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Mexican Cartel Tactical Note No. 2: Ambush/ Targeted Killing of US Law Enforcement Officer (San Antonio, Texas)

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Mexican Cartel Tactical Note # 2

By [Robert Bunker](#)

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Mexican Cartel Tactical Notes: No 2. Ambush/Targeted Killing of US Law Enforcement Officer (San Antonio, Texas)

Mexican cartel linkages to this incident are currently being investigated but have not been confirmed by US Law Enforcement

Who: Sergeant Kenneth Vann, 48, Bexar County Sheriff's, Texas.

What: Ambush-Targeted Killing of US Law Enforcement Officer.

When: About 2:00 AM Saturday 28 May 2011.

Where: While in uniform, sitting in his marked patrol car at a traffic light at Loop 410 and Rigsby Road (on San Antonio's southeast side) on his way to a call.

Why: Unknown. Initial speculation via Sheriff Amadeo Ortiz is that the officer was randomly targeted because he was a governmental representative/symbol of authority. No motive has been established and no one has claimed credit.

Synopsis: Hasty overview; The officer was waiting at a traffic light. The flashing lights/siren were not turned on in the patrol car and the officer was obeying traffic laws. A small white car is thought to have pulled up next to Sgt. Vann's vehicle. A gunman then fired an estimated 28 rounds via a semi-automatic weapon—possibly an AK-47 assault rifle—at the officer in two bursts. Sgt. Vann was pronounced dead at the scene. Suspect(s) are still at large.

Update: On Tuesday, a sheriff's spokesman said investigators were looking for a royal blue Ford F-150 pickup truck that left the intersection where the incident took place. The small white car has been found and is being processed by forensics. Reward of \$127,000.00 now offered for the arrest of those responsible; More than 300 officers from 10 law enforcement agencies—armed with about 1,300 warrants—were deployed to the streets of San Antonio on Tuesday, May 31 in order to get leads concerning this incident.

Tactical Analysis: Derived from news photos of the crime scene and satellite imagery. Kill zone was established at a traffic signal going forward toward I-410 bridges underpass; channeled avenue of approach/confined terrain on Rigsby Road going forward. Location is also well suited for E&E (escape and evasion) of engaging forces (I-410 and 87). The targeted killing appears to have occurred via shots entering the passenger side of the patrol vehicle that struck the officer on the right side of his body. This places the law enforcement officer at an immediate tactical disadvantage in his response since he would be required to shoot through the passenger side of his vehicle to return fire. The targeted killing appears to

have been conducted in a tactically proficient manner. TTPs/Weaponry/ Ford F-150 pickup truck (of interest) appears consistent with cartel operations in Northern Mexico.

Significance: Officer Safety Issues; Reward Amount/Mass Warrant Approach; Psychological Warfare/Insurgent Tactics (If determined to have cartel linkages); Cartel Violence Spillover (If determined to have cartel linkages).

Source(s):

["Search Continues For Sergeant's Killer - Investigators Working Full-Time To Find Sgt. Kenneth Vann's Killer"](#) - Tim Gerber, KSAT 12 News, Wednesday, June 1, 2011

["Officers Hope Warrant Roundup Leads To Info In Sergeant's Death: 10 Agencies Join Efforts In Warrant Roundup"](#) - David Sears, KSAT 12 News, Tuesday, May 31, 2011

["Reward For Info On Vann's Death Raised To \\$127K: FBI Offering \\$50,000, In Addition To \\$77,000 Already Raised"](#) - KSAT 12 News, Tuesday, May 31, 2011 (UPDATED: June 1, 2011)

["Mexican Drug Link Probed in Ambush Murder of Texas Lawman"](#) - Borderland Beat, Tuesday, May 31, 2011 | Borderland Beat Reporter Owen [Original Reuters Link](#)

["Slain Sergeant's Widow Speaks Out: Yvonne Vann Asks For Public's Help Solving Husband's Slaying"](#) - Jessie Degollado, KSAT 12 News, Monday, May 30, 2011

["Suspect Who Gunned Down Deputy Remains At-Large: Sgt. Kenneth Vann Shot, Killed Early Saturday Morning"](#) - Simon Gutierrez, KSAT 12 News, Sunday, May 29, 2011

["Bexar County Deputy Slain in 'Senseless' Ambush"](#) (See crime scene photos/video) - Associated Press, WFAA.com, May 28, 2011

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Dr. Robert J. Bunker

About the Author

Robert Bunker

Dr. Robert J. Bunker holds degrees in political science, government, behavioral science, social science, anthropology-geography, and history. Training taken includes that provided by DHS, FLETC, DIA, Cal DOJ, Cal POST, LA JRIC, NTOA, and private security entities in counter-terrorism, counter-surveillance, incident-response, force protection, and intelligence. Dr. Bunker has been involved in red teaming and counter-terrorism exercises and has provided operations support within Los Angeles County.

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