



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David L. Anderson
Northern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2021

**INTERPRETER IN FEDERAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION CHARGED
WITH DISCLOSING INVESTIGATION AND COURT-ORDERED WIRETAP TO
TARGETED DRUG DEALER**

SAN JOSE – Liliana Moreno, a Spanish translator hired as a contractor by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in a drug trafficking investigation, appeared today in United States District Court to face federal charges that she intentionally disclosed the investigation and its court-ordered wiretap to the investigation’s target, announced United States Attorney David L. Anderson, Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Los Angeles Field Office Special Agent in Charge Zachary Shroyer, and Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge Daniel C. Comeaux.

“We trusted Liliana Moreno to keep her work confidential,” said U.S. Attorney Anderson. “Law enforcement needs confidentiality to protect the rights of the innocent and the guilty. We allege Moreno violated that trust.”

“Moreno jeopardized an investigation when she allegedly tipped off the subject of a court-authorized wiretap. DOJ employees and contractors who share confidential law enforcement information will be held accountable for their actions,” said Zachary Shroyer, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Los Angeles Field Office.

“Releasing sensitive government information can have devastating consequences. Not only does it damage a case, often beyond repair, but more importantly, it also endangers the lives of those agents and officers assigned to the investigation,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Daniel Comeaux. “In instances such as these we will ensure justice is served without delay.”

According to the federal complaint unsealed today, Moreno, age 35, of Modesto, California, worked for a private company that contracts with DEA to provide translation services. DEA regularly uses interpreters in court-authorized wiretaps to monitor and translate intercepted telephone calls in a foreign language. DEA hired Moreno as a contractor, and she promised in DEA employment contracts never to disclose any investigative information without authorization and to notify DEA if she had any personal association with a target of an investigation.

The complaint outlines that DEA assigned Moreno as the lead monitor and Spanish translator for a court-authorized wiretap in an investigation of a drug trafficking organization whose membership included numerous Spanish-speaking members. During February and March of 2018, the complaint alleges that while monitoring calls Moreno recognized an individual on a call who she knew from the individual's romantic relationship with a friend of Moreno. DEA agents also displayed a surveillance photo and name of that individual, deemed Wire Target 2 in the complaint, in the wire room where Moreno worked. Despite this, Moreno did not notify DEA about her knowledge and association with Wire Target 2, the complaint outlines. Instead, Moreno met with her friend on March 17, 2018, and according to the complaint's allegations, warned the friend that Wire Target 2's calls were being intercepted in a DEA wiretap investigation and that DEA had a photo of Wire Target 2. Moreno's friend relayed this information to Wire Target 2, and the complaint describes how Wire Target 2 and another drug-trafficking organization member thereafter discarded their wiretapped cell phones, frustrating and significantly delaying the investigation.

Moreno made her initial appearance on the complaint, which was unsealed today, before the Honorable Virginia K. DeMarchi, United States Magistrate Judge. Moreno remains out of custody on a \$50,000 bond. Moreno's next scheduled appearance is on February 19, 2021, for appointment of counsel before United States Magistrate Judge DeMarchi.

A complaint merely alleges that a crime has been committed, and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Moreno is charged with one count of unlawful disclosure of electronic surveillance, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2232(d). If convicted, the defendant faces a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

The United States Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Section is prosecuting the case. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Further Information:

Case #: 21-70248 MAG (Complaint at link below.)

A copy of this press release, with the complaint linked to it, will be placed on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

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