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## News Releases

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JULY 13, 2011 MCALLEN, TX

### **Hostage taker sentenced to nearly 12 years in federal prison He is the last of 5 to be sentenced following the May 2010 hostage-taking case of 10 aliens**

MCALLEN, Texas — A man from Mexico, who admitted to taking hostages, was sentenced on Wednesday to 11 years and eight months in federal prison for his role in a May 2010 hostage-taking case, announced U.S. Attorney José Angel Moreno, Southern District of Texas. The investigation was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigation (HSI) with the assistance of Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office.

Hugo Oscar Rodriguez-Montoya, 37, of Tamaulipas, Mexico, was sentenced July 13 to 140 months by U.S. District Judge Randy Crane. He was also been ordered to serve a three-year period of supervised release. Rodriguez-Montoya entered a guilty plea in December 2010.

According to court documents, on May 10, 2010, ICE HSI special agents were notified that Leon-Villa, of Guanajuato, Mexico, had shot himself during a botched alien-smuggling attempt. At that time, agents interviewed a smuggled alien who had escaped from Leon-Villa and the others. The smuggled alien told agents he had made arrangements to be smuggled into the United States.

During the early hours of May 10, 2010, his smuggler placed him and at least nine other aliens, including one child, in a truck. He further stated that before they could leave their location, Bermudez-Benito, of Guanajuato, Mexico, and another unidentified male assaulted their driver at gunpoint and took them and the truck to a house in Penitas, Texas. They were all told they needed to pay \$2000 as a condition for their release.

The smuggled alien and several others managed to escape their captors who were all armed. While threatening the remaining aliens, Leon-Villa accidentally shot himself. During the investigation, ICE HSI located the remaining smuggled aliens in a stash house in Edinburg, Texas. The aliens identified Leon-Villa as one of the stash house guards and Bermudez-Benito as the one who made some of the extortion phone calls to their family members. The aliens also identified Jimenez, of Edinburg, Texas, and Pinon of Edinburg, Texas, as stash house guards.

Rodriguez-Montoya has been in federal custody since his arrest. He will remain in custody pending transfer to a Bureau of Prisons prison, to be designated in the near future, where he will serve out his sentence. Rodriguez-Montoya also faces possible deportation after he completes his prison term.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Leo J. Leo III and Kristen Rees, Southern District of Texas, prosecuted the case.

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