

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Karen P. Hewitt***

For Further Information, Contact: Assistant U. S. Attorney Carlos Arguello, 619-557-6252

For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 12, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Lazaro Serna-Cruz was sentenced today in federal court in San Diego for knowingly concealing and attempting to transport from Mexico into the United States, more than \$10,000 in U.S. currency. United States District Judge William Q. Hayes sentenced Serna-Cruz to serve 10 months in federal prison followed by three years' supervised release.

As part of his guilty plea on December 18, 2006, Serna-Cruz admitted that he attempted to enter the United States through the Otay Mesa Port of Entry while knowingly concealing on his person and in his car approximately \$50,800 in U.S. currency. Serna-Cruz also admitted he intended to evade the United States' currency reporting requirements for amounts of \$10,000 or more.

Serna-Cruz further acknowledged that the \$50,800 constituted the proceeds of alien smuggling activity, and agreed to forfeit to the United States the entire \$50,800 he had attempted to conceal. Judge

Hayes also imposed a \$3,000 fine as part of the sentence, which he ordered could be satisfied by forfeiture of an additional \$3,000 in money orders that Serna-Cruz possessed on the day of his arrest.

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 06cr2392WQH

Lazaro Serna-Cruz

SUMMARY OF CHARGE

Title 31, United States Code, Section 5332(a) (Bulk Cash Smuggling)

Maximum Penalty: Maximum of 5 years in prison; \$250,000 fine; three years of supervised release

AGENCIES

Customs and Border Protection

Immigration and Customs Enforcement