



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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HUMAN SMUGGLER RECEIVES 10 YEAR PRISON TERM FOR HOLDING ILLEGAL ALIENS HOSTAGE

TUCSON, Ariz. – A Mexican national from Zacatecas who was involved in the human smuggling trade was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison here today for holding some of his illegal alien clients hostage inside a home in Tucson.

Jose Manuel Enriquez-Hernandez, 29, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson. Enriquez-Hernandez pleaded guilty in February to conspiracy to commit hostage taking. The charges are the result of an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

According to court documents in the case, illegal aliens would contract with other members of the smuggling organization in Mexico to be brought into the United States. Once the aliens arrived at the Tucson smuggling “drop house” overseen by Enriquez-Hernandez, their clothing would be taken from them and they would be advised the smuggling fee had been raised. The male aliens were then placed in a room with bars on the windows and a door that was locked from the outside. The defendant would contact the aliens’ families and advise their relatives would not be released until the higher fee was paid. Once there was confirmation that the new fee had been received, the aliens would be transported to their ultimate destination.

When ICE agents originally responded to the “drop house” on March 28, 2007, they encountered approximately 15 illegal aliens attempting to leave the residence. Once inside, investigators found an additional 20 illegal aliens, including Enriquez-Hernandez. One of the aliens told agents he had been held for three weeks.

A second defendant in the case, Jesus Alejandro Hernandez-Padilla, was sentenced in February to three years in federal prison for transporting illegal aliens. The prosecution was handled by Shelley K.G. Clemens, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-740-001-TUC-CKJ(HCE)
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-114(Enriquez-Hernandez)

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