



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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BORDER PATROL AGENT PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG, BRIBERY AND FRAUD CHARGES

TUCSON, Ariz. - United States Border Patrol Agent Juan Luis Sanchez, 31, of Rio Rico, Ariz., pleaded guilty to drug, bribery and worker's compensation fraud charges in federal district court in Tucson. Immediately following his guilty plea, Sanchez who had been on indefinite suspension, resigned from the U.S. Border Patrol.

At his change of plea hearing on May 20, 2008 before U.S. District Court Chief Judge John M. Roll, Sanchez pleaded guilty to an Information charging him with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana, bribery of a public official, and worker's compensation fraud. Sanchez admitted to facts showing that he transported marijuana in his Border Patrol vehicle on six separate occasions from Summer 2002 through January 28, 2004. The loads ranged in size from 376 pounds to 921 pounds.

Sanchez estimated he transported at least 3,000 pounds of marijuana over the course of the conspiracy and received a total of \$45,000 in bribes. Sanchez also admitted to fraud relating to worker's compensation benefits he received following an on-duty vehicle accident that occurred after the drug trafficking activities but prior to his arrest. Sanchez admitted that by March 2008 his medical condition had improved, such that he was no longer entitled to benefits, but that he failed to notify the U.S. Department of Labor of the improvement in his condition.

A conviction for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$4 million fine or both. The bribery charge carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. The fraud charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Chief Judge Roll will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Chief Judge Roll on August 13, 2008. The investigation in this case was conducted by the Southwest Border Corruption Task Force in Tucson, which is comprised of agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Professional Responsibility, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, and the Tucson Police Department. Assistance for this investigation also came from the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General along with assistance and full cooperation of the U.S. Border Patrol. The prosecution is being handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-1005-TUC-JMR-(HCE)
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