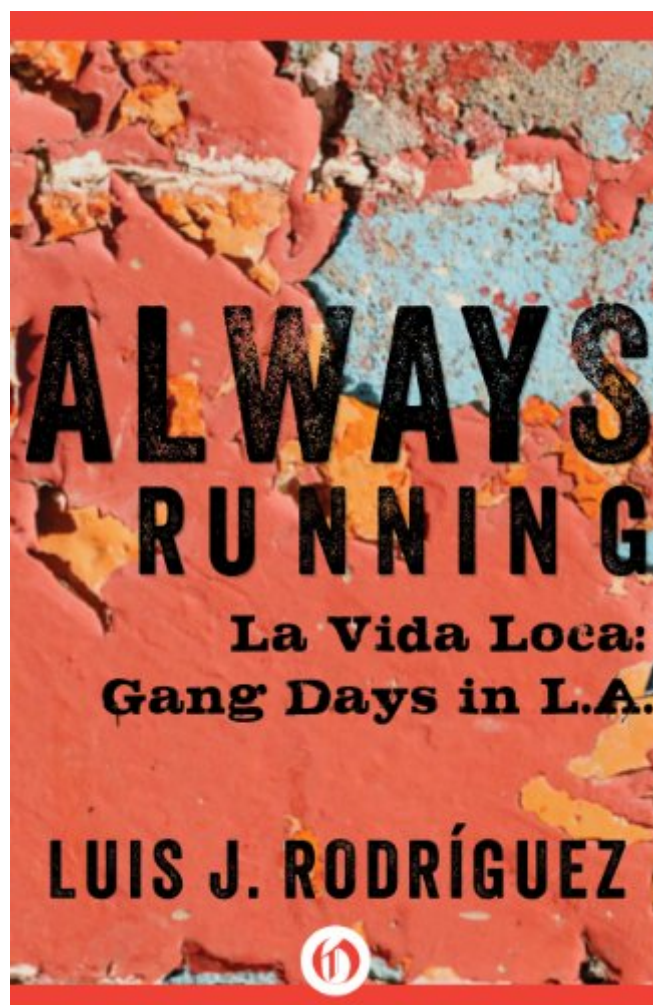


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# Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days In L.A.



## Synopsis

Luis J. RodrÃ­guezâ€™s stunning memoirâ€™s a brave, unflinching account of life in a Los Angeles street gang. Luis J. RodrÃ­guez joined his first gang at age eleven. As a teenager, he witnessed the rise of some of the most notorious cliques and sets in Southern California and knew only a life of violenceâ€™ one that revolved around drugs, gang wars, and police brutality. But unlike most of those around him, RodrÃ­guez found a way out when art, writing, and political activism rescued him from the brink of self-destruction. Always Running spares no detail in its vivid, brutally honest portrayal of street life and violence, and it stands as a powerful and unforgettable testimonial of gang life, by one of the most acclaimed Chicano writers of his generation. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Luis J. RodrÃ­guez including rare images from the authorâ€™s personal collection.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Luis Rodriguez's autobiographical account of a gang member's life in Watts, East Los Angeles was the most expressive, powerful, and vivid depiction ever to be told. Through his novel, Always Running he has opened my eyes to the realism of gang life. I mean you see it in movies, the news, sometimes even on the streets, but to read about it and visualize it in your mind is like being there

and living it. Through Rodriguez's novel he has shared his life with us, and in hopes of deterring younger generations of turning over to "la vida loca", the crazy life. Rodriguez joined his first gang at age eleven, and by age eighteen, he was a veteran of gang warfare, killings, police, drug overdoses, rapes, Mexican funerals, and suicides. He has watched his friends die one by one at such early ages as he waits his turn of his finality. The turning point of Rodriguez's life turns out to be when he killed an innocent man as his initiation to a new gang. Because of this he was sentenced to jail where he was able to think hard about what he wanted to do with his. And now look at him he is an award winning journalist and author. but despite his successful transition he later experienced the karma of his childhood when his son Ramiro falls into the wrong crowd in their home Chicago, and joins a gang. Always Running is a novel dedicated to Ramiro Rodriguez and all the other lost children in the world who has lost hope and turned to the hellish streets of gangster life. Through his novel Luis not only shares his life experiences, but he also shares with us how he saved his son. So waste no more and read this very compelling, moving story of a father and son reunion.

So much has been written about this powerful, truthful and inspiring memoir by Luis J. Rodriguez that I doubt that I could offer anything to add to the book's understanding and appreciation. But of all the professional reviews, the most telling critiques come from the high school students and teachers some of which are printed in the first two pages of the most recent edition of "Always Running." One student, Johnny Mendez, offers the chilling but hope-filled words: "History repeats itself and we must make some changes." These words are chilling because Rodriguez writes of events from the 60s and 70s yet a high school student of today sees the same despair, neglect and fear that existed a generation earlier. The hope we see is in the high school student's resolve: "[W]e must make some changes." Rodriguez has just opened a bookstore in Sylmar, California, named after his wonderful and misunderstood aunt, Tia Chucha, where he hopes to reach out to Latino youth to help them find a path towards full and productive lives. The fight continues. And this book still speaks the truth, eloquently and to all.

In Australia, we are yet to the stage where our cities have turned into concrete jungles, swallowing each generation of youth into violence and drugs. I will honestly say that I cannot relate to the upbringing depicted in this book as I have been lucky enough to live in a city where 13 year olds ride their bikes and play football in the park, with the only threat to their health would be falling off their bike. I don't say this to be offensive, I say it because I have been lucky. Luis has shown these

kids living in the barrios do not have time to be children and enjoy the simple things in life that growing up has to offer. Instead they are frustrated, and pushed into a world of drink, drugs, murder, violence, rape, sex and parenthood well before they have turned into adults physically. I hope peace can be brought to these barrios as killing themselves is not the answer. I will not preach to have the answer. The deeds done and written in the book by Luis and his friends, depicted images of grown men, however they are mere teens who need more assistance from the governments, police and each other to forge friendship and peace instead of hatred and death. Maybe politicians, parents and the police should read books like this and other gang books to try to understand the plight of those living in these barrios and then educate themselves to enable the vatos locos to make their barrios places of pride without fear of death and allow them to grow into whatever they want to be just like Luis.

I'm Latino, born in 1954 just about the authors age. I saw the gangs, the crime and suffered the discrimination. However, I did not choose to join a life of crime and violence. Reading this book I saw the author portray himself a victim driven to attacks on innocent whites and murder of fellow Latinos because of the circumstance of his race and geography of his birth. Many, actually most Latinos in Los Angeles and across the country worked hard, excelled in school and became productive members of society and by example broke down the walls of racism and exclusion. This guy is nothing but a clever criminal still pulling the scam on Anglos who read and believe, "this is the way it was". Choosing a life of drugs, crime and violence is just that a choice. Tough luck we didn't have the same chances as white America but I became a man and made the best of it. The author doesn't think much of himself, but he certainly is all he thinks about.

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