

TO BE RELEASED TOMORROW AFTER CONFIRMATION FROM AUSA

September 10, 2007

NEWS RELEASE:

**UNITED STATES CUSTOMS & BORDER PATROL OFFICER
CHARGED WITH BRIBERY IN CONNECTION WITH AN
ALIEN SMUGGLING OPERATION**

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Donald Balberchak, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, Mike Foster, Special Agent in Charge, United State Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, Steven Mocsary, Special Agent in Charge, United States Immigration & Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility, Anthony Mangione, Special Agent in Charge, United States Immigration & Customs Enforcement, Office of Investigation, and Jonathan I. Soloman, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced that defendants **Ronald Howard Merker, Clodoaldo Ribeiro, Sidney Herberth Sathler, and Alair Campos** have been charged in a criminal Indictment with conspiring to and committing alien smuggling, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371, and Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(2)(B)(ii).

Merker, a United States Customs & Boarder Patrol Officer assigned to Miami International Airport, has also been charged with accepting illegal payments in return for allowing aliens, who had not received prior official authorization, to come to, enter and reside in the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(2)(C). According to the Indictment, from October 2005 to July 2007, the defendants brought aliens to the United States, for the purpose of commercial advantage and private financial gain, knowing and in reckless disregard of the fact that such aliens had not received prior official authorization to come to, enter, and reside in the United States.

Ribeiro is also charged with illegally reentering the United States after having been deported, fraudulently obtaining a United States passport, and falsely claiming to be a United States citizen, all in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1326(a) and (b)(1), and Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1542 and 911, respectively.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the agents. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys William White, Benjamin Daniel, and Eloisa Fernandez.