

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

## Body found in Juárez with U.S. agents' business cards

By Louie Gilot / El Paso Times  
El Paso Times

Article Launched:12/15/2006 12:00:00 AM MST

U.S. law enforcement agencies were informed by their Mexican counterparts that a man found murdered in Juárez last month had the bloodied business cards of two U.S. agents taped to his forehead.

The victim, who has not been identified, was dropped from a van at the Chamizal park in Juárez on the afternoon of Nov. 23. The man had the cards of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent Raul Bencomo and of a DEA agent with the first name of Todd stuck to his forehead with masking tape.

One of the man's fingers had been cut off and shoved into his mouth, Juárez state police officials said.

"It looks like it's a message. He's a 'dedo,' a finger, an informant," said Raul Loya, a Dallas lawyer suing ICE for its handling of Juárez drug informants.

Because the ICE card was from Bencomo, the handler of a controversial former ICE informant known as "Lalo," lawyers involved in the case believe the message was intended for Lalo himself, whose real name is Guillermo Eduardo Ramirez Peyro.

Ramirez was a lieutenant in the Vicente Carrillo Fuentes drug cartel in Juárez and also worked as a U.S. informant, eventually leading authorities to the discovery of 12 male bodies in a Juárez backyard in 2004 and to the U.S. prosecution of a high-ranking cartel boss.

That investigation became controversial when ICE memos surfaced suggesting that the agency knew the slayings were going on and did not try to stop them.

Ramirez is in ICE custody in an undisclosed facility and is fighting deportation.

He believes he will be killed if he is sent back to Mexico, said his lawyer, Jodi Goodwin of Harlingen, Texas.

She and Loya both say the Bencomo business card might be a warning to Ramirez.

Officials of ICE and DEA confirmed that they were told about the cards found on the Chamizal body by Mexican authorities, but said they were not part of any investigation.

"The matter is under investigation by Mexican law enforcement authorities," ICE spokes man Carl Rusnok said. "We have a strong relationship with our Mexican counterpart, and we'll assist if requested."

DEA spokesman Matthew Taylor said he didn't know exactly whose card was found on the body because more than one person named Todd works for the agency.

It isn't clear whether the slain man, in his 30s, was an informant.

"We have no ties to the individual that I know of. There are several occasions somebody would give out a card -- while working on another case, or to somebody's lawyer, even at a party," Taylor said.

ICE officials said Bencomo's card says "U.S. Customs" and dates from before the homeland security reorganization that created ICE in 2003.

Mary Stillinger, the lawyer representing Bencomo in the Loya lawsuit, said she couldn't comment at this time.

About 240 homicides have occurred in Juárez since the beginning of the year, including 40 execution-style killings that might be related to drug trafficking, Juárez police said.

The man at the Chamizal had been beaten and shot multiple times, an autopsy found.

He had a tattoo of a black panther on the right arm, police said.

Louie Gilot may be reached at [lgilot@elpasotimes.com](mailto:lgilot@elpasotimes.com); 546-6131.