of such importance for the understanding of the underlying thesis of this collection, that the reader is urged to consult Paredes's text and translation (*A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* [Austin: U of Texas P, 1995] 96-100). On the other hand, the sound recording included in our collection provides a sense of the "flavor" of this seminal smuggling corrido, and along with all of its subsequent "covers" and slightly varying versions, it stands as a testimony to the durability of the legend of Mariano Reséndez in the popular imagination, and how it lays the foundation for the portrayal of subsequent generations of cross-border smugglers.

2.Mariano Reséndez

1. Año de mil novecientos
dejó recuerdos muy grandes,
murió Mariano Reséndez,
lo aprehendió Nieves Hernández.
2. Le iban a quebrar la puerta
cuando llegó el otro hermano,
con ansia le preguntaban:
—¿Dónde se halla don Mariano?—
3.José María Reséndez,
su contestación fue buena:
—Señores, yo no sé nada,
yo vengo de Santa Elena.—
4. El carro "onde" iba Mariano,
iba rodeado de lanzas,
decía Mariano Reséndez:
—No pierdo las esperanzas.—
5. Como le tuvieron miedo
que recibiera algún cargo,
lo mataron entremedio

2.Mariano Reséndez

1. The year of nineteen hundred
left many fond memories,
Mariano Reséndez was killed,
he was captured by Nieves Hernández.
2. They were going to break down the door
when Mariano's other brother arrived,
with great anxiety they asked him:
"Where is Don Mariano?"
3. José María Reséndez,
his answer was very good:
"Gentlemen, I know nothing,
I've just come from Santa Elena."
4. The cart in which Mariano was riding
was surrounded by picked men,
Mariano Reséndez was saying:
"I'm not going to lose hope."
5. Because they were afraid of him,
because they were afraid he might be given some office,
they killed him on the road

de Agualeguas y Cerralvo.
6. Empleaditos de Guerrero
a todos los llevo en lista,
ya no morirán de susto,
ya murió "El Contrabandista".
7. Ya con ésta ahí me despido
cortando una flor de mayo,
aquí se acaban cantando, los versos de don Mariano.

between Agualeguas and Cerralvo.
6. You policemen of Guerrero [Tamps.],
I have you all on my list;
you will no longer die of fright,
because The Smuggler is dead.
7. Now with this I bid farewell,
plucking a May flower,
here ends the singing of the stanzas about Don Mariano.

3. Nieves Hernández (Jose Pérez)

sung by Los Satélites (recorded in Monterrey, N.L. ca. 1960s)

The only reason that Colonel Nieves Hernández is remembered in folklore and popular culture is because of the historical happenstance that it fell to him to arrest Mariano Reséndez. His name was thus immortalized in the corridos about the famous smuggler, but not in a particularly positive light given that the implication—especially in the briefer versions of the ballads—is that he was either resposnsible for or at least complicit in the extrajudicial execution of the defenseless hero. Textual evidence in the one known corrido dedicated specifically to Hernández—included here—suggests that some of his descendants—most likely the grandchildren referred to in stanza #1—were not content with this state of affairs, and commissioned the composition of the "Corrido de Nieves Hernández" as a reinvindication of their grandfather's memory. Ramos Aguirre notes that the composer—frequently although not always given as "José Pérez"—engaged in certain "poetic license" in his "heroic" portrayal of Colonel Hernández, claiming that he died "heroically" in an ambush because his enemies feared him too much to risk a direct encounter (stanza #5). According to Ramos Aguirre's documentary research, the truth was somewhat more prosaic; the captor of Mariano Reséndez died of natural causes in a military prison, having bungled the apprehension of Catarino Garza and thus having lost the protection of his former patrons, Porfirio Díaz and Bernardo Reyes. Nonetheless, we include the corrido because it is yet another testimony to the ubiquity and symbolic importance of the legend of Mariano Reséndez in the communities that produce and consume the corridos of the Lower Border.

3.Nieves Hernández	3.Nieves Hernández
1. Recordando viejos tiempos	1. In remembrance of old times,
porque el destino me mande,	let destiny command me,
con permiso de sus nietos,	with the permission of his grandchildren,
canto un hombre de los grandes, con respeto al coronel	I sing of a great man, with respect to the Colonel
llamado Nieves Hernández.	named Nieves Hernández.
2. Era hombre de gran valor	2. He was a man of great courage,

de los pocos que hay ahorita,	there are few enough like him nowadays,
apreciado por los hombres	respected by his male peers,
y las muchachas bonitas,	and appreciated by the pretty girls,
su cuna lo fue Jaumave, estado de Tamaulipas.	he was born in Jaumave, in the state of Tamaulipas.
3. Un coronel afamado,	3. He was a famous officer,
todo el mundo lo sabía,	everybody knew about him,
nació en el siglo pasado,	he was born in the last century (19th),
ya todos lo conocían,	in those days everyone knew him,
era hombre de las confianzas	he was a man who had the confidence
del señor Porfirio Díaz.	of the great Porfirio Díaz.
4. Yo te doy explicación	4. I will explain it all to you,
por si tú no me comprendes,	in case you don't understand,
era jefe de la plaza	he (Hernández) was the top commander
de ese pueblito de Méndez,	in this little town of Méndez (Tamaulipas),
recibió orden de aprehender	when he received the order to arrest
a don Mariano Reséndez.	Don Mariano Reséndez.
5. Era un hombre respetable,	5. Hernández was a man worthy of respect,
no le tenía miedo a nada,	he wasn't afraid of anything,
le tiraron a traición,	the ambushers shot him without warning,
le dieron la retirada, sólo así podían matarlo	they shot him in the back, only by springing an ambush,
poniéndole una emboscada.	only in this way could they kill him.
6. Aquí termina el corrido, pues ya me voy retirando,	6. Here ends the corrido, because I am now taking my leave,
ya murió Nieves Hernández, que siempre anduvo cuidando	now Nieves Hernández has died, he who was always vigilant
que al país no entrara nada	that nothing might come into the country
que fuera de contrabando.	that might have been contraband.

4. Corrido de Mier

sung by Peña y Tijerina (recorded in McAllen, Tx. October 4, 1950 – Falcon # 133)

The incident at the Customs House of Ciudad Mier, Tamps., recounted below has given rise to a number of corrido variants that follow the general story line, employ the same musical and metrical patterns, but which nonetheless vary considerably in details and names of persons. Among alternate titles we find "La aduana de Mier" and "El Resguardo," for instance. My sense is that the incident occurred sometime during the 1920s—thus illustrating that even during Prohibition the flow of contraband from the U.S. into Mexico never diminished. Ramos Aguirre remarks that for a long time the performance of this corrido was a delicate business, due to the fact that many family relatives of the customs officers involved were present in the region, and strongly resented the public ridicule represented by the ballad. Probably for this reason, Ramos Aguirre notes that the song was not widely sung until around 1930, and in fact did not enter the commercial recording repertoire until after WWII, when it did

receive fairly wide dissemination. Perhaps for the purposes of this collection, the main lesson to be learned here is that although the smuggler himself may be portrayed as a heroic social bandit, the corrupt law enforcement officials—despite their necessary contribution to the structural success of the contraband business—are often viewed negatively, and as here, comically as well, especially when they have behaved in an inept and cowardly manner.

4. Corrido de Mier

1. Señores, pongan cuidado,
lo que ha pasado
en esa Aduana de Mier,
no se puede creer,
que a toditito el Resguardo,
y aquí lo guardo, pa' poderlo reprender.
2. Y se ponían de acuerdo,
del otro lado,
con un revolucionario, un tal Macario,
para pasar contrabando, y así burlando,
a los empleados de El Vado.
3. El general Elizondo,
por lo más hondo, del río se había pasado,
pa' este lado, para buscar su caballo,
para montarse y también armarse
con los empleados de El Vado.
4. También decía Rendón,
pues tenía razón,
que todo se iba informando,
yo supe cuando,
que Arnulfo y Zacarías
todos los días, protegían contrabando.
5. Al llegar a la garita,
muy silencita, decía el cabo De La Huerta:
—Abreme la puerta, porque ahí vienen los contrarios,
y vienen varios, presos de la gente nuestra.—
6. Al llegar a la garita,
muy silencita, la gente asaltadora,
y a mala hora,
se encontaron bien dormidos
a los empleados,
muy arrojados, menos la registradora.

4. Ballad of Mier

1. Gentlemen, pay attention
to what has happened
in that Customs House at Mier (Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas),
it's difficult to believe that it happened
to the entire Customs detachment,
I recall it here, in order to reprehend it.
2. The Customs officers made an arrangement,
on the other side of the Río Grande,
with a revolutionary, a certain Macario,
in order to pass contraband, and thus make fools
of the customs agents of El Vado. (vehicle ford at Mier)
3. General Elizondo
had crossed over the, deepest part of the river,
over to this side, to look for his horse,
in order to mount up, and also to
muster the aid of the loyal agents of El Vado.
4. Rendón was also saying,
because he was right about it,
that Elizondo was investigating everything,
I knew exactly when,
that Arnulfo and Zacarías (Customs men)
everyday of the week, were protecting loads of contraband.
5. Upon arriving at the Customs shed,
very quietly, corporal De La Huerta was saying:
"Open up the door, because the enemy is coming,
and they have taken, some of our people prisoner."
6. Upon arriving at the Customs shed,
very quietly, the assaulting force
by bad luck,
found all the Customs officers
very bravely asleep,
all except for the female inspector.

5. Los Tequileros

sung by Jesús Maya y Timoteo Cantú (recorded in Nuevo Laredo, Tamps. – ca. January 1949 – Ideal # 253)

The imposition of Prohibition in the U.S. in 1919 set into motion a fundamental structural change in the trafficking of contraband along the border that continues to give shape to all aspects of this activity up to the present day. Although smuggling of illicit merchandise from north to south has never ceased completely, the thirsty market for illegal alcohol in the U.S. re-oriented the major focus of the border smugglers. Furthermore, as in the case of the luxury goods trafficked in by Mariano Reséndez, major segments of the community could not see any inherent justification for the illegality of the traffic in liquor. As noted in the Introduction, from 1919 on the contraband ballads of the border can be divided into two basic types: a) the "heroic" corridos in which the by-then established figure of the smuggler as social bandit was fused with and unimaginably enhanced by the powerful image of the hero of intercultural conflict in the mold of Gregorio Cortéz and Jacinto Treviño; b) ballads that fall within the category known in international ballad studies as the "prisoner's lament." Of the ballads pertaining to the first category, undoubtedly the most durable and widely-known is "Los Tequileros." This corrido also exhibits a feature common to many similar ballads of its type: while the smugglers are portrayed as heroically valiant in their defiance of the superior forces arrayed against them, they are also presented as victims. As Américo Paredes and others have established, it was the custom of Anglo law enforcement agents along the border and throughout South Texas—whether technically Texas Rangers or Border Patrolmen or whatever, all are lumped by the corrido community into the category of "*rinches*"—to cut down their victims from ambush, and "ask questions later." In this respect, these "tequilero" corridos anticipate the so-called "victim" corridos of the post-WWII period identified and commented on by Manuel Peña, among others, and serve to rally public indignation against abusive treatment under color of authority in addition to the celebration of the heroic qualities of the border traffickers.

Much like "Mariano Reséndez," "Los tequileros" is based on real people and events (see Ramos Aguirre) and seems to have been current in the oral tradition along the border for many years before being recorded commercially. Paredes gives a text of sixteen stanzas that focuses much more attention on the circumstances leading up to the ambush than the version included here. Curiously, again for reasons unknown, only one recording seems to have been made before WWII—a two-part rendition by Los Hermanos Chavarría for Columbia in 1932 (C 4904-X)—, and unfortunately it continues to elude the grasp of the most diligent collectors. The Cantú y Maya interpretation included here quite probably represents the earliest post-war commercial recording. Numerous subsequent recorded performances vary slightly in length (usually reducing the text to eight or even fewer stanzas in contrast to the ten here) and content. One feature of the commercial recordings is that they invariably change the orally collected

versions' "they hunt **us** down like deer / just so they can kill **us**" (stanza #9) to "hunt **them**" and "kill **them**," thus distancing the performers from those engaged in illegal activities.

5.Los Tequileros

1. El día tres de noviembre,
¡qué día tan señalado!
mataron tres de Guerrero
estos rinches desdichados.
2. Salieron desde Guerrero
con tequila ya anisado, el rumbo que ellos llevaban
era San Diego mentado.
3. Al llegar al Río Grande
se pusieron a pensar:
—Es bueno llevar a Leandro
porque "semos" dos nomás.—
4. Le echan el invite a Leandro,
Leandro les dijo que no:
—Miren que yo estoy enfermo,
y así no quisiera yo.
5. Al fin de tanto invitarlo
Leandro los acompañó,
en las Lomas de Almirambo
fue el primero que murió.
6. Les dispararon a un tiempo,
lo deben de haber sabido,
cayó Gerónimo muerto y, Silvano muy mal herido.
7. Pues Silvano con dos tiros
todavía quedó hablando:
—Mátenme rinches cobardes,
ya no me estén preguntando.—
8. El capitán de los rinches
a Silvano se acercó,
en unos cuantos segundos, Silvano Gracia murió.
9. Los rinches son muy valientes,
no se les puede quitar,
los cazan como venados
para poderlos matar.
10. Ya con ésta ahí me despido
en mi caballo Lucero,
mataron tres gallos finos, del pueblito de Guerrero.

5.The Tequileros

1. On the third day of November,
what a memorable day!
Those despicable rinches (Rangers)
killed three men from Ciudad Guerrero.
2. They left from Guerrero
with "gold" tequila, the direction they were headed
was towards the well-known town of San Diego (Texas).
3. When they reached the Rio Grande,
then they stopped to think:
"We had better take along Leandro,
because there are only two of us."
4. They asked Leandro to go with them,
Leandro told them "no:"
"Look at me, I'm sick,
I don't want to go like this."
5. They kept on asking him to go,
until Leandro went with them,
in the Lomas de Almirambo,
he was the first to die.
6. The rinches fired a volley at them all at once,
they must have known ahead of time,
Gerónimo fell dead and, Silvano was badly wounded.
7. Silvano, although hit by two bullets,
nonetheless continued to speak:
"Go ahead and kill me you cowardly rinches,
just don't try to ask me any questions!"
8. The captain of the rinches
came up close to Silvano,
in just a few seconds, Silvano Gracia was dead.
9. The rinches are very brave,
there's no taking that away from them,
they hunt them (Mexicans) down like deer,
just so that they can kill them.
10. Now with this I bid farewell
mounted on my horse Lucero,
they killed three brave "roosters," from the town of Guerrero.

6 & 7. Contrabando de El Paso (Parts I & II) (Gabriel Jara)

sung by Luis Hernández y Leonardo Sifuentes (recorded in El Paso,Tx on April 15, 1928 – V 80755)

At least in the commercial sphere of the incipient mass media during the 1920s and 1930s, the "heroic" smuggling corrido as represented by "Los tequileros" was clearly overshadowed by the ballads of the "prisoner's lament" variety. The theme had already achieved considerable commercial success in the burgeoning field of what was to become Country & Western music with Vernon Dalhart's 1924 hit the "Prisoner's Song." Spanish-language prisoner ballads of the conventional sort had been recorded since the first decade of the twentieth century, but the El Paso-based duet of Hernández y Sifuentes seems to have launched a particularly successful sub-genre—in which the prisoner is a repentant "victim" of trafficking in illegal merchandise—with their 1928 recording of "Contrabando de El Paso." Virtually the same text was recorded subsequently no less than five times between August 1928 and October 1929 by four different duets. Guillermo Hernández informs us that: "This corrido is based on the life experience of its author, Gabriel Jara, who spent two years as a prisoner in Leavenworth prison. Accused and sentenced for smuggling alcohol into the United States during the Prohibition Era, Jara was released and deported to Mexico in October of 1925. His friend, Leonardo Sifuentes, along with Luis Hernández, made the first recording of 'El Contranbando de El Paso' in El Paso, Texas on April 15, 1928" ("El corrido en la historia cultural mexicana" © Unpublished Ms. in possesion of Professor Guillermo Hernández). Thus not only is their version based on real people and events but it also probably launched this classic corrido into the oral tradition as well. Paredes notes that it is widely known along the border, and gives an eighteen stanza version that does not differ in substantial respects from the Hernández y Sifuentes recording—itself of nineteen stanzas. Possibly because the exact type of contraband involved is not specified in the text, this corrido continues to have currency in the post-war repertoire. It also spawned a string of close imitations during the late 1920s and early 1930s that are, as will be seen in selections #16-#19 below, directly implicated in the composition and recording of the first known corridos to explicitly mention the traffic in illegal drugs as well as alcohol.

6. Contrabando de El Paso Pt. I

1. El día siete de agosto,
estábamos desesperados,
que nos sacarán de El Paso
para Kiansas mancornados.
2. Nos sacaron de la corte, a las ocho de la noche
nos llevaron pa' el dipo, nos montaron en un coche.
3. Yo dirijo mi mirada, por todita la estación,

6. Contraband of El Paso Pt. I

1. On the seventh day of August
we were feeling desperate;
for they took us out of El Paso,
chained together, toward Kansas.
2. They took us out of the jail, at eight o'clock at night;
they took us to the station, and they put us on a coach.
3. I direct my gaze, all over the station,

a mi madre idolatrada,
pedirle su bendición.
4. Ni mi madre me esperaba,
ni siquiera mi mujer,
¡adiós todos mis amigos! ¿cuándo los volveré a ver?
5. Ya viene silbando el tren,
ya no tardará en llegar,
les dije a mis compañeros, que no fueran a llorar.
6. Ya voy a tomar el tren,
me encomiendo a un santo fuerte,
ya no vuelvo al contrabando,
porque tengo mala suerte.
7. Ya comienza andar el tren,
a repicar la campaña,
le pregunto a Mr. *Hill*, que si vamos a Louisiana.
8. Mr. *Hill* con su risita, me contesta: —No señor,
pasaremos de Louisiana,
derechito a Leavenworth.
9. Corre, corre maquinita, suéltale todo el vapor,
anda a dejar los convictos
hasta el plan de Leavenworth.
10. Yo les digo a mis amigos,
que salgan a exprimentar
que le entren al contrabando,
a ver dónde van a dar.

seeking my beloved mother,
so that I may ask for her blessing.
4. But my mother was not waiting for me,
nor even my wife,
farewell to all of my friends! when shall I see you again?
5. Now the train approaches, whistle blowing,
it will not be long before it arrives;
I tell my companions, to be sure not to weep.
6. Now I'm going to get on the train,
and I commend myself to a powerful saint,
I will not go back to smuggling,
because I have bad luck.
7. Now the train begins to move,
and its bell begins ringing,
I ask Mr. Hill, if we are going to Lousiana.
8. Mr. Hill, with his little smile, replies: "No sir,
we will go through Louisiana,
and straight to Leavenworth.
9. Run, run, little locomotive, full steam ahead!
go deliver these convicts,
straight to the plain of Leavenworth.
10. I tell my friends
to go ahead and experiment,
that they go ahead and get into contraband,
just wait and see where they'll end up!

7. Contrabando de El Paso Pt. II

11. Esto encargo a mis paisanos,
que brincan el charco y cerco,
no se crean de los amigos,
que son cabezas de puerco.
12. Que por cumplir la palabra,
amigos en realidad,
cuando uno se halla en la corte,
se olvidan de la amistad.
13. Yo lo digo con razón,
más de algunos compañeros,
en la calle son amigos,
porque son convenencieros.
14. Pero de esto no hay cuidado,

7. Contraband of El Paso Pt. II

11. I advise my countrymen,
when they jump across the pond and the fence (the border),
do not trust in your friends,
for they are self-serving hypocrites.
12. I kept my word,
like a true friend,
but when one lands in jail,
your friends forget all about friendship.
13. I say this with good reason,
more than a few companions,
pretend to be your friends out on the streets,
just because it suits their interests.
14. But let's not worry about all that,

ya lo que pasó voló,
algún día se han de encontrar,
donde me encontraba yo.
15. Es bonito el contrabando,
se gana mucho dinero,
pero lo que más me puede,
las penas de un prisionero.
16. Vísperas de San Lorenzo,
como a las once del día,
que pisamos los umbrales,
de la penitenciaría.
17. El que hizo estas mañanitas,
le han de otorgar el perdón,
si no están bien corregidas,
pues ésa fue su opinión.
18. Unos vienen con dos años,
otros con un año y un día,
otros con dieciocho meses,
a la penitenciaría.
19. Allí te mando mamacita,
un suspiro y un abrazo,
aquí dan fin las mañanas,
del contrabando de El Paso.

what's done is done and over;
may they some day find themselves
in the same fix I'm in right now.
15. Smuggling is very fine,
you can make yourself a lot of money,
but what really weigh on me,
are the sufferings of a prisoner.
16. On the eve of St. Lawrence's day,
about eleven o'clock in the morning,
we crossed the threshold
of the penitentiary.
17. He who wrote this ballad,
may you please forgive him
if it isn't composed correctly,
well, that was just his opinion.
18. Some were coming for two years,
others for a year and a day,
and others for eighteen months,
all to the penitentiary.
19. Here I send you mother of mine,
a sigh and an embrace,
here ends the ballad
of the contraband of El Paso.

8. La Cocaína

sung by Pilar Arcos (recorded in New York City – early 1927 – C 2621-X)

Both this selection and the following one are not strictly speaking corridos, nor do they deal directly with the theme of trafficking in contraband. They have been included, however, as representatives of early songs that deal with consumption of illegal drugs. Songs that talk about the use (or abuse) of cocaine or opiates are relatively rare in the Spanish-language field, at least before the 1980s and 1990s. What is even more notable in this case is that neither the artist, Pilar Arcos, nor the material that she normally recorded, were cultivated by the "corrido community." On the contrary, Pilar Arcos appealed to a generally more well-to-do audience with a preference for semi-operatic and/or *bel canto* type material. This could possibly be interpreted as an indicator of patterns of consumption for drugs like cocaine during the so-called "Jazz Age."

8. La Cocaína

1. Un amante tuve yo, lleno de pasión y fe,
pero sin saber por qué, él cruel me abandonó.

8. Cocaine

1. I had a lover, full of passion and faith,
but I never knew why, he cruelly left me abandoned.

2. Le buscaba sin cesar,
entre copas de champán,
y olvidara si quería,
mi más ardiente y loco afán.
3. Busqué placer
en el licor,
busqué calmar, mi cruel dolor.
4. Siempre locuras ansiaba
al hombre que tanto amaba,
cuando el placer ya vi marchar,
cuando el amor ya vi alejar,
fue la cocaína un consuelo
para mi anhelo mejor calmar.
5. Una noche en un foyer
a mi antiguo amante vi
que besó con frenesí, a la estrella del cuplé.
6. Su maldita ingratitud
agitó mi corazón,
yo oprimiendo aquí un cuchillo,
vengar yo quise su traición.
7. ¡Viva el champán
que da el placer,
quiero reír (ah hah hah)
¡quiero beber!
8. Mi juventud ya declina
Dadme a probar cocaína,
amante infiel yo vuelvo a ti,
loca trepé de exaltación.
Y en mi fatal desvarío
hundí el cuchillo, en su corazón.

2. I searched for him ceaselessly,
in between glasses of champagne,
and I forgot if I loved him,
my torment and my crazy obsession.
3. I sought pleasure
in liquor,
I sought to assuage, my cruel suffering.
4. I always yearned crazily
for the man I loved so much,
when I saw the pleasure leave,
when I saw love fading into the distance,
cocaine was my consolation
in order to better calm my longing.
5. One night at the theater
I saw my former lover,
he was frenziedly kissing, the star of the show.
6. His damnable ungratefulness
stirred up my heart,
I pulled out a knife,
I wanted revenge for his betrayal.
7. Long live champagne
which gives so much pleasure!
I want to laugh (ah hah hah hah!)
I want to drink!
8. My youth is now slipping away,
give me cocaine to try,
Oh unfaithful lover, I return to you,
crazed with exaltation.
And in my fatal delirium
I sunk the knife, directly into his heart.

9. La Marihuana

sung by Trío Garnica – Ascencio (Julia Garnica – 1st voice with Blanca & Ofelia Ascencio – 2nd & 3rd voice) (recorded in Mexico City in 1929 – V 46107)

In contrast with the case of so-called "hard drugs" such as cocaine and opiates, popular songs about marijuana abound. By at least the early 1920s there are Spanish-language songs that mix the use of *caló* ("pot-head" slang) with humorous commentaries on the experience of smoking "the weed." The brief example given here is representative of the comic treatment typically accorded the subject.

9. La Marihuana

1.Fume y fume cantaba la rana
y echaba los polvos de la marihuana (2X)
2. Marihuana tuvo un hijito
y le pusieron San Espidito
como era abogado de los de Santa Ana,
porque era sazón para la marihuana. (2X)
3. Marihuana, ya no puedo ni
levantar la cabeza,
con los ojos retecolorados
y la boca reseca, reseca. (2X)

9. Marijuana

1. Smoke, smoke, sang the frog
as he blew out the dust of the marihuana. (2X)
2. Marihuana had a little son
and they named him San Espedito,
and he was the lawyer for Santa Ana's followers,
because he was really seasoned for the marihuana. (2X)
3. Marihuana, I can no longer raise my head,
with my eyes so very red
and my mouth so very dry. (2X)
(Repeat all three verses)

10. Corrido de Juan García (Homero Morales)

sung by Los Pingüinos del Norte (recorded in Piedras Negras, Coah. December 31, 2000 – ARH CD 9024)

Based on true events in 1931 that gave rise to a diplomatic incident between the U.S. and Mexico, this corrido was composed by a close relative of the "hero," performed publicly in the Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras area by a local conjunto for a number of years, and then largely forgotten until revived in the 1980s by Rubén "El Pingüino Mayor" Castillo Juárez of Los Pingüinos del Norte. One of García's relatives is said to have composed a longer version, suitable for a two-part recording, but the record was never made. This corrido is of special interest as providing yet another perspective to the "heroic/victim" type of smuggling ballad along the general lines of "Los tequileros." For further details, see my notes to Arhoolie CD 9024.

10. Corrido de Juan García

1. Año de mil novecientos
treinta y uno al recordar,
corrido de Juan García
es el que voy a cantar.
2. Era ladrón de ganado,
contrabandeaba licor,
ya lo traían en la lista
agentes de Migración.
3. Para poder liquidarlo
pues así les convendría,
a traición le dieron muerte
los rinches de infantería.
4. Melchor también disparando
alcanzó a cruzar el río,

10. The Ballad of Juan García

1. The year of 1931,
as it is remembered,
the ballad of Juan García
is the one I'm going to sing.
2. He was a livestock rustler
and he smuggled liquor,
Immigration agents
had him on their "list."
3. In order to "liquidate" him,
because it was the most convenient way,
the "rinches"* of the Border Patrol
murdered him in an ambush.
4. Melchor, who was also firing,
managed to cross the river,

dejando a Juan y a un amigo
y al caballo mal herido.
5. Por las calles de Eagle Pass
los gabachos lo exihibían,
en la polvera de un carro
el cuerpo de Juan García.
6. En San Vicente* quedó
recuerdo de aquel panteón,
acompañado de un rinche
que Juan García mató.

leaving behind Juan and another friend
and a badly wounded horse.
5. Through the streets of Eagle Pass
the Anglos paraded
the body of Juan García
lashed to the running board of a car.
6. In San Vicente** he remains,
a reminder to us from that cemetery,
accompanied by a "rinche"
that Juan García had killed.

*Ejido de donde era, en lado mexicano más o menos parejo con El Indio.

* "rinche" = originally a derogatory term applied to the Texas Rangers, later expanded to apply to all Anglo law enforcement officers.
** San Vicente = Name of the ejido where Juan García was born and lived, roughly opposite El Indio ranch on the Mexican side of the river.

11. García y Zamarripa

sung by Los Hermanos Chavarría (recorded in San Antonio, Tx on April 8, 1938 – Bb 3195)

Like "Juan García," this is another "heroic/victim" ballad from the Coahuila/Texas border—in this case the Ciudad Acuña/Del Rio sector. The 1938 performance by Los Hermanos Chavarría is the only known pre-war recording. A number of similar versions under the same title as well as that of "El 25 de mayo (The 25th of May)" have been recorded in the post-war period. These include a very rare release from the late 1940s on the ephemeral Orfeo label from Monterrey, Nuevo León by Tomás Ortiz, a certain Maldonado, and Eugenio Abrego—an immediate predecessor line-up to that of the classic conjunto Los Alegres de Terán. "García y Zamarripa" represents an extreme example of its sub-genre—the contraband involved is only alluded to—"when they were crossing" (stanza #2)—and all of the narrative focuses on the ambush and the subsequent shoot-out.

11. García y Zamarripa

1. El veinticinco de mayo,
fecha que no olvidaré,
mataron a Andrés García;
Zamarripa se les fue.
2. Eran las seis de la tarde
cuando éstos iban pasando,
los rinches bien escondidos,
ya los estaban espiando.
3. Sería su mala suerte

11. García y Zamarripa

1. The 25th of May,
a date I won't forget,
they killed Andrés García;
Zamarripa got away from them.
2. It was six o'clock in the afternoon
when the two of them were crossing (the Río Grande);
the rangers, very well hidden,
were already waiting for them.
3. Maybe it was just bad luck,

o ya estaría de Dios,
los rinches hicieron fuego,
hiriéndolos a los dos.
4. Martín sacó su pistola
pero ya estaba perdido,
viendo a Andrés en agonía
y él también muy mal herido.
5. A Andrés la sangre lo ahogaba,
ya no les pudo tirar,
los rinches le tenían miedo
y lo acabaron de matar.
6. Cuando Martín comprendió
que se podía levantar,
se regresó para atrás,
alcanzándose a salvar.
7. Su familia lo pidieron,
también se les concedió,
y en un panteón mexicano
su cuerpo se sepultó.
8. Ya con ésta me despido,
tomándome una tequila,
esta canción fue trovada
en Villa Acuña, Coahuila.

or maybe it was God's will;
the rangers opened fire on them,
wounding both of them.
4. Martín pulled out his pistol
but it was in vain,
seeing that Andrés was in his death agony
and he himself was badly wounded.
5. Andrés was choking in blood
and couldn't shoot anymore,
the rangers were afraid of them,
so they went ahead and finished Andrés off.
6. When Martín realized
that he could get up,
he managed to retreat
and managed to save his life.
7. Andrés's family asked for his corpse,
and it was granted,
and in a Mexican cemetery
his body was buried.
8. Now with this I bid farewell,
as I drink a tequila,
this song was composed
in Villa Acuña, Coahuila.

12. Los Pateros (Tomás Ortiz)

sung by Los Alegres de Terán (recorded in McAllen, Tx February 16,1954 – Falcon # 403; F-1795)

Along the Río Grande border the term "patero" has come to mean generally anyone who crosses the river by improvised means, and more specifically the smugglers as well as the bandits who prey upon all who cross the border illegally. The hero of this particular corrido clearly fits the mold of the social bandit—no one turns him in as he travels around South Texas selling his prohibited goods and he defends himself heroically with his pistol in his hand—but in this case his mortal foes are not the usual *rinches* but rather the even more dangerous river bandits. The theme of intercultural conflict takes a peculiar but not unheard of twist here: the thugs are especially to be feared if they come from the U.S. side of the river (stanza #6)—thus expressing the ever present but more often than not unspoken distrust and rivalry between *mexicanos*, on the one hand, and *tejanos* on the other, that further complicates the already treacherous cultural and ethnic landscape of the borderlands.

12. Los Pateros

1. Pueblitos del sur de Texas,
donde Cortez se paseaba,
pasaba de contrabando
y nadie lo denunciaba.
2. Al pasar el Río Grande,
lo quisieron asaltar, él descargó su pistola,
para poderse salvar.
3. Varios fueron los traidores,
un tal Martínez murió,
con un tiro de pistola rodando al agua cayó.
4. Cortez cruzó la frontera,
se fue para Nuevo León,
a ver su prieta querida
que traíba en el corazón.
5. Si quieren investigarlo los agentes de la ley,
de todos es conocido, y nacido en Monterrey.
6. Cuando pasen el Río Grande,
siempre pasen con cuidado,
cuídense de los pateros
si vienen del otro lado.

12. The River Bandits

1. Little towns of south Texas,
those that Cortez used to visit
selling his contraband,
and no one would betray him.
2. One day he was crossing the Río Grande,
and some bandits tried to rob him, he fired his pistol
in order to save himself.
3. There were many of the traitors,
a certain Martínez died,
he fell with one pistol shot and rolled down into the water.
4. Cortez went back across the border,
he headed for Nuevo León
to see his beloved sweetheart
who he loved with all his heart.
5. If the lawmen want to investigate him,
everybody knows him, and he was born in Monterrey.
6. When you cross the Río Grande,
always proceed with greatest caution,
look out for the river bandits,
especially if they come from the other side.

13 & 14. Corrido del hampa (Parts I & II)

sung by Flores y Durán (recorded in El Paso, Tx on September 9, 1935 – Vo 8833; EP 136 & 137)

This corrido presents a string of thumbnail sketches of the different faces of the underworld of Ciudad Juárez of the mid-1930s. It would appear to be a topical ballad, probably composed in the context of some political campaign or struggle of the moment in the rough and tumble border city. Of particular interest in terms of the development of the theme of drug trafficking in the corrido, as well as the role of women in life and in song, is the "notorious Nacha," "a very shrewd and elegant woman" who deals in morphine untroubled by the authorities (stanza #9).

13. Corrido del hampa Pt. I

1. Voy a cantar un corrido,
¡escuchen con atención!
de las mujeres galantes,
viciosos y malhechores,
de Juárez hay de a montón.
2. A unos los han desterrado,

13. Ballad of the Underworld Pt. I

1. I'm going to sing a ballad,
please listen carefully,
about loose women,
addicts and criminals.
In Juárez there are so many!
2. Some have been exiled,

otros dejan la carrera,
otros que por mala suerte
han encontrado la muerte
en la mentada Piedrera.
3. Fernández, con su dinero
que de nada le sirvió,
la muerte se le acercaba.
En México se paseaba
y Barragán lo mató.
4. Su muerte fue muy sentida,
pues tenemos gratitud.
Dio dinero a manos llenas:
aquí mandó hacer escuelas
en bien de la juventud.
5. Pero el que camina mal,
todo el mundo le reprocha.
Aunque demuestre ser bueno
paga caro por lo ajeno
como Pablo "la Popolla".
6. Otro, que en su vida fue
Jesús Heredia Durán,
la madrugada del veinte,
en la Piedrera le dan
dos balazos de repente.
7. Eso es castigo de arriba:
hoy la ley ya no castiga.
Fue la influencia y el dinero,
nadie lo podrá negar,
salva todo prisionero.
8. Como Sabás Ontiveros,
un hombre sin corazón,
y adentro de su cantina
mató a un anciano indefenso,
sin tenerle compasión.

others have given up the "rackets,"
still others, due to bad luck,
have encountered death
in the notorious Piedrera.
3. Fernández and his money,
which didn't do him any good,
was stalked by death.
He was traveling in Mexico
and Barragán killed him.
4. His death was widely mourned:
we are filled with gratitude.
He gave out money freely:
he had schools built here
to benefit the youth.
5. But he who walks the road of evil,
the whole world reproaches,
Although he might do noble deeds
he pays dearly for what he has acquired dishonestly,
as did Pablo "la Popolla."
6. Another one, in life called
Jesús Heredia Durán,
at dawn on the twentieth
in La Piedrera, they got him unexpectedly
with two bullets.
7. That was punishment from above:
nowadays the law doesn't penalize.
It was political influence and money,
no one can deny it—it
could get any prisoner out of jail.
8. Like Sabás Ontiveros, for instance,
a heartless individual.
Inside his bar,
without compassion,
he killed a defenseless old man.

14. Corrido del hampa Pt. II

9. También "la Nacha" mentada,
que ha sido una hembra muy fina,
la ley no la ha desterrado,
siempre en Juárez se ha quedado

14. Ballad of the Underworld Pt. II

9. There was also the notorious "Nacha,"
who has been a very shrewd and elegant woman,
the law has not exiled nor jailed her,
she has always remained in Juárez

traficando la morfina.
10. Que si la ley castigara
con una larga condena,
el dinero rechazara
y la influencia se acabara
la cárcel estaría llena.
11. Juárez, lo que necesita,
para que no haiga maleantes,
un hombre que al sacrificio
acabe con todo el vicio,
como el mayor de los amantes.
12. Un hombre que sea temible,
debe de apretar mucho rea,
un hombre de corazón
que con él no haiga perdón como Raúl Mendiolea.
13. Ahora voy a recordar
de las mujeres galantes,
que en Juárez hay de sobrar
y muchas van a quedar
en manos de sus amantes.
14. Como María de la Luz
que quería hacer la carrera,
le tocó la mala suerte y vino a encontrar la muerte
en las manos de Caldera.
15. Así es el mundo engañoso,
nadie sabe el porvenir,
unos traen mala suerte y todo es puro sufrir
hasta que llega la muerte.
16. Allá va la despedida,
escuchen bien mis cantares,
aquí termina el corrido del vicio que no ha podido
acabarse en Ciudad Juárez.

trafficking in morphine.
10. Because if the law were to punish
by imposing long sentences,
and if bribes were rejected
and if influence were to come to an end,
the jailhouse would be too full.
11. What Juárez needs,
in order to get rid of the criminals,
is a man willing to sacrifice,
who can put an end to all of the vice,
just like Jesús Christ.
12. He would have to be a feared man,
he would have to really pressure the defendants,
a man of great heart
with whom there is no pardon, just like Raúl Mendiolea.
13. Now I'm going to recall
some of the loose women
of whom there are too many in Juárez,
and many of whom go to stay
in the arms of their lovers.
14. Like María de la Luz,
who wanted a career,
she had bad luck and encountered her death
at the hands of Caldera.
15. Thus is the deceitful world,
no one knows the future,
some come with bad luck and everything is suffering
until death finally comes.
16. There goes the farewell,
listen well to my singing,
here ends the ballad about the vice that can't be
put an end to in Ciudad Juárez.

15. La Canela (Tomás Ortiz)

sung by Los Alegres de Terán (recorded in McAllen, Tx. on January 5, 1973 – F # 1985)

Many, myself included, used to speculate that the "canela (cinammon)" of the title was a metaphor for some type of illegal drug. Recently, however, Monterrey-based researcher Armando Hugo Ortiz Guerrero has discovered a wealth of detail about the true events and persons recalled in this classic

contraband ballad. The incident occurred in 1934, just outside of the town of Cadereyta Jiménez, Nuevo León at a bridge on the main Reynosa-Monterrey highway. The contraband in question was in fact Ceylonese cinnamon that had been legally imported into the U.S. through the seaport of Corpus Christi, Texas and then smuggled in a Ford truck across the border, probably near Ciudad Mier or Guerrero, Tamaulipas. Mexican customs men based in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, expecting to intercept the illicit cargo, had arrived at the bridge earlier in the night. Unfortunately, when the smugglers pulled up to the improvised road-block, a deadly shootout ensued, the basic details of which are preserved in the text of the corrido given here. Ortiz Guerrero states that the repeal of Prohibition in the U.S. the year before (1933) had provided the stimulus to the border traffickers to return to the earlier pattern of large scale smuggling of luxury goods from the U.S. into Mexico.

15. La Canela

1. Amigos voy a contarles
pero quiero su atención,
estado de Tamaulipas
y también de Nuevo León.
2. Fueron cuatro los valientes
y todos de buena ley,
traficaban la canela
de Reynosa a Monterrey.
3. Los fiscales los detienen,
Fortunato no hizo alarde,
pero le decía a un fiscal:
—Vayan y vuelvan más tarde.—
4. Traficantes y aduanales
sus pistolas dispararon,
después de la balacera
muertos y heridos quedaron.
5. El fiscal Emén Rodríguez
era hombre no muy dejado,
pero al oír los disparos
corría como un venado.
6. Fortunato fue muy hombre,
no se le puede negar,
herido les hizo fuego,
no se pudo levantar.
7. Fortunato quedó muerto
y muy grave De la Fuente,

15. Ballad of the Cinnamon

1. Friends, I'm going to tell you the story,
but I want your attention,
(it happened) in the state of Tamaulipas
and also in Nuevo León.
2. There were four brave men,
each and every one a man of his word,
they were trafficking in cinnamon
from Reynosa to Monterrey.
3. The customs men stopped their truck,
Fortunato didn't display any emotion,
but he told one of the customs men:
"Why don't you all go away and come back later?"
4. Traffickers and customs men
all began to fire their pistols;
after the shooting stopped
only the dead and wounded remained.
5. Emén Rodríguez, one of the customs men,
was not a very weak person,
but upon hearing the first shots
he ran away like a deer.
6. Fortunato was a very valiant man,
you can't deny him that,
even though wounded he kept on firing at them,
even though he couldn't even stand up.
7. Fortunato fell dead
and De la Fuente was badly wounded,

orillas de Cadereyta
antes de llegar al puente.
8. Vuela, vuela palomita,
hasta que puedas llegar,
avisa a Nuevo Laredo
lo que acaba de pasar.

just on the outskirts of Cadereyta,
just before you get to the bridge.
8. Fly, fly away, little dove,
as far away as you can fly,
let them know in Nuevo Laredo
what has just happened here.

16. & 17. Por morfina y cocaína (Manuel C. Valdez) (Parts I & II)

sung by Manuel C. Valdez y Juan González with Morales and Malagera on guitars

(recorded at the Texas Hotel in San Antonio, Tx. August 9, 1934 – Bb 2277)

As we have seen with "La canela," one possible result of the repeal of Prohibition was to revitalize smuggling from the U.S. into Mexico. Nonetheless, by far the most serious, long-term impact was to provide a momentous stimulus to the pre-existing, although relatively modest, traffic in illegal drugs like marijuana, morphine, and cocaine from Mexico north across the border. The corrido "Por morfina y cocaína" appears to be the very earliest recording of a contraband ballad that attests explicitly to this moment of transition. The basic model is still the prisoner's lament in the style of "Contrabando de El Paso," but from the vantage point of 1934, the author mentions both liquor and drugs in the tale of his downfall.

Curiously enough, Manuel C. Valdez was long given credit for the authorship of the first drug-running corrido, but not for "Por morfina y cocaína" but rather his enduring 1948 classic "Carga blanca" (selection # 20). In contrast with the latter, however, it is not unlikely that "Por morfina y cocaína" refers to a real situation—one in which the author or close friends may well have had the misfortune to participate.

16. Por morfina y cocaína Pt. I

1. En la cárcel del condado
sacaron una cadena,
eran puros prisioneros
que iban a sufrir su pena.
2. Fue el veintitrés de octubre,
como a las ocho serían,
llevan veintiséis convictos
a la penitenciaría.
3. Van Guadalupe García
también un americano,
con su corazón muy triste,
y su destino en la mano.
4. Juan Vicente y Chuy Cisneros
le hablan a Roberto Mora:

16.Because of Morphine & Cocaine Pt. I

1. In the county jail
they took out a chain gang,
they were all prisoners
who were going off to serve their sentences.
2. It was the twenty-third of October
probably around eight o'clock,
they were transferring twenty-six convicts
to the penitentiary.
3. Guadalupe García was going,
and also an Anglo-American
with a very sad heart
and his destiny in his hands.
4. Juan Vicente and Chuy Cisneros
were talking to Roberto Mora:

—Dile a Sabas Escobedo
que ya se llegó la hora.
5. Sabas estaba muy triste,
acababa de llorar,
pues había que ir a la pinta,
ocho años iba a pasar.
6. Todos van a Leavenworth
por no saberse tantear,
el whiskey y la marijuana
que algo bueno han de dejar.
7. No les valen los consejos
que sus padres les han dado,
sabiendo bien que esos viejos
ya por todito han pasado.
8. Unos dejan a sus madres
rogándole al Dios del Cielo
que se duela de sus hijos
y que les mande algún consuelo.
9. Otros dejan a sus hijos
esperando a su papá,
y sus padres a la finca,
sabe Dios, hijo verás.

"Tell Sabas Escobedo
that the time has come."
5. Sabas was very sad,
he had just been crying,
because he had to go to the "pen,"
eight years he was going to spend in jail.
6. All of them are going to Leavenworth
because they didn't "know the score,"
that whisky and marijuana
have got to leave something good.
7. They didn't pay attention to the advice
that their parents gave them,
knowing full well that these older people
have already been through everything imaginable.
8. Some leave their mothers behind
begging God in Heaven
to feel sorry for their children
and to give them some consolation.
9. Others leave their children
waiting for their father,
and their parents in their last moments,
God only knows, child, if you will get to see them.

17. Por morfina y cocaína Pt. II

10. Por por esa línea del Katy
me han llevado muy seguido,
a miles de prisioneros
que mala suerte han tenido.
11. Qué triste es ir pa' el tren
cuando ya se iba a arrancar,
qué tristes iban los presos,
daban ganas de llorar.
12. Rechinaron las maneas
y la campana sonó,
y entre ruido de cadenas
un gemido se escuchó.
13. Por morfina y cocaína,
por marijuana y licor,
están poniendo su tiempo,
muchos allá en derredor.

17.Because of Morphine & Cocaine Pt. II

10. Up this Katy Line (railroad passing through San Antonio)
they are taking away, all the time,
thousands of prisoners
who all have been unlucky.
11. How sad it is to board the train
when it is getting up steam to go,
how sadly those prisoners were going,
it was enough to make you cry.
12. The shackles were clanking
and the locomotive's bell rang out,
and between the noise of the chains
a groan could be heard.
13. Because of morphine and cocaine,
because of marijuana and liquor,
many are doing their time
up there in Leavenworth.

14. Pero el mundo es una bola
y el que lo anda es un bolón,
y cada quien con sus uñas
se rasca su comezón.
15. De esos veintiséis convictos
me dijo un amigo mío:
—Seis viven en San Antonio,
los demás son de Del Río.
16. Solamente el que ha vivido
algún tiempo en la prisión
sabe lo que son congojas
y penas del corazón.
17. El corrido aquí se acaba,
ya no quiero atormentar,
cuando se estarán deseando
que termine de cantar.
18. Señores, este corrido
no es de mayor interés,
es compuesto humildemente
por Manuel Cuéllar Valdez.

14. But the world is a globe/big lie,
and he who walks in it is a bewildered wanderer,
and each one with his finger nails
scratches his own itch.
15. Of those twenty-six convicts,
one of my friends told me:
"Six live in San Antonio,
the rest are from Del Río."
16. Only someone who has spent
some time in prison
knows what anguish is,
and what heartfelt sorrows are.
17. The ballad ends here,
I no longer want to torment you
when you are probably wishing
that I would stop singing.
18. Gentlemen, this ballad
is not of the greatest interest,
it was humbly composed
by Manuel Cuéllar Valdez.

18 & 19. El Contrabandista (Juan Gaytán) (Parts I & II)

sung by Juan Gaytán y Frank Cantú (recorded in San Antonio, Tx October 13, 1934; SA-2218/19; Vo 8585)

Recorded only two months after Valdez's "Por morfina y cocaína," Juan Gaytán's "El contrabandista" in effect shares the honors for the first smuggling corrido to deal explicitly with illegal drugs as well as alcohol. Like "Por morfina y cocaína," Gaytán's corrido is fundamentally a prisoner's lament, but here the life style and circumstances that brought about the protagonist's downfall are portrayed in much greater detail, and with a much surer command of the "literary" expression typical of the best of the corrido genre. Furthermore, Gaytán, although born in Mexico, reflects his longer residence in the U.S. by the inclusion of Anglicisms which render this ballad a truly "Chicano" corrido—a feature that would not be seen in Valdez's work until the1940s.

18. El Contrabandista Pt. I

1. Pongan cuidado señores
lo que aquí voy a cantarles,
me puse a rifar mi suerte
con los *mentaos* federales.

18. The Contraband Trafficker Pt. I

1. Pay attention, gentlemen,
to what I am going to sing about here,
I gambled my luck
against those notorious federal agents.

2. Comencé a vender champán
tequila y vino habanero,
pero es que yo no sabía
lo que sufre un prisionero.
3. Muy pronto compré automóvil,
propiedad con residencia,
sin saber que en poco tiempo
iba a ir a la penitencia.
4. Por vender la cocaína
la morfina y marijuana
me llevaron prisionero
a las dos de la mañana.
5. Les encargo a todititos,
los que siguen *buleguiando*,
que lo hagan con precaución
porque los andan espiando.
6. Yo tenía mis correrías
desde El Paso a Canutillo,
Houston, Fort Worth y Dallas
San Antonio y a Del Río.
7.Y un veintidós de febrero
que corría por el *highway*,
en ese pueblo de Uvalde
allí me pescó la ley.
8. Allí me pescó la ley
al estilo americano,
me presentaron los broches
todos con pistola en mano.
9. Me enseñaron mi retrato
mi nombre y donde vivía,
solito caí a la trampa
ese desdichado día.

2. I began by selling champagne,
tequila, and Havana rum,
But what I didn't know
is how much a prisoner suffers.
3. Very soon I bought a car,
and some land with a house on it,
little did I know that soon
I would be going to the penitentiary.
4. For selling cocaine,
morphine, and marijuana
they took me prisoner
at two o'clock in the morning.
5. I recommend to everyone,
all of you who keep on bootlegging
that you do it with caution
because the "feds" are watching you.
6. I had my routes
from El Paso to Canutillo,
Houston, Fort Worth and Dallas,
San Antonio, and to Del Río.
7. And one twenty-second of February
I was driving down the highway
through the town of Uvalde,
it was there that the law caught up with me.
8. The law caught up with me there
American style,
they showed me their badges
with their pistols in their hands.
9. They showed me my photograph,
my name, and where I lived,
I was trapped all alone
on that unlucky day.

19. El Contrabandista Pt. II

10. Me llevaron a la corte
y allí delante del juez
presentaron lo que traíba,
vino, mescal y jerez.
11. Y el jefe de los cherifes
les ordena en alta voz:

19. The Contraband Trafficker Pt. II

10. They took me to court
and there in front of the judge
they presented what I was caught carrying:
wine, mescal, and sherry.
11. And the chief sheriff
ordered in a loud voice:

—Amarrenlo con cadenas
y échenlo allí al calaboz.—
12. Y en las celdas más calientes
estuve dos meses y un día,
de allí salí sentenciado
a la penitenciaría.
13. Mucho cuidado muchachos,
todito el que sea *bulega*,
ténganlo por experiencia
que con la ley no se juega.
14. Adiós pueblo de Río Grande
donde no conocí el miedo,
adiós Columbus y El Paso
Brownsville, Aguila y Laredo. ("El Aguila" = Eagle Pass.)
15. En ese mentado Paso
donde mis padres quedaron
recibí su bendición
cuando a mí me sentenciaron.
16. Llegó un día que triste estaba
y ese día lloré por cierto
recibí carta enlutada
y decía: —Tu madre se ha muerto.—
17. Yo lloraba y le gritaba
y loco me quise volver:
—Te fuistes madre querida
y yo ya no te volví a ver.
18. Me despido de mis cuates
los que quedan en la lista
aquí se acaban cantando
versos del contrabandista.

"Chain him up
and throw him in jail."
12. In the hottest cells
I spent two months and a day,
and I only left from there sentenced
to the penitentiary.
13. Be very careful, boys,
all of you who are bootleggers,
learn from my experience
because the law doesn't play around.
14. Farewell, Río Grande City
where I never knew fear,
farewell, Columbus and El Paso,
Brownsville, Eagle Pass, and Laredo.
15. In this notorious town of El Paso
where my parents remained,
I received their blessing
when I was sentenced there.
16. Then a sad day arrived
and on that day I cried for sure,
I received a letter bordered in black
that said: "Your mother has died."
17. I wept and cried out,
and I wanted to go crazy,
"You have left me, beloved mother,
and now I'll never see you again."
18. Now I bid farewell to my pals,
to those of you that are still around,
here comes to an end the singing
of the ballad of the smuggler.

20. CARGA BLANCA (Manuel C. Valdez)

sung by Los Cuatesones (Manuel C. Valdez & Andrés Alvarez) (recorded in San Antonio, Tx. ca. 1949 – Cor. 2032)

Although not, as once believed, the earliest drug smuggling corrido, "Carga blanca" has certainly been one of the most well-known and long-lived. Ever since the late 1940s when Manuel C. Valdez sold this composition to and performed it for Manuel Rangel of Discos Corona in San Antonio, this unforgettable ballad has been recorded countless times (the Arhoolie Foundation's Strachwitz Collection of Mexican and

Mexican-American Recordings database shows some sixty releases, and can by no means be considered exhaustive). There is perhaps no better proof of its timelessness, or more aptly, enduring timeliness, than the fact that Los Tigres del Norte included it on their second LP in the early 1970s—a collection that played a key role in establishing the dominance of the modern narcocorrido. Is this corrido based on true events? According to don Salomé Gutiérrez, who knew Valdez well, it does not refer to any one specific incident, but rather represents a synthesis of, unfortunately, all too common occurrences.

20. Carga blanca

1. Cruzaron el Río Bravo
ya casi al anochecer
con bastante carga blanca
que tenían que vender.
2. Llegaron a San Antonio
sin ninguna novedad
y se fueron derechito
a la calle Navidad.
3. En una casa de piedra
entraron José y Ramón,
y en la troca se quedó
esperándolos Simón.
4. Dos mil ochocientos pesos
les pagó don Nicanor,
y le entregaron la carga,
¡eso sí de lo mejor!
5. Apenas iban llegando
a la calle Vera Cruz
cuando les cerró el camino
un carro negro sin luz.
6. —No hagan ningún movimiento
si no se quieren morir,
y entréguenos el dinero
que acaban de recibir.—
7. Varios tiros de pistola
y unos gritos de dolor
se escucharon de repente
esa noche de terror.
8. Tres muertos y dos heridos
la ambulancia levantó,
pero el rollo de billetes

20. White Cargo

1. They crossed the Río Grande
just about sunset
with plenty of "white cargo"
that they had to sell.
2. They arrived in San Antonio
without any trouble
and they went straight away
to Navidad Street.
3. José and Ramón entered
a house built of stone,
and Simón remained behind
waiting for them in the truck.
4. Two thousand eight-hundred pesos
Don Nicanor paid to them,
and in return they handed over to him the "cargo,"
this, of course, of the very best quality!
5. Scarcely were they approaching
Vera Cruz Street
when they were cut off
by a black car running without lights.
6. "Don't make any moves
if you don't want to die,
and hand us over the money
that you've just received."
7. A number of pistol shots
and some cries of pain
were heard suddenly
on that night of terror.
8. Three dead and two wounded
were hauled off by the ambulance,
but the roll of cash

de ahí desapareció.
9. Ahora después según dicen,
ya ven la gente cómo que es,
el dinero completito
volvió a su dueño otra vez.
10. Despedidas, se las diera,
pero hoy ya se me perdió,
dejen los negocios chuecos,
y ven lo que sucedió.

disappeared completely from the scene.
9. Now, afterwards, according to what is being said,
you can really see what people are like,
they say that all the money
returned to its original owner once again.
10. A farewell, I would give it to you if I could,
but now it seems that I've lost it,
just abandon crooked business,
you've seen what happened.

21. El profugo (Juan Gaytán)

sung by Juan Gaytán y Frank Cantú (recorded in Alice, Tx. March 13, 1952 – Ideal 725)

Like his longtime friend and rival, Manuel C. Valdez, Juan Gaytán continued to compose and perform prolifically in the post-war period. "El prófugo (Marihuana)," too, is basically a prisoner's lament, but like the earlier "El contrabandista" is enlivened by a vivid, although probably fictitious, biographical narrative that, again, demonstrates a distinctly "Chicano" perspective. Furthermore, there is a heightened awareness of the perils of the drug smuggling life as an arena of intercultural conflict, at least in symbolic terms (witness especially stanzas #3 & #4).

21. El profugo

1. Me convertí en delincuente
por ambicionar la lana,
me pescaron en el puente
con morfina y marihuana,
por eso soy un prófugo
de la ley americana.
2. Me mandaron a la pinta,
cuando ya me sentenciaron,
me salí con los convictos
que una noche se fugaron
y me fui pa' Monterrey
de donde me deportaron.
3. Me casé y viví tranquilo
y cinco años se pasaron,
pero unos americanos
fueron y me emborracharon,
les platiqué mi secreto
y después me denunciaron.

21. The Fugitive, Marijuana

1. I became a criminal
because I desired money,
they busted me on the International bridge
with morphine and marijuana,
that's why I'm a fugitive
from North American law enforcement.
2. They sent me to the penitentiary,
after they had sentenced me
I took off with those convicts
that escaped one night
and I went down to Monterrey
from where I was deported.
3. I got married and lived peacefully
and five years went by,
but some Anglos
went and got me drunk,
I told them my secret
and afterwards they turned me in.

4. Yo mismo tuve la culpa
por no tener experiencia,
pero es que yo no conozco
a la gente sin conciencia,
pues, ése era mi destino,
sufrir en la penitencia.
5. Sólo siento haber dejado
al autor de mi querencia,
a un niño de siete meses
y a mi esposa en esta ausencia,
mi bendición les alcance
y Dios les tenga clemencia.
6. Pues, adiós Laredo, Texas,
ya el tren me lleva volando
de nuevo a la penitencia,
y otra vez me está esperando
con otra nueva condena
por causa del contrabando.

4. It was all my own fault,
because I lacked experience,
I just didn't understand
that there are people without conscience,
but, that is just my fate,
to suffer in the penitentiary.
5. I only regret leaving behind
my dear old mother,
and a little boy of seven months,
and my wife in this forced absence,
may my blessing be upon them,
and may God have mercy on them, too.
6. Well, farewell Laredo, Texas,
now the train is speeding me away
once again to the penitentiary,
once again it is awaiting me
with another, new sentence,
all because of contraband.

22. Corrido de Juan Meneses

sung by Las Hermanas Guerrero with Jimmy Morgan's conjunto (recorded in Alice, Tx in May 1960 – Ideal 1786)

This ballad bears witness to the fact that the ambush of senior police commanders with high-powered automatic weapons is not a recent innovation in Baja California del Norte—presently notorious as bastion of the so-called Tijuana cartel and scene of all too many such brazen assasinations during the 1980s and 1990s. The "Corrido de Juan Meneses" also demonstrates that at least certain lawmen can be portrayed in much the same heroic terms usually reserved for the smuggler in his social bandit avatar.

22. Corrido de Juan Meneses

1. Con el permiso de Uds.,
señores, voy a cantar
la muerte de Juan Meneses,
se la voy a recordar.
2. Día veintitrés de junio
del año cuarenta y seis,
mataron al comandante,
que siempre recordaré.
3. En el territorio norte

22. The Ballad of Juan Meneses

1. With your permission, gentlemen,
I'm going to sing about
the death of Juan Meneses,
I'm going to remind you about it.
2. On the twenty-third day of June
of the year of nineteen forty-six,
they killed the comandante,
which I will always remember.
3. In the northern territory

de la Baja California
lo mataron a traición,
que Dios lo tenga en la Gloria.
4. Esto pasó en Mexicali,
que es vecino de Sonora,
lo acriballaron a tiros
con una ametralladora.
5. Don Juan Meneses (?Lárraga?),
un comandante afamado,
por manos contrabandistas
a traición fue ametrallado.
6. Fue azote de los maleantes,
contrabandistas de drogas,
por eso le tenían miedo
en la Baja California.
7. Ya con ésta me despido,
porque cantar ya no puedo,
ya murió don Juan Meneses,
¡que se les acabe el miedo!

of Baja California
they killed him in an ambush,
may God keep him in his Glory.
4. It happened in Mexicali,
where the Sonora native
was riddled with bullets
fired from a machine gun.
5. Don Juan Meneses (?Lárraga?),
a famous comandante,
was cut down by the cowardly
machine guns of the smugglers.
6. He was the scourge of the criminals,
the drug smugglers,
because of this they were afraid
of him in Baja California.
7. Now with this I bid farewell,
because I can sing no longer,
now Don Juan Meneses has died,
may they no longer live in fear!

23. Francisco Martínez

sung by Juan Gaytán y Félix Solís (recorded in San Antonio, Tx, ca. 1949 – Rio # 131)

In "Francisco Martínez" Juan Gaytán turns away from the successful formula of the repentant prisoner and anticipates the modern narcocorrido with a hero who is proud of having been a smuggler, and who defends himself against the *rinches*, pistol in hand, without apologies. It is perhaps indicative of the new artistic liberty afforded by the small independent labels that sprang up in the Mexican-American community after WWII that Gaytán was able to record and release this "heroic" affirmation of the trafficker at all.

23. Francisco Martínez

1. Yo también fui buen contrabandista
pero no me la ando recargando,
nadie sabe de los sacrificios
ni el trabajo que da el contrabando.
2. Una vez de las que yo recuerdo
que como un hombre di la estampida,
pues los rinches se nos presentaron,
pero allí nos jugamos la vida.
3. Cuando entramos por el Puente Blanco

23. Francisco Martínez

1. I, too, was a good smuggler,
but I don't go around bragging about it,
nobody knows the sacrifices
nor the hardships that smuggling brings.
2. On one occasion of those that I recall,
when as a grown man I ran for my life,
the rangers confronted us,
and there we had to gamble with our lives.
3. We came in over Puente Blanco (the white bridge)

y con rumbo a Minas de Dolores,
de repente marcaron el alto
con disparos los rinches traidores.
4. Nosotros contestamos el fuego,
porque siempre íbamos preparados,
nos tumbaron a un compañero,
cuatro rinches quedaron tirados.
5. Y alabé por mi Dios que me cuida,
ese día me protegió la suerte,
porque allí siempre hallaron los rinches
que con balas mandaban la muerte.
6. Madrecita que estás en el cielo
no me olvides con tus oraciones,
cuando se halla en peligro mi vida
tú me salvas con tus bendiciones.
7. Y con ésto ya les dije todo,
el recuerdo que tengo en mi lista,
es la historia de toda mi vida
sin temor ni peligro a la vista.
8. Con orgullo y bastante derecho
yo nací en las Minas de Dolores,
y por Dios que peleó por mi chata
porque soy decidido en amores.
9. Sí señores, fui contrabandista,
de principios pero buenos fines,
fui muy sano y muy lleno de vida,
se despide Francisco Martínez.

heading towards Minas de Dolores,
suddenly the treacherous rangers
ordered us to halt with a hail of bullets.
4. We returned their fire,
because we always went about prepared,
they took out one of our companions,
but four rangers also went down.
5. I praise God who watches over me,
on that day my luck protected me,
because the rangers always could be found there,
those rangers that kill with their bullets.
6. Dearest Mother up in Heaven
please don't forget me in your prayers,
when my life is in danger
you save me with your blessings.
7. And now with this I've told you everything,
the memory that I have on my list,
it's the story of my entire life
without fear or danger in sight.
8. With pride and all my rights,
I was born in Minas de Dolores,
and God is witness that I fought for my woman
because I'm very determined when it comes to love.
9. Yes, gentlemen, I was a determined smuggler
but with good intentions,
I was very healthy and full of life,
Francisco Martínez bids farewell.

24. Tragedia de los cargadores

sung by Frank Cantú with conjunto Topo Chico (recorded in San Antonio, Tx. ca. 1950 – Cor 2133)

Francisco "Frank" Cantú, long the duet partner of Juan Gaytán, demonstrates here that he, too, is a master of the corrido idiom. It is quite possible that the story is based on a true incident, although the necessary research has yet to be undertaken. In certain ways this ballad prefigures the spate of "road smuggling" corridos such as "La banda del carro rojo" and all of its multicolored offspring. The only difference is that here, instead of a fatal shootout, the intercepted smugglers go quietly. Much in keeping with the established pattern of the myth of the social bandit, it is a woman—romantically involved with one of the traffickers—who betrays the gang.

24. Tragedia de los cargadores

1. Pasó en el mes de febrero,
del año corriendo va,
a cuatro de San Antonio, los prendió la federal.
2. Salieron de Corpus Christi
con destino a Nueva York,
llevaban carga pesada, en un carro nuevo Ford.
3. Muchas cajas y paquetes
de agujas con su algodón,
la morfina y marijuana
la llevaban de cajón. [por fuerza, obligatoriamente]
4. Cuando llegaron a Austin
la federal los paró,
la querida de uno de ellos, fue la que los denunció.
5. La morfina la encontraron
en el fondo de un morral,
nomás mil quinientos gramos
y de yerba era un costal.
6. El federal muy paciente
a los cuatro encadenó, llamó a la justicia de Austin
y ahí se los entregó.
7. Ya se despiden cantando
con lástima y con dolor,
son los cuatro cargadores
de morfina y grifa en flor.

24. Tragedy of the Drug Couriers

1. It happened in the month of February
of this very year,
four men from San Antonio, were captured by the Feds.
2. They set out from Corpus Christi
heading for New York,
they were carrying a "heavy load," in a brand new Ford car.
3. They had many boxes and packages
of darning needles and its cotton,
about the morphine and the marijuana,
however, it was a favor about which they had no choice.
4. When they arrived in Austin
federal officers pulled them over,
the mistress of one of them, had betrayed them to the Feds.
5. They found the morphine
at the bottom of a knapsack,
there were only 1,500 grams,
and of marijuana there was one gunny sack.
6. The federal agents, very patiently,
chained the four together, and called the Austin police,
to whom they were handed over.
7. Now they bid farewell singing
with pain and sorrow,
they are the four drug couriers
of morphine and marijuana in bloom.

25. La Cadena (Manuel C. Valdez)

sung by Los Cuatesones (Manuel C. Valdez y Andrés Alvarez) (recorded in San Antonio, Tx. on March 9, 1954 – Río # 304)

At first glance, this is obviously a somewhat abbreviated reworking of Valdez's "Por morfina y cocaína" of 1934. Like its earlier version it is essentially a prisoner's lament. The major difference—perhaps reflecting the cumulative impact of life's hard knocks over the intervening years—is an even more profound note of cyncism, as evidenced in stanza #7.

25. La Cadena

1. De la cárcel del condado
sacaron una cadena,
eran dieciséis convictos,
que iban a sufrir su pena.
2. Juan Vicente y Chuy Cisneros

25. The Chain Gang

1. From the county jail
they took out a chain gang,
there were sixteen convicts
who were going off to serve their sentences.
2. Juan Vicente and Chuy Cisneros

le hablan a Gilberto Mora:
—Dile a Sabás Escobedo, que ya se llegó la hora.—
3. Sabás estaba muy triste,
acababa de llorar,
pues había que ir a la pinta,
ocho años iba a pasar.
4. Unos iban por seis meses,
otros por un año o más,
José Leza sentenciado, para no volver jamás.
5. Unos eran de Del Río,
de San Antonio eran tres,
otros venían del Valle,
los demás de San Andrés.
6. Por morfina y cocaína,
por marihuana y licor,
por muerte y otras causas
todos van a Leavenworth.
7. Culpables son o no culpables,
quién tocó la de perder,
así lo quiso el destino
y ¿qué le vamos a hacer?
8. Pero el mundo es una bola,
y el que lo anda es un bolón,
y cada quien con sus uñas
se rasca su comezón.
9. Adiós mi madre querida,
mis hijos y mi mujer,
que si Dios me da licencia, nos volveremos a ver.
10 Aquí va la despedida
si la quieren apuntar,
a la ley no se le gana, menos a la federal.

were talking to Gilberto Mora:
"Tell Sabas Escobedo, that the time has come."
3. Sabas was very sad,
he had just been crying,
because he had to go to the "pen,"
eight years he was going to spend in jail.
4. Some were going for six months,
others for a year or more,
José Leza was sentenced, to never return at all.
5. Some were from Del Río,
there were three from San Antonio,
still others came from the Valley,
and the rest were from San Andrés.
6. Because of morphine and cocaine,
because of marijuana and liquor,
for murder and other reasons
all of them were going to Leavenworth.
7. Some were guilty, others were not,
they had just drawn the losing hand,
that was what fate had decreed,
and what can we do about that?
8. But the world is a globe/big lie,
and he who walks in it is a bewildered wanderer,
and each one with his finger nails
scratches his own itch.
9. Farewell, my dearest mother,
my children and my wife,
if God grants it to me, we will all see each other again.
10. Here goes the farewell
if you would like to make a note of it,
you can't beat the law, especially not the Feds.

26. El rey de pipa roja

sung by Los Monteños (recorded in Mexico – ca. 1970s)

As stated in the Introduction, "El rey de la pipa roja" is the only example of the fully realized, modern narcocorrido from the 1970s that we offer here. In those years, the full brunt of U.S. backed eradication and interdiction programs was still focused on the traditional growing and processing areas of northern Mexico, and so the wild mountains of the south

represented a virtually wide-open opportunity to locals and outsiders alike. It was during this period that large numbers of small-time operators from Guerrero became an integral part of the scene along and across the border in places such as Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez. Simultaneously, the long-established and powerful trafficking organizations of the north began to extend their operations into the region on a massive scale. In the production zones of Guerrero and neighboring southern states it was common knowledge that large tractor-trailer type trucks—which curiously enough seemed immune from inspection at the ever more frequently set up road blocks—were being used to collect previously unimaginable loads of contraband, principally high-grade marijuana, and transport them to the clandestine airstrips and other crossing points of the northern border. As there were still few trucks of this type on the roads of Mexico in those days, everyone also knew exactly which powerful, establishment interests were complicit in the trafficking.

In the symbolic world of the corrido, however, it is still the heroic figure, now fully realized as an amalgam of social bandit and protagonist of intercultural conflict, who dominates the stage. As I have remarked in another context: "The portrayal of 'El Sapo,' the drug-trafficking protagonist, as a hero of intercultural conflict is first made explicit in stanza 3, where he is celebrated for outwitting the roadblocks set up under the infamous Operation Condor of the Nixon/Ford era. In stanza 4 the *machismo* and essential Mexican character of the hero are explicitly extolled. The characterization of the U.S. government as the antagonist is made even more clear in stanza 5. 'El Sapo,' his trusty submachine gun in hand, is described as crossing back into Mexico 'unconquered, invincible.' The most telling commentary is reserved for the final two lines of the stanza, with 'ningún grado respetó / de aquellos entrometidos.' Not only does the *corridista* flaunt the hero's disdain for the power of North American law enforcement here, but he also underlines the widespread resentment felt in Mexico for what is perceived as an unjust violation of national sovereignty. The long reach of U.S. drug interdiction policy into local affairs has created among many Mexicans the impression that official North America is indeed a 'meddlesome interloper.' Given the history of Anglo-American intervention in Mexico, beginning with the transfer of over a third of the national territory under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, this attitude does not necessarily reflect criminal cynicism, but a genuinely popular nationalism. Furthermore, as [Guillermo] Hernández points out, the drugs are not destined for consumption where they are produced, so any potential harm is effectively transferred to the traditional cultural antagonist (225, 229). This portrayal of the drug smuggler as an anti-imperialist culture conflict hero is widespread in so-called *narco-corridos* from the 1970s on" ("The Heroic Corrido: A Premature Obituary?" *Aztlán* 22.1 [1997]: 115-138). The final two lines of stanza #6, of course, are a good-humored intertextual jab at the most famous of the new style narcocorridos of the 1970s, the Tigres's monster hit "Contrabando y traición," in which the unforgettable, doomed couple of Camelia la tejana and her erstwhile lover Emilio Varela stash their load of marijuana in the tires of the car. In any case, in my opinion "El rey de la pipa roja" is a far more instructive example than any of the Tigres's or others' hits of the development of the figure of the smuggler as hero from the days of Mariano Reséndez up to the present.

26. El rey de pipa roja

1. Contrabandista y valiente
"el sapo" audaz operaba,
"el rey de la pipa roja"
la mafia así lo llamaba,
trailero de los mejores,
porteador de marijuana.
2. Primero fueron los trailers
cargados de mucha lana,
decía transportar cerveza
cuando esto era marijuana,
de las costas de Guerrero, con destino hasta Tijuana.
3. La Operación Cóndor fue,
quien lo frenó muchas veces,
el sapo los afrontó
su barrera de la gente,
que no se sabe dejar, es un tipo muy valiente.
4. Contrabandista de agallas
de sangre muy mexicana,
quería ganar muchos pesos, traficando marijuana,
de la sierra de Guerrero, a la Unión Americana.
5. El sapo y su metralleta
fueron amigos queridos,
invicto se retiró de los Estados Unidos,
ningún grado respetó, de aquellos entrometidos.
6. —Me voy mujeres bonitas
de las fronteras del norte,
el rey de la pipa roja
ya se va para Guerrero, yo no la cargo en las llantas,
por algo he sido trailero.—

26.The King of the Red 18-Wheel Tanker

1. A valiant smuggler
the "Toad" operated audaciously,
"the King of the Red 18-Wheel Tanker Truck,"
that is what the Mafia called him,
he was among the best of the tractor-trailer drivers,
a smuggler of marijuana.
2. First, the trailers
were loaded with lots of "wool" (cash),
he said he was transporting beer,
when it was really marijuana,
from the coasts of Guerrero, all the way up to Tijuana.
3. Operation Condor went down,
it stopped a lot of traffickers many times,
but the "Toad" confronted them face-to-face
and their barrier against the people,
he just doesn't know about quitting, he's a really brave guy.
4. A gutsy smuggler
of pure Mexican blood,
he wanted to earn lots of money, trafficking in marijuana
from the mountains of Guerrero, up to the United States.
5. The "Toad" and his submachine gun
were the very dearest friends,
unconquered he retired from the United States,
he had no respect at all, for those meddling interlopers.
6. "I'm taking my leave, all you pretty women,
from the borders of the north,
'The King of the Red 18-Wheel Tanker Truck,'
is going back to Guerrero now, I don't conceal it in the tires,
not for nothing have I been a tractor-trailer driver."

The Roots of the Narcocorrido

1. EL CORRIDO DE HERACLIO BERNAL (ca. 1888) sung by Dueto Adán & Eva with Mariachi Guadalajara
2. MARIANO RESÉNDEZ (ca. 1890) sung by Timoteo Cantú & Jesús Maya
3. NIEVES HERNÁNDEZ (Jose Pérez) (ca. 1890s) sung by Los Satélites (Fidencio Ayala & Toño Borrego)
4. CORRIDO DE MIER (ca. 1922) sung by Peña & Tijerina
5. LOS TEQUILEROS (1920s) sung by Jesús Maya & Timoteo Cantú
6. CONTRABANDO DE EL PASO (Gabriel Jara) (1920s) sung by Luis Hernández & Leonardo Sifuentes
7. CONTRABANDO DE EL PASO - Part II
8. LA COCAÍNA (1920s) sung by Pilar Arcos
9. LA MARIHUANA (1920s) sung by Trío Garnica-Ascencio
10. CORRIDO DE JUAN GARCÍA (Homero Morales) (1931) sung by Los Pingüinos Del Norte
11. GARCÍA Y ZAMARRIPA (1930s) sung by Los Hermanos Chavarría
12. LOS PATEROS (Tomás Ortiz) (1920s/30s) sung by Los Alegres de Terán
13. CORRIDO DEL HAMPA – Part I (ca. 1935) sung by Flores & Durán
14. CORRIDO DEL HAMPA – Part II
15. LA CANELA (ca. 1934) sung by Los Alegres de Terán
16. POR MORFINA Y COCAINA – Part I (Manuel C. Valdez) (1934) sung by Manuel C. Valdez& Juan González
17. POR MORFINA Y COCAINA - Part II
18. EL CONTRABANDISTA – Part I (Juan Gaytán) (1934) sung by Juan Gaytán & Frank Cantú
19. EL CONTRABANDISTA - Part II
20. CARGA BLANCA (Manuel C. Valdez) (ca. 1948) sung by Los Cuatesones (Manuel C. Valdez & Andrés Alvarez)
21. EL PROFUGO (Juan Gaytán) (ca. 1950) sung by Juan Gaytán & Frank Cantú
22. CORRIDO DE JUAN MENESES (1946) sung by Las Hermanas Guerrero with Jimmy Morgan's conjunto
23. FRANCISCO MARTÍNEZ (late 1940s) sung by Juan Gaytán & Félix Solís
24. TRAGEDIA DE LOS CARGADORES (early 1950s) sung by Frank Cantú with Conjunto Topo Chico
25. LA CADENA (Manuel C. Valdez) (1934) sung by Los Cuatesones (Manuel C. Valdez & Andrés Alvarez)
26. EL REY DE PIPA ROJA (1970s) sung by Los Monteños

This collection of rare, historic recordings of corridos about various aspects of smuggling (not only of drugs), attempts to place the phenomenon of the currently widely popular narcocorrido in its historical and cultural contexts. By presenting these ballads from the past 150 years, it is our hope that we can promote a more informed understanding of how an activity so harmful has come to play such a compelling role in the popular imagination.

Edited and Annotated by Prof. James Nicolopulos.

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