



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
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Eastern District of Michigan**

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For Immediate Release:

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April 15, 2008

EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Wilmer A. Benegas

**FEDERAL PRISONER SENTENCED ON CHARGES OF
MAIMING FELLOW INMATE WITH SCALDING WATER**

Wilmer A. Benegas, 23, a citizen of Honduras, was sentenced today to 41 months in prison after pleading guilty to the federal offense of maiming with scalding water, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge Andrew G. Arena. The sentence was imposed by the Honorable Robert H. Cleland, U.S. District Judge.

The evidence presented at Benegas's November 29, 2007 guilty plea showed that on August 8, 2006, defendant was a prisoner at the Federal Detention Center in Milan, Michigan. While inside the prisoner lunch area, defendant filled a container with water. Defendant placed the water in a microwave oven and heated it until it boiled (212 degrees Fahrenheit.) Defendant, with the intent to maim and disfigure, poured the scalding water over the head of another Milan FDC inmate, causing both first and second degree burns and resulting in serious bodily injury. The inmate was transported to the University of Michigan Medical Trauma Burn Center.

United States Attorney Murphy said, "Violence against a fellow federal inmate is particularly serious given the potential for retaliation and the sparking of prisoner unrest. My office is committed to prosecuting such dangerous acts to deter such unlawful conduct in the federal prisons."

Benegas had been in federal custody since December 5, 2005 relating to his arrest and guilty plea to assaulting and inflicting serious bodily injury upon a federal officer. In that case, Benegas bit a U.S. Border Patrol agent on the finger while trying to evade arrest. The Agent was treated at Detroit Receiving Hospital for a deep bite wound. Benegas was sentenced to 27 months in federal custody.

Both Benegas's past assault case, and the current case, were prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Schneider.