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Spare Parts: Four Mexican American Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream

#### *Joshua Davis. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $25 (240p) ISBN 978-0-374-18337-0*

Davis (Entrenched) offers a forceful portrait of four Mexican American teens from an impoverished neighborhood in Phoenix who became engineers and won first place in a national NASA-sponsored robotics competition. Despite their meager funds and lack of experience, these high school students, with the support of two teachers, succeed beyond all expectations, defeating well-funded teams like the one from MIT. Throughout the book, Davis gives almost equal time to the rising tide of anti-immigrant feeling in Arizona and around the nation. These young men, all but one of who are undocumented, are painfully aware that their place in the spotlight may garner unwanted scrutiny by immigration officials. Despite their amazing win, their options continue to be severely constrained. The final chapters, which document what happened after the accolades and fanfare faded, really capture the character of these young men. Davis takes what could have been another feel-good story of triumphant underdogs and raises the stakes by examining the difficulties of these young immigrants in the context of the societal systems that they briefly and temporarily overcame. Agent: Bonnie Nadell, Hill Nadell Literary Agency. (Dec.)