

News story: Hoddesdon people smuggler jailed

On 13 June 2015 Border Force officers at the UK inward tourist controls at the Channel Tunnel in Coquelles, France stopped a British-registered VW Touran. They questioned the driver of the car, Russell Milton, who said he had been on a day trip to Belgium.

The purpose of his trip had been to identify a suitable location to scatter the ashes of his girlfriend's Belgian grandfather.

Officers noted a blanket had been laid across the rear seats in such a way that it obscured the view into the vehicle's boot. They asked Milton to open the vehicle's boot and found the Albanian hidden inside.

Paul Morgan, Director of Border Force South East and Europe said:

This was a deliberate attempt to bypass the UK's border controls, made all the more shameless by Milton's efforts to use the death of his girlfriend's grandfather as a cover story.

Border Force officers are on the frontline keeping our borders safe and secure. We will continue to work with law enforcement colleagues to ensure that people smugglers and traffickers, who often put the lives of others at risk through their actions, face the consequences of their crimes.

Milton was arrested and the investigation passed to Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) officers. During subsequent interviews Milton claimed he would be travelling back to Belgium with his girlfriend and intended to combine the ashes-scattering with a surprise proposal of marriage.

He was charged with assisting unlawful immigration into the UK.

Milton was found guilty by a jury after a trial lasting 3 days at Canterbury Crown Court and was sentenced immediately.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the CFI team, said:

Milton's explanation for his trip did not stand up to scrutiny. He claimed he was looking for a romantic spot where he intended to both propose marriage and scatter the ashes of a loved one, yet when he was asked where he had been in Belgium he could not even recall the name of the town.

This was a pre-meditated, if unsophisticated attempt to undermine

the UK's border controls and the case should serve as a warning to anyone tempted to get involved with this kind of criminality. We will catch you, and put you before the courts.

We work closely with Border Force colleagues to rigorously investigate allegations of immigration related criminality.

The Albanian man involved was passed to the French Police Aux Frontières.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit [crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).