

# Border Patrol Stops Presidio Deportation Program

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PUBLISHER

In mid-January, Marfa Border Patrol Sector Chief Patrol Agent John Smietana mentioned at the Lajitas meeting of the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition that the Alien Transfer and Exit Program has been halted effective December 31 of last year.

Under the border patrol program, two busloads of undocumented Mexican nationals caught in the Tucson, Arizona sector were being deported daily at the Presidio-Ojinaga border crossing.

The deportation program was short-lived, occurring only in November and December of last year. When the plan was first announced in late October of last year, it was expected up to 34,000 people would be deported annually.

When asked at the meeting why the program was halted, Smietana said it was a "decision made by [Department of Homeland Security] headquarters."

The following week, Bill Brooks, the border patrol's Marfa Sector spokesman, told the *Gazette* the program was halted "primarily because the Tucson Sector's number of daily apprehensions dropped and they could no longer fill a bus with qualified candidates for repatriation."

"The requirements to be repatriated through Presidio and Ojinaga were very strict," he said.

Only single, male Mexican nationals with no criminal background—other than entering the U.S. illegally—were eligible for the voluntary deportation program.

Brooks cited a seasonal decline in illegal entries into the U.S. as the main reason for the decreased number of Tucson Sector apprehensions.

"The program could very well resume at any time," Brooks said.



Wackenhut busses like this one (on I-10) were used briefly last year to deport Mexican nationals via the international bridge between Presidio and Ojinaga. Last month at a meeting of the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition Marfa Border Patrol Sector Chief Patrol Agent, John Smietana told the *Gazette* the program was halted December 31, 2009.

## Some Dark Clouds on Terlingua Ranch

### Apparent Murder-Suicide on Terlingua Ranch

A Terlingua Ranch couple died in an apparent murder-suicide on Thursday, January 21.

A 911 caller reported a murder and suicide at 7:09 pm, according to Brewster County Sheriff Ronny Dodson. When sheriff's deputies and the constable arrived at the couple's home on Terlingua Ranch at 7:19 pm, they found dead Dianne Key, 50, and her husband Bill Key, 59. Dianne had been shot several times and Bill Key died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound. It is believed Bill Key made the 911 call. The case is under investigation.

### Suspects in Terlingua Ranch Kidnapping, Assault and Arson Remain in Jail

Daniel Phillip Martinez, 46, and Kristopher Buchanan, 27, were indicted last month on four felony charges each: aggravated sexual assault, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated robbery, and arson. The men remain in Brewster County Jail. Bond is set for each at \$275,000.


Recently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation concluded its investigation on the possible hate-crime motivation of this case, based on real or perceived sexual orientation of the victim. The bureau has sent their findings to the Department of Justice for a determination on whether to pursue a hate-crime prosecution.

### Terlingua Ranch Office Broken Into and General Manager Resigns

The new general manager of the Property Owners Association of Terlingua Ranch, Leslie Bullard, has resigned.

Bullard was hired as GM in October and resigned on January 19, a day after a break-in at the Terlingua Ranch offices.

According to a Brewster County sheriff's incident report, file cabinets were rifled through and \$220 in cash was taken during the break-in.

  
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