



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona

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CHILD SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR 21 MONTHS

Abandoned one child at shuttle stop for 19 hours

TUCSON, Ariz. – Jessica Sanchez-Gutierrez, 27, of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Raner C. Collins to 21 months in federal prison. Sanchez-Gutierrez pleaded guilty on December 20, 2007, to conspiring to transport illegal aliens.

On October 23, 2007, at approximately 2:00 p.m. Sanchez-Gutierrez presented herself for admission into the United States at the Nogales, Ariz. Port of Entry. She was accompanied by a 10-year-old girl. Sanchez-Gutierrez claimed that she was the girl's caretaker and that they were going shopping in Nogales. Sanchez-Gutierrez presented laser visas for both herself and the young girl. Further investigation revealed that the girl was not the person named on the laser visa that had been presented as authorization for her to enter the U.S., and that Sanchez-Gutierrez, was to receive \$125 to smuggle the girl into the U.S.

The next day, October 24, 2007, a Nogales Police officer approached agents at the port of entry and asked whether agents had arrested or had contact with anyone named Jessica. The police officer said that he had been approached by an employee of a shuttle service located in Nogales who told him that a woman named Jessica had come to their office the day before at about 1:30 p.m., with a young boy, and had purchased two tickets to travel to Phoenix. Jessica asked the shuttle service employees to look after the boy while she went to get her baggage and another little girl, and told them she would not be long. Nineteen hours later, employees notified police that the boy had been abandoned.

Officers responded and interviewed the boy. The boy, who stated he was seven years old, was able to identify a photograph of the girl who had crossed with Sanchez-Gutierrez the previous day as his sister. Sanchez-Gutierrez later admitted that she had brought the boy into the U.S. using her son's laser visa, and she was to be paid \$125 to smuggle the child into the U.S. The smuggled children were turned over to the custody of the Mexican Department of Family Services (the Mexican equivalent of U.S. Child Protective Services) to be reunited with their families.

The investigation was conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Nogales. The prosecution was handled by Cynthia R. Wood, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-19411
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