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<http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-10-10/long-dangerous-journeys-arent-stopping-cubans-trying-come-us> -

# Long, dangerous journeys aren't stopping Cubans from trying to come to the US

Producer Shirin Jaafari

Reporter Shefali S. Kulkarni

Marco Werman: host

**TRANSCRIPT**

**Frances Robles:** I met a guy named Yannio La O. He is 31 years old and he has a degree in physical, er, he calls it dagger sport (laughter). He's a wrestling coach, he's an elementary school wrestling coach. And he's been caught leaving Cuba I think it was six times, or not caught but that he got 6 failed attempts in the past and this was his seventh. And he was fascinating to me because if he had been deported he would have tried it again. And he was in a very horrible voyage--he was lost at sea for 24 days, and he lost 17 friends on that trip (Hmm), half the group did not make it. And he says you know, he thinks everybody should do it again, he says, "it's worth it, we can't live, we don't have any money." And so what he says is that there's *a lot* of people like him, you know, they're college graduates, they're young, they're looking for a future, and they just don't see it.

**Marco Werman:** Yes, despite the odds of going to sea he's willing to tell his friends and anybody who's willing to listen to him to try it.

**Frances Robles:** One of the quotes, the quote that ends the story that ran in today's paper really shook me he said, you know, "Let's say half the people who go to sea don't make it — half of them did!" I mean he's looking at it from a glass half full perspective! This is a guy who's spent 24 days lost at sea, who had to throw 9 people overboard, day by day as more people died. And his message to people in Cuba is, you know, "get your Toyota motors and your Styrofoam and your inner tubes ready, and make the trip, too."