# Three killed, eight injured in high speed US Border Patrol chase in southern California

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On Wednesday, a Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck carrying eleven people crashed off Interstate 8 near the San Diego-Mexico border, after being chased at high speeds by Border Patrol vehicles. Three of the passengers were pronounced dead on the scene, while the remaining eight were taken to nearby hospitals for the treatment of injuries, some of them major.

At the time of publication, CBP has not released any details regarding the passengers' identities or the reasons for the chase. The only official statement reported in the local news outlets is from the California Highway Patrol (CHP) spokesman Officer Travis Garrow.

The *San Diego Union Tribune* quoted Officer Garrow as stating that the pickup crashed while fleeing at an "extremely high rate of speed" on the two-lane interstate east of Crestwood Road near the Golden Acorn Casino. Witnesses reported the pickup truck traveling at speeds as high as 100 mph, "weaving in and out of traffic and passing other motorists using the center median and right shoulder" of the highway.

Border Patrol agents supposedly gave chase to the vehicle after it had refused to make a stop. All eleven passengers in the pickup—two in the cab, and nine on the flatbed—were visible to the agents. While there has been no official statement as to why the vehicle was asked to stop, given the context of the virulent anti-migrant policies that have become the norm as well as the specific location of the chase, the motivations behind the CBP agents targeting the pickup are quite apparent. For the same reasons, the fear that presumably led the pickup truck driver to attempt fleeing from the CBP should also be understandable.

CBP and ICE agents exercise enormous power over the lives of those migrant workers who have been limited to non-existent access to legal recourse. These agents tasked with "immigration enforcement" have been more and more in the news for the ways in which they have abused that power. The abuse has taken the form of not just the horrifying treatment of men, women, and children in the various detention camps, but also the torture and murder of those who have sought asylum. This is of course in addition the grotesque spectacle that was played at the San Ysidro border crossing just this past weekend, when US Border Patrol agents fired tear gas shells at unarmed women and children, whose only crime was demanding the right to asylum.

Given this situation, the question becomes not so much why a group of individuals—presumably migrants, whether or not with documents—would try to avoid any contact with Border Patrol, but rather what would compel agents to carry out an obviously dangerous chase under extremely unsafe conditions.

As the *Union Tribune* pointed out, "Border Patrol policy states that agents may get involved in pursuits only when the benefit outweighs any immediate danger created by speeding or other emergency driving techniques." In this case, the question of what that benefit might be beggars the mind. CBP agents not only continued the chase even when the speeds became dangerously high, but in fact upped the ante by throwing a spike strip on the path of the pickup.

This was done under extremely inclement weather conditions, which had already made the I-8 a dangerous route that day. It was only after it hit the spiked strip that the driver of the pickup lost control of the vehicle, causing it to veer off an embankment and ultimately crash, killing three of the passengers and injuring all others.

The driver, who survived the crash, has been taken into custody pending official charges, though some

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reports suggest he has been already charged with three counts of manslaughter. There have also been reports that the driver is a US citizen, though that has not been officially verified.

Regardless of the citizenship status of the passengers in the pickup, this tragedy needs to be viewed in the context of the Trump administration's fascistic attack on immigrants and the on-going scapegoating and dehumanization of those who are forced to cross borders. The war against immigrants that is being spearheaded by the Trump reflects the hostility of the ruling class as a whole towards the entire working class. This hostility has become more pronounced and more visibly virulent in the past year and has led to numerous tragic incidents.

In recent months, ICE agents have caused the deaths of a young migrant couple in California's Central Valley after a car chase based on mistaken identity, while CBP was involved in another triple fatality near the Rancho Bernardo area. These kinds of incidents are either dismissed or blamed on the victims, who are all presumed to be "guilty until proven innocent." The systematic undermining of fundamental bourgeois democratic norms is symptomatic of deep crisis of the capitalist state, which will continue to generate such tragedies.

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