



PRESS RELEASE

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MEXICAN CITIZEN SENTENCED FOR MARIJUANA RELATED FELONY

TUCSON, Ariz. –The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on May 12, 2004, Magdaleno Ramirez-Banuelos, DOB 7/22/65, of Mexico, was sentenced to 77 months imprisonment and four years supervised release by United States District Judge Frank R. Zapata in Tucson, Ariz.

On November 7, 2003, Border Patrol agents tracked a group of illegal immigrants west of State Route 85 near Ajo. The agents discovered bundles of marijuana under a tree and approached individuals near the bundles. At that time the individuals began to run and agents apprehended Ramirez-Banuelos and three other marijuana backpackers, all Mexican citizens without proper documentation to be in the United States. A total of 537.1 pounds of marijuana was recovered by the agents.

Ramirez-Banuelos entered a plea of guilty on March 3, 2004 to a felony charge of violating Title 21, U.S. Code, Sections 846 and 841(b)(I)(B)(vii), conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana.

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Ramirez-Banuelos was held responsible for the 53.7 pounds of marijuana he carried in a backpack and had intended to transport to Ajo in exchange for \$400. Due to his extensive criminal history, he was sentenced as a career offender.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the U.S. Border Patrol and Drug Enforcement Administration.

The prosecution was handled by Fred W. Slaughter, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR 03-2384 TUC FRZ (JM)
RELEASE NUMBER: 2004-90

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