

Victims: The Illegal Aliens

Big rig driver Tyrone Williams, a Jamaican immigrant from Schenectady, New York, was hauling his temperature-controlled semi-trailer from Harlingen, Texas to Houston, a 330-mile run. He was being paid \$7500 for the short trip – quite a substantial day’s pay, considering most truckers would be happy to make \$500 for that run. His cargo: illegal aliens – at least 74 of them from Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic.

In the hands of this ‘paid professional,’ the criminal aliens (each of whom had paid about \$1800 for the cross-border experience) were being transported from a ‘safe house’ to vehicles that would carry them to their destinations in the U.S. Instead, the brief trip turned into our nation’s deadliest human smuggling attempt.

According to court and media documents, Williams failed to turn on the trailer’s air conditioning unit. As the temperatures inside the trailer soared, the ‘cargo’ kicked holes in the walls, clawed at the insulation, and screamed for help. When Williams became aware of the dire situation, he pulled over, then opened, unlocked, and abandoned the trailer and its contents near Victoria, Texas.

Unfortunately for 19 of the folks inside the death box, it was too late. Seventeen were found deceased in the trailer, and two more died later

– from dehydration, hyperthermia, and suffocation. This was one human trafficking operation gone extremely awry.

Fourteen people were charged in the subsequent indictment and trial, including Williams, who is now serving life sentences in prison for murder. All of the victims had Hispanic surnames, as did all of the other defendants in the smuggling ring.

When discussing the victims of illegal immigration, the aliens themselves are sometimes overlooked. All-too-often, however, these border-crossers are put in jeopardy by their own actions and by those that run the human trafficking enterprises. Crossing deserts without adequate food, water, and shelter can be dangerous; wild animals and inhospitable topography pose real problems; and heartless, greedy profiteers and coyotes put their ‘clients’ at great risk. In the Tyrone Williams case, 19 of them paid the ultimate price to come to the United States – their very lives.

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