

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 3, 2010

Houston Transportation Company Owner and Manager Arrested on
Indictment for Transporting Illegal Aliens into New Jersey

(More)

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NEWARK – The owner and an operator of a Houston transportation company were arrested yesterday in Houston on charges contained in a three-count Indictment for transporting van loads of illegal aliens from Houston to locations on the eastern seaboard, including New Jersey, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

The Indictment describes a scheme in which Gaspar Campos, 36, and Angel Bravo, 42, both of Houston, Texas, used Transportes Latinos, a Houston-based transportation company, to transport recently smuggled aliens across the United States, including to New Jersey. The Indictment, which was unsealed on Feb. 2 as a result of the defendants' arrest, charges Campos and Bravo each with one count of conspiracy to transporting illegal aliens and two counts of transport illegal aliens.

Both defendants are expected to appear today before U. S. Magistrate Judge Stephen W. Smith in U.S. District Court in Houston pending their removal to the District of New Jersey.

The two men were arrested by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration & Customs Enforcement ("ICE") at their residences in Houston. The arrests were the result of a year-long investigation into alien smuggling by Transportes Latinos, which is owned by Campos and operated by Bravo. In addition to Campos and Bravo, the investigation resulted in criminal charges being filed against the following individuals:

- Bernardo Fernandez, 55, of Hackensack, pleaded guilty to transporting illegal aliens on March 30, 2009, and is awaiting sentencing;
- Nicholas Estrada, 40, of Houston, pleaded guilty to transporting illegal aliens on April 7, 2009, and is awaiting sentencing;
- Hugo Navarette, 39, of Houston, pleaded guilty to transporting illegal aliens on Dec. 15, 2008, and is awaiting sentencing;
- Jose Efrain Fuentes, 55, of Houston, pleaded guilty to transporting illegal aliens on Oct. 14, 2009, and is awaiting sentencing;
- Camilo Borja-Picaz, 42, of Houston, charged by complaint Nov. 12, 2009, with transporting illegal aliens.

According to the Indictment, Campos and Bravo intended to profit from transporting illegal aliens from Houston to locations that included New Jersey. To accomplish that, Campos and Bravo allegedly arranged for cross-country transportation for the illegal aliens for a fee. The Indictment charges that from January 2008 through Dec. 3, 2008, Campos and Bravo hired drivers to drive "Transportes Latinos" vans from Houston to locations in New Jersey. Allegedly, the drivers were given computer-generated passenger lists which fraudulently under-represented the amount that each illegal alien was required to pay as a transportation

fee and they were instructed to only accept cash payment of the fee.

According to the Indictment, Campos and Bravo hired taxi drivers to meet the incoming Transportes Latinos vans as they arrived in New Jersey and then deliver the passengers to locations in New Jersey and New York.

The Indictment alleges that the van drivers and others, were instructed to deposit the cash fees they received from the illegal aliens into an account at Bank of America, which was controlled by Campos. According to the Indictment, Campos then used the cash to pay personal expenses, including mortgage payments, credit card payments and home improvements.

Each charge contained in the Indictment carries a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, the judge to whom the case is assigned would, upon a conviction, consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Despite indictment, all defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Fishman credited Special Agents with ICE, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter T. Edge, with developing the case against Campos and Bravo.

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Deborah J. Gannett of the U.S. Attorney's Public Protection Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorneys:
Campos - Samuel Milledge, Esq., Houston
Bravo - unknown