

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

For Further Information, Contact: Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward C. Weiner (619) 557-7125

For Immediate Release

**FORMER IMMIGRATION INSPECTOR CHARGED WITH
CONSPIRACY TO IMPORT MARIJUANA AND TO BRING IN ALIENS**

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - May 25, 2004

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced arraignments today on an 18-count Indictment charging former Immigration and Naturalization Service (“INS”) Inspector Michael Taylor and nine other individuals with conspiracy to import marijuana, importation of marijuana, conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain, bringing in aliens for financial gain, and use of false immigration documents.

Taylor, who was arrested by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and Department of Homeland Security agents in Atlanta, Georgia, when he returned to the United States from Paris, France, was brought before a United States Magistrate Judge in the Northern District of Georgia for his initial appearance. Taylor remains in custody pending removal to the Southern District of California.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward C. Weiner, who is prosecuting the case, the investigation began with the sale of false immigration documents to an INS undercover agent. The investigation was subsequently assigned to the Border Corruption Task Force, which then focused on allegations of corruption at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. The Border Corruption Task Force includes agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General. Several defendants charged in the Indictment are members of the Torres family, who the Indictment alleges arranged for the smuggling of marijuana and aliens through lanes at the San Ysidro Port of Entry manned by Taylor. In August 2001 Taylor resigned from his position with the INS following a seizure of a large amount of marijuana at an auto repair shop frequented by him.

Daniel Dzwilewski, Special Agent in Charge, San Diego Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, commented, "The duty of the FBI is to serve the public trust and assist in maintaining the security of the United States borders. Border officials are charged with the enormous responsibility of thwarting the efforts of those who would seek to undermine our way of life. We cannot allow officials in such key positions to operate with anything less than the utmost of character and integrity."

United States Attorney Lam said that "There is no room for corruption in our federal law enforcement community. With this prosecution we reaffirm our commitment to the principle that no one is above the law."

Ms. Lam also praised the efforts of the Border Corruption Task Force whose members conducted the investigation culminating in the Indictment.

After the defendants are brought before magistrate judges for arraignment, all further hearings will be held before the Honorable Napoleon A. Jones, Jr., United States District Judge, to whom the case is assigned.

DEFENDANTS:

- | | | | |
|------|--|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) | Michael Taylor Address: San Diego, CA | Age: Status: | 39 In custody (U.S. Citizen) |
| (2) | Carmen Torres-Vidales Address: Tijuana, Mexico | Age: Status: | 51 In custody (Mexican Citizen) |
| (3) | Maria Emma Cebreros Address: Tijuana, Mexico | Age: Status: | 26 At large (U.S. Citizen) |
| (4) | Blanca Angelica Torres Address: Davis, CA | Age: Status: | 23 In custody (U.S. Citizen) |
| (5) | Antonio Torres-Valencia Address: Tijuana, Mexico | Age: Status: | 53 At large (Mexican Citizen) |
| (6) | Alicia Sanchez-Maldonado Address: Los Angeles, CA | Age: Status: | 48 In custody (Resident Alien) |
| (7) | Maria Sanchez-Castaneda Address: San Diego, CA | Age: Status: | 52 In custody (Resident Alien) |
| (8) | Norma Alicia Diaz Address: San Diego, CA | Age: Status: | 39 In custody (Resident Alien) |
| (9) | Wendy Garcia-Aguilar Address: San Diego, CA | Age: Status: | 25 In custody (Mexican Citizen) |
| (10) | Diana Diaz-Diaz Address: Chula Vista, CA | Age: Status: | 34 In custody (U.S. Citizen) |

SUMMARY OF CHARGES: Criminal Case No. 04CR0504-J

(1) Michael Taylor

Conspiracy to import marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952, 960, and 963) (1 count)

Importation of marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952 and 960) (5 counts)

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (7 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 204 years to life, \$8,250,000 fine

(2) Carmen Torres-Vidales

Conspiracy to import marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952, 960, and 963) (1 count)

Importation of marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952 and 960) (2 counts)

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (4 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 75 years to life, \$4,500,000 fine

(3) Maria Emma Cebreros

Conspiracy to import marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952, 960, and 963) (1 count)

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (1 count)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 10 years to life, \$2,500,000 fine

(4) Blanca Angelica Torres

Conspiracy to import marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952, 960, and 963) (1 count)

Importation of marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952 and 960) (1 count)

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (5 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 58 years to life, \$4,500,000 fine

(5) Antonio Torres-Valencia

Conspiracy to import marijuana
(21 U.S.C. Sections 952, 960, and 963) (1 count)

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (3 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 22 years to life, \$3,000,000 fine

(6) Alicia Sanchez-Maldonado

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (6 counts)

Use of false immigration documents
(18 U.S.C. Section 1546(a)) (2 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 31 years, \$2,250,000 fine

(7) Maria Sanchez-Castaneda

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (4 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 15 years, \$1,250,000 fine

(8) Norma Alicia Diaz

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (1 count)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 6 years, \$500,000 fine

(9) Wendy Garcia-Aguilar

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (4 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 15 years, \$1,250,000 fine

(10) Diana Diaz-Diaz

Conspiracy to bring in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii) and 18 U.S.C. Section 371) (1 count)

Bringing in aliens for financial gain
(8 U.S.C. Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii)) (3 counts)

MAXIMUM PENALTIES: 12 years, \$1,000,000 fine

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES:

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility
Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Investigations
Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General
Border Corruption Task Force

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.