

Department of Justice

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SENTENCING OF COUPLE RESCUED FROM NIAGARA GORGE ICE BRIDGE

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- Linda Ann Summerfield, 51, an English citizen and resident of Canada, and Mark Prince, 39, a United States citizen who was living in Canada until he was deported in January 2009, were both sentenced this week by U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny to time-served sentences, United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter announced. The judge also ordered both defendants to pay \$447.11 to the Niagara Falls Fire Department to reimburse the Department for costs incurred when firefighters had to rescue the couple from the Niagara Gorge in sub-zero temperatures in the early morning hours of January 24, 2009. Judge Skretny imposed sentence on Prince today. Summerfield was sentenced on Wednesday.

Assistant U.S. Attorney MaryEllen Kresse, who prosecuted the cases, said that Summerfield and Prince have been in custody since their arrest by the United States Border Patrol on January 24, 2009. On June 2, 2009, Summerfield pled guilty to attempted illegal re-entry into the United States, and Prince pled guilty to aiding and abetting the attempted illegal re-entry.

The prosecutor stated that on the afternoon of January 23, 2009, Prince and Summerfield had presented themselves for admission to the United States at the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls, New York. Prince had been ordered removed from Canada, and was allowed to enter the USA. Summerfield was denied entry, and made to return to Canada. Later that evening, with temperatures hovering around 14 degrees Fahrenheit, Summerfield descended into the Niagara Gorge on the Canadian side of the Niagara River, and walked across the river to the United States, using an ice bridge that had formed on the River below the Rainbow Bridge. Slightly after 8:00 p.m., when Summerfield realized that she was not going to be able to climb up the gorge on the American side, she called Prince from her cell phone. Prince lowered himself into the gorge near the Rainbow Bridge where Summerfield was waiting. After unsuccessfully attempting to get himself and Summerfield out of the gorge, Prince called 911. The Niagara Falls New York

Fire Department appeared on the scene and worked for five hours in the below-freezing temperatures to get Summerfield and Prince out of the gorge. Two firefighters had to rappel into the gorge and, in an operation that took almost three hours, secure Summerfield and Prince in baskets, one at a time, to be lifted out of the gorge. In the early morning hours of January 24, 2009, Summerfield and Prince were airlifted to the Erie County Medical Center where they were treated for hypothermia. As part of their respective plea agreements, both Summerfield and Prince agreed that they should face increased sentences based on the fact that their conduct created a substantial risk of death or serious bodily injury to the workers involved in their rescue.

The convictions of Summerfield and Prince resulted from an investigation by the United States Border Patrol, under the direction of Patrol Agent in Charge Michael Powell.