

Press Release

Customs and Border Protection Officer Sentenced for Sexual Assault of Women at Miami International Airport

October 5, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Paulo Morales, 48, of Miami, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Robin S. Rosenbaum to 33 months in prison along with one year supervised release, the Justice Department announced. In July, Morales, a former Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer, pleaded guilty to three misdemeanor counts of deprivation of rights under color of law.

During the plea proceedings, Morales admitted that on various dates in January 2011, while working as an officer with CBP at the Miami International Airport, he groped the breasts of three separate women without their consent and while they were in the custody of CBP.

"My office and the Department of Justice are fully committed to protecting the civil rights of our citizens from all types of abuses," said Wifredo A. Ferrer, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida. "In this case, the harm to the victims and the general public cut deep because it came at the very hands of someone who was sworn to serve and protect the public, and instead breached that trust."

"This officer abandoned his commitment to legitimate law enforcement and used his power to abuse women in his custody," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department is committed to holding officers who engage in such conduct accountable."

David P. D'Amato Special Agent in Charge for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility stated, "The sentencing of Morales should send a strong message and serve as a reminder that we will not tolerate the abuse of authority by anyone privileged to wear the uniform of Customs and Border Protection."

This case was investigated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Professional Responsibility and CBP Internal Affairs and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney William White of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida and Trial Attorney Henry Leventis of the Civil Rights Division.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls>. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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