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District of Arizona*

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Public Affairs
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FORMER SANTA CRUZ COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS FOR COCAINE TRAFFICKING

TUCSON, Ariz. – Jesus Rene Contreras, 31, of Nogales, Ariz., was sentenced on March 13, 2012, by Senior U.S. District Judge Marvin Aspen to six years in federal prison for conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine. Contreras pleaded guilty to the charge on July 14, 2011.

According to court documents, Contreras and his co-conspirator, Ernesto Castro, reached an agreement with another individual for Contreras to use his position as a Deputy Sheriff to transport cocaine past the Border Patrol checkpoint on Interstate 19. On March 2, 2010, Contreras drove approximately 4.9 kilograms of cocaine past the Border Patrol checkpoint while in uniform and driving his official Santa Cruz County patrol vehicle. Castro was sentenced on September 26, 2011, to six years imprisonment for this offense and a related supervised release violation.

“When law enforcement officers engage in corrupt activities while in official uniform, they not only violate the public’s trust, but they also put our communities’ safety at risk,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Ann Birmingham Scheel. “The United States Attorney’s Office remains committed to working with our law enforcement partners to find and prosecute those who engage in border corruption. I commend DHS and the FBI for their successful investigation of this case.”

“Let today’s sentencing demonstrate to the public that federal and local law enforcement agencies stand committed to eradicate border corruption, particularly among the few who choose to tarnish the badge for money,” stated Paul Leonard, Special Agent in Charge, DHS-OIG, Tucson Field Office.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Southern Arizona Corruption Task Force. The prosecution was handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier and Robert A. Fellrath, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-10-912-TUC-CKJ
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