



Department of Justice

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FOUR PERSONS SENTENCED IN ALIEN SMUGGLING AND PASSPORT FRAUD CONSPIRACY

Atlanta, GA - VIRGINIA ARLENE GOFORTH, 53, of Marietta, Georgia; TODD JOSEPH MCCLUNG, 33, of Woodstock, Georgia; WILLIAM DONALD BARNETTE, 30, of Douglasville, Georgia; and DAVINA MARIE BRANDON, 30, of Dallas, Georgia, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Thomas W. Thrash on charges of conspiracy, alien smuggling, and passport fraud.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "The sentencing of the defendants in this case is significant for protecting the integrity of the process whereby United States passports are issued. We will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute alien smuggling schemes."

GOFORTH was sentenced to three years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. BARNETTE was sentenced to three years probation and ordered to pay a \$500.00 fine. GOFORTH and BARNETTE were convicted of these charges on November 10, 2005. MCCLUNG was sentenced to five months in prison to be followed by five months of home confinement and three years of supervised release. BRANDON was sentenced to three years probation. MCCLUNG and BRANDON were convicted of these charges on November 15, 2005.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: VIRGINIA GOFORTH and another conspirator, WENDY LIZZETH ORTEGA, who previously pleaded guilty and was sentenced by the Court for her participation in this scheme, began smuggling Central American children into the country in February 2003. The parents of the children were living in this country under Temporary Protective Status issued by the Department of Homeland Security. Persons living in this country under TPS are not eligible to bring family members into the United States. GOFORTH, using ORTEGA as a Spanish interpreter, instructed the Salvadoran parents to provide her with a passport size photograph of their child, and with clothing with American logos for their child to wear on the plane when traveling to the United States. The parents were required to pay GOFORTH \$4500 per child for her services. One parent who was unable to pay GOFORTH the full cash

amount installed hardwood floors in her home and in WENDY ORTEGA's home at no charge.

GOFORTH and TODD McCLUNG traveled to New Orleans to obtain expedited passports in the names of GOFORTH's granddaughter and McCLUNG's two sons, using photographs of Salvadoran children, for use on the first trip to El Salvador in February 2003. Three children were brought into the United States on that trip, accompanied by GOFORTH and McCLUNG. The children, who were in the custody of their grandparents or other relatives, were taught to use the names of the American children on the passport they were given to use, and were taught to refer to GOFORTH and McCLUNG as their grandmother and father, respectively.

Four trips were made to El Salvador or Honduras between February 2003 and February 2004. GOFORTH, McCLUNG, and Ortega made the trips. At GOFORTH's request, BARNETTE and BRANDON obtained passports in their children's names that were used on some of the trips. A number of Salvadoran parents who paid GOFORTH to bring their children to the United States were unsuccessful in persuading her to return the money after ORTEGA was arrested in El Salvador while attempting to smuggle five children into the United States.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U. S. State Department..

Assistant United States Attorney Teresa D. Hoyt and Special Assistant United States Attorney Arlene Reidy of the U.S. Department of Justice Domestic Security Section prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Charysse L. Alexander, Chief, Public Corruption and Government Fraud, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.