



**PRESS RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Elizabeth M. Martinez  
Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Public Affairs Officer  
[elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov](mailto:elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov)  
505.224.1469

**For Immediate Release**

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**TWO TEXAS RESIDENTS EACH SENTENCED TO FIVE YEAR PRISON  
TERM FOR CONSPIRING TO BRIBE A U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENT**

ALBUQUERQUE – Yesterday afternoon a federal judge in Las Cruces, N.M., sentenced Debbie Ayala, 26, of San Elizardo, Tex., and David Rogelio Leyva, 27, of Socorro, Tex., to five-year prison terms for conspiring to bribe a public official, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales. Ayala and Leyva will be on supervised release for three years after they complete their prison sentences.

Ayala and Leyva were arrested on Nov. 18, 2011, in Horizon City, Tex., based on a two-count indictment charging them with conspiracy and bribery of a public official. The indictment charged that, between Jan. 10, 2010 and March 1, 2010, the defendants conspired illegally to smuggle Ayala's cousin and ten kilograms of cocaine from Mexico into the United States by offering money to a U.S. Border Patrol agent, who refused the defendants' offer. It further charged that, on Jan. 26, 2010, an undercover officer met with Ayala and Leyva, and discussed payment and the logistics of smuggling Ayala's cousin into the United States. During this meeting, Ayala, Leyva and the undercover officer agreed that the undercover officer would smuggle ten kilograms of cocaine into the United States for a fee of \$500 per kilogram of cocaine.

On June 5, 2012, Ayala entered a guilty plea to the conspiracy count of the indictment. In entering her guilty plea, Ayala admitted that on Jan. 10, 2010, she approached a U.S. Border Patrol Agent with whom she had gone to school and asked the Agent to smuggle her cousin in exchange for compensation. Although the U.S. Border Patrol Agent declined to assist Ayala, the Agent agreed to introduce Ayala to another U.S. Border Patrol Agent who was willing to help Ayala. Ayala admitted that, on Jan. 26, 2010, Leyva and she met with a U.S. Border Patrol Agent, who unbeknownst to Ayala was actually an undercover FBI Agent, to discuss the price to be paid for smuggling the cousin into the United States. During that conversation, Ayala and Leyva asked the undercover FBI Agent if he also could assist with smuggling cocaine into the United States in exchange for a fee of \$500 per kilogram.

On June 19, 2012, Leyva also entered a guilty plea to the conspiracy count of the indictment. During his plea hearing, Leyva admitted his participation in the conspiracy to bribe

a U.S. Border Patrol in exchange for smuggling Ayala's cousin into the United States and also to smuggle cocaine into the country.

Count 2 of the indictment, charging Ayala and Leyva with bribery of a public official, was dismissed after the two defendants were sentenced.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the FBI and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark A. Saltman of the U.S. Attorney's Las Cruces Branch Office.

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