



Published: 09.22.2005

Border agent pleads guilty to harboring illegal entrant

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

A U.S. Border Patrol agent pleaded guilty Monday to harboring an illegal entrant for four years.

Pablo Sergio Berry, 23, an agent in the Naco Border Patrol station, also pleaded guilty to making false statements. That charge surfaced after he signed a letter to internal investigators that he believed the woman he was harboring, Claudia Veronica Vasquez Banda, was a U.S. citizen when he knew she was not, said a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Berry is on an unpaid, indefinite suspension from the patrol, said Tucson Sector spokesman Gustavo Soto. Berry started working for the patrol in July 2003, Soto said.

He admitted to harboring the woman from 2001 until Feb. 17, 2005 and admitted to lying to an investigator to get a job with the Border Patrol. He faces a maximum 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine and will be sentenced in December.

Berry is the third Tucson Sector agent to be charged with illegal immigration felonies this year.

In July, agent Ephraim Cruz, 32, was charged with harboring, transporting, failing to report an illegal entry, and aiding and abetting.

In March, former agent Christopher E. Bemis, 24, was indicted on a charge of harboring a woman from June 2004 to February 2005.

Soto said he does not believe the three agents are representative of the entire agency. The Tucson Sector has about 2,400 agents.

All content copyright © 1999-2005 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.