

## **Jury selection starts in deadly smuggling case**

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A **jury** was selected Monday in the first trial stemming from the nation's **deadliest** human **smuggling** attempt -- a May 2003 journey that ended in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants in a stifling trailer.

Victor Jesus Rodriguez, Claudia Carrizales de Villa and Fredy Giovanni Garcia-Tobar each face 58 counts of harboring and transporting illegal immigrants.

Each faces up to life in prison if convicted. Opening statements were to begin today; prosecutors expect the trial to last a month.

Prosecutors say the three were part of a **smuggling** ring that tried to transport a group of more than 70 immigrants inside a tractor trailer during a trip from southern Texas to Houston that began May 13, 2003. The temperature inside the trailer reached an estimated 173 degrees.

The following morning, the trailer was found abandoned at a truck stop about 100 miles southwest of Houston. Authorities found the bodies of 17 immigrants inside; two others died later.

The victims, including a 5-year-old boy, were from Mexico, Central America and the Dominican Republic.

Truck driver Tyrone Williams of Schenectady, N.Y., is set to go to trial Jan. 5. He could face the death penalty if convicted.

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