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## **MAN RECEIVES 137 YEAR SENTENCE AFTER JURY FINDS HIM GUILTY IN HOSTAGE TAKING CONSPIRACY**

PHOENIX – Carlos Alvarez-Espinoza, 22, and Jesus Corrales-Fernandez, 30, both citizens of Mexico, were sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge David G. Campbell. Alvarez-Espinoza received 137 years in federal prison after being convicted at trial on June 19, 2009, for Conspiracy to Take Hostages, five counts of Hostage Taking, Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens, Harboring Illegal Aliens, and five counts of Brandishing a Firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. Alvarez-Espinoza received a combined sentence of 30 years for all but the gun counts. The five gun counts carried a mandatory consecutive sentence of an additional 107 years. Corrales-Fernandez pleaded guilty to one gun count and received 15 years in federal prison, the maximum allowed by his plea agreement.

“These sentences reflect the serious nature of hostage taking offenses, in which human beings are treated like property,” stated U.S. Attorney Dennis K. Burke. “I applaud the continued efforts of ICE and the Phoenix Police Department in bringing these defendants to face justice for their violent acts.”

“Alien smugglers have a callous disregard for the value of human life,” said Matt Allen, special agent in charge of ICE investigations in Arizona. “The violence exhibited by the defendants in this case will not be tolerated by law enforcement and the community.”

Alvarez-Espinoza and Corrales-Fernandez were part of a violent group of alien smugglers that held at least 23 illegal aliens hostage in May 2008 at a house in Phoenix. Not only were the victims held hostage at gunpoint, some were beaten and pistol whipped and all were threatened with death. At least two people escaped the house by jumping out a second story window after which Alvarez-Espinoza and a co-defendant told the aliens that they were going to look for one of the escapees and make him pay by taking him out to the desert and killing him. Soon thereafter, Alvarez-Espinoza drove away from the house with Corrales-Fernandez and two undocumented aliens. Police officers stopped Alvarez-Espinoza’s car and found a loaded firearm. Evidence at trial demonstrated that both Alvarez-Espinoza and Corrales-Fernandez lived at the stash house and brandished firearms during the hostage taking. The court noted while sentencing Alvarez-Espinoza that this was a “violent hostage taking with numerous victims” and that “affording adequate deterrence is particularly important.”

Three other defendants were charged in this case. Evertisto Ortiz-Jimenez, who pleaded guilty to a gun count, was sentenced on September 21, 2009, to 25 years in federal prison. Ortiz-Jimenez was identified as one of the leaders of the group and was accused of sexually assaulting a teenage female hostage even after her family had paid for her release. Another defendant, Freddy Ovando-Ocana pleaded guilty and is set for sentencing on November 16, 2009. The fifth defendant,

David Alejo-Ortiz, is currently in Maricopa County custody pending State of Ariz. charges of human smuggling, misconduct involving weapons and kidnaping-related charges. His trial date on those charges is October 30, 2009.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement with assistance provided by the Phoenix Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Lisa Jennis Settel and Josh Parecki, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-611-PHX-DGC  
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