



## MEMORIES

*The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them is a non-fiction 1999 book written by The Freedom Writers, a group of students from Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California, and their teacher Erin Gruwell.*

The memory of my journey, or should I say my struggle to America, is buried deep inside of me. I was four years old when I was lifted into the arms of two strange men. They guided me down through the Rio Bravo in the dead of night, from Mexico to Texas.

The river is called the Rio Bravo, meaning the “angry river”, because its huge waves are very strong. It has taken the lives of many people who have tried to cross it. [...]

After my brothers, sisters, mother, and I made it across the river, we were taken to a man's house. He was a coyote and was supposed to help us get through our second obstacle – the border, without getting caught by Immigration. I guess you could say he knew what he was doing because I am here today.

Since I'm an illegal immigrant, the obstacles didn't stop once I got across the border. My freshman year, I thought I was going to be kicked out of school because of Proposition 187. Now I can't get a part-time job, or apply to college. On one occasion, I even blamed my mother for all the troubles that I've had, because I don't have the necessary papers to be in this country. Blaming my mother was the biggest mistake I've ever made. She only wanted what was best for us. If she had known that in this country of “dreams” everybody talked about, things would be harder than they seemed, she wouldn't have brought us here. She would have raised us in our country to the best of her ability. To this day, I can't decide whether my journey was taken in vain. I was brought here to have a golden opportunity, but unfortunately, it's not being given to me. I know it won't be easy, but I won't stop until I have gotten what I came here to get: my education. You know, come to think of it, my journey here was for that purpose. I must fulfill my dream of becoming an educator and helping young people like myself.

The Freedom Writers Diary, 1999

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