



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EAST TEXANS ARRESTED, CHARGED WITH ALIEN SMUGGLING

(Lufkin, Texas) A combined task force of federal, state and local law enforcement agents have begun arresting individuals in East Texas suspected of transporting illegal aliens for private financial gain. As of this afternoon, 7 federal defendants are in custody as part of a coordinated round-up in Nacogdoches and in the Dimmit County, Texas area.

According to court documents, the defendants were part of an eighteen month conspiracy to illegally transport aliens from Mexico into the United States and to receive cash in exchange. The organization used personal vehicles, rental vehicles, and other means of transportation to move the aliens. The indictment resulted from an investigation launched by the United States Border Patrol, the Texas Department of Public Safety Narcotics Division, the Nacogdoches Police Department, the Deep East Texas Narcotics Trafficking Task Force, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. On Wednesday, a federal grand jury returned a 12-count indictment charging 10 people with conspiracy to transport illegal aliens in violation Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 and each defendant with at least one count of bringing an illegal alien into the United States.

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Smuggling Bust
April 23, 2004
page 2

Arrested today were **Saul Barrera-Cruz, a/k/a "Petraça"**, 34, of Nacogdoches; **Regino Rios-Lerma**, 58, of Asherton; **Rodolfo Casarez, a/k/a "Rudy,"** 47, of Big Wells; **Linnie Wilson Simon**, 59, of Cushing; **Otis Oneil Roland, a/k/a "Okie,"** 23, of Center; **Elizabeth Ann Shaw**, 48, of Lufkin; and **Steven Woodard**, 34, of Crockett.

If convicted, the defendants could face a maximum of not more than ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count. It is important to note than an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Reynaldo Morin is prosecuting the case.

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