

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

FORMER CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OFFICER SENTENCED TO MORE THAN SIX YEARS FOR RECEIVING BRIBES TO ALLOW ALIENS TO ENTER THE U.S. ILLEGALLY

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – September 9, 2013

Former Customs and Border Protection Officer Hector Rodriguez was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Roger T. Benitez to serve 78 months in federal prison followed by three years of supervised release for bribery, bringing in aliens for financial gain and conspiracy.

Rodriguez, who pleaded guilty on March 28, also forfeited a 2009 Jaguar, 12 luxury watches – including five Rolexes - jewelry, televisions, cash, and computers that were obtained as a result of his criminal activity.

Two of Hector Rodriguez's accomplices were also sentenced today. Codefendant Gerardo Rodriguez was sentenced to 60 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release and he forfeited a 2005 Mercedes, 2006 Harley Davidson, \$60,000, televisions, and computers that were obtained as a result of his criminal activity. Codefendant Maria Guerrero was sentenced to 30 months in federal

prison followed by three years of supervised release and ordered to pay a \$40,000 fine.

The case was investigated by the multi-agency Border Corruption Task Force.

According to court records, defendant Hector Rodriguez agreed that from around 2010 until his arrest on July 13, 2012, he received bribes from codefendants Gerardo Rodriguez and Maria Guerrero, in the form of cash money, use of luxury vehicles, and use of an apartment, in return for failing to enforce U.S. immigration laws by admitting illegal aliens into the U.S. through his inspection lane at the San Ysidro Port-of-Entry.

Defendant Hector Rodriguez provided his lane assignment information to codefendants who would then drive vehicles containing illegal aliens from Mexico to the United States through his assigned inspection lane. On their date of arrest, July 13, 2012, codefendant Gerardo Rodriguez drove a vehicle containing eight illegal aliens and codefendant Vanessa Moya drove a vehicle containing six illegal aliens through defendant Hector Rodriguez's inspection lane. To conceal the smuggling, defendant Hector Rodriguez would enter into the government database false information about who was driving the vehicle and the number of occupants, thereby concealing the fact that the vehicles contained illegal aliens.

(Codefendant Vanessa Moya was previously sentenced on May 13, 2013 to five years of probation and ordered to pay a \$2,500 fine.)

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy stated, "The honesty and integrity of those who protect our borders are an integral part of the security equation. Corrupt officials who violate the public's trust and jeopardize the security of our borders will not be tolerated and will be brought to justice."

Pete Flores, director of CBP field operations for San Diego, said: "The sentencing of this former officer sends a message both to the community at large and to those in trusted positions in federal law enforcement who would contemplate participating in corrupt and unlawful behavior. We will not tolerate corruption within our workforce and we will actively ferret out and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any employees who commit unethical or unlawful acts that violate that special trust."

FBI Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Daphne Hearn commented, "Public corruption tears at the fabric of our communities and our national security. The FBI will continue to work with our partners in the Border Corruption Task Force (BCTF) to root out corruption along the Southwest Border and ensure those who violate the public's trust are held accountable." The public can report alleged instances of corruption to the FBI hotline at 1-800-NO BRIBE.

DEFENDANTS Case Number: 12cr2997-BEN/12cr4462-BEN

Hector Rodriguez
Gerardo Rodriguez
Vanessa Moya
Maria Guerrero

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 8, United States Code, Section 371- Conspiracy to Bring In Aliens For Financial Gain and Bribery;
Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)- Bringing In Illegal Aliens For Financial Gain; and
Title 18, United States Code, Sections 201(b)(1), 201(b)(2) – Bribery.

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

The Border Corruption Task Force is composed of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Customs and Border Protection - Internal Affairs, Customs and Border Protection - Field Operations, Border Patrol, Transportation Security Administration, and Drug Enforcement Administration.