

[ePaper Login](#) | [Tour](#) | [Sample](#) | [Help](#) | [Subscribe](#) [Day Pass](#)



[Advertise](#)   [Lottery](#)   [Newcomers Guide](#)   [Site Map](#)   [Deaths](#)   [Merchandise](#)   [American F](#)  
[Free Desktop Photos](#)   [School Lunch Menus](#)   [Religion Calendar](#)   [Poll](#)   [Wedding Annou](#)

**Ads from the print edition:** [Today's New Ads](#) | [All of Today's Ads](#)  
**Local Restaurant Guide:** [Whet Your Appetite](#)  
**Buy Photos:** [Get prints by our photographers](#) | **Fuel:** [Local prices](#)

This site requires Flash 8 or later. [Get the free plugin.](#) Lak  
Ch:  
WE



## Four found guilty of conspiring to harbor illegal workers (5/29)

By **VANESSA C. DEGGINS**  
AMERICAN PRESS

After four hours of deliberation, a jury on Wednesday reached a unanimous guilty verdict in the federal trial of four men accused of conspiring to harbor certain aliens.

Rodney Ryder, Keith Smith, Wayne Adams and Richard Wade Townley were found guilty of nine charges.

Juror Ashley Rogers — who served as the forewomen — said the combination of evidence showed that the men were aware of their illegal actions.

The other jurors declined to comment.

The men were accused of using a warehouse — set up dormitory-style — in north Lake Charles to house undocumented workers after Hurricane Rita.

One of Ryder's employees — Sergio Alire — had already pleaded guilty to acting as the recruiter of the hundreds of workers who were believed to have lived there and were contracted out as laborers.

According to invoices presented, some of the local companies who used the workers were Dunham Price, Resin Systems, E.P. Breaux, Henning Systems, LeMoine, Quality Drywall, Singer Construction, Ruddick and Lone Star



Toda  
All of



Roofing.

### Defendants testify

On this last day of testimony, Adams was cross-examined by the prosecution. He said the concerns from Dunham Price about having a certain number of legal workers stemmed more from the fact that the plant was running 24 hours a day.

"They were mostly worried about not meeting their deadlines, and they knew that sometimes Border Patrol took everybody and later released them," Adams said, citing an event in which five workers were detained at Fort Polk and later released.

"I made it clear to all of the companies that (American Workforce Solutions) was separate from R&R Contracting," he said. "Jody (Singletary of Dunham Price) chose to believe differently."

In regards to the workers, Adams testified that he was never told that any of them were illegal — not by manager Bruce Slinker or Alire — until after the Aug. 18, 2006 raid.

"We did not handle the paperwork, and Rodney (Ryder) assured me that he took care of that side of things," Adams said.

Smith testified that he agreed with all of Adams' testimony and that all authority he practiced was with Ryder's permission.

"Everything still required a final approval and signature from Rodney," Smith said.

He also said the proposal about Puerto Rican workers was to help meet Dunham Price's need to lower costs.

"We knew the current workers would not take a pay reduction. You can't ask that of someone," Smith said.

He also said he told Bruce Slinker that he didn't want any known undocumented workers on the camp property, which is not the same as firing them.

### Closing arguments

Lead prosecutor Jim McManus said there were four main elements in the charges: knowing the workers were undocumented, harboring those workers, knowledge of their undocumented status or reckless disregard for this information and facilitating the workers in remaining in the country.

"If the workers always fled when the Border Patrol arrived and it's obvious to the American workers at the camp that everyone living there was illegal, why wasn't it obvious to the defendants?" McManus said.

He said the meetings with Dunham Price and Resin Systems owner Tom Thomas's refusing to hire a man to check for inconsistencies should have caused some suspicion.

Defense attorney Joseph Scott said his client, Townley, spoke to the right people — an attorney and certified public accountant — and they failed to give him the proper information on his check cashing business, which was unlicensed.

"If you are focused on your task, it's easy not to notice other people's actions that may pique suspicions," Scott said.

Ryder's attorney, Michael Walsh, said the prosecution tried to complicate the situation by not focusing only on the harboring charges.

"This should let you know that even they are not sure about these charges," Walsh said.

He also said they picked and chose documents that did not accurately reflect his client's income, and none of the

NEWS  
SPOR  
PODC  
STOC



paid informants were called to testify.

Daniel Stanford, who represented Smith and Adams, said there were too many contradictions by the government's witnesses and that none of the undocumented workers could identify his clients.

"When Lynn Pope first met Alire, he blatantly lied and said he was legally in the country," Stanford said.

He said that Ramos should have been in prison for re-entering the country after being deported — which is a felony — but instead was given a work authorization card by the government.

"All of these people, companies included, are going to say what the government wants them to so they won't get in trouble," Stanford said.

### Sentencing

Sentencing is scheduled for Aug. 29. The defendants each face up to 20 years in prison, and the government could seize all funds and assets purchased with those funds that they believe were made during this conspiracy.

Sentencing for Sergio Alire is scheduled for Friday.

Judge Patricia Minaldi allowed the defendants to remain with their families until sentencing.

Defense attorneys would not say if they plan to appeal. They may do so up to 10 days after sentencing.

**The entire print edition is available online daily through the *American Press ePaper*, just \$10 per month, or \$3.50 monthly if you already subscribe to the print edition.**

[< Prev](#)

[Next >](#)

SELECTED LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS



Housing



Autos



Jobs