



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Public Affairs
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DRIVER OF ROLLOVER CRASH SENTENCED TO OVER 15 YEARS IN PRISON

Ten people died in August 2008 crash near Florence, Ariz.

PHOENIX – Brian Guzman-Ochoa, 39, of Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Neil V. Wake to 188 months in federal prison. Guzman-Ochoa pleaded guilty on April 20, 2009, to one count of transportation of illegal aliens resulting in death. The charge is related to a vehicle rollover crash that occurred on August 7, 2008, near Florence, Ariz., resulting in the death of 10 passengers. Guzman-Ochoa admitted that he was the driver of the vehicle at the time of the collision.

U.S. Attorney Dennis K. Burke stated that, “This case exemplifies how dangerous, and at times deadly, human smuggling can become. Smugglers commonly treat crossers as human cargo -- and, they will face the consequences. This Office is committed to continuing its efforts with law enforcement to prosecute these offenders.”

“This case is yet another demonstration of how little regard human smugglers have for the lives of their victims,” said Matt Allen, special agent in charge of ICE investigations in Arizona. “ICE and our law enforcement partners, like the Arizona Department Public Safety in this case, will work together to investigate and hold responsible those who see human lives as nothing more than profits in their criminal enterprises.”

In the early morning hours of August 7, 2008, officers from the Arizona Department Public Safety responded to a single vehicle collision on Highway 79 near Florence, Ariz. The vehicle, a 2006 Chevrolet Suburban, contained 19 people, all illegal aliens. Guzman-Ochoa apparently fell asleep at the wheel and drove off the road. The vehicle rolled over and traveled through the air for approximately 60 feet before landing upside down. Prior to deployment of the airbags, the vehicle was traveling at 78 MPH. Seven men and two women were killed at the scene. Another passenger later died from his injuries.

Guzman-Ochoa admitted in his plea agreement that he “along with Jesus Enrique Barrera-Morales, guided the aliens into the United States. Once in the United States we [Guzman-Ochoa and Barrera-Morales] guided 17 others for three days and nights north until we came to the Chevrolet Suburban. After walking all night, I told the 17 aliens to get into the back of the Suburban and Jesus sat in the front passenger seat.” Barrera-Morales died at the scene. Guzman did not have a U.S. driver's license and he has a paralyzed left arm. He also used marijuana prior to the crash.

When imposing the sentence, Judge Wake noted that “Mr. Guzman-Ochoa has a long history of involvement of transporting illegal aliens” and he purposefully decided to supplement his

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pension with illegal activity. This was Guzman-Ochoa's 23rd apprehension by Immigration since 1999.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Arizona Department of Public Safety with assistance from U.S. Border Patrol. The prosecution was handled by Brian E. Kasprzyk and Lisa Jennis Settel, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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