



United States
Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

PRESS RELEASE

Dallas Man Sentenced for Role in Human Smuggling Organization

Thursday, May 30, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District
of Texas

SAN ANTONIO – A Dallas man was sentenced in a federal court in San Antonio to 84 months in prison for conspiracy to transport undocumented noncitizens.

According to court documents, Sedrick Zelitis Smith, 47, was a member of a human smuggling organization, coordinating transport of migrants who arrived in Laredo from Mexico, serving as the go-between for organization leadership and load drivers during smuggling events, and assisting in the theft and procurement of tractor trailers. On multiple occasions, Smith traveled between Dallas, San Antonio and Laredo to assist with smuggling loads. He also served as a driver for the organization, smuggling migrants from Laredo to San Antonio, using his commercial driver's license.

Smith's arrest was the result of an investigation led by Homeland Security Investigations beginning in May 2021. Agents learned that the human smuggling organization had smuggled more than 900 migrants from Laredo to San Antonio inside tractor trailers in at least 19 human smuggling events. The loads ranged from approximately 30 migrants to more than 100 packed into a single trailer.

Nine others have been indicted in the case. Bryan Adamson, Ronnie Joe Branch, Eliseo Lored, Rodney Edward Shavers, Mark Algie Holliday, Francisco Arredondo-Colmenero, and Debbie Marie Gonzales await court proceedings.

Fredi Zagala-Servin was sentenced in April to 97 months in prison for Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens.

Norman Lee Walker Jr. was arrested May 21.

“With the rise of human smuggling in recent years, it is absolutely critical that we send a message to criminals throughout all levels of these organizations that their crimes at the expense of vulnerable individuals are serious, they are dangerous, and we are here to readily prosecute,” said U.S. Attorney Jaime Esparza for the Western District of Texas. “I appreciate the dedication of our partners at HSI and our Joint Task Force Alpha initiative. Their efforts have been essential in taking down this HSO and many others. We’ll continue to dismantle these groups and serve justice together.”

“Justice was served for a human smuggler responsible for coordinating the transportation of hundreds of noncitizens from Laredo to San Antonio. These noncitizens were crammed into tractor trailers, during multiple smuggling events in the stifling Texas heat,” said Special Agent in Charge Craig Larrabee for HSI San Antonio. “HSI is committed to aggressively target human smugglers and smuggling organizations who continually victimize people for profit.”

HSI and JTFA investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Amanda Brown prosecuted the case.

The indictments and convictions of these defendants are the result of the coordinated efforts of Joint Task Force Alpha (JTFA). The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Texas is part of JTFA, which was established by Attorney General Merrick B. Garland created JTFA in June 2021 to marshal the investigative and prosecutorial resources of the Department of Justice, in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security to strengthen the Justice Department’s efforts to combat the rise in prolific and dangerous smuggling emanating from Central America and impacting our border communities. JTFA is comprised of detailees from U.S. Attorneys’ Offices along the southwest border, including the Southern District of Texas, the Western District of Texas, the District of New Mexico, the District of Arizona, and the Southern District of California. Dedicated support is also provided by numerous components of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division that are part of JTFA, led by the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section (HRSP), and supported by the Office of Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT), the Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section (NDDS), the Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (MLARS), the Office of Enforcement Operations (OEO), the Office of International Affairs (OIA), and the Violent Crime and Racketeering Section JTFA also relies on substantial law enforcement investment from DHS, FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and other partners. To date, JTFA’s work has resulted in over 295 domestic and international arrests of leaders, organizers, and significant facilitators of human smuggling; over 230 U.S. convictions; 170+ significant jail sentences imposed; and forfeitures of substantial assets.

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