



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas

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CBP OFFICER ARRESTED FOR SELLING BADGE TO TRANSPORT COCAINE

(HOUSTON) – A Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer has been arrested for using his official Border Patrol Agent Department of Homeland Security (DHS) credentials, badge and official authority to circumvent the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening checkpoint at McAllen International Airport to transport and deliver six kilograms of cocaine to Houston in exchange for \$6,000 and expenses, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today.

Ramiro Flores Jr., 36, a CBP officer stationed in McAllen, Texas, was arrested by officers of the Houston Police Department and special agents of the DHS-Office of Inspector General (OIG) at Bush Intercontinental Airport on Thursday, May 15, 2008, upon arrival on a Continental Airlines flight from McAllen, Texas. A criminal complaint charging Flores with possession with intent to distribute cocaine was filed late yesterday afternoon. Flores is expected to make his initial appearance before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Houston later today.

According to the allegations in the complaint, on May 14, 2008, Flores agreed to use his official credentials and badge to transport a bag containing six kilograms of cocaine from McAllen to Houston in exchange for \$6,000 and expenses payable upon arrival in Houston. On the morning of May 15, 2008, Flores, while off duty and carrying a bag he allegedly knew contained six kilograms of cocaine, used his official credentials and badge to circumvent the TSA screening checkpoint at McAllen International Airport. Once past the secured area, Flores met with a confidential source in an airport restroom and delivered the bag containing the cocaine. The source, who on the suggestion of Flores was carrying an identical bag to avoid detection, verified the bag Flores had delivered to him contained six kilograms of cocaine. Flores and the source then boarded a flight from McAllen to Houston. Upon arrival at Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, Flores was arrested by officers of the Houston Police Department and taken into federal custody by DHS-OIG agents.

In a search incident to his arrest, agents recovered \$340 of the \$400 in expense money received by Flores to transport the cocaine.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark McIntyre and James McAlister.

A complaint is an accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process