



Published: 10.04.2007

## Santa Cruz deputy charged as people-smuggler is fired

**By Dale Quinn**

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

A Santa Cruz County sheriff's deputy facing human-smuggling charges was fired Wednesday morning, an official said.

Deputy Octavio Garcia, 28, was arrested Sept. 25 at the Nogales port of entry when authorities say he tried to drive back into the United States with an illegal entrant, said Sheriff Tony Estrada.

Garcia made false statements to border officials in an attempt to get the man in the country, Estrada said. He did not know if Garcia was going to receive any money.

Garcia was given a chance to explain his actions at a meeting with the sheriff Wednesday morning, but Estrada said he still decided to fire the deputy.

Garcia has 10 days to appeal.

Garcia has been with the department since 2002 when he began working as a dispatcher, Estrada said. About 3 1/2 years ago, he became a patrol deputy.

According to Estrada, Garcia and his wife drove into Nogales, Sonora, to get haircuts for their four children.

On the way back, Garcia picked up a man and drove to the Dennis DeConcini Port of Entry, where the man told authorities he was a U.S. citizen, Estrada said. But after further questioning they learned he was not.

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