Rancho La Vega

Teuchitlan, Jalisco, Mexico

20°36'18.46"N 103°52'0.90"W

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Incident Date: Discovered January 2025
Fatalities: UNK
Injured: ~37

Aggressor(s): Cartel Jalisco New Generation (CJNG)

Victim(s) Profile: Mostly males (late teens-30s) lured through false job postings.

Summary

According to survivors, they were initially drawn in via intentionally false and misleading job offers. These postings advertised legitimate employment, security guards being a common one. These listings had exorbitant pay, some exceeding $600 weekly (SÁNCHEZ). A recruit who survived the ordeal explained that they were instructed to meet at "collection points" and were promptly picked up by CJNG operatives and transported to Rancho La Vega. Some common collection points included trucking centers, particularly those in Zapopan (Cano). Once at the ranch, the unwilling recruits had any electronics and identification methods confiscated, and subsequently underwent physical fitness and weapons training. A lack of compliance was punished with beatings with wooden planks and threats (Ferri). The recruits were repeatedly told of the horrible things that would happen to them (i.e., dismemberment) should they attempt to flee.

On **January 29, 2025**, between the hours of 16:00 and 17:00, a JTF (Joint Task Force) comprising the Mexican Army, FGR (Attorney General's Office), and National Guard stormed the ranch, pre-emptively shooting. A total of "18 magazines, 1,818 cartridges of different calibers, four communication radios, tactical equipment, and chemical precursors" were recovered by the JTF, the latter of which would have been used in the manufacturing of

narcotics. Survivors recount several different experiences, but they all agreed the army took an aggressive approach while seizing the compound. The unwilling recruits also agreed that the army wasn't exactly accommodating to them once the dust settled. They were assumed to be just as criminal as those who had abducted them, being treated as such by the soldiers. The 32nd Mexican Infantry Battalion denies any involvement in this; however, the victims' accounts differ from this. "Kicks to the stomach, head and genitals, stabs to the buttocks, screws stuck in the arms, broken mouths and noses, drowning in buckets of water, belts to the soles of the feet…" (ELPAIS). The two women who were present both had harrowing accounts of the sexual assaults they experienced at the hands of the Mexican Army. One man was also sexually assaulted, and while the Army claims the National Guard arrived at the scene first, the eyewitnesses all described the green pixelated uniforms worn by the Army. There were an estimated 25 soldiers who either partook in the torture or idly stood by as it happened.

Despite being liberated from CJNG, they continued to suffer. The timeframe between the storming of the ranch and the recruit's transport to prison is unclear, although it can be assumed that it lasted for several hours. What is clear is that once the victims were transported to FGR facilities in Jalisco, they were released in a matter of days (~36-38). After months of demanding investigation, the Human Rights section of the FGR has made no progress, and it is almost certain that the perpetrators will evade justice. After the court proceedings, all detainees were released save for two. Their role in the ordeal was unspecified; it is only known that one is a 52-year-old male, and the other, "Edgar N.", 38, with a collapsed lung inflicted upon him by the soldiers.

The capture of a high-ranking CJNG member should also be noted, as he was the one behind Rancho La Vega and the more infamous Rancho Izaguirre. José Gregorio Lastra Hermida, better known as "Commandante Lastra" or "El Lastra", was arrested in another JTF operation on March 20th, 2025. He pioneered the aforementioned use of social media as a means of recruitment, posting fake job offers on platforms like TikTok. The murder of those who resisted or attempted to escape any given one of the ranches was not uncommon. The image below depicts "Commandante Lastra" after his arrest in March.



Case Location Evidence:

Coordinates/Location:

- Rancho La Vega is located at 20°36'18.6"N, 103°52'01.1"W.
- Rancho La Vega is located approximately 7.5 kilometers Southwest of Rancho Izaguirre, and ~2.5 kilometers from the town of La Vega's center.

History/Description:

- Although the site was first brought to public attention in 2014 after a raid, it appears on satellite imagery as early as 2011.
- The appearance of the structure has stayed relatively consistent over time. It is composed of one brick building with a sheet metal roof. This structure is ~20 meters long, and ~25 meters wide, including the ~7-meter fenced enclosure on the building's west side.
- Further to the west, there is a ~40-meter cement yard culminating in a large tree.

Imagery: The images below are publicly available images of the ranch from varying angles.



Fig. 1: A skewed aerial view of the Ranch taken by drone facing Southwest. Note the sheet metal roof and large tree at the end of the plot. Taken September 20, 2025.



Fig. 2: A frontal aerial view of the Ranch, also taken by drone, facing south. Note the lower distinct section of the roof as well as the fenced enclosure. Taken September 20, 2025.



Fig. 3: A top-down aerial view of the Ranch is most useful when searching via satellite imagery. Taken March 25, 2025.



Fig. 4: An image taken of the ranch by a journalist on the ground.



Fig. 5: Mugshots of the 37 taken after rescue from the ranch and processing at FGR facility.



Fig. 6: A Mexican national guardsman stands watch over the cordoned-off Rancho La Vega.

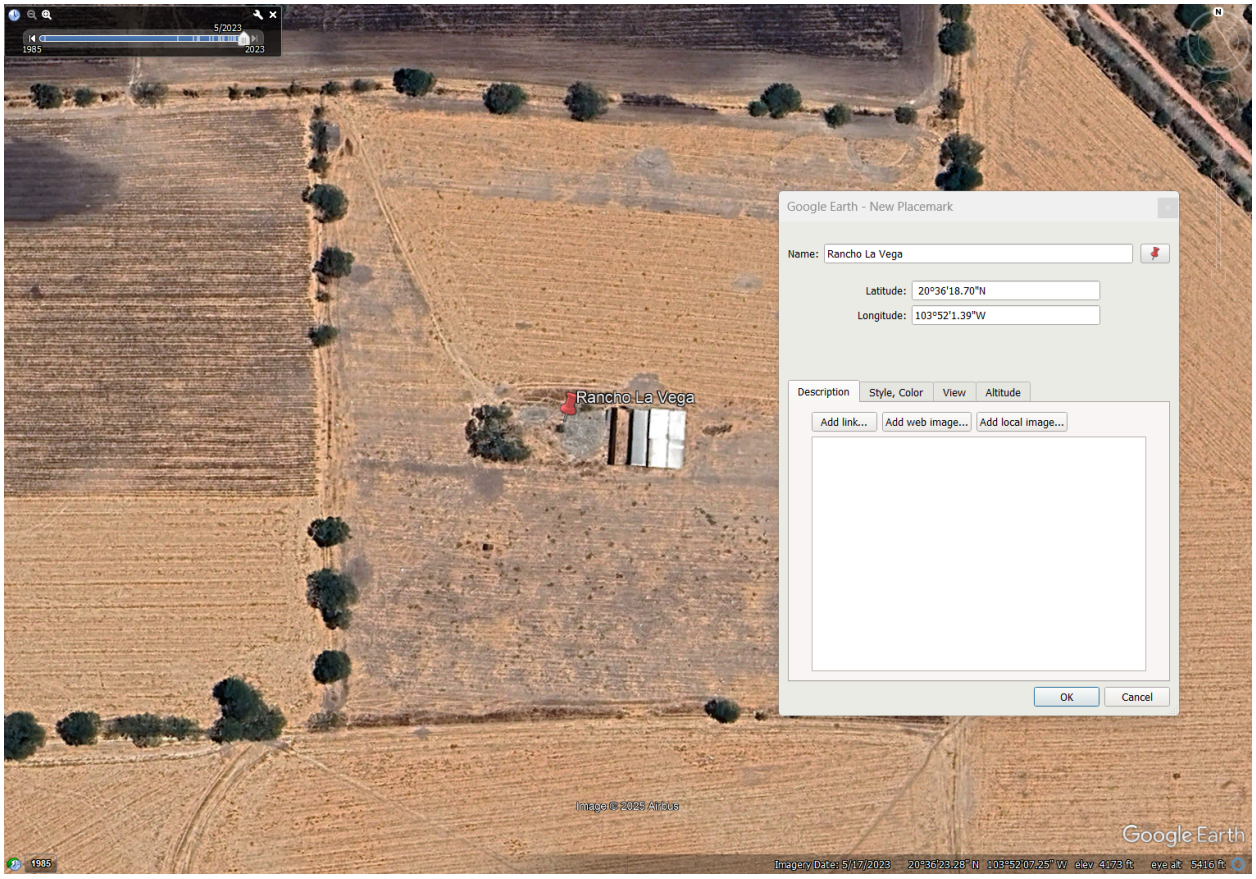


Fig. 7: The ranch as seen from Google Earth, in May of 2023. Note the discernible sheet metal roof, as well as the fenced enclosure, cement yard, and large tree at its end. Fig. 3 displays the clearest view of the ranch from satellite view.



Fig. 8: Rancho La Vega on Google Earth Pro. Lake La Vega is visible in the background, and across it is Rancho Izaguirre.



Fig. 9: Rancho La Vega in March of 2014, around the time it began to arouse suspicion in the community, and gain the attention of law enforcement.



Fig. 10: Image of the ranch that better matches Fig. 3. Also dated May 2023.

Sources:

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