

Brilliant New \$5.34 Ladder Defeats Not So Brilliant \$2.5 Billion Trump Fever Dream

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Thanks to his ineffable stupidity – cue hilariously skewered [tweet](#) about [kings](#) and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who he probably thinks is that guy in kids' books always hiding in crowds – Trump has proposed spending another \$3.8 billion for his “beautiful” and “impregnable” border wall – the [estimated \\$21.7 billion](#) one that Mexico was gonna pay for, that so far has seen just [100 miles](#) refurbished, that he once [claimed](#) couldn't be climbed by world-class climbers who charged he was “full of shit as usual,” and that has prompted savvy observers to [note](#), “The day they build a 10-foot wall on the Texan border, the 11-foot ladder business in Mexico will boom.” Just so: Over time, scores of aspiring migrants have successfully breached the stupidity with an array of unsurprising tools.

They've [scrambled up](#) it singly or in pairs with cheap rope and wood ladders, shimmying down fireman-style; they've [scaled it in](#) groups, with Border Patrol video to prove it; they've both [sliced](#) through it with \$100 power saws and then learned to slyly leave the severed posts in place for up-and-coming fellow-travelers, a [trick](#) border agents now check for by kicking the fence (but only, of course, after they're through); they've welcomed Mother Nature's [windy](#) help; and they've gotten at least one Jeep atop the wall by ramp, but then got it stuck. Last year, their supporters also campaigned to Make [Tacos Not Walls](#), and [raised](#) over \$160,000 for “Ladders Not Walls,” which in fact went to the Texas-based [RAICES](#).

Now, Mexicans still determined to come here despite our national mayhem [have discovered](#) a new, cheap, go-to method of scaling Dear Leader's pesky, pointless pet project. Using two lengths of light, cubed, readily available rebar called castillo – ubiquitous in Mexican construction and LOL the wall itself – they're [fashioning](#) hook-and-ladder rigs; the rebar is fitted with steps, and connected to four thinner poles bent into a U-shape to hug the top of the wall. The rust-colored rebar is naturally, fortuitously [camouflaged](#), barely visible against the rust brown wall. And it's dirt cheap: Six meters of castillo cost 99 pesos, about \$5.34, at Juárez' Hágalo – or Do It Yourself – True Value hardware store.

Last spring, the new ladders started turning up near the El Paso section of wall, where the number of single male migrants who mostly use them has nearly doubled in recent months; border agents say the level of “evading activity” has likewise soared. Last week, they [found](#) 9 ladders in one spot. Meanwhile, the whole stretch of border is littered with rusted rebar – waiting on the Mexican side, yanked down on the U.S. side, poking from dumpsters, their users long gone. Outwitted and conscripted into ludicrous service, agents say all they can do is pull abandoned ladders off the wall, cut them up, and hope they can't be used again. “It's a very powerful, very powerful wall,” Trump brayed at a September rally there, “the

likes of which, probably, to this extent, has not been built before.”

“A wise man lets a fool build a wall before choosing the height of his ladder.” -
Socrates

Rebar abandoned, job done. Photo by Briana Sanchez/El Paso Times

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