



*United States Attorney
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**HOUSTON TRANSPORTATION COMPANY OWNER PLEADS GUILTY
TO TRANSPORTING ILLEGAL ALIENS INTO NEW JERSEY**

NEWARK, N.J. – The owner and operator of a Houston, Texas transportation company pleaded guilty today to smuggling illegal aliens from Houston to locations on the eastern seaboard, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Gaspar Campos, 36, of Houston, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Susan D. Wigenton to an Indictment charging him with one count of conspiracy to transport illegal aliens and two counts of transporting illegal aliens. The guilty plea came days before Campos' trial was scheduled to commence.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in Newark federal court:

In the summer of 2007, Campos and co-conspirator Angel Bravo started Transportes Latinos, a Houston-based company in the business of transporting individuals from Houston to locations on the eastern seaboard, including New Jersey. Campos admitted he and Bravo began working with a pair of "coyotes," or human smugglers, who smuggled people across the border from Mexico and brought them to Transportes Latinos to be transported within the United States. Campos admitted that these coyotes brought people to Transportes Latinos approximately every two weeks, and that he paid the coyotes about \$250 for each illegal alien they brought to the company.

Transportes Latinos employed van drivers to drive loads of passengers from Houston to various locations in the United States for about \$500 cash per load. Before the drivers left with the passengers, they were given a computer-generated passenger list with family contact information and the amount owed for each passenger. These passenger lists, Campos admitted, hid the actual amount owed by the families; the amount of the transportation fee listed on the passenger list was coded so that what the family members appeared to owe was actually much less than the transportation fee that was actually charged.

Campos also admitted that Transportes Latinos transported minors who were unaccompanied by parents or grandparents.

The operation also used several local taxi drivers in various parts of the United States. Campos said that whenever he had a van with passengers going to New Jersey or New York, the van drivers arranged to meet taxi drivers in New Jersey who would deliver the passengers to their family members for an additional \$100 fee. Campos called the coyotes to come collect their

money at Transportes Latinos after the passengers had been delivered and the van drivers had returned to Houston. Campos admitted that he knew these aliens were in the country illegally and that he operated his business with the intent to conceal and further their illegal status.

At sentencing, scheduled for November 9, 2010, Campos faces a maximum potential penalty on each of the three counts of 10 years in prison and a fine of the greatest of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss caused by his offense. The sentence may also include restitution to the victims of his crimes.

This investigation has also resulted in convictions of six other individuals who pleaded guilty to transporting illegal aliens: Bravo, 42, who also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to transport illegal aliens, on July 14, 2010; Bernardo Fernandez, 56, on March 30, 2009; Nicholas Estrada, 51, on April 7, 2009; Hugo Navarette, 40, on Dec. 15, 2008; Jose Efrain Fuentes, 56, on Oct. 14, 2009; and Camilo Borja-Picaz, 40, on March 9, 2010. All of the defendants are from Houston save Fernandez, of Hackensack, New Jersey, and Estrada, of New York. All six await sentencing.

Fernandez and Estrada were local taxi drivers who met the Transportes Latinos vans after they entered New Jersey and delivered passengers to their family members for a fee. Efrain Fuentes, Navarette and Borja-Picaz were van drivers, the latter of whom admitted to making as many as three or four trips a month – with up to 13 illegal aliens in each van – during the majority of 2008.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents with Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations in Newark, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter T. Edge, with the investigation that led to the guilty pleas.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Deborah J. Gannett and Scott B. McBride of the U.S. Attorney's Office Health Care and Government Fraud Unit.

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Defense counsel: Paul C. Looney, Esq., Houston