For Immediate Release
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THREE PLEAD GUILTY TO FEDERAL MARIJUANA CHARGES

Marijuana Found in Gas Tank of Truck at I-10 Border Patrol Checkpoint

LAS CRUCES – Today in Las Cruces federal court, Amarillo, Texas residents **Aliceia Christine Patterson-Shepard**, 25, and **Danielle Sheriee Thorn**, 30, and Yuma, Colorado resident **Daniel Miramontes-Rivera**, 25, pled guilty to an indictment charging them with conspiracy to possess marijuana with intent to distribute. Patterson-Shepard and Thorn also pled guilty to possession with the intent to distribute marijuana. All three were released on bond after their arrest on December 10, 2010, and will remain out of custody pending their sentencing hearings, which have yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that the charges arose out of conduct occurring on December 10, 2010, in Doña Ana County, New Mexico. According to a criminal complaint filed in the case, Patterson, who was driving, and Thorn, entered the United States Border Patrol checkpoint on I-10 west of Las Cruces in a Dodge truck. A drug-detecting canine alerted to the truck and agents discovered two metal containers in the gas tank. Inside the containers, agents found 75.25 kilograms of marijuana. According to the criminal complaint, Miramontes, who was in a separate vehicle, entered the checkpoint around the same time as Patterson and Thorn. Miramontes was not detained, but subsequently was stopped on Highway 26 after Thorn and Patterson told agents Miramontes' vehicle had been traveling with them. In documents filed with the court, Miramontes admitted that he had agreed to escort Patterson and Thorn as they smuggled the marijuana from Mexico into the United States.

The maximum penalty for these charges is up to 20 years in prison and three years of supervised release. The case was investigated by the United States Border Patrol and the Drug

Enforcement Administration, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney

Jessica Càrdenas Jarvis.

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