



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

**ILLEGAL ALIEN SENTENCED TO 12 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON
FOR ASSAULTING A BORDER PATROL AGENT AND OTHER
CHARGES**

PHOENIX - Rafael Rivera-Alonzo, 34, an illegal alien from Mexico with numerous felony convictions in the U.S., was sentenced here yesterday by U.S. District Judge Stephen M. McNamee to 10 years in federal prison after Rivera-Alonzo was found guilty by a federal jury on June 6, 2007 of assault on a Border Patrol Agent.

On July 15, 2006, Rivera-Alonzo had just crossed the U.S.-Mexico border into San Luis, Ariz. when he was pursued by a Border Patrol Agent. When the agent moved in for the arrest, Rivera-Alonzo fought the agent and wrestled the agent's service handgun free from his grasp. During the struggle, the agent was able to render the firearm inoperable, but neither man knew that at the time. After the defendant had control of the gun, he tried to operate it to shoot at the agent. The agent's partner arrived and assisted in subduing Rivera-Alonzo.

Rivera-Alonzo also pleaded guilty to a federal charge of Illegal Re-Entry After Deportation for which he received a term of seven years in federal prison. This term will run concurrently to his 10 year sentence for the assault.

Finally, Rivera-Alonzo had just been released from federal custody for illegally entering the country four months prior to this most recent attempt to re-enter and the assault. Because he was on a term of federal supervised release when he committed these new offenses, Judge McNamee also sentenced him to two additional years in federal prison that will run consecutively to the 10-year prison term for the assault. Therefore, the defendant faces a total of 12 years in federal prison for all three offenses.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Border Patrol. The prosecution was handled by Alison S. Bachus, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBERS: CR-06-748-PHX-SMM
CR-06-715-PHX-SMM
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