



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, September 24, 2008

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DRIVER OF ARIZONA ROLLOVER CRASH SENTENCED TO OVER 7 YEARS IN PRISON

TUCSON, Ariz. – Jesus Espinoza-Martinez, 31, of Rancho Mayola, Sinaloa, Mexico, was sentenced here by today U.S. District Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson to 87 months in federal prison for his role as the driver of a vehicle that rolled over and crashed in April 2008, killing one person and injuring 28 others. Espinoza-Martinez pleaded guilty on May 12, 2008, to Transporting Illegal Aliens for Profit Resulting in Death.

In April 2008, Espinoza-Martinez was driving a van loaded with 31 illegal aliens traveling north on Interstate 10 just south of Tucson. U.S. Border Patrol agents, stopped on the side of the road, noticed the suspicious looking van and attempted to follow it to investigate further. Without using their emergency lights, agents exited the highway looking for the van. Espinoza-Martinez admitted in the plea agreement that when he saw the Border Patrol vehicle, he turned off the van headlights and exited the highway in an attempt to evade capture. As a result, he could not properly see the road and drove the van off the embankment, where it rolled over several times before it stopped on its side.

In addition all the seats, except for the driver and passenger seats, were removed from the van in order to maximize the number of illegal aliens that could be transported. Espinoza-Martinez stated that he was to be paid \$1,500 to transport the group north. As a result of the rollover, one illegal alien female died at the scene and several others were in a coma or critical condition. Twenty-nine of the illegal aliens in the van were provided medical care.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The prosecution was handled by Munish Sharda, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-00595-TUC-CKJ (BPV)
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-251(Espinoza-Martinez)

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