



Former Federal Agent Sentenced To Prison For Making False Statements

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAN FRANCISCO – James Contreras was sentenced today to 12 months in prison, and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine for making false statements to the government, announced United States Attorney Melinda Haag and United States Department of Justice Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz.

Contreras pleaded guilty on Feb. 26, 2014 in the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington in Seattle to one count of making material false statements to the government. According to the plea agreement, Contreras stated that while he was employed with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (“ATF”) and assigned the position of Group Supervisor, he was responsible for disbursing and accounting for money in a cash fund used for investigative expenses, including making payments to confidential informants. In pleading guilty to one of the thirty false statement counts in the indictment, Contreras admitted that he wrote what purported to be the signature of an agent under his supervision on forms requesting and documenting use of money from the cash fund. Contreras also admitted that he signed a payment receipt falsely showing that the agent used the money to make a payment to an informant, although Contreras knew that the agent did not make the payment. Contreras admitted that he then submitted the forms for supervisory approval knowing that they contained falsified signatures and information.

Contreras, 52, of Ravensdale, Wash., was indicted by a federal grand jury in Seattle on Nov. 21, 2013. He was charged with thirty counts of making material false statements on sets of documents purporting to document expenditures from the cash fund over which he had custody and control, and with one count of embezzlement of public money in excess of \$1,000.

As part of the plea agreement, Contreras agreed that the total funds disbursed from the cash fund in connection with the charges in the Indictment was \$19,700.

Seattle Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Special Agent in Charge Douglas R. Dawson, stated, “Jim Contreras’s actions should not reflect poorly on the men and women of the ATF who perform their jobs with honesty and integrity every day. Their tireless efforts to protect our communities, regularly in the face of great danger, is what we all should recognize and appreciate.”

The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Marsha J. Pechman, Senior United States District Court Judge, Western District of Seattle, following Contreras's guilty plea to Count Nineteen of the indictment, charging making a material false statement to the government, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(3). Judge Pechman also sentenced the defendant to a three-year period of supervised release. The defendant will be permitted to self-surrender for service of sentence. He will be notified of the date by the court.

Susan Badger of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California is the Assistant U.S. Attorney who is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Rosario Calderon. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the United States Department of Justice Office of Inspector General, Investigations Division and the ATF Office of Professional Responsibility and Security Operations.

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