



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill  
Middle District of Florida

Tampa

Orlando

Jacksonville

Fort Myers

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CONTACT: STEVE COLE

PHONE: (813) 274-6136

FAX: (813) 274-6300

## HONDURAN DRUG TRANSPORTER SENTENCED

Tampa, Florida - U.S. District Judge Susan C. Bucklew, today sentenced Carson William Matute-Rankin to 24 years' and 8 months' imprisonment for his role in a cocaine transportation conspiracy. Matute, a 56 year old Honduran national, was extradited to the United States from Panama in September, 2007 to face the drug charges. Matute was found guilty on January 9, 2008.

According to court documents, Matute was described as the head of a major cocaine transportation organization operating out of Honduras. Thousands of kilograms of cocaine were smuggled through the efforts of the organization, with Matute organizing boat crews, organizing refueling operations, and providing logistical support. Two ventures resulted in seizures by the United States Coast Guard of over 6,000 kilograms of cocaine.

The case was investigated by the Panama Express Task Force and included the efforts of DEA, ICE, FBI and various other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James C. Preston, Jr.