



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney
Director of Community Relations
(612) 664-5611
email: jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov**

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 14, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN

Prosecutions continue in illegal entry cases involving those with prior criminal records

In the District of Minnesota, court action continues in federal cases involving three foreign nationals who entered the United States illegally after being deported as criminals. Today in Fergus Falls, one of those men was sentenced, while earlier this week the other two men pleaded guilty to the same crime.

In Fergus Falls, U.S. District Court Judge John R. Tunheim sentenced Salvador Landa-Meraz, age 23, no known address, to 32 months in prison on one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. He was indicted on September 15, 2010, and pleaded guilty on December 21, 2010. In his plea agreement, Landa-Meraz admitted that on July 19, 2010, he was found in the U.S. after having been previously deported to Mexico following a 2007 Stearns County conviction for second-degree assault with a dangerous weapon. Landa-Meraz was most recently arrested on July 16, 2010, by St. Cloud police for driving while intoxicated and was in jail when he was identified as an illegal alien through the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Criminal Alien Program ("CAP"). The goal of that program is to locate criminal aliens incarcerated in federal and state prisons, as well as in local jails, and prevent them from being released into the general population.

Landa-Meraz's case was the result of an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations ("ICE-ERO"), the St. Cloud Police Department and the Stearns County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lola Velazquez-Aguilu.

On April 14, 2011, in Minneapolis, Rogelio Robles-Caballero, age 37, also pleaded guilty to one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. Robles-Caballero, who was indicted on January 19, 2011, entered his plea before U.S. District Court Judge Ann D. Montgomery. In his plea

agreement, Robles-Caballero admitted that on October 14, 2010, he was found in the U.S. illegally after having been previously deported to Mexico. His deportation followed a 1995 California conviction for unlawful sale of a controlled substance. He was arrested most recently by the Richfield Police Department and was then identified via the CAP.

On April 12, 2011, in Minneapolis, Cesar Ortiz-Castillo, age 29, of Minneapolis, pleaded guilty to one count of illegal re-entry after deportation. Ortiz-Castillo, who was indicted on December 21, 2010, entered his plea before U.S. District Court Judge David S. Doty. In his plea agreement, Ortiz-Castillo admitted that on July 23, 2010, he was found in the U.S. after having been previously deported to Mexico following a 2009 Hennepin County conviction for terroristic threats. According to a law enforcement affidavit filed in the current federal case, Ortiz-Castillo was identified as an illegal alien through the CAP while in Ramsey County jail following an arrest for violating probation. He also admitted paying a smuggler \$3,500 to get him into the country via the Arizona border.

For their crimes, Ortiz-Castillo and Robles-Caballero face a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Their respective judges will determine their sentences at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled. The Robles-Caballero case is the result of an investigation by the Richfield Police Department and ICE ERO. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen B. Schommer. The Ortiz-Castillo case is the result of an investigation by ICE-ERO and the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Deidre Y. Aanstad.

Ortiz-Castillo and Robles-Caballero will remain in ICE custody until their current federal cases are resolved. All three men will be deported after serving their sentences. To learn more about the CAP, visit www.ice.gov/criminal-alien-program/

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