



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

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## **WOMAN SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR SMUGGLING CHILDREN AND SELLING HER ID**

TUCSON, Ariz. – Veronica Sanchez, 32, of Phoenix, was sentenced yesterday by Chief U.S. District Judge John M. Roll to a total of 37 months incarceration in two separate cases. Sanchez was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison for Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens for Profit and 16 months (consecutive) for Identity Fraud, following her guilty pleas to charges on February 13, 2008 and July 7, 2008, respectively.

On October 25, 2007, Sanchez attempted to bring two undocumented Mexican citizens, a 10-year-old girl and a 1-year-old boy, into the U.S. at the Nogales, Ariz. Port of Entry. Sanchez tried to pass the children off as her own U.S. citizen children by giving the Customs and Border Protection official her own children's Arizona birth certificates. When the official questioned her, Sanchez admitted she did not know either child, and had arranged with a man to bring them into the U.S. and take them by shuttle to Phoenix. In return, the man would arrange to smuggle Sanchez's deported common law husband into the U.S. at no additional fee. 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) and have been reunited with their families.

During preparation of the pre-sentence investigation report in the child smuggling case, Sanchez told the U.S. Probation officer that she had previously been employed at a Food City grocery store in Phoenix, but had left several months earlier. Food City records showed that the defendant was still employed with them. The ensuing investigation revealed that from December 23, 2002, through May 29, 2008, Sanchez had sold her identity to a Mexican citizen with no authorization to reside or work in the United States, so that woman could work illegally at the grocery store in Phoenix. In return, Sanchez fraudulently collected the tax refund from the other woman's employment. Sanchez helped the other woman obtain a counterfeit Social Security card with Sanchez's Social Security number on it, as well as a false personal identification document purportedly issued by the State of Arizona bearing the other woman's photograph and Sanchez's personal identifiers.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Social Security Administration and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution was handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBERS: CR-07-1911-TUC-JMR; CR-08-0853-TUC-JMR  
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