



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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CHILD SMUGGLER OF 7-YEAR-OLD GIRL SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR 16 MONTHS

TUCSON, Ariz. – Avelina Carmona, 24, of Nogales, Ariz., was sentenced today to 16 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Marvin E. Aspen. Carmona pleaded guilty on October 14, 2008, to Conspiracy to Transport Illegal Aliens for Profit.

Carmona attempted to enter the U.S. on June 27, 2008, at the Nogales Port of Entry accompanied by a 7-year-old girl, whom Carmona claimed was her friend's daughter. On behalf of the minor, Carmona presented an Arizona birth certificate with the date of birth of 1999. The CBP official became suspicious and referred them for further inspection.

During additional questioning, Carmona admitted that the birth certificate did not belong to the girl and provided the girl's true name. Carmona reported that her cousin contacted her and advised her that a woman wanted her daughter transported into the United States from Mexico. Carmona stated that earlier that day, she traveled to the woman's house in Tucson where she was given the birth certificate that she was to use to facilitate the minor's entry into the U.S.

The woman offered Carmona financial compensation to smuggle the minor into the U.S., but the amount had not been determined. Carmona admitted that she was aware that the 7-year-old did not have legal immigration documents that would allow her entry into the United States.

The smuggled child was turned over to the custody of the Mexican Consulate who then turned her over to the Mexican Department of Family Services (the Mexican equivalent of U.S. Child Protective Services) to be reunited with her family. The child was determined to be a Mexican Citizen with no legal documents allowing her to be in the United States.

The investigation in this case was conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The prosecution was handled by Raquel Arellano, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-00935-TUC-JMR
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