

SMUGGLING SNAPSHOT

Just a few weeks into the Biden administration, the southwestern border is proving exceptionally busy with illegal crossings and border agents and officers trying to stop them. Here are some of the smuggling cases The Washington Times has tracked in recent days.

San Ysidro, California

Date: Jan. 29

Situation: Port of entry between the U.S. and Mexico

Details: A contraband-sniffing canine alerted Customs and Border Protection officers to the dashboard area of a Chevrolet Tracker. CBP officers sent the vehicle for a secondary inspection, where they unscrewed the glove box and discovered an illegal immigrant woman from Mexico inside a specially built compartment.

■ The Mexican migrant said she was paying \$16,000 to reach Santa Maria, California. The driver, Guillermo King, told officers he was being paid \$5,000 to make the crossing.

San Ysidro, California

Date: Jan. 29

Situation: Multiple groups of migrants trying to break through a drainage culvert

Details: Smugglers paid a man \$500 to guide a group, during heavy rain, through a drainage ditch that runs underneath the boundary and the border wall. The man was supposed to shout for help and try to get the Border Patrol to open the grate on the U.S. side, where the migrants would make a break for it.

■ The rainfall was too heavy, and several people began to drown. The guide's brother died. A woman was saved through CPR and by coughing up water until her breathing was restored. As agents were working to save the first group of 10, the smugglers sent another group through the drainage ditch, figuring the agents might be too distracted by the rescues. Agents stopped the second group, too.

Falfurrias, Texas

Date: Jan. 30

Situation: Border Patrol checkpoint at Falfurrias

Details: A driver's shaky hands roused the suspicion of an agent running the checkpoint. The driver, Mark Unsworth, became belligerent and locked himself in his Toyota Yaris before pulling away a blanket in the car's rear to reveal two illegal immigrants. Mr. Unsworth said he had been homeless for five years and was offered \$1,200 to smuggle two people through the checkpoint.

■ He told agents he had COVID-19 but admitted he was lying after a check by medical staff. Agents said he used the same tactic successfully two weeks earlier at the Sarita checkpoint.

Laredo, Texas

Date: Feb. 1

Situation: Border Patrol tip on a stash house

Details: Two Mexican migrants said they paid \$8,000 apiece to be smuggled and were brought to the U.S. to a stash house, where they were kept while their families were extorted for more money.