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## SXSW Film Reviews

BY [MICHAEL KING](#)

March 16, 2001:

### Los Trabajadores/The Workers

*D: Heather Courtney. (Video; 48 min.)*

Austin's "First Workers" site connects immigrant day laborers and contractors who once would hook up on the fly on downtown streets. Northside residents complained the site would bring transients and crime. The conflict has mostly subsided, but the workers still arrive before dawn in hopes of picking up steady work at a living wage. Heather Courtney's camera-eye is captured particularly by two men: Ramón Castillo Aparicio, a middle-aged father from Mexico desperate to support his family, and Juan Castillo Gutiérrez, a young Nicaraguan who runs afoul of the INS. The two men burst to life and come to stand for their fellows, who build Austin while largely invisible within it.

*Los Trabajadores* is rough-hewn and unpolished, but includes some powerful material with Castillo's family in Mexico. The human narrative overwhelms the documentary's subject as it engulfs the workers caught in economic waves they can't control. Every Austinite should see this film, the human underside of our relentless growth; filmmakers should see it as a testimony to letting the story come to you. (*Alamo*, 3/15, 6:15pm)

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