

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Karen P. Hewitt***

For Further Information, Contact: Assistant U. S. Attorney Rebekah Young (619) 557-7179

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - November 5, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Juan Sandoval-Torres was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in San Diego by the Honorable Larry A. Burns to serve 71 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release based on Sandoval's conviction for one count of Alien Smuggling for Financial Gain. Sandoval-Torres entered his guilty plea on July 26, 2007.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Rebekah W. Young, who prosecuted the case, the charges arose from an alien smuggling event on May 29, 2007, when Sandoval-Torres guided by foot a group of approximately eight undocumented aliens from Mexico into the United States. After arriving in the United States, Sandoval placed the aliens into a vehicle – including the trunk – and was en route to their next location, when deputies from the San Diego County Sheriff's Department attempted to conduct a traffic stop. Sandoval refused to yield and sped away from the location. Deputies pursued the vehicle for approximately five miles, but ended the pursuit for safety reasons. Sandoval then drove eastbound on Skyline Road and failed to negotiate a northbound turn at the end of Skyline Drive and Billows Drive. The car then crashed through a cul-de-sac barrier, collided into a residential wooden fence, flipped over and fell approximately ten

feet off a retaining wall, where it finally came to rest, upside down, and burst into flames. Each of the aliens inside the vehicle and the trunk later told officials that they screamed at the driver to stop after he panicked and fled from the deputies, but that the driver ignored their pleas.

Although injured, most of the vehicle's occupants were able to get out of the car. However, one of the smuggled aliens – who was trapped in the trunk – was unconscious and had to be extracted from the trunk. She later spent several weeks in the hospital, slipping in and out of consciousness, and she suffered permanent injuries.

United States Attorney Hewitt stated, “Smugglers make things worse for themselves and others when they attempt to run from law enforcement. This smuggler put many lives at risk and the punishment he received is fully warranted.”

DEFENDANT

Criminal Case Number: 07CR1505-LAB

Juan Sandoval-Torres

a.k.a Jose Cerpas-Talavera

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. § 2 — Bringing in Illegal Aliens for Financial Gain.

AGENCIES

United States Border Patrol, Department of Homeland Security
San Diego County Sheriff's Department
San Diego Police Department