



FRONTPAGE ARTICLES

[Make Comment](#) [View Comments](#) [Printable Article](#) [Email Article](#)

Font

People of the Year: Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean



By [FrontPage Magazine](#)
FrontPageMagazine.com | January 1, 2007

The annual FrontPage Magazine Man of the Year award seeks to honor individuals who have devoted their lives to promoting the spread of liberty and the defense of their country and its people. Moreover, FPM seeks to fete those who have suffered as a result of their actions. In recent years, this has included [Col. Allen B. West](#), [John O'Neill](#), and Orianna Fallaci, whose good deeds have brought them derision, harassment, or physical or verbal abuse. This year, so many people met both qualifications (see the first two "Honorable Mentions" below) that the intensity of suffering tipped the scales.

In 2006, none have suffered worse for doing good than Border Patrol agents Ignacio "Nacho" Ramos, 37, and Jose Alonso Compean, 28. In August, the pair received 11 and 12 years in prison, respectively, for trying to stop a drug smuggler from entering the country.

On February 17, 2005, Ramos and Compean were patrolling the border town of Fabens, Texas, when a Mexican illegal alien and drug smuggler, attempted to secret nearly 800 pounds of marijuana into the United States in his van. Agent Compean chased Osbaldo Aldrete-Davila by vehicle and on foot, ordering him to stop. Compean says Aldrete-Davila ignored him, pushed him down, and assaulted him, whereupon the agent called for backup, drawing seven additional units, including Ramos. When he arrived on the scene, he heard gunfire, saw Compean bleeding on the ground, and the fugitive – still refusing to stop as commanded – stealing furtive glances over his shoulder while holding something shiny he believed to be a handgun. Both state they felt threatened, and both fired rounds in the alien's direction, Ramos striking him in the buttocks. The alien got away, but the two men had jeopardized their own well-being to keep his noxious contraband off our streets.

Returning to Mexico, Aldrete-Davila related his misfortunes to his mother, who contacted the mother-in-law of Border Patrol agent Rene Sanchez. Sanchez in turn tipped off a member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, who went to Mexico to offer immunity if Osbaldo would act as a state's witness against Ramos and Compean: the feds wanted to prosecute the agents shooting the alien narcotics supplier.

To sweeten the immunity deal, the feds paid for Osbaldo Aldrete-Davila's medical treatment of his ailing backside – a taxpayer-funded recuperation at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas. He showed his gratitude by breaking his immunity agreement in October 2005, when officers say he attempted to smuggle 1,000 pounds of marijuana into America. The prosecution further extended its immunity to this felony and [sealed the indictment](#) from jurors. Aldrete-Davila repaid this new shower of grace by [suing the federal government for \\$5 million](#), alleging the shooting violated his civil rights. However, he agreed to help in their criminal prosecution, as well, and the feds are apparently happy to collaborate with the pusher as long as he helped put effective lawmen behind bars.

What exactly is their crime? In the [words](#) of Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra Kanof, "It is a violation of Border Patrol regulations to go after someone who is fleeing." That is, if an illegal immigrant – even a drug kingpin or terrorist – flees from a Border Patrol agent, regulations demand that he not further pursue or apprehend

SIGN UP TODAY FOR FRONTPAGEMAG E-MAIL UPDATES

KEEP FRONTPAGE RUNNING!
HELP FPM NOW!

STUDENTS FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic Freedom

Roger Williams Science Students Forced to Watch Environmentalist Propaganda Film. [Read more.](#)

SYMPOSIUMS

[One Islam?](#)
[Apes, Pigs and Anti-Semitism](#)
[Confronting Hezbollah](#)
[The First Nuclear Terrorist Power](#)
[The Problem with Public Education](#)

INTERVIEWS

[John B. Taylor](#)
[Ian Buruma](#)
[Evan Maloney](#)
[Robert Murphy](#)
[Michael B. Oren](#)
[Brian Doherty](#)

BLOGS

- [PowerLine Blog](#)
- [Little Green Footballs](#)
- [PolySigh](#)
- [The Anti-Chomsky Blog](#)
- [Snapshots](#)
- [Milt Rosenberg](#)
- [The Anti-Chomskyan Redoubt](#)

FPM WATCH DOG

[Heterodoxy archives:](#)
[Read back issues here](#)

AUDIO: [Restoration Weekend audio files.](#)

[Stop The ISM](#)
[StoptheISM.com](#)

[Professors Watch](#)
[DangerousProfessors.com](#)

[Borders Watch](#)
[Recruitment Drive to Boost Border Patrol](#)

[Jihad Watch](#)
[News Updates](#)

Ads by Google

Locate This Person

Current address and phone available. Instant results.
www.usa-people-search.com

Minuteman Border Fence

Chris Simcox to President Bush Build a Fence or US Citizens Will
www.MinutemanBorderFence.com

Ramos Hisaronu

Find Deals, Read Reviews from Real People. Get the Truth. Then Go.
www.TripAdvisor.com

Import/Export Books

Customs Regulations (19 CFR) Free Demo. CD \$89, Book \$175
www.boskage.com

Be a Border Patrol Agent

Earn your Criminal Justice degree online & work in the Border Patrol!
www.uphoenixdegrees.com

IS HILLARY "INEVITABLE"?



PLEASE CLICK HERE

the fugitive. Patrol agents acknowledge this procedure is widely disregarded, for obvious reasons. Secondly, both men have said numerous agents were on hand for the shooting and had filed a report, so they did not file a report of their gunfire. Compean also picked up his shells from the scene, though Ramos did not. These actions breach Border Patrol protocol and should be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Instead, the federal government portrayed Ramos and Compean as bloodthirsty racists and threatened them with 20+ years in prison.

Compean's lawyer, Chris Antcliff, attempted to insert some sanity to the proceedings. He reminded the jury Osbaldo was the criminal and told the media, "This case is a little bit upside down in my mind."

Conversely, Assistant U.S. Attorney Debra Kanof prosecuted the case with rare initiative. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – the department that is supposed to protect American *citizens* from the likes of Aldrete-Davila – joined her program to demonize the agents.

The prosecution contended Compean called the alien victim a "Mexican piece of sh-t." The DHS went further, telling concerned Congressmen in Texas on September 26 that the agents confessed they "were out to shoot Mexicans." The department's Office of Inspector General has provided no proof for the assertion. Nor do they seem concerned that both alleged racists, Ramos and Compean, claim to be of Mexican descent.

Further, Kanof claimed the agents themselves never said the smuggler had a gun. Prosecutors contended Aldrete-Davila "had attempted to surrender by holding his open hands in the air, at which time Agent Compean attempted to hit the man with the butt of Compean's shotgun, causing the man to run in fear of what the agents would do to him next." Allegedly, the good-hearted smuggler was climbing out of this ditch in order to surrender to Compean. However, the prosecutors did not explain why he ran into the ditch in the first place, if surrender were his goal. They claimed "Compean swung his shotgun around in an attempt to hit Aldrete-Davila with the butt of his weapon, but lost his footing and fell face down into the dirt and brush." Poor Osbaldo did not lay a finger on the clutz.

The prosecutorial caricature proved so transparent local media rapidly saw through it. The (Ontario, CA) *Daily Bulletin* provided outstanding coverage of all aspects of the trial, reporting:

[A]n Office of Inspector General memorandum obtained by the *Daily Bulletin* Tuesday contradicts [Prosecutor] Sutton's claim that Ramos and Compean reported Aldrete-Davila was unarmed. The memorandum of activity was written April 4, 2005, by Christopher Sanchez, the OIG investigator who questioned Compean about the Feb. 17, 2005, shooting. Sanchez was the same agent who went to Mexico to interview Aldrete-Davila, according to documents obtained by the newspaper.

The Sanchez memo notes:

Compean said that Aldrete-Davila continued to look back over his shoulder towards Compean as Aldrete-Davila ran away from him. Compean said that he began to shoot at Aldrete-Davila because of the shiny object he thought he saw in Aldrete-Davila's hand and because Aldrete-Davila continued to look back towards his direction. Compean explained that he thought the shiny object might be a gun and that Aldrete-Davila was going to shoot at him because he kept looking back at him.

Two of the smuggler's family members lend credence to his concern, telling the newspaper Aldrete-Davila had been smuggling since age 14 and "wouldn't move drugs unless he had a gun on him." One of them added he had lately taken to "bragging about the money he's going to get in a lawsuit every time we talk to him – but now he's nervous."

Further, murderous retaliation was not confined to his past. The Sanchez memo continues:

Osbaldo [Aldrete-Davila] had told [Border Patrol agent] Rene Sanchez that his friends had told him they should put together a hunting party and go shoot some BP [Border Patrol] agents in revenge for them shooting Osbaldo. Osbaldo advised Rene Sanchez that he told his friends he was

[United American Committee](#)
[UAC.com](#)

[Campus Watch](#)
[About Campus Watch](#)
[Current News](#)
[Survey of Institutions](#)

[Media Watch](#)
[HonestReporting.com](#)
[David Limbaugh.com](#)
[CAMERA.org](#)

SIGN UP
TODAY FOR
FRONTPAGEMAG
E-MAIL UPDATES

Email Address



**MASTER OF ARTS
IN DIPLOMACY**

Global Affairs
International Terrorism
International
Conflict Management
International Commerce

not interested in going after the BP agents **and getting in more trouble.** (Emphasis added.)

On the other hand, even the prosecution admits, “in the entire time of the defendants’ employment as Border Patrol agents, every reported shooting had been ruled justified and no agent was disciplined as a result of a shooting.”

Aside from conflicting stories of Border Patrol agents caught up in the heat of a shootout, the case comes down to the word of two exemplary officers with spotless records versus that of a drug smuggling border crasher who may or may not have opted to have his gangland friends execute innocent Border Patrol agents as long as it would not entail “getting into more trouble.” Ramos is a Navy veteran and has been nominated for Border Patrol Agent of the Year.

Nevertheless, this August a jury in Texas convicted the two of assault with serious bodily injury, assault with a deadly weapon, discharge of a firearm in relation to a crime of violence, violating the “civil rights” of an illegal alien, and obstruction of justice “for not reporting that their weapons had been fired.”

Some of the jurors broke down in tears at the reading of the guilty verdict. Three jurors – Robert Gourley, Claudia Torres, and Edine Woods – came forward days before the sentencing in October to say they had been holdouts against a guilty verdict and only voted with the majority when other jurors told them the judge would not allow a hung jury. Doing so, they noted, violated their consciences. Gourley wrote, “Had we had the option of a hung jury, I truly believe the outcome may have been different.” Two days later, U.S. District Judge Kathleen Cardone denied the motion for a new trial.

Although many Congressmen hoped for a federal investigation, Judge Cardone – a 2003 George W. Bush appointee whose near-total focus before assuming the federal bench had been family law – had also refused to delay sentencing until after any potential review, saying it would only “postpone the inevitable.” Ultimately, no review ever came.

In October, Cardone sentenced Ramos to 11 years, and Compean to 12 years, imprisonment – 6-7 years longer than the sentence a U.S. district judge imposed that July upon another Border Patrol officer who had smuggled 100 illegal immigrants *into* the country.

Outraged by this decision, 48 Congressmen asked President Bush to grant a Christmas pardon to the two via letter on December 9. “We submit this letter, in the spirit of reconciliation and pardon that is such a part of this season, asking you personally to commute the sentences of U.S. Border Patrol Agents Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean,” they wrote.

The effort is a bipartisan affair. One is unsurprised to learn Reps. Tom Tancredo and James Sensenbrenner have signed on. However, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-CA, has also called for a Congressional investigation and appealed to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. “It appears that the facts do not add up or justify the length of the sentences for these agents, let alone their conviction on multiple counts,” she said. “Border agents often have a difficult and dangerous job in guarding our nation’s borders. Undue prosecution of Border Patrol agents could have a chilling effect on their ability to carry out their duties.”

Rep. Walter Jones, R-NC – a conservative who has also championed the Academic Bill of Rights – penned his own letter to the president. “This demoralizing prosecution puts the rights of illegal smugglers ahead of our homeland security and undermines the critical mission of better enforcing immigration laws,” Jones wrote.

The Bush Justice Dept. merely responded to this coalition with a note that indicated “should Messrs. Ramos and Compean wish to petition for clemency, they may contact the Office of the Pardon Attorney at the Department of Justice for further information on eligibility and procedures.” No further action has been taken.

This inaction has spurred more than 156,000 people to sign a petition for the agents’ pardon at Grassfire.org. (Here is another.)

The Ramos family has seen its home slide into foreclosure trying to pay its legal bills; the costly appeals process seems prohibitive. Unless action is taken, the

Ramos family could lose their breadwinner to incarceration and Jose Compean could be taken from his [three-month-old child](#)'s side as early as [January 17](#).

The agents may not have followed protocol to the letter, and FrontPage Magazine does not condone or excuse that. However, they displayed the mettle necessary to protect their fellow countrymen from drug smugglers, terrorists, and other illegals on a daily basis – qualities of purpose, fortitude, and self-sacrifice that have themselves become alien from so those in the federal bureaucracy. How else could federal prosecutors and U.S. the Department of Homeland Security, run by a hawkish administration in the midst of a War on Terror, side with a gun-toting drug smuggler over a veteran and an officer with an impeccable record? The federal government has presumed against two of its own, lied and demonized them, as they tried to plug one porous hole in our ossified War on Drugs. Bureaucratic infractions call for bureaucratic penalties; these men have lost their money, their reputations, and (perhaps soon) their freedom trying to protect our nation. For that, they deserve our thanks.

Honorable Mentions (in no particular order):

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The much-maligned Defense secretary who led American forces through one of the most rapid military overthrows in history, followed by the most benign “occupation” marked by the most humane rules of engagement (yea, these even to our soldiers’s detriment). He transformed the military, spoke the truth about our Eurosocialist “allies,” and showed grace in resignation. A leaked memo showed he was far more flexible than ever given credit for. He proved a model appointee. With his departure exits perhaps the last man in the administration who still dared to calculate the means of an American *victory*.

UN Ambassador John Bolton. After a stormy non-confirmation, Bolton won over even his hardened critics with a performance that forced the United Nations to take baby steps toward reform. Since the GOP put off the confirmation in the interests of Sen. Lincoln Chafee’s re-election, it gave a sore loser the opportunity to deprive America of its most successful advocate in two decades.

Former Secretary of State Jeanne Kirkpatrick. Merely recounting her words and deeds – now more than two decades old – has injected reality into the discussion of foreign policy following the Iraq Study Group’s terms of surrender. RIP.

[Click Here to Sign Up Today to our Weekly Digest.](#)



[Make Comment](#)



[View Comments](#)



[Printable Article](#)



[Email Article](#)