



# Romancero Gitano

*Raoul Lowery Contreras*

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## **Romancero Gitano** Raoul Lowery Contreras

On a bitterly cold February night of 1992, the Armenian government ordered its troops to destroy an innocent town of 6,000 people in the Caucasus Mountains. The town was Khojaly in Azerbaijan's Karabakh region. Surrounded on three sides by Armenian troops and their allies, the town was destroyed in less than three hours by bombardment, tanks and hundreds of attackers on foot. Khojaly's people were chased down and those not fast enough — women and children and the elderly — were massacred in what the Armenians claimed was a "humanitarian corridor". It was a killing field for hundreds of unarmed men, women and children. It was a preplanned and organized ambush that felled men, women and child victims in open fields with no cover. The Human Rights Watch called it "the largest massacre in the conflict" between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Khojaly was one of the first atrocities of the war waged by Armenia against Azerbaijan in the early 1990s eventually resulting in the illegal military invasion and total ethnic cleansing of twenty percent of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territory. It is representative of a conflict frozen in time; a conflict that has no international outrage to push for a solution. This was only the beginning of years of attacks and terror. The story is real, supported by undisputed facts and captured by eyewitness reports. The story of Khojaly should be told so that such human brutalities are never repeated.

"We live in the Age of the Tweet, and in a nation and world with the attention span of a hummingbird.

Conflicts near and far command great attention then suddenly disappear down the memory hole. In *Murder in the Mountains*, journalist Raoul Lowery Contreras takes readers to little known Azerbaijan and Armenia in fierce conflict for centuries. The author delves into the complicated regional history but focuses on the town of Khojaly in the Caucasus Mountains on a cold night in February 1992. He charts the conflict there and its aftermath, providing documentation for human rights violations. The account is certain to be controversial but, agree or not, here is the evidence of the ongoing struggle of memory against forgetting. *Murder in the Mountains* also serves as a reminder that, as Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, the line between good and evil does not pass between nations, parties or classes but runs straight down the middle of every human heart." Lloyd Billingsley, author of *Bill of Writes: Dispatches from the Political Correctness Battlefield and Hollywood Party: Stalinist Adventures in the American Movie Industry*.

Raoul Lowery Contreras is an internationally recognized author who writes regularly for *The Hill*, *Fox News Latino* and dozens of publications around the globe. His passion is finding untold stories that can foster change in our world. He was formerly with the *New American News Service* of the *New York Times* Syndicate. Contreras, a former United States Marine with a deep knowledge of international affairs with a distinctly American viewpoint around freedom and liberty, is a rare commentator that tells true stories in a passionate way. This story of terror and war crimes resonated with him as a story that needs to be told.

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