



**Department of Justice**  
**U.S. Attorney's Office**  
**Southern District of Texas**

Donald J. DeGabrielle, Jr. • United States Attorney

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ANGELA DODGE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

(713) 567-9388

**FORMER BP OFFICER SENTENCED FOR MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS OR ENTRIES**

(McALLEN, Texas) - A former Border Patrol (BP) agent has been sentenced for making a false statement or entry for failing to report his seizure of cocaine, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today. Juan Espinoza, 31, of Edinburg, was sentenced to statutory maximum of 60 months imprisonment without parole by U.S. District Judge Randy Crane on Tuesday, Sept. 16, and immediately ordered into federal custody to begin serving his sentence.

"Border Patrol agents are entrusted with tremendous authority and the enormous responsibility of securing our nation's borders, making it a world-class law enforcement agency," said Ronald D. Vitiello, Chief Patrol Agent, Rio Grande Valley Sector. "Isolated incidents by Border Patrol agents who violate the trust of the citizens they swore to protect will be held accountable."

Espinoza pleaded guilty June 23, 2008, to a criminal information charging him with making false statements or entries in violation of Title 18, USC, Section 100. Espinoza resigned his position as a BP agent in May 2008 during the course of a Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General (DHS-OIG) investigation into Espinoza's alleged failure to report seizures of controlled substances.

In August 2006, the DHS-OIG initiated an investigation upon receiving information that Espinoza, then a BP agent, was seizing undetermined amounts of controlled substances from drug traffickers and unlawfully conspiring with others to further distribute the controlled substance in disregard of his official duty and in violation of federal law.

On Aug. 23, 2006, in an attempt to verify the validity of the information received, agents of the DHS-OIG placed a duffel bag with what was purported to be 20 kilograms of cocaine in a metal building. Upon being contacted by a confidential source of information and advised of the location of the contraband, Espinoza located and retrieved the duffel bag and placed it in his BP-marked vehicle. While driving to a second location, Espinoza examined the contents of the duffel bag and, upon arrival, concealed the duffel bag. Espinoza returned some time later, removed the bag and concealed it in yet another location.

At a later date, Espinoza was asked about the events of Aug. 23, 2006 by investigating agents. He admitted both verbally and in a written statement to having received a call from another person offering him \$2000 to move a bag of drugs. Espinoza admitted to recovering and concealing the duffel bag containing the cocaine while on duty as a BP agent and failing to document the seizure in disregard of his official duty.

The case was investigated by DHS-OIG and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim McAlister. AUSA Jimmy Leo represented the United States at yesterday's sentencing hearing.

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