

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 29, 2009

Former Port Authority Police Recruit, Boxing Manager Sentenced to
75 Months for Theft, Sale of Drugs from Sheriff's Department

(More)

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NEWARK – A former Port Authority police recruit who also managed professional boxers in New Jersey was sentenced today to 75 months in prison for conspiring with a detective-sergeant in the Passaic County Sheriff's Department to distribute significant quantities of cocaine that had been stolen from the Sheriff's Department evidence vault, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

U.S. District Judge Jose L. Linares ordered Henry Cortes, 35, of Mahwah, to report to the federal Bureau of Prisons on Sept. 10 to begin serving his prison sentence.

Cortes pleaded guilty on Feb. 26, and admitted before Judge Linares that he conspired with Alan Souto, then a detective-sergeant in the Sheriff's Department and a former member of the Haledon Borough council, to steal and later sell the drugs from the evidence vault. Souto pleaded guilty on Dec. 4 and stipulated in his plea agreement that the amount of stolen drugs was at least 43 kilograms (94.6 pounds) of cocaine and 700 grams of heroin. Cortes stipulated to those same amounts in his plea agreement.

On May 18, Judge Linares sentenced Souto to 85 months in federal prison.

Cortes pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine. Cortes said the conspiracy spanned at least from about August 2007 to July 2008, during which time he was a probationary police recruit with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, as well as a professional boxing manager in New Jersey.

Cortes admitted that he arranged with Souto to hide the stolen drugs at a vacant property Cortes owned in Haledon. He said he had told Souto in advance where to find hidden keys to access the property. Cortes said another co-conspirator would then retrieve the drugs and sell them to various individuals in Passaic County.

After the drugs were sold, Cortes and Souto took shares of the proceeds, and Cortes said he received more than \$200,000 for his involvement in the conspiracy.

"Cortes' conduct was disgraceful, particularly considering that he aspired to be in law enforcement," said Marra. "The sentence is appropriately long and fits the crime."

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, for the investigation of Souto. He also credited for their assistance in the investigation prosecutors and investigators with the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor James F. Avigliano, and investigators with the Passaic County Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Sheriff Jerry Speziale, and investigators with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Gramiccioni of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Counsel: Ronald Fava, Esq., Wayne.