

The evidence suggests that the U.S. government, in its zeal to solve the heinous killing of Enrique Camarena, induced corrupt former Mexican police to implicate top officials there in a conspiracy to plan his kidnapping.

Their statements not only were critical to winning convictions against the three, including the brother-in-law of a former president, they also have tarnished the reputations of Mexican political figures and strained relations between the two countries.

U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes, in town to honor El Paso artist Ernesto Martinez, said he not only knew Camarena "but his mom and his sister, too.

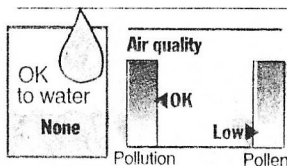
"He was recruited initially for service in the Border Patrol ... and I knew him well when I was chief in the (Texas) Valley."

Reyes, former Border Patrol chief in El Paso, said he would be "skeptical at this point" about what he's heard so far about the investigation into Camarena's

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Manuel Esparza of Anthony, N.M., led a procession of worshippers during the annual trek up Mount Cristo Rey Sunday. The trek has taken place the last Sunday of October for the last 58 years.

Leonel Monroy / El Paso Times

Sacred trek challenges the spirit

By Allison Gregor

El Paso Times

Struggling to overcome pain with spirit, Benito Lopez has toiled barefoot up Mount Cristo Rey 20 times in 20 years, praying for a man he loves and a tradition he wants to preserve.

Every year at this time, beginning at dawn, the 39-year-old Lopez joins the 20,000 to 30,000 others winding up the dusty, brush-covered mountain to

the blinding white statue of Jesus Christ, sculpted by Urbici Soler in 1939.

Devout Catholics have made the pilgrimage up Mount Cristo Rey on the last Sunday in October, the Day of the Lord, for the 58 years since. Some go barefoot or on their hands and knees. Mass is delivered at the top, this year given by Monsignor Rafael Miranda of St. Jude's and Father Richard Matty of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"It's a personal sacrifice,

not for yourself, but for someone that you love," said Lopez, an aspiring writer. "It is for someone who is in need of salvation, to have God look after them, because of course you can't."

Lopez was 10 in 1968, the year his Uncle Chava went to Vietnam. That's when he started climbing shoeless up the mountain with his grandmother, he said. His uncle was only 20, and the two boys were close as brothers.

"When he came back, things were never the same," Lopez said.

He has been walking for his uncle ever since. Sunday, in the crisp fall air, Lopez ascended with thoughts of his Uncle Chava in his head, having a "discussion with God."

United by faith, people climb for different reasons.

They watch the whirling, vibrant *matachines* from Juárez, who dance for the

Please see **Spirit** 2A

El Paso Times

Engineers have stopped rebuilding the pavement on the airport terminal's south side because the design violates national standards adopted into the city's fire code.

The problem shouldn't inconvenience air travelers, but it could add anywhere from \$530,000 to \$8 million to the pavement project's \$6 million price tag, city officials said.

A decision is to be made by City Council this week on how to address the problem. Representatives Monday also are expected to hear an update on the \$58 million terminal renovation, which has been plagued by delays and rising costs.

The new airport ramp, upon which airplanes pull up to the boarding gates, was designed to slope under the east concourse and toward the desert. The east concourse is to the right of the top of the escalators leading to the airport boarding areas.

The design is similar to the existing one, which slopes toward the building and violates the city fire code. Fuel trucks at the airport commonly carry 8,000

Work on pavement the El Paso Airport the east stopped problem

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WEATHER

Record blizzard kills 8 in sweep across Plains

Associated Press

DENVER — Rescuers used helicopters, snowmobiles and military vehicles Sunday to pick up snowbound travelers and residents left without heat by a record blizzard that piled snowdrifts up to 15 feet high. At least eight people died during the storm.

By Sunday night, all stranded motorists were believed to have been rescued,

a house without power started a fire that killed one woman in Omaha, Neb.

Grand Island, Neb., police say 50-year-old James Coon died Sunday of an apparent heart attack while snowblowing his property.

An 11-year-old boy from tiny Stratton in eastern Colorado died Sunday at Children's Hospital in Denver



Daniel Luedert / Associated Press

A woman looked at the damage to a parked car after a

Cold signals winter's re

By Jim Conley

El Paso Times

A Rocky Mountain chill pressed across southern New Mexico and El Paso Sunday morning. The low of 35 degrees was one degree off the record, and temperatures threatened to go lower before daybreak today.

"But this will be the coldest night of the week probably," said Joe Roman of the

day's high 70 and seasonal 40

Sunday signaled many, Hostette Church, El Paso: "It's day of the heat

The seasonal should be

gave \$3.642 million toward the \$6 million project, had no objections.

Gonzalo Cedillos, city engineer, said the storm drain collection system might be used to avoid massive renovations costing millions, although he would not say which option he favored.

"It's a system developed out of Houston, I believe, that, because of the difference in densities of the fluids, is capable of trapping the oil and fuel in separate chambers. It can then be pumped out later into trucks for disposal elsewhere," Cedillos said.

To completely reverse the entire slope of the southside ramp would cost an estimated \$4 million to \$8 million, Rankin said.

Ramirez said the storm drainage

Cedillos pointed out that such a change could be massive because it would entail ponding areas and could affect a much more widespread area.

"You can't have all kinds of conflicting slopes out there making for a bumpy ride for the aircraft," he said.

Some El Pasoans said the whole problem should have been avoided. As the mayor pointed out, engineers are supposed to design projects to meet city codes.

Helen Metcalf, a 76-year-old East Side resident who has lived near the airport for some 20 years, said that makes sense to her. And if the private sector is required to abide by the fire code, the city should too, she said.

it," she said. The cost for the change "should come out of the pocket of the company that is doing it. Whoever made the mistake should pay for it."

Another problem is the cost of construction if the project has to be completely redesigned instead of just having the drains added to it.

J.A.R. Concrete already had been awarded the ramp reconstruction, and if the redesign raises the cost of the project by 25 percent or more Texas law requires that it be re-bid.

Cedillos three weeks ago proposed getting started by terminating the contract with J.A.R. The company's owner, Joe Rosales, is fighting to keep the contract.

by key witnesses appear false. For example, two witnesses said the kidnapping was plotted in a Guadalajara hotel suite, but a recent visit to the hotel indicates no such suite exists.

► Key informants received more financial and legal help than the jury was told about. Some informants were provided final lump-sum payments of thousands of dollars after the trial had ended. And records show that a DEA agent helped another witness escape prosecution on felony charges of spousal abuse.

► The DEA operative who helped investigate Camarena's

DEA recently launched an internal investigation into the Camarena probe, which was officially closed in 1995. Deputy Director James Milford said the agency could not comment about any aspect of the case until the review is completed.

Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Drooyan said his office is constrained from discussing details of the case because they are likely to become issues in court.

Expressing "great confidence" in the "integrity and judgment" of the trial prosecutors, he said they would never knowingly encourage perjury and would have taken steps to ensure that all

Spirit

Continued from 1A

Virgen of Guadalupe, a tradition that has faded in the United States. Juarenses climb the other side of the mountain, the side with no trail.

Some buy from the vendors who seem to be found at any event that draws so many thousands. Organizers said they weren't happy about that tradition, however, saying that people sometimes get sick from the fruit, fried pork rinds, and sugarcane sold by Juárez vendors.

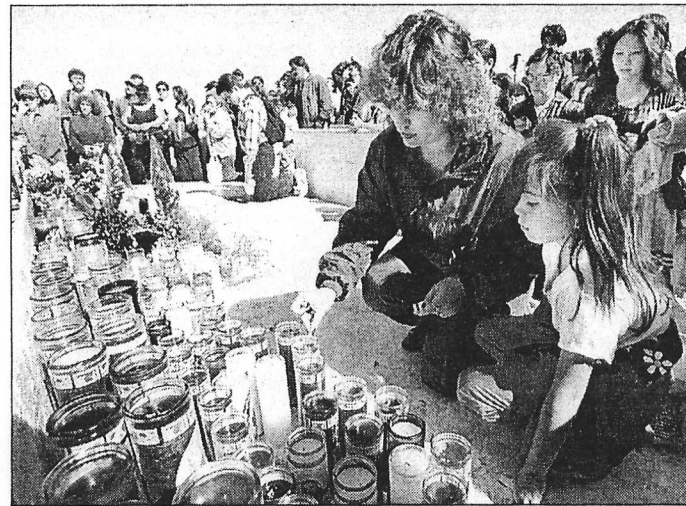
"I've asked the Agriculture Department and Border Patrol to do something about it, and they do nothing," said Ray Sarabia, an organizer for 14 years.

Still, the focus always is on faith.

Aurora Loera and her 16-year-old granddaughter of the same name began their odyssey Sunday guided by the burgeoning morning brilliance their names signify.

The elder Loera, 68, has trod the rocky, twisting way six times before, though she relies on a cane.

"The walk is like God to me," she said in Spanish, her eyes bright. She leaned heavily on



Leonel Monroy / El Paso Times

Michelle Saenez lit a candle at the top of Mount Cristo Rey as her daughter Charlene, 6, watched during the annual pilgrimage Sunday. Saenez has made the trip from Phoenix to El Paso to participate in the ceremony for the past six years.

the arm of her husband, Alfonso Loera, and her granddaughter, who both said they climb because the trek is enjoyable.

For Lopez, the experience is mild torment.

"You come to do the little bit of suffering you need to do to get God to recognize you," he said.

Though his grandmother died

in 1984, Lopez kept up the tradition, the only one in his immediate family to do so. Laughing, he said he wears socks and slippers on a carpeted floor at home, and sometimes enjoys a beer after his grueling trek to ease the bite.

"When you walk barefoot, there are different stages of pain," Lopez said. "Today was

'It's a personal sacrifice, not for yourself, but for someone that you love. It is for someone who is in need of salvation, to have God look after them, because of course you can't.'

Benito Lopez

colder than last year to where my toes were red."

A little tenderness at the end of the day is worth it, he said. His Uncle Chava, though sick, is still alive.

That's important to Lopez, who said his uncle's colorful stories may help preserve a culture.

"My uncle's a good storyteller, and has a great delivery," Lopez said. "He's carried some stories from my grand-uncles. I've asked for him to be around (though) he'd rather not be here. Really, I want more from him."

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