



CBP Agent Sentenced to Prison for Taking Bribes from Drug Traffickers

According to a March 8 Department of Justice news release, a former U.S. Border Patrol Agent (BPA) was sentenced to 114 months (9 1/2 years) in prison followed by three years of supervised release for accepting bribes in return for helping traffickers smuggle illegal drugs into the United States.



The former agent, Robert Hall, of La Feria, Texas, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Ewing Werlein, Jr. of the Southern District of Texas. Werlein also ordered Hall to pay a fine of \$20,000. Hall pleaded guilty to one count of bribery on September 14, 2018.

The plea documents stated that between 2004 and 2014, Hall, who was working with others (including one Daniel Hernandez of Roseville, California) facilitated the trafficking of illegal drugs, including marijuana, into the United States from Mexico on behalf of a drug trafficking organization (DTO). In exchange for cash payments, Hall provided an individual in the DTO with CBP sensor locations, the locations of unpatrolled roads at or near the U.S.-Mexico border, the number of BPAs working in a certain area, keys to unlock CBP locks located on gates to ranch fences along the border, and CBP radios.

Hall accepted over \$50,000 in cash from the DTO in exchange for using his position as a BPA to enable the DTO's drug shipments to cross the border into Texas without law-enforcement detection.

Hall's co-conspirator, Daniel Hernandez, pleaded guilty to conspiring to accept money in return for helping to smuggle marijuana and other illegal drugs into the United States, according to an earlier Justice Department new release on February 11. Sentencing has been scheduled for May 9, before U.S. District Judge Gray H. Miller.

The details of Hernandez's plea agreement mirrored those found in Hall's. Between 2013 and May 2014, Hernandez and the BPA (Hall) agreed, and took overt acts, to facilitate the trafficking of illegal drugs into the United States from Mexico on behalf of a drug trafficking organization. But Hernandez accepted only a tenth of the amount of money (approximately \$5,000) in return for facilitating shipments of illegal narcotics into Texas without law-enforcement detection.

Hernandez, who is a former CBP nurse, was once paid \$500 for a map containing CBP sensor locations and a copy of a key that opened CBP locks.

An article in *The New American* last May observed that the U.S. Border Patrol has an immensely difficult job to do, including stopping the flow of illegal immigrants and illicit drugs across our southern border with Mexico. The article noted that in addition to the expected challenges the Border Patrol must contend with — the ruthless traffickers who carry out and assist in the smuggling, human and



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otherwise — they must also deal with “irksome federal bureaucracies.”

The exposure of Robert Hall’s and Daniel Hernandez’s crimes adds one more dimension to the Border Patrol’s challenges — betrayal from within by employees who value money more than loyalty and duty. It is to be hoped that Hall and Hernandez are anomalies and not at all typical of the thousands of loyal, dedicated CBP agents and employees.



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