



PRESS RELEASE

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LAS CRUCES WOMAN SENTENCED TO A YEAR AND A DAY IN PRISON FOR FEDERAL MONEY LAUNDERING CONVICTION

Defendant Conspired to Defraud Farmers Insurance Agency of More than \$140,000

LAS CRUCES – Earlier today, **Deniece Sanchez**, 34, of Las Cruces, N.M., was sentenced to twelve months and a day in prison for conspiracy to launder money. Sanchez will be on supervised release for three years after she completes her prison term. She also was ordered to pay \$144,494.27 in restitution to Farmers Insurance Agency (Farmers). Sanchez, who has been on conditions of release since her arrest on July 13, 2010, is required to surrender herself to a federal correctional institution to be designated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons for service of her sentence.

According to court records, between March 9, 2007 and Aug. 19, 2009, Sanchez and her now-estranged husband, Joseph Reyes Montes, 39, also of Las Cruces, conspired to submit fraudulent insurance claims to Farmers on more than 30 separate occasions. Montes, who was then employed as a claims supervisor for Farmers, laundered the stolen money through Sanchez' business bank account to give the funds the appearance of legitimate business income, rather than illegal proceeds of the scheme to defraud Farmers.

U.S. Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Sanchez pled guilty to an information charging her with conspiracy to launder money on October 14, 2010. On July 28, 2011, Montes, who also pled guilty to conspiracy to launder money, was sentenced to one year and one day in prison and ordered to pay \$149,779 in restitution to Farmers.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrea W. Hattan.

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