

NEWS

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IT'S NOT WHAT THEY MIGHT FIND THAT WORRIES THEM. IT'S WHAT THEY MIGHT MISS

**No One Is Above Suspicion as Federal Agents at New York's JFK International Airport
Go on the Hunt *To Catch a Smuggler***

New Series Premieres Monday, October 8, at 9 PM ET/PT

(WASHINGTON, D.C. — September 18, 2012) Millions of dollars of contraband are seized annually by agents and officers with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, one of the largest hubs for international travel in the United States. It's a job where everything — from the safety of their team to the security of the nation — is at stake. Any stone left unturned is an opportunity for criminal activity that could put the country at risk. The only thing they're often given to act on: gut instinct.

Go behind the X-ray scanners and security doors at JFK with officers of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the new series **To Catch a Smuggler**, premiering Oct. 8 at 9 PM ET/PT on the National Geographic Channel. Nothing and no one is above suspicion.

Two major agencies at JFK work together to limit the amount of illegal drugs and banned goods coming into the United States. CBP officers stand at the gates, checking passports and assessing passengers; they are the first line of defense, tasked with observing suspicious activities and making inquiries. ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) special agents take these cases to the next level to uncover the real source of the criminal activity by exposing contraband and eliciting confessions. Now National Geographic goes where cameras are rarely allowed — into the interrogation room with agents as they identify, search, question and arrest criminals, engaging in a cat-and-mouse game for the truth.

Supervisory officer Joe Finn, who leads a team of CBP officers, says, "I love catching drugs ... I mean that's what I find more fun than anything. It's always coming in It's a hunt. And when you find it, it's very satisfying."

People employ numerous methods to smuggle drugs into the country. Sometimes it's a clever form of concealment; most times, less so. In an early episode, thorough detective work causes the story of an Ecuadorian man to unravel, and despite continued protestations an X-ray reveals that he's swallowed large pellets of liquid heroin. Later in the series, a random baggage search by CBP officers of an 18-year-old reveals cocaine in the lining of his luggage, seeping out through the cracks in his suitcase and mixing in with his clothes. After he's arrested, HSI agents convince him to cooperate and start naming names.

Drugs aren't the only thing these agents are looking for. Fruits, meats and other foreign produce, potentially carrying harmful pests and bacteria that could devastate the country's agricultural industry, are confiscated and destroyed, including nearly 25,000 seizures in 2011 alone. Officers in the mail room inspect nearly 700,000 packages a day for drugs, counterfeit money, exotic animals or worse. For ICE and CBP agents, it's all in day's work.

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Premiere Episodes Include:

**To Catch a Smuggler: Courier to Kingpin
Premieres Monday, Oct. 8, at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

At New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, one of the largest hubs for international travel in the United States, officers of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are always on the hunt for contraband. When a flight arrives from South America, the CBP team sends the plane's luggage through X-ray and then to the K-9 team, which immediately picks up on a package containing crystal meth. Next, CBP Officer Redpath interviews a traveler returning from his wedding ceremony in Bangladesh. The passenger admits to filing a false report about his kidnapped parents at the U.S. Embassy, which further intrigues Officer Redpath — is this a crime for CBP or the FBI? A Guyana flight arrives with a man making his third trip in the past year — a little too frequent, in the officers' opinions. After inspecting the passenger's bag, the team finds 4 kilos of cocaine. A young kid arrives from the Dominican Republic and Officer Finn has a suspicion about him. After seven calls to relatives fail to verify the young man's story, Officer Finn decides to take him in for an X-ray.

**To Catch a Smuggler: Cavity Courier
Premieres Monday, Oct. 15, at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

A flight arrives from Guyana, a recent hot spot for smuggling activity, and CBP Officer Elias has his eye on a particularly nervous passenger. As soon as Officer Elias opens the man's bag, he sees a false bottom concealing cocaine. Officer Redpath interviews a woman from Paraguay about the stamps in her passport. It takes very little coaxing to get this woman to admit to living illegally in the U.S. for seven years — and she's not going to be admitted into the U.S. today. A Jamaican man is stopped by CBP officers and becomes very nervous. After the officers remove his shoes, they discover cocaine in the bottom worth around \$60,000. On another arriving flight from Guyana, a woman in baggage claim keeps looking back at the officers — is this a dead giveaway for a smuggler? After Officer Finn's tough interrogation proves futile, he tries a gentler approach with the woman, which ultimately leads to her confession.

**To Catch a Smuggler: Hidden Heroin
Premieres Monday, Oct. 22, at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

When a man arrives from Ecuador without luggage, CBP Officer Finn wastes no time meeting him at baggage claim for questioning. The team brings him into a private room for a pat-down and the traveler's story begins to unravel, forcing the officers to do an X-ray for ingested drug pellets. CBP's target team discovers a package containing engine pistons. When the weights of each piston begin to differ drastically, the officers decide to drill for drugs, leading them to a heroin trafficker in D.C. Later, a very nervous traveler arrives on a flight from Nigeria. As Officer Finn probes, the man seems to be stumbling over his story.

**To Catch a Smuggler: Coke in the Coat
Premieres Monday, Oct. 29, at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

A family arrives on a flight from Peru carrying bags full of leather jackets. After CBP officers go through the bags, they discover cocaine in the lining of the coats. The father admits to transporting the bags, but claims he never knew he was carrying drugs. In the mail room, Officer Boris identifies a package containing a photo album ... and half a pound of heroin worth around \$13,000. When flights arrive from Pakistan, Egypt and Kuwait simultaneously, Officer Elias is already on his toes, but when a radiation detector starts going off, the team must identify the source without causing panic among the passengers.

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To Catch a Smuggler: Search & Seize
Premieres Monday, Nov. 5, at 10 p.m. ET/PT

For CBP officers Ramirez and Finn, an 18-year-old trying to smuggle cocaine in the lining of his suitcase proves to be a slam dunk. When he is selected for a random baggage search, CBP officers find the narcotic seeping through cracks in his suitcase. Now they work to get him to cooperate and start naming names. Later, at immigration, an unemployed man from Nigeria claims to be in the country to purchase computer parts while traveling with just \$100. Through deft ICE interrogation, his story starts to unravel, and he may be barred from the U.S. for five years. Finally, a woman from Jamaica attempts to smuggle undeclared food, and cockroaches are crawling out of her bag.

For more information, visit www.natgeotv.com or www.ngcpr.com.

To Catch A Smuggler is produced by National Geographic Television (NGT) for the National Geographic Channel (NGC). For NGT, the Executive Producer is Jerry Decker. For NGC, Executive Producer is Madeleine Carter, Vice President of Production and Development is Kevin Mohs and Executive Vice President of Production is Michael Cascio.

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National Geographic Channels

Based at the National Geographic Society headquarters in Washington, D.C., the National Geographic Channels US are a joint venture between National Geographic and Fox Cable Networks. The Channels contribute to the National Geographic Society's commitment to exploration, conservation and education with smart, innovative programming and profits that directly support its mission. Launched in January 2001, National Geographic Channel (NGC) celebrated its fifth anniversary with the debut of NGC HD. In 2010, the wildlife and natural history cable channel Nat Geo WILD was launched, and in 2011, the Spanish-language network Nat Geo Mundo was unveiled. The Channels have carriage with all of the nation's major cable, telco and satellite television providers, with NGC currently available in 84 million U.S. homes. Globally, National Geographic Channel is available in 440 million homes in 171 countries and 38 languages. For more information, visit www.natgeotv.com.

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