

The Devil's Highway Glossary of Terms and Proper Names

Note: Words in Spanish are italicized

p. 4 arroyo: a small steep-sided gulch or dry river bed

Cabeza Prieta Wilderness: 1,000-square-mile desert refuge west of Organ Pipe Cactus National shares a 56-mile international border with Sonora, Mexico. *Cabeza Prieta*, Spanish for "dark head," refers to a granite peak in the western corner of the refuge.

p. 5 eldritch: strange; unearthly; eerie

pinches piedras: "damned rocks"

Tohono O'odham: The Tohono O'odham, formerly the Papago, a Nation of about 24,000 people, reside in the Sonoran Desert in south central Arizona. The largest community, Sells, is the Nation's capital. See: http://www.itcaonline.com/tribes_tohono.html

p. 6 coyote: here, the trickster; in the text, "coyote" most often refers to the human smugglers

Yaqui: a Tribe living in Sonora, Mexico, and Arizona. About 4,000 people live in Pascua Nuevo, the home of the Pasqua Yaqui Tribal government in the US. See: <http://www.pascuayaqui-nsn.gov/>

hoodoo: a person who practices voodoo

La Llorana: or the "the crying woman," figure in Mexican folklore, the ghost of a woman crying for her drowned child; her appearance signals death

p. 7 Hohokam: Native Americans people living in south-central Arizona from about the first through 15th centuries

Anasazi: Native Americans who lived around 100 A.D. in what is now southern Colorado and Utah and northern Arizona and New Mexico

cairn: stones piled up as a monument or landmark

hardpan: hard, unbroken ground

rotgut: cheap and inferior liquor

p. 8 *El Norte*: "the North," North America

coolies: offensive term for Chinese laborers

p. 9 joie de vivre: French, “joy at being alive”

p. 10 harquebus: heavy portable matchlock gun invented in the 15th century

Así Es Mi Tierra: “this is how my land is,” or “this is like my land”

perro desgraciado: “worthless dog”

p. 11 Yuma: The Yuma, who today prefer to be called the Quechan, reside along both sides of the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona. The Tribe’s lands border Arizona, California, Baja California, and Mexico. There are almost 2500 enrolled tribal members. See:

http://www.itcaonline.com/tribes_quechan.html

Pima: The Pima people reside in the Salt River valley near Scottsdale, Arizona and extend into Sonora, Mexico. A traditional name used by the Pima is “Akimel Au-Authm,” or River People. Almost 6,000 members of the Pima nation and Maricopa nation live in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. See: <http://www.saltriver.pima-maricopa.nsn.us/> and http://www.itcaonline.com/tribes_saltrv.html

Glanton gang: Named for John Glanton, a gang who pillaged and murdered across the Sonora Desert between Texas and Mexico in the mid 19th century.

p. 12 Craig Childs: (1967-), American writer born in the Arizona, recipient of the Spirit of the West award and the Colorado Book Award; many of his work feature desert themes

Sand Papagos: A Native American peoples also known as the Hia-C-ed O’odham, a traditional name meaning the Sand Dune People. The traditional homeland of the Sand Papagos lies in Arizona and Mexico. They are federally non-recognized tribe, but were awarded a tract of land in the late 1990s by the Bureau of Land Management which is held in trust by the Tohono O’odham Nation.

Edward Abbey: (1927-1989), American author and essayist who advocated for environmental issues; worked as a park ranger in the southwest, recording stories from this work in *Desert Solitaire* (1968) and other books

p. 13 Yokohama Rice Bowl: Asian restaurant in Tucson

magus: sorcerer, magician

The Beast: the Antichrist

P. 16 Allahu Akbar: Muslim saying meaning “God is greater” or “God is great,” used in situations ranging from a greeting to an expression of strong sentiments

wets: derogatory term used by Border Patrol agents for undocumented entrants, short for “wetback,” based on the notion that the person crossed the Rio Grande to enter the US; also used as a racial slur to refer to Mexican Americans in general

bon mot: French, literally “good word,” a clever saying or remark

p. 17 *Hola, amigos! Estan arrestados*: “Hello, friends. You’re under arrest”

Muertos: dead, the dead, dead ones

p. 19 *ville*: town

Joseph Wambaugh: (1937-), American writer of fiction and non-fiction accounts of police work

p. 22 INS: US Immigration and Naturalization Service; now known as the US Citizenship and Immigration Services

p. 25 *probie*: probationary officer, rookie

Chupacabras: Goat Sucker, from *chupar*, “to suck,” and *cabra*, “goat”; a mysterious creature; blood-sucker; similar to the Boogeyman in English

p. 26 *sere*: withered, dried-up, especially for vegetation

molder: disintegrate, decompose

interdict: stop, hamper

p. 27 *Pinche Migra*: “damned immigration officers”

muchachos: “young boys” or “men”

Allí, allí. Mira. Es grande: “Over there, over there; Look, it’s big”

chinga’o: “fuck”

p. 28 *La Muerte*: Death

p. 36 Virgin of Guadalupe: also, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico’s most beloved religious and cultural image; the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe is in Mexico City; her feast day is December 12.

p. 37 *air-tray*: a tray used to hold and transport a casket on an airplane

p. 38 Cocopah: The Cocopah Indian Reservation is located approximately 13 miles south of Yuma, Arizona, along the Colorado River. The Tribe is composed of more than 800 members. See: http://www.itcaonline.com/tribes_cocopah.html

p. 39 *mestizo*: a person of mixed ethnic ancestry, especially mixed European and Native American

Mixtec: Native people with an ancient heritage in Aztec times, Mixtecs live in Mexico and the United States, including the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Puebla in Mexico, and the southwestern United States

p. 43 Nahautl: Aztec language spoken in Mexico

p. 44 *maíz*: corn

p. 45 AARP: American Association of Retired Persons

p. 46 *Banamex*: *Grupo Financiero Banamex*, Mexico's second largest bank

p. 47 *panza*: slang for "belly"

p. 48 Pancho Villa: Francisco "Pancho" Villa (1878-1923), legendary Mexican Revolutionary general

norteño: "northerner," or a person from the North; can also refer to a genre of music that originated in the northern area of Mexico, as *norteñas*

p. 49 *guayabera*: popular men's shirt with two or four patch pockets and two vertical rows of pleats on the front and back, with many variations; most commonly found on the eastern coast of Mexico in areas such as Veracruz or the Yucatan peninsula

p. 53 *jefe*: the boss

p. 55 wonk: person who thoroughly studies an issue or subject

Mexico, D.F.: *Mexico, Distrito Federal*, Mexico City

Tres Estrellas: Three Stars

alambrista: from *alambre*, "wire," someone who crosses the barbed-wire US-Mexico border; may also refer to someone who works with wiring, as in home construction

p. 56 Charles Bowden: (1945-), American author of non-fiction, journalist, essayist, based in Tucson, who writes about the American Southwest; author of the controversial piece, "The Emptied Prairie," in *National Geographic* (January 2008), that enraged many North Dakotans

p. 57 *EEUU*: abbreviation for the United States, *Estado Unidos*

p. 60 *arroz con pollo*: chicken with rice

p. 61 *narcotraficante*: drug trafficker or smuggler

p. 62 *aquiline*: hooked (nose), shaped like an eagle's beak

p. 65 H.P. Lovecraft: Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), American writer of horror, fantasy, and science fiction

enganchador: literally, one who hooks (the mark); hence, recruiter for walkers

p. 67 ABC peaks: abbreviation for Antelope, Baker, and Copper mountains

p. 74 *No seas pendejo*: "Don't be stupid"

pinche: "damned"

agarra la onda: "get the meaning," "get with it": literally, "catch the wave," but it implies that one should get the drift of what's going on

buey: literally "ox" or "oxen," but often used as an insult, as "stupid fool"; can also mean "dude"; also spelled *güey*

chi-chi: slang for "breast"

p. 75 *orale*: meaning depends on context: okay, let's go, right on, hold on, etc.

banda: traditional Mexican form of music

cumbia: genre of popular music and dance found in Mexico

El Tri: Mexican blues/hard rock band from Mexico City

p. 76 *la chota*: term for law enforcement, "cop"

la placa: "plate," (license plate), term for law enforcement

samizdat: Russian, grassroots copying and distribution of literature banned by the government

p. 77 Zapata: Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919), famous leader of the Mexican Revolution

Che: short for Ernesto “Che” Guevara (1928-1967), legendary Argentinian revolutionary, physician, politician, Marxist theorist, author, and guerrilla fighter.

muy macho: “very manly”

p. 78 *vamos*: “let’s go”

p. 79 BLM: US Bureau of Land Management

p. 80 *Chichimeca*: derogatory term Spaniards used to describe indigenous groups in northern Mexico

p. 83 *orale vato, no mames buey*: loosely translates as “come on, don’t be difficult” or “come on dude, don’t be a jerk.”

p. 85 Gu Vo: community on the Tohono O’Odham Indian Nation in Pima County, Arizona

Schuchali: community near Arizona state highway 86 which runs across the Tohono O’Odham Indian Nation between Ajo and Tucson

Hickiwan: community on the Tohono O’Odham Indian Nation in Pima County

p. 87 *Curandera*: traditional healer or witch doctor

p. 92 behemoth: a creature or thing of enormous size

p. 93 *bolillo*: Mexican white bread used to make a sandwich; also, *gringo*

OVNI: Objecto Volador No Identificado, UFO, Unidentified Flying Object

p. 94 *maguay*: type of cactus, known as the Century Plant

p. 95 *Oye, buey, es ese un fresno? / Quién sabe / Allí, cabrón / Ese árbol / Cómo chingas, buey. No jodas / No mames / Ya pues, pendejo! / No me vengas con pendejados / Fresnillos. Bésame el culillo*: Loosely translates: Is that a Fresno tree? / Who knows / Over there, stupid / That tree / You whine too much/ don’t be a pest / Don’t whine / That’s enough, stupid / Don’t come to me with stupid things / Fresnillos / Kiss my ass.

p. 100 *huévon*: Slang for “lazy guy”

Levántate: “Get up”

puto: male prostitute/male “slut”/can also indicate weakness, as in being a sissy or wimp

p. 101 moiled around: moved about in confusion

- p. 104 magic realism: magical realism, a form of fiction combining realism and fantasy
- p. 105 *qué la chingada*: “what the hell”
- p. 106 *cabrones*: “good-for-nothing”; “worthless”
- p. 112 astrolabe: instrument used until the 18th century to navigate by the stars
- p. 126 panacea: a remedy for all diseases or ills; cure-all
- p. 127 *campesino*: farm worker or laborer
- effluent: something that flows out or forth; outflow
- p. 140 *pendejo*: “stupid”
- chingón*: slang for someone who is very important, smart, or who likes to mess with people, a “bad ass”
- p. 144 *compa*: short for *compadre*, “buddy”; comes from the term *compadre* which indicates that the person is the godparent of one’s children, but because of the closeness implied in having the godparent/parent relationship, it indicates a close friendship or familiarity and is often used to refer to friends.
- paisano*: a compatriot, a friend
- p. 147 *torta*: sandwich, similar to a submarine sandwich
- p. 152 Kangol: company famous for headwear, especially a military-type beret
- p. 160 *Canta y no llores*: “Sing and don’t cry,” lyrics from a popular Mexican song
- El tuca-tuca-tucanazo*: Lyrics from a song by the band *Los Tucanes De Tijuana*
- p. 163 *Están locos*: “They are crazy,” “You (group) are crazy.”
- ándale*: “hurry up,” “move it”
- p. 182 vagaries: unpredictable actions or events
- Frida Kahlo: (1907-1954), one of the most influential Mexican painters of her time, achieving international popularity: now regarded as one of the most significant painters of the 20th century; especially known for her self-portraits. See http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/kahlo_frida.html
- p. 186 *pols*: politicians, especially those known for making deals

- p. 187 ur-: prefix meaning “earliest,” “original”
- p. 193 potter’s field: burial place for unknown or destitute persons
- p. 196 *Derechos Humanos: Coalición de Derechos Humanos* ("The Human Rights Coalition") is a grassroots organization based in Tucson which promotes awareness of human/civil rights and fights discrimination and human rights abuses by federal, state, and local law enforcement officials affecting U.S. and non-U.S. citizens alike.
- p. 202 *cojones*: “balls” (testicles)
- p. 204 Perestroika: Russian term meaning “restructuring,” referring to economic reforms introduced in 1985 by Mikhail Gorbachev, who led the Soviet state until its collapse in 1991.
- p. 206 *maquis: maquiladoras*, industrial factories located in Mexican cities, most near the border, that often employ laborers for low wages and in harsh conditions
- p. 208 über: German prefix meaning “super” or “above”
- p. 209 *sicarios*: hit men, killer for pay
- p. 216 Wobblies: Industrial Workers of the World, an international union headquartered in Cincinnati. Formed in 1905 at a convention of radical trade unionists, it peaked in the 1920’s, but is still organizing and representing workers around the world today, such as food cooperatives in Seattle.
- p. 217 EFE News Service: The leading Spanish language news agency and the fourth largest news agency in the world

Prepared by Staff Members of the Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity. We hope you enjoyed the book!