

Arizona Crime Victims of Illegal Aliens

A snapshot of preventable tragedies

BY BRENDA WALKER

Some months back, Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce sent out an e-mail list of crime victims of illegal aliens from his state. Putting occasional acts of violence into a list reveals the disturbing and consistent pattern: illegal alien crime is harming far too many Americans and shouldn't be happening at all because the killers and thieves shouldn't be here.

The attentive citizen can learn a lot from such a list, first and foremost that it is dangerous to live in a region infested by so many criminal illegal aliens. Arizona is a major on-ramp for the most violent Mexican drug smugglers, so the hazard is even more pronounced.

Every crime committed by an illegal alien is a preventable crime. If the federal government were doing its job and protecting the country from invasion (as promised in the Constitution), then the general welfare would be promoted by improving public safety.

Following is the Pearce list of victims with a few deletions (because not all names were given), with more description added.

Rancher **Rob Krentz** (below) was shot and killed March 27, 2010, on his own property (owned by his family since 1907), which had become a popular crossing point for illegals. In earlier times, when the influx of aliens was a trickle and not a flood of criminals, ranchers



had given food and water to crossers. Now the same people carry guns whenever they go outside.

Krentz became the face of embattled southern Arizona, where life has become ever more dangerous for ranchers, despite continuing lies from DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano that the U.S.-Mexico border is "as secure now as it has ever been." His killer remains at large.

A young Phoenix police officer, **Shane Figueroa**, was killed in October 2008 when a drunk-driving illegal alien turned his truck in front of the patrol car, causing a crash. The alien was Salvador Vivas-Diaz, who had been repatriated on several occasions via voluntary deportation (under which the illegal accrues no serious penalties if he returns), but had re-entered every time. Officer Figueroa was only 25 and had a wife and three-month old girl. In June 2009, Vivas-Diaz was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to serve 16 years.

Another Phoenix officer, **Nick Erfle**, was shot and killed by a man whom he and his partner attempted to arrest for jaywalking and obstructing traffic. The shooter, Erik Martinez, was an illegal who had been deported after a conviction for theft, but returned unlawfully. After shooting the officer, Martinez carjacked a vehicle and grabbed a hostage, and was shot and killed by an officer when he pointed his gun at the hostage.

Phoenix officer **Bret Glidewell** was shot in the chest by an illegal during a traffic stop in 2007, but was protected by his vest and was released from the hospital within a day.

The victims of **Santana Batiz Aceves** cannot be named because they were children, junior high school students in Chandler, aged 12 to 14. He stalked at least five girls in a most deliberate manner to learn the family's routine prior to raping them. When he was finally arrested after more than a year of terror, the twice-deported illegal alien was sentenced to 168 years in prison. Aceves had worked as a heavy equipment operator and was featured as a dangerous criminal on America's Most Wanted.

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Another anonymous victim was the 15-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted by an illegal alien hired as a janitor by the Scottsdale school district. In 2007, Roberto Lemus-Retana was sentenced to 60 years in prison.

Phoenix Police Officer **Marc Atkinson** was shot and killed in a 1999 ambush by an illegal alien from Mexico. Officer Atkinson was a five-year veteran of the Phoenix Police Force, and was survived by his wife and infant son. The killer, Felipe Petrona-Cabanas, had around a pound of cocaine in his car when apprehended with two other Mexican nationals.

An interesting detail in this case is how an armed citizen, Rory Vertigan, returned fire against the three Mexicans after they had ambushed Officer Atkinson and began shooting at him. He tackled one Mexican and disabled their car so the others were unable to escape into their country.

Park Ranger **Kris Eggle** was killed in 2002 by a Mexican smuggler while on the job in Organ Pipe National Monument, a park which had become overrun with drug traffickers due to its southern perimeter facing the Mexican border. His family keeps a remembrance online, www.KrisEggle.org.

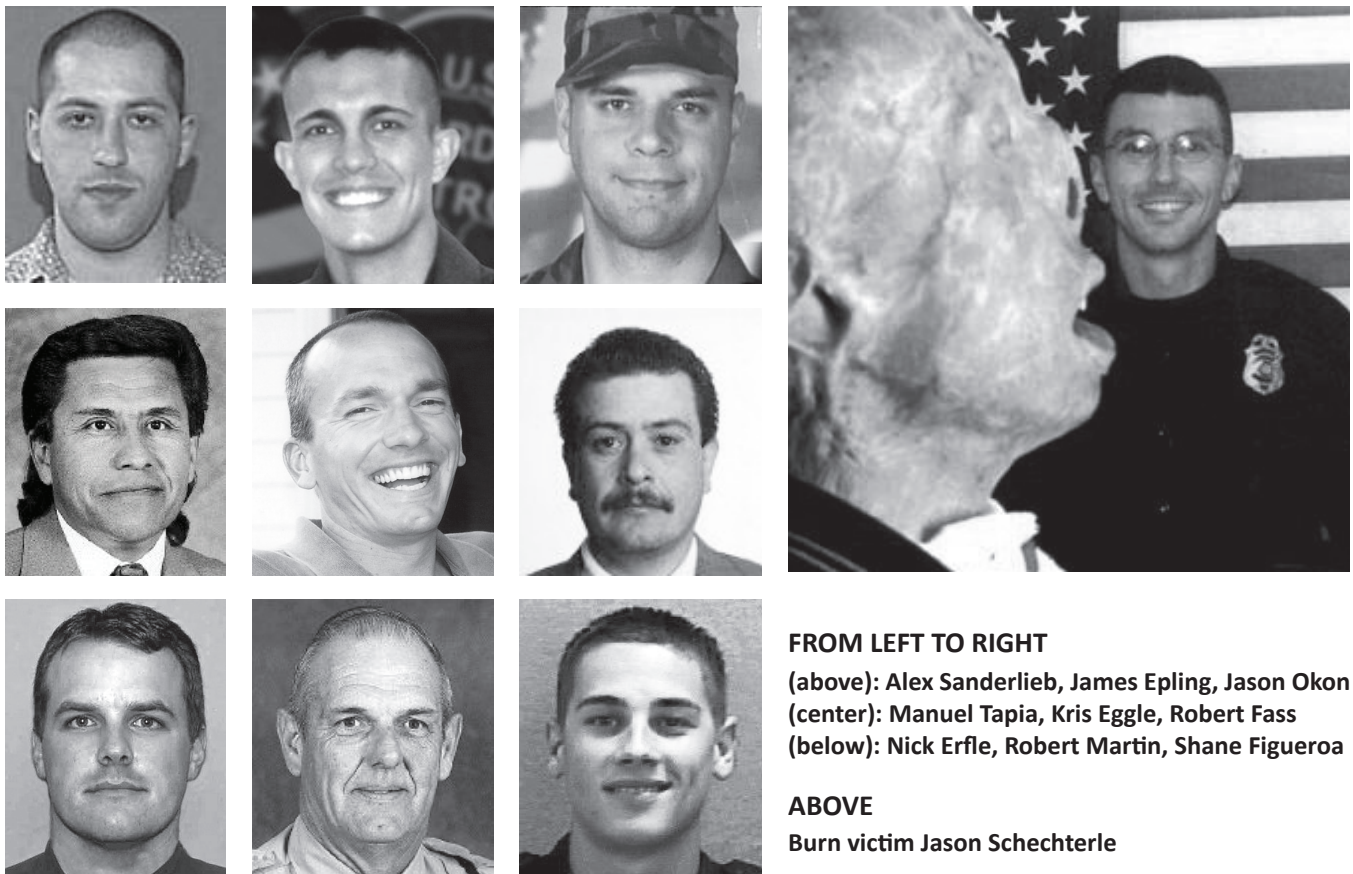
Border Patrol Agent **James Epling** drowned in the Colorado River while in pursuit of escaping illegal

aliens in 2003. Earlier the same day he had rescued a Chinese national from the river.

Mesa Deputy **Sean Pearce**, Sen. Pearce's son, was shot in 2004 by an illegal alien while executing a search warrant for homicide suspects. Deputy **Lew Argetsinger** was also shot in the same incident. Fortunately both officers survived. In addition to the shooter, the suspects of the search warrant were also illegal aliens, and all possessed matricula cards issued by the Mexican embassy. Curiously, Russell Pearce learned of the shooting as he appeared on a panel at Washington's Brookings Institution considering immigration policy. Mexican Jorge Guerra-Vargas was later sentenced to 51 years in prison after pleading guilty to three counts of aggravated assault.

Sgt. **Manuel H. Tapia** was shot and killed in 1991 by a Mexican drug smuggler in Nogales, about a mile north of the border. The Mexican was then shot by another officer.

Officer **Robert K. Martin**, a 27-year veteran of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, was shot to death during a traffic stop in 1995 by 19-year-old ex-con Ernesto Salgado Martinez. The killer was sentenced to be executed, and was also accused of murdering a convenience store clerk in Blythe the same day he killed Officer Martin.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
 (above): Alex Sanderlieb, James Epling, Jason Okon
 (center): Manuel Tapia, Kris Eggle, Robert Fass
 (below): Nick Erfle, Robert Martin, Shane Figueroa

ABOVE
 Burn victim Jason Schechterle

DEA Special Agent **Richard Fass** was working on an undercover assignment in Phoenix in 1994 when he was murdered by Mexican drug smugglers, who then escaped to Mexico. The four men involved were eventually arrested and given long prison sentences.

Border Patrol agent **Alexander Sanderlieb Kirp-nick**, a naturalized citizen from Russia, was killed in 1998 during the arrest of five drug smugglers near the Mexican border with a fellow agent. All the suspects were eventually caught and the shooter received a life sentence.

Phoenix PD officer **Jason Schechterle** was burned beyond recognition 10 years ago when a taxi moving at 100 mph plowed into his patrol car, which then burst into flames. He was in a coma for two and a half months and had 52 surgeries to repair his face and body from fourth-degree burns. His story is told online at www.BeyondTheFlames.com. The taxi driver, Rogelio Gutierrez, was found guilty in 2002 of two counts of aggravated assault after a jury learned of four prior seizure-related accidents, indicating he lied about both his illness and his immigration status to get a license.

In 2008, Gilbert high school student **Kelly Tracy** was killed in a head-on collision with a previously arrested drunk driving illegal alien, Mexican Manuel Contreras-Galdean. The 16-year-old was a percussionist in Gilbert's Highland High School band and was on her way to a music event with her brother Matthew when the crash occurred. In 2010, the killer got 14 years in prison in a plea deal.

Jason Okon was a three-year Army veteran who had served in Iraq and received a Bronze Star for valor. In 2007, he and his pregnant wife Elizabeth and their two children were getting ready to move to Wisconsin because he had been unable to find a job in Arizona. As Okon was doing yard work a day prior to leaving, an illegal alien, later identified as 34-year-old Armando Martinez-Lozano, approached with a knife, said something in Spanish, and then stabbed Okon in the stomach. The attack put Okon into the intensive care ward, where he came close to death but survived. In January 2008, after pleading guilty to aggravated assault, the alien was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

This list is a snapshot of the human tragedy caused by illegal alien crime in one smallish state that is unlucky in geography. Arizona is on the front lines because it lies next to Mexico, but it is not unique in terms of victims of illegal aliens. Foreign criminals don't stay put in the Southwest, but travel the entire country to pursue their crime-centered American Dream. Mexican drug cartels operate in 230 American cities. Drunk driving illegal aliens endanger citizens around the nation.

Border security not only protects citizens from national enemies; it also keeps out criminal gangs and individuals that increasingly act like terrorists. As long as Washington does not put public safety first (as shown by the administration's attack on Arizona's enforcement law and recent moves to hobble Secure Communities), every American's safety is threatened. ■