



Texas Sheriff: Groups of Armed Illegal Immigrants in His County

Larry Spence, who has been sheriff of Willacy County in South Texas for 29 years, said that farmers there have reported seeing gangs of armed men in their fields.

In an interview with MailOnline (the website of Britain's *Daily Mail* newspaper), Spence said ranchers as far as 25 miles north of the border have reported groups of men in military fatigues and armed with rifles walking single file across their land. The men are believed to be illegal immigrants.



"About three or four months ago we had an individual who saw people walking through farm property in military fatigues, with backpacks," Spence told MailOnline, adding,

He went out and asked them, "Who are you?" [and] they said, "What's it to you?" He said he owned the property and they said, "Well you better get out of here." Sensibly he left and called us, but by the time we got out there, they were gone.

We've had people say they've seen groups going through the fields in single file, with rifles as well. [Sightings of illegal aliens have] picked up on the road where the incident with Javier Vega took place. It's a very busy road for illegal immigrants. A couple of weeks ago we had fifty of them in three cars.

As soon as we lit them up the doors fly open and they're off into the brush. You get some back and the next day you get some walking down the highway, but it's getting more and more frequent and it's getting more and more dangerous.

This concerns not only me here, but the other counties as well. These are not people seeking asylum legitimately; they have criminal intent and they are making money.

Javier Vega, Jr., of whom Spence spoke, was an off-duty Border Patrol agent who was shot and killed in front of his wife, children, and parents on August 3 while the family was fishing in Santa Monica, Texas, near the Mexican border. When the family was abruptly confronted by two robbers, Vega identified himself as a Border Patrol agent and drew his weapon. ([See related article.](#))

One of the suspects shot Vega in the chest. Vega's father, Javier Vega, Sr., was struck by gunfire during the attempted robbery, but survived.

Spence told the conservative news and opinion website TheBlaze: "The Border Patrol agent apparently kept telling his dad to 'keep firing, Dad, keep shooting, Dad' at the suspects after he was already hit."

Spence added that the agent's mother "apparently picked up the AR-15 rifle and continued shooting at the suspects' vehicle, hitting the windshield and other parts of the vehicle as the suspects fled."

Spence's department led the investigation that resulted in the arrest of two suspects, Ismael Hernandez and Gustavo Tijerina, who are illegal immigrants from Mexico. Police sources told FoxNews.com that



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the two confessed to shooting Vega after being interrogated. They were arraigned on August 5 inside the Willacy County jail library and were ordered held without bail.

Spence said the two suspects were likely connected to cartels or other criminal gangs. “They claim to have been involved in other incidents. This means you’ve got stolen vehicles going into Mexico,” Spence told Fox News, adding,

“Everything is going to be cartel-related — there’s a connection somehow.

This is not the first episode of border violence in Willacy County, but it’s the first time someone’s been killed.

Fox News reported that according to court records, Tijerina had a long rap sheet. He pled guilty to entering the United States illegally on July 9, 2007 and was given a 30-day sentence with credit for time served and charged a \$10 fee.

Three months later, on October 4, 2007, he was again found guilty of entering the country illegally and was sentenced to 60 days in jail and \$10 fee. A year later, on October 25, 2008, he again crossed into the United States by wading across the Rio Grande. On November 18, 2008, he was given 90 days in jail and another \$10 special assessment fee.

On December 15, 2009, Tijerina was indicted by a grand jury on charges of entering the United States illegally yet again. The indictment read that he “had previously been denied admission, excluded, deported and removed, knowing and unlawfully was present in the United States having been found near Edinburg, Texas.” Court records say he had not obtained consent from the U.S. attorney general and the secretary of Homeland Security to reapply for admission into the United States.

He was arrested and held without bond on January 26, 2010, after which he was sentenced to nine months in jail and fined \$100.

A writer for *Investor’s Business Daily* commented on the Vega murder on October 7:

Who knows what might have happened if Vega’s family wasn’t armed and didn’t know how to use firearms?

Being armed along the Mexican border is a good thing these days. According to a Judicial Watch report, crime there is so high that “nearly half of all the criminal cases filed by federal prosecutors in the United States last fiscal year were concentrated in a handful of districts located in that region, according to the U.S. government’s figures.”

In spite of all of this crime being related to illegal immigration, our immigration authorities have been releasing known criminals among illegal immigrants into the United States. In our [recent article](#), we quoted Border Patrol agent Chris Cabrera, who told Fox News on August 6 that the federal government is allowing murderers from Central America to be released into the United States.

“If they have family in the United States, [Customs and Border Patrol officers will] release them to the family, even if they’re admitted gang members,” Cabrera said to Fox News. “We’ve had a couple that had admitted to murders in their home country. They were 17 years old, 16 years old, and the United States government thought it fit to release them to their parents here in the United States.

“Even if he’s a confirmed gang member, a confirmed criminal even by self-admission, we for some



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reason don't send them back to their home country, we release them into our country.”

In the case of the Javier Vega, Jr., it will be hoped that the combination of his alleged killers' confessions — along with Tijerina's long record, will result in a conviction and a just punishment.

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