



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer
(210) 384-7440

April 21, 2008

**FORMER EL PASO CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY
AND IS SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON ON DRUG CHARGE**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that in El Paso this morning, former Customs and Border Protection officer Margarita Crispin pled guilty to a grand jury indictment charging her with one count of conspiracy to import more than 1000 kilograms of marijuana into the United States. U.S. District Judge Kathleen Cardone accepted her plea of guilty and sentenced her to serve 240 months in prison, a \$2,000 fine, 5 years of supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. In addition, Crispin agreed to a judgment forfeiting up to \$5,000,000, a 2002 GMC Denali, \$16,000 in currency, and a quantity of jewelry.

Crispin used her position as a CBP officer to knowingly allow vehicles loaded with marijuana to pass through Port of Entry lanes that she was assigned to monitor, without checking or inspecting them. The activity occurred from about June 2003 until about July 2007, when Crispin was indicted by an El Paso grand jury.

“We rely on the integrity of federal officers to enforce the laws and ensure the security of our borders,” said U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton. “Agents who join forces with drug smugglers to subvert border inspections undermine border security in the most treacherous way. My office is committed to strengthening our border and will seek out, prosecute and punish those officers who betray their office and our trust.”

The case was investigated by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Internal Affairs, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Assistant United States Attorney Juanita Fielden prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

#####