

Former federal officer guilty of money laundering

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Texas

HOUSTON –A former deportation officer has entered a guilty plea to charges of laundering money while working for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), announced U.S. Attorney Nicholas J. Ganjei.

Christopher Washington Toral, 49, Spring, began working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in 2008 and was assigned to a processing center in Conroe.

Over a two-month period in 2023, Toral agreed to transport \$700,000 in drug proceeds under the protective cover of his position as a federal law enforcement officer.

As part of an undercover operation, Toral agreed to transport a black bag containing \$200,000 in cash from Dallas to Houston in February 2023. He believed this money was revenue from the sale of illegal narcotics. Later that same month, Toral repeated the trip, delivering an additional \$200,000.

In March 2023, Toral agreed to transport \$300,000 from Newark, New Jersey, to Houston on a commercial flight. The money was represented to be the proceeds of drug trafficking. While carrying the illicit gains, Toral bypassed airport security and Transportation Security Administration checkpoints by exploiting his law enforcement position.

Toral did all this in exchange for cash payments.

“Christopher Toral swore to protect America from the cross-border crime and illegal immigration that threatens our national security....but he betrayed that oath,” said Ganjei. “Today’s guilty plea reflects our commitment to hold accountable those who would choose corruption and deception over faithful service to their country, their community, and their brothers and sisters in law enforcement.”

"In choosing greed over duty, former ICE officer Christopher Toral disgraced the badge he vowed to uphold," said FBI Houston Special Agent in Charge Douglas Williams. "His crimes – frequently conducted under the guise of a righteous law enforcement officer – betrayed all the men and women who tirelessly protect and serve their communities with integrity every day. FBI Houston proudly partnered with DHS-Office of Inspector General (OIG) to ensure Toral's corrupt and deceitful activities were exposed and brought to justice."

"Today's plea sends a clear message that federal employees who violate the trust of the public and break the law will be prosecuted," said DHS-OIG Inspector General Joseph V. Cuffari PhD. "DHS-OIG is grateful for our continued partnership with our law enforcement partners as we continue fighting corruption."

U.S. District Judge Keith Ellison accepted the plea and set sentencing for May 15. At that time, Toral faces up to 20 years in federal prison and a possible \$1 million maximum fine.

FBI and DHS-OIG conducted the investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Carolyn Ferko and John Marck are prosecuting the case.

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