

Drugs/Crime

- **U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 177.693 unique individuals in May 2022, which was a 15% increase over the prior month in terms of unique enforcement encounters.** “The number of unique individuals encountered nationwide in May 2022 was 177,793, a 15 percent increase in the number of unique enforcement encounters over the prior month.” (‘‘CBP Releases May 2022 Monthly Operational Update,’’ [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 6/15/22)
- **In the first half of FY 2022, CBP encountered just under 1.06 million illegal migrants at the southwest border.** “According to an April filing in *Texas v. Biden*, CBP encountered 221,303 illegal migrants at the Southwest border last month, bringing total encounters there to just fewer than 1.06 million for just the first half of FY 2022.” (Andrew R. Arthur, ‘‘Nearly 1.06 Million CBP Encounters at Southwest Border Thus Far in FY 2022,’’ [Center for Immigration Studies](#), 4/19/22)
 - **As of March 2022, the Biden administration has released over 836,000 migrants into the U.S.** “Worse, DHS released more than 80,000 of those migrants into the interior last month, raising the total number of migrant illegal releases under the Biden administration to 836,225.” (Andrew R. Arthur, ‘‘Nearly 1.06 Million CBP Encounters at Southwest Border Thus Far in FY 2022,’’ [Center for Immigration Studies](#), 4/19/22)
- **In 2021, the amount of fentanyl that was seized in South Texas increased by 1,066%, among other drugs that saw increases from 2020.** “During FY 2021, CBP officers at the eight ports of entry extending from Brownsville to Del Rio that comprise the Laredo Field Office seized 87,652 pounds of narcotics that would have commanded a combined estimated street value of \$786 million. Specifically, they seized 41,713 pounds of marijuana; 8,592 pounds of cocaine, up 98 percent from FY 20; 33,777 pounds of methamphetamine; 1,215 pounds of heroin, 588 pounds of fentanyl, up 1,066 percent from FY 2020, \$10.4 million in unreported currency, 463 weapons, up 21 percent from FY 2020 and 84,863 rounds of ammunition.” (Press Release, ‘‘CBP Officers at South Texas Ports of Entry Post Significant Increases in Fentanyl, Cocaine Seized in FY 2021,’’ [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 1/5/2022)
 - **In addition to the increase in drugs, there were also tens of thousands of illegal immigrants that tried to make their way into the US via South Texas.** “CBP officers at Laredo Field Office ports of entry in FY 2021 also determined that more than 20,701 non-U.S. citizens were inadmissible to the U.S. due to violations of immigration law.” (Press Release, ‘‘CBP Officers at South Texas Ports of Entry Post Significant Increases in Fentanyl, Cocaine Seized in FY 2021,’’ [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 1/5/2022)
- **Cartels have allegedly been known to infiltrate Border Patrol forces in the Rio Grande Valley.** “In south Texas, Mexican and South American cartels have been able to infiltrate law enforcement agencies in the U.S. Several former law enforcement officials from an anti-narcotics force in the Rio Grande Valley are currently serving lengthy prison sentences for drug crimes and corruption. In 2016, Border Patrol agent Joel Luna was charged with capital murder for the March 2015 beheading of an undocumented Honduran immigrant. Luna, a south Texas native and Army combat veteran, allegedly decapitated Palacio Paz and

left his headless body floating in the bay. Prosecutors claim Luna was part of a cartel drug trafficking conspiracy with his brothers. Luna has pleaded not guilty. In November, Border Patrol agent Eduardo Bazen Jr., also was arrested after being accused of working with a drug trafficking organization. According to the criminal complaint, Bazen said he was paid \$8,000 for falsifying a 2007 drug bust and admitted to lying about suspects being present at the scene.” (Barnini Chakraborty, “ ‘They come every day’: Border town residents face daily threat from trafficking,” [Fox News](#), 1/17/2017)

- **The Gulf Cartel is a frequent visitor to the South Texas area transporting their heroin and cocaine into the United States.** “The Gulf Cartel holds its power base in parts of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas and in the state of Zacatecas, and may have alliances with CJNG members working in that region of Mexico. The Gulf Cartel focuses its drug trafficking activities on heroin and cocaine by transporting loads into the United States near the McAllen and Brownsville, Texas, areas.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
 - **Texas was in the top 10 of states with the number of drug overdoses involving cocaine in 2018.** “The U.S. states with the greatest number of deaths from drug poisoning involving cocaine in 2018, in descending order, were New York (1,276 deaths), Florida (1,221), Ohio (1,105), Pennsylvania (1,045), New Jersey (867), Illinois (771), Michigan (768), Texas (741), Massachusetts (716) and North Carolina (711).” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **Texas and D.C. saw the greatest number of increases in 2019 of controlled substances lost in transit.** “Lost in transit describes controlled substances being misplaced while moving from one point to another within the supply chain. There has been a decrease in lost in transit incidents from 2017 through 2019 (See Figure 36). This data is self-reported from any facility that manages CPDs. In 2019, 22 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia experienced increases in the number of incidents, with the greatest increases occurring in the state of Texas and the District of Columbia.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **Texas and California in 2019 had the largest marijuana seizure levels.** “State-level DEA (net weight) marijuana seizures generally followed previously established patterns. The highest seizures occurred in states with major land border crossings or high traffic seaports, as well as in states with large recreational or medical marijuana state approved markets (See Figure 50). California and Texas had the largest marijuana seizure levels, consistent with previous years, followed by Arizona and Colorado.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)
- **Texas, California, Arizona, and New York saw the largest amounts of heroin seized in 2019.** “DEA Field Divisions seized 6,951 kilograms of heroin in 2019, a 30 percent increase from 2018, with the largest amounts of heroin seized in Texas, California, Arizona, and New York.” (“2020 National Drug Threat Assessment,” [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), March 2021)

- **Reynosa and Ciudad Victoria lie just across the border in Mexico and are among the top 50 most dangerous cities in the world.** “Across the bridge from Brownsville is Matamoros. While it did not make the list for the most violent cities, other cities not far from us including Reynosa and Ciudad Victoria, ranked in the top 50 cities with the highest murder rates in the world. It is something that happens quite too often along the Texas-Mexico border.” (Karina Vargas, “Violence on the rise near Texas-Mexico Border,” [Local 23 News Valley Central](#), 12/2/2019)
- **The plight of journalists is severe in the area as well.** “Nowhere do journalists face the threat of death more than here in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, one of four states bordering Texas across from Laredo and the McAllen, Harlingen and Brownsville area.” (Yami Virgin, “Texas cities hit hard by cartel violence targeting Mexican law enforcement,” [Fox 29 News](#), 3/26/2018)
- **Harlingen Border Patrol agents have seized hundreds of thousands worth of marijuana carried over by people crossing the border:** “Early this morning, Harlingen Border Patrol agents working near the Rio Grande in Bluetown, Texas, observed multiple subjects carrying bundles of suspected narcotics. Upon detection, the drug smugglers dropped their contraband and swiftly absconded back to Mexico. Agents seized the five abandoned bundles of marijuana. The weight of the marijuana was approximately 347 pounds, valued at over \$278K. The seized marijuana was transported to a Border Patrol station for processing. About an hour later, Rio Grande City Border Patrol agents working in La Grulla, Texas, encountered a similar incident as they responded to illegal activity near the Rio Grande. Agents, along with a Border Patrol canine team, searched the area and discovered an abandoned bundle of marijuana. The total weight of the marijuana was 93 pounds, worth an estimated \$75K. The drugs were transported to a Border Patrol station for processing.” ([U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), “\$353K Worth of Drugs Seized by USBP Near Harlingen, Texas,” Released July 21, 2021)
- **McAllen has been the scene of cartel clashes in the past, in which its believed that Mexican police were involved assisting the cartels.** “On January 19, several bodies were found burned to death in two vehicles just across the border near McAllen, Texas. Three of the dead were reportedly cartel members. Law enforcement officials in Texas believe the others were Guatemalan migrants headed to the U.S. It's believed the murderers were Mexican police working with the cartels.” (Brett Shipp, “For migrants, threats from cartel are abundant on journey to U.S.,” [Spectrum News 1](#), 6/7/2021)
- **Drug smugglers and human traffickers have used people's homes in the Brownsville area to evade CBP detection without a homeowner's permission.** “[Pamela] Taylor, whose property is on the front line of the border battle, says illegal immigrants have been using her land to sneak into the U.S. for years. One day, the 90-year-old grandmother recalled, she even walked into her living room to find a border crosser trying to evade capture.” (Barnini Chakraborty, “‘They come every day’: Border town residents face daily threat from trafficking,” [Fox News](#), 1/17/2017)
- **Gulf Cartel leader Jose Alferdo Cardenas-Martinez was indicted in Brownsville in November 2021 and as of March 2022, he is currently in Mexico pending an extradition request.** “Jose Alfredo Cardenas-Martinez aka El Contador has been indicted in the Southern District of Texas on various charges related to his position as the head of the

Cardenas family drug trafficking operation known as the Cartel del Golfo, announced U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery. A federal grand jury sitting in Brownsville returned the nine-count indictment Nov. 10, 2021. Cardenas-Martinez is currently in custody in Mexico pending litigation on the U.S.'s extradition request." (Department of Justice U.S. Attorney's Office, "Head of Gulf Cartel Indicted," [Southern District of Texas](#), 3/24/2022)

- **Cardenas-Martinez is charged with conspiracy and intent to distribute.**
"Cardenas-Martinez is charged in an international conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute meth, cocaine and fentanyl. The indictment also alleges he possessed with intent to distribute 50 grams or more of meth, five kilograms of cocaine and 400 grams or more of fentanyl." (Department of Justice U.S. Attorney's Office, "Head of Gulf Cartel Indicted," [Southern District of Texas](#), 3/24/2022)
- **Cardenas-Martinez is alleged to have been the coordinator of narcotics shipment into the U.S.** "As head of the CDG, Cardenas-Martinez allegedly coordinated the shipment of narcotics to the United States for illegal sale across the country. According to the charges, the conspiracy to transport cocaine, meth and fentanyl into the United States began in 2015 and continued through 2021." (Department of Justice U.S. Attorney's Office, "Head of Gulf Cartel Indicted," [Southern District of Texas](#), 3/24/2022)
- **An MS-13 gang member was apprehended by Brownsville Border Patrol Station agents in Oct. 2021.** "On Oct. 21, Brownsville Border Patrol Station agents apprehended a group of five migrants in Brownsville. Record checks on a Salvadoran national, revealed he is a MS-13 gang member with criminal and immigration history in the United States." ([Texas Border Business](#), "Gulf Cartel Member and Criminal Migrants Arrested at the Border," 10/26/2021)
- **In Oct. 2021, CBP agents seized over \$48 million worth of meth.** "The seizure took place on Friday, Oct. 22, at the Veterans International Bridge when a 60-year-old male Mexican citizen applied for entry into the United States driving a 1997 Freightliner truck. The truck was referred to CBP secondary for further examination after a primary inspection. In secondary, CBP officers discovered 62 buckets which contained a total of 2,444.92 pounds of alleged methamphetamine. The estimated street value of the methamphetamine from the seizure is \$48,898,072." (Yantis Green, "Agents Seize Over \$48 Million Worth of Cartel Meth in Brownsville," [San Angelo Live](#), 10/29/2021)
- **In July 2022, CBP officers in Brownsville seized over \$3.5 million worth of meth at Gateway International Bridge.** "U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers working at the Gateway International Bridge seized \$3,614,662 in methamphetamine in one enforcement action." ("Brownsville CBP Officers Seize \$3.6 Million in Methamphetamine at Gateway International Bridge," [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 7/18/2022)
- **In Feb. 2022, McAllen Border Patrol Station agents arrested six migrants, one of whom was a Gulf Cartel member, near Hidalgo.** "On Feb. 28, McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) agents apprehended a group of six migrants near Hidalgo, Texas. At the station, record checks revealed a man traveling in the group is an active member of the Gulf Cartel. The cartel member's brother was also traveling among the group. Both men have prior

arrests in Mexico for possession of marijuana.” ([U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), “Multiple Criminal Migrants Arrested in the RGV,” 3/2/2022)

- **Gang member with multiple prior removals from the U.S. was caught by Harlingen police and border agents in Feb. 2022.**

Also on Feb. 28, Harlingen Police Department officers requested assistance from Harlingen Border Patrol agents to determine citizenship from a subject they had detained. Agents determined the subject was unlawfully present in the United States and took custody of the individual. Record checks revealed he is a Paisa gang member with extensive criminal history and multiple removals from the U.S. dating back to 2007. The subject has served prison time twice for assault in Nashville, Tennessee, to include a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. The man also served a six-year confinement for possession of cocaine, and almost three-years in confinement for immigration related offenses.

([Texas Border Business](#), “Multiple Criminal Migrants Arrested in the RGV,” 3/3/2022)

- **McAllen Border agents apprehended six migrants south of Mission. One of the people apprehended was convicted of sexual assault of a child in Conroe, TX.**

On Oct. 22, McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) agents apprehended a group of six migrants south of Mission. Record checks on Humberto Garrido-Negrete, a Mexican national, revealed he was convicted of sexual assault of child in Conroe, Texas, and was sentenced to two years’ confinement. He was later sentenced to 12 months’ confinement by an immigration judge and subsequently removed from the United States.

([Texas Border Business](#), “Gulf Cartel Member and Criminal Migrants Arrested at the Border,” 10/26/2021)

- **In mid-July, CBP seized \$3.6 million worth of meth at the Gateway International Bridge in Brownsville.** “U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers working at the Gateway International Bridge seized \$3,614,662 in methamphetamine in one enforcement action.” (Local Media Release, “Brownsville CBP Officers Seize \$3.6 Million in Methamphetamine at Gateway International Bridge,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 7/18/2022)

Along the U.S. – Mexico border, “law enforcement officers are finding increasing amounts of illegal drugs,” and an “uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico:”

- Per a Fox News headline, border officials are seeing an “uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico.”

US border officials see uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico

(Joy Addison, "US border officials see uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico," [Fox News](#), 3/10/22)

- **Along the border, "law enforcement officers are finding increasing amounts of illegal drugs."** "As traffic grows at the U.S.-Mexico border with the easing of restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic, law enforcement officers are finding increasing amounts of illegal drugs." (Joy Addison, "US border officials see uptick in drug trafficking from Mexico," [Fox News](#), 3/10/22)

In 2021, "the son of a major drug cartel leader" was charged with "smuggling goods:"

- **VIDEO: Son of former cartel leader arrested in Brownsville in Dec. 2021. Osiel Cardenas, Jr. was arrested for violating parole. He was arrested in 2018 for a felony weapons charge and for personating a law enforcement officer.** (KRGV, "Son of former Gulf Cartel leader arrested in Brownsville," [YouTube](#), 12/18/2021)
- **In 2021, "the son of a major drug cartel leader" faced "two charges of smuggling goods from the United States in the Southern District of Texas's Brownsville court."** "The son of a major drug cartel leader is moving forward with federal charges of gun smuggling. Osiel Cardenas Jr., 29, is facing two charges of smuggling goods from the United States in the Southern District of Texas's Brownsville court. Cardenas is accused of attempting to transport 10 firearms to Mexico in April 2021." (Nathaniel Puente, "Cartel drug lord's son waives arraignment on gun smuggling charges," [Valley Central](#), 1/28/22)
 - **"Cardenas is the son of Osiel Cárdenas Guillén, the former leader of the Gulf Cartel and Los Zetas, two of Mexico's most notorious drug cartels. The senior Cardenas was sentenced to 25 years in U.S. federal prison in 2010 for actions relating to these cartels."** (Nathaniel Puente, "Cartel drug lord's son waives arraignment on gun smuggling charges," [Valley Central](#), 1/28/22)

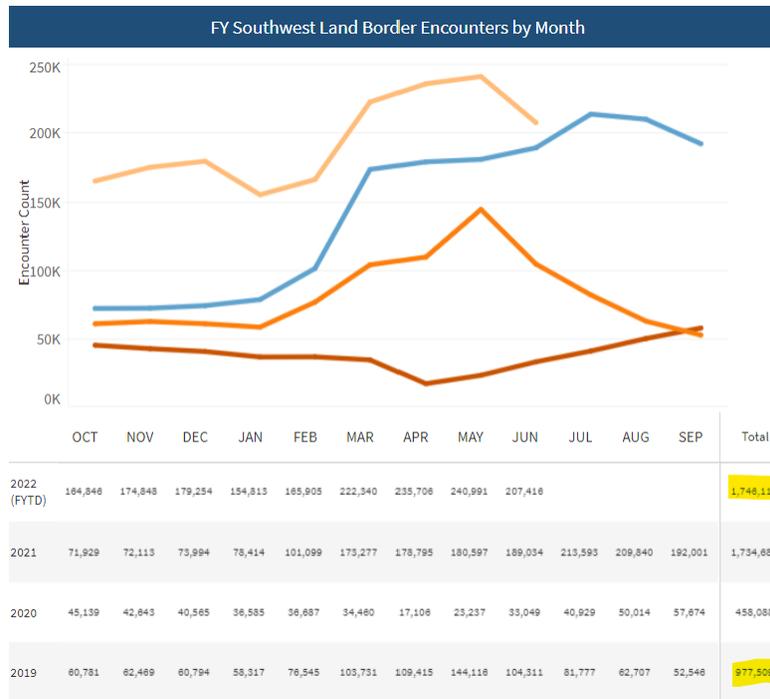
In the Rio Grande Valley, attempts of human smuggling have occurred as recently as March 2022:

- **In 2022, "Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol (RGV) agents disrupted four human smuggling attempts resulting in 34 arrests."** "Rio Grande Valley Sector Border Patrol (RGV) agents disrupted four human smuggling attempts resulting in 34 arrests. On March 16, at approximately 12:00 p.m., McAllen Border Patrol Station (MCS) agents responded to a request for assistance from Palmview Police Department (PPD) with a vehicle bailout near Palmview, Texas. When the agents arrived on scene, PPD had the driver and one other subject in custody. Agents determined that the driver was a U.S. citizen and the second person in custody was a Mexican national determined to be illegally present in the United States. PPD took custody of the U.S. citizen driver, who faces state charges for

smuggling while MCS agents took custody of the Mexican national. (“Law Enforcement Works Together to Arrest 34 Migrants in the RGV,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), 3/17/22)

The amount of border encounters CBP has had in FY2022 so far is already more than what it had in the entirety of FY2021 and almost double what it encountered in FY2019, with three months left to go in the fiscal year:

- 1.74 million migrants had been stopped at the southwest border through the first nine months of FY2022, which is already more than the previous fiscal year’s total, with three more months left to go before the end of this fiscal year. “More than 1.74 million migrants had been stopped at the southwest border through June, breaking the record set through all of the last fiscal year with three months still to go in this fiscal year. The latest numbers from Customs and Border Protection show that while apprehensions fell sharply from May to June, they were still above 200,000 for a fourth straight month. That pushed encounters in the first nine months of fiscal 2022 past the previous record of 1.73 million apprehensions through all of fiscal 2021.” (Daisy Gonzalez-Perez, “June border encounters top 200,000, set record of 1.74 million for year,” [Cronkite News](#), 7/18/2022)
- The 1.74 million number is almost double what FY2019 had in its entirety.



(“Southwest Land Border Encounters,” [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#), Accessed 7/22/2022)

Human smuggling across the border also appears to be a very profitable business for cartels, who have boasted on TikTok about the millions of dollars they are making doing such things:

- Cartels have been boasting on TikTok about the millions of dollars they are making smuggling people across the border. “Cartels are openly bragging on TikTok about how

they make millions of dollars from a migrant border smuggling operation across the Texas border while evading law enforcement, according to three videos obtained by the Washington Examiner... The first video shows millions of dollars stacked on a table along with a currency counting machine. It is set against the backdrop of a Spanish language song with the subtitles ‘DRIVERS ASAP.’ A second is similar and says, ‘Truck drivers needed [Rio Grande Valley] area!! Comment and add me to start working,’ and “DM to make some racks.’ A third features a Spanish rap song and shows a driver heading down a freeway with several people stuffed into the back of his car, which has the seats removed. TikTok placed a disclaimer on the video that reads, ‘The actions in this video could result in serious injury or adverse health effects.’” (Tori Richards and Anna Giaritelli, “Cartels boast on TikTok how they make millions smuggling migrants across border,” [Washington Examiner](#), 6/16/2022)

Oil and Gas

- **Oil and gas was 12% of the Texas economy in 2021.** “Oil and gas is 12% of Texas economy - A February State of Energy report released by TIPRO found that Texas oil and gas industry accounted for more than one-third of total industry employment in the country in 2021, and the gross regional product for the state’s oil and gas was \$200 billion last year – 12% of the state economy.” (Donna Provencher, “Texas oil and gas has gained 16,000 jobs in the past year, new report says,” [KSAT](#), 3/16/22)
 - **Texas oil and gas employment in 2021 totaled over 175,000 jobs.** “TIPRO’s analysis found that Texas employment in January totaled 176,300 jobs – an increase of 1,200 jobs from the revised December numbers. Texas employment for January 2022 totaled 176,300, an increase of 1,200 jobs from revised December numbers. This number also reflects an increase of 16,000 positions since January 2021.” (Donna Provencher, “Texas oil and gas has gained 16,000 jobs in the past year, new report says,” [KSAT](#), 3/16/22)
- In 2019, the oil and natural gas industry supported over 37,000 jobs in Texas’ 34th congressional district.

Table C-44. Economic Impact of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry in Texas, 2019, continued

State / Congressional District	Employment (Jobs) ⁽¹⁾			Labor Income (\$Million) ⁽²⁾			Value Added (\$Million)		
	Direct	Total ⁽³⁾	Total as a % of State / District	Direct	Total ⁽³⁾	Total as a % of State / District	Direct	Total ⁽³⁾	Total as a % of State / District
TX-31	6,160	38,340	8.2%	\$775	\$2,870	9.4%	\$1,120	\$4,281	9.2%
TX-32	19,620	99,110	14.1%	\$7,676	\$14,264	24.7%	\$10,762	\$20,606	22.8%
TX-33	7,000	44,720	8.3%	\$1,072	\$3,680	10.1%	\$1,778	\$5,872	10.0%
TX-34	10,060	37,070	10.9%	\$891	\$1,968	13.6%	\$1,659	\$3,397	15.2%
TX-35	7,830	52,210	10.7%	\$3,179	\$5,764	19.1%	\$3,688	\$7,783	16.6%
TX-36	15,180	67,860	17.1%	\$4,251	\$7,576	25.9%	\$11,325	\$16,492	28.9%

(“Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the US Economy in 2019,” [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#), 7/21)

