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*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

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

## **MEXICAN POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED TO OVER 7 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING**

TUCSON, Ariz. – Mexican Policia Preventiva Federal Officer Ruben Rochin-Gutierrez, 41, of Navojoa, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced here yesterday by U.S. District Judge David C. Bury to 87 months in federal prison. Rochin-Gutierrez pleaded guilty on May 15, 2007, to Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute 6,489 pounds of marijuana.

Rochin-Gutierrez was employed as a Policia Preventiva Federal de Caminos police officer, in the Nogales, Sonora, Mexico area, and used his official capacity to assist Mexican drug trafficking organizations pass marijuana through his area of responsibility and bring it close to the U.S. border.

On April 17, 2003, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in New York City seized 2,969 pounds of marijuana which they traced back to Rochin-Gutierrez. Rochin-Gutierrez admitted that the marijuana passed through his area of responsibility in Mexico, and he knew it was destined for the U.S. However, unbeknownst to Rochin-Gutierrez and his co-conspirators, the people they had made the smuggling arrangements with in the United States were actually FBI agents.

After the seizure of the New York load, Rochin-Gutierrez began negotiating directly with the undercover FBI agent about smuggling a second shipment of marijuana into the United States. Ultimately, he agreed to pay the undercover agent \$100,000 in advance to import 3520 kilograms of marijuana and transport it to Phoenix. Rochin-Gutierrez directed his brother, Rene Rochin-Gutierrez, who made three separate advance payments to the undercover agent between December 2, 2004, and December 15, 2004, totaling \$99,900 cash. Rochin-Gutierrez then authorized the marijuana to be released from the Mexican side of the border. While under continual FBI surveillance, the marijuana was imported through the Nogales Port of Entry, transferred to a vehicle provided by Rochin-Gutierrez and taken to a parking lot in Phoenix. On December 16, 2004, Rochin-Gutierrez's driver took possession of the vehicle and drove out of the lot. Police stopped conducted a traffic stop and seized 3520 pounds of marijuana from the vehicle.

Despite the December 2004 seizure, Rochin-Gutierrez continued to negotiate with the undercover FBI agent to smuggle and transport a third shipment of marijuana. On January 31, 2006, Rochin-Gutierrez met with the undercover agent and paid him a down payment of \$39,980 for the next shipment, and was arrested as he left the meeting.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the FBI with assistance from the Pima County Sheriff's Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Tucson Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

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