





**Elian Case:**

# Latinos Are No Different

Philadelphia, - Latinos across the country have witnessed the passion play of the past five months and the emotional events of 5 a.m. Holy Saturday morning. And at least according to the reaction LATNN.com has received, Latinos who do not consider themselves a Cuban exile or one of their supporters fall in line with the opinion of America's general public -- Elian's return to his father is long overdue, although some thought that maybe the timing wasn't so appropriate.

After Saturday morning's ordeal, the crowd surrounding Lazaro Gonzalez's home swelled again to about 500. Angry supporters took to the streets in protest. Although there was at least 80 arrests reported, most of the crowds were peaceful and the crimes committed petty.

Cuban exiles' reaction was one of frustration and shame for their government's actions.

"Today is a sad and dark day for America," said Jorge Mas, Chairman of the Cuban American National Foundation, through a written statement. "The images of young Elian Gonzalez, staring down the barrel of a gun in the pre-dawn hours, is a haunting portrait of utter despotism that offends the very memory of the Founders of this nation who fought tyranny, and of all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice throughout its history to uphold it as a symbol of refuge and hope the world over."

Mas also said that this act would be part of President Clinton's and Attorney General Janet Reno's legacy, one of which they should be ashamed.

However, just as all polls conducted on this issue have reported, many Latinos seem to approve of Elian's return of custody to his father -- although the way in which the boy was seized is debated.

"IT'S ABOUT TIME" Many Latinos LATNN.com spoke with thought the reunion of Elian with his father was long overdue.

"It's about time," said Miguel Rose, a paralegal living in Harrison, NJ, a town not too far from the Union City area, the second largest Cuban American enclave in the United States.

Rosa can relate with the circumstances of this six-year-old boy's life. In 1986, Rosa boarded

a flight to the United States along with his two other siblings and his mother to escape the economic a civil turmoil in El Salvador, a

"It's a bad time to pick up the kid in the middle of the night like that," said Webber, who was born in Havana, Cuba. He is still not sure what side he takes

Ruiz said that the government had no other choice Saturday morning because of the family's repeated rejection of any compromise. He also said he



Apenas conocida la decisión de entregar al niño a su padre integrantes del exilio cubano en Miami iniciaron una serie de protestas frente a las instalaciones federales. Las autoridades están tomando medidas para prevenir posibles desórdenes.

Central American nation that was in the thick of a civil war at the time. He acknowledges that both sides have compelling arguments, but argues that the union between a child and his father should not take a back seat to what he characterized as Cuban exiles' desire to "stick it to [Fidel] Castro."

"Not matter what, as long as he is for it, they are against it," Rosa said. "I find it ironic that Cubans are always talking about democracy, but when democracy speaks against what they believe, their reactions are very much what a dictator would do."

Rosa, a devout Christian, did wonder whether it was appropriate for the INS to seize the home the day after Good Friday and the day before Easter Sunday.

Willie Webber, a radio personality at WPEN radio in Philadelphia, also questioned the move's timing.

in the Elian case. "Unfortunately, if we send him back, we won't know whether or not it was the right thing to do until he is 15 or 16 years old" argued Webber. "Nobody wins [in this case]. And that is the saddest fact of them all."

Webber is not the only Cuban-American who was not clearly against Elian's repatriation to his father.

Albor Ruiz is a columnist at the New York Daily news and a native of Cardenas, Cuba, the town where Juan Miguel Gonzalez resides. Ruiz, who has written extensively about this case in his column, says Elian's return to his father is "a no-brainer," but his repatriation, he said, has been complicated because of the United States' absurd embargo with Cuba and Cuban exiles' "ancient hatred for Fidel Castro, which clouds what the reality is in this case."

spoke with Cardenas residents, neighbors and relatives of Juan Miguel, and he said they are in a state of "reserved celebration."

"[They say] this Juan Miguel and Elian have suffered enough," Ruiz said. "This is a private moment for everyone."

"I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL IT'S OVER" Possibly the community with the strongest opinions about this issue -- regardless of which side they stand with -- resides in Miami-Dade County.

"I can't until it's over," said Gil Tersey, 36, who lives in the Cutler Ridge section of Miami, a community about 20 minutes from Little Havana. He said that the raid was in general "justified," but done at a bad time. But he had particular opinions about the media coverage both in Miami and across the country surrounding this case.

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# Janet Reno Big Favor to Elian's Miami Relatives

By Rick Martinez

The Miami relatives of Elián González should thank Janet Reno. The day before Easter, she gave them precisely what they had been seeking: a showdown.

The defining moment was captured by a news photographer -- the 6-year-old boy, in the hands of a sympathizer, confronted at gunpoint by a Justice Department officer.

It was a regrettable chapter in this passion play. But Reno was left with no other option, unless she wanted to keep playing patsy in negotiations that had been going nowhere for far too long.

The U.S. attorney general essentially had been dared by the Miami relatives for weeks to

send the federal marshals to Little Havana to take the child. They dared her to take Elián on national TV in front of a crowd that could easily be whipped into a frenzy.

In making the call with the blessing of President Clinton, Reno did the Miami relatives a great favor. She allowed them to save face. The show of force allowed the relatives to be viewed as patriots to their cause -- freedom for Elián and unwavering opposition to Fidel Castro.

It seems to me they always preferred the option of facing automatic weapons rather than turning the boy over quietly at some neutral site. If they did the latter, they risked being

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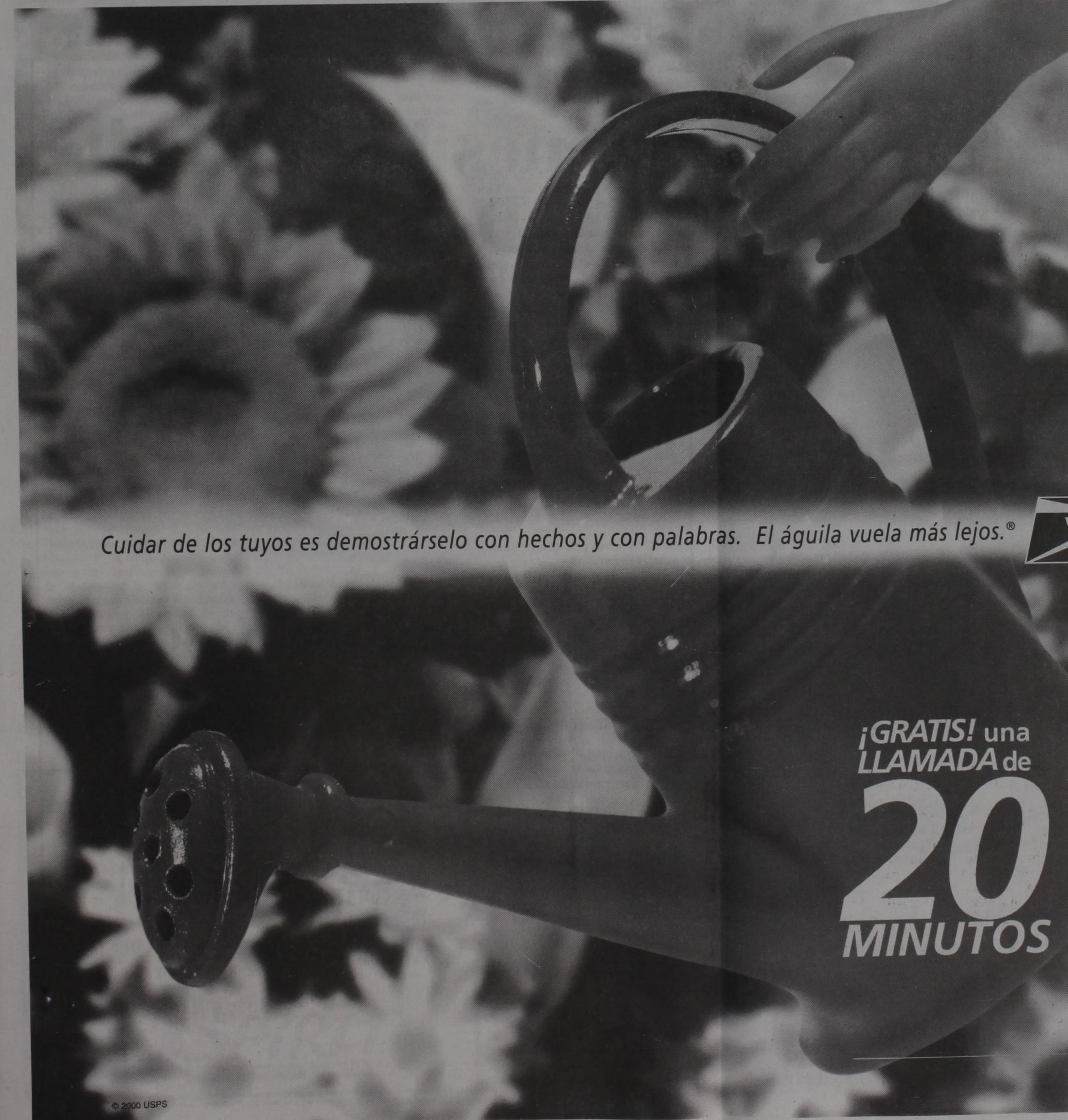
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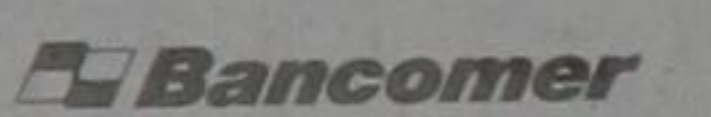


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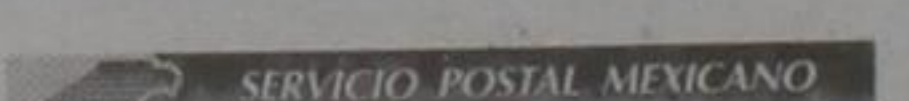
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# Lewis-Grant At Least Promises to be One of the Heaviest Title Fights Ever

NEW YORK - Michael Grant hopes to put some hard lessons learned in his last fight to good use when he challenges heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

"I learned not to take people for granted," the unbeaten challenger said. "I was thinking about what I was going to do next."

At the end of the first round against Andrew Golota Nov. 20, it didn't appear that Grant would next be fighting Lewis on Saturday night in Madison Square Garden.



Grant was knocked down twice and was badly hurt after the first round, but he hung tough, scored a knockdown in the 10th round and won when Golota quit.

Another lesson learned was to keep his hands up. They weren't when Grant got nailed by a tremendous right that put him down the first time.

"We've been working on it (keeping his hands high) basically the entire camp," said Grant, who sparred two rounds with Corey Sanders Tuesday at The Theater in the Garden complex. "If I didn't keep my hands up, Don Turner (his trainer) would start a round over or he would add a round."

The comeback victory gave the 6-foot-7 Grant a 31-0 record, with 22 knockouts and underscoring his will to win.

Although the 6-5 Lewis was stopped in the second round after being knocked down by a thunderous right to the jaw by Oliver McCall Sept. 24, 1994, he also has proven himself tough in tough situations. He was in deep trouble in the first two rounds against Shannon Briggs, but he fought back to stop Briggs in the fifth round March 28, 1998.

"I'm expecting a very tough fight," said Emanuel Steward, Lewis' trainer. "It's the first time I've seen two guys of this size who have talent, and have dealt with adversity and shown they can weather the storm."

As for the fact that Golota almost beat Grant but was stopped by Lewis in the first round Oct. 4, 1997, Lewis said, "I don't draw any conclusions from that."

To add that comparing fights



can be futile, Grant noted that he stopped Sanders in the second round in 1996, but Golota had to go the full 10 rounds to beat Sanders in 1998.

Lewis (35-1, 27 knockouts) has a definite edge in big-fight experience and is favored to retain the WBC and IBF titles.

"Whether people are giving me a chance to win this fight or not is irrelevant," Grant said. "They're not fighting."

A federal judge has ruled Lewis cannot keep the WBA title because when he signed for a rematch against Evander Holyfield, he agreed that if he won he would make a mandatory defense against the highest available WBA contender and that he breached the contract by signing to fight Grant.

The WBA ranks John Ruiz and Holyfield 1-2, respectively, while Grant is ranked No. 5. Grant is ranked second behind Ruiz by the WBC and No. 2 by the IBF behind David Tua.

"He's No. 1 in my book," Lewis said of Grant. "He's been active. He hasn't been sitting about waiting."

For Turner, it will be the

fourth time he has worked in the corner of a man fighting Lewis. He was there when 6-7 Henry Akinwande was disqualified in the fifth round for constantly holding and he was there the two Holyfield-Lewis bouts -- a controversial draw and a Lewis victory.

Turner was asked what made him think he was backing a winner this time.

"I've got a different guy this time," he said.

"He thinks he has the perfect solution here," Steward said. "He has a guy who's not afraid of Lennox and a guy who is

physically bigger."

Grant is expected to weigh about 250 pounds when he weighs in officially Thursday, while Lewis is expected to weigh in the 240s. The highest combined weight for a championship fight is 488, when Primo Carnera (25912) outpointed Paolino Uzcudun (229) Oct. 22, 1933.

The fight will be the fourth match on a pay-per-view (TVKO) show that begins at 9 p.m. EDT. The main event is expected to start between 11:15 and 11:30 p.m.

## In Protest, Cuban-American Players Sit Out Tuesday Games

The growing presence of Cubans in the major leagues took a political turn on Tuesday when more than a dozen players and coaches missed games in support for the one-day work stoppage by Cuban-Americans in the Miami area over the Elian Gonzalez case.



Cubano Orlando Hernandez In Miami, where the Florida Marlins played San Francisco on Tuesday night, 10 members of the Marlins, including six players, as well as two Giants players and a coach, did not dress for the game at Pro Player Stadium.

"We chose the spiritual well-being of our employees ahead of tonight's game," Marlins Manager John Boles said.

One of the more prominent Cuban-born players, Jose Canseco, elected not to play in Tampa Bay's game against the Royals on Tuesday night in Kansas City, Mo. Canseco was originally scheduled to start as the designated hitter for the Devil Rays, batting fourth. But about 30 minutes before the game, it was announced that he had been replaced by Bubba Trammell.

The impact of the boycott seeped into New York as well. At Shea Stadium, where the Mets played the Cincinnati Reds, Mets shortstop Rey Ordóñez and the third-base coach Cookie Rojas were given the day off.

"You tend not to want baseball to be a political forum," General Manager Steve Phillips said, "but I understand both Rey's and Cookie's position on it."

Orlando Hernandez, who was not scheduled to pitch on Tuesday night and who defected

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