



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on January 13, 2011

Border Patrol Agent Arrested for Harboring Illegal Immigrants, Including Father

Fox5SanDiego.com reported Jan. 12 that Border Patrol agent Marcos Gerardo Manzano, Jr., 26, was arrested Monday in San Diego and charged with harboring illegal immigrants and lying to a Border Patrol agent. The arrest was made by the Border Corruption Task Force.



A few hours later, a federal SWAT team raided Manzano's San Ysidro house in search of his 46-year-old father. The elder Manzano was not there, but agents discovered José Alfredo Garrido-Morena, 26, an illegal immigrant, hiding in an underground room at the home and arrested him. [According to Asst. U.S. Attorney Tara McGrath](#), the agents also found 61 grams of methamphetamine, along with a substantial amount of narcotics packaging and other materials.

Agent Manzano and Garrido-Morena both appeared in federal court on Wednesday, where U. S. Magistrate Judge Louisa Porter set a \$75,000 bond for Manzano and a \$40,000 bond for Garrido-Morena.

Manzano's father, convicted four years ago in a U.S. court of marijuana possession, and twice deported to his home in Mexico, is facing federal immigration violation charges, but the FBI says he remains at large.

In addition to the charge of harboring illegal immigrants, Manzano is charged with lying to another Border Patrol agent. While on duty, he was asked if he knew the whereabouts of his father, and lied in his answer. He may be facing drug charges as well.

Los Angeles Times reporter Richard Marosi commented on Fox's television broadcast that the agent's house has been under surveillance for over a year. He added,

Usually in cases like this, they are looking into other potential crimes, possibly a smuggling operation, and the investigation had to be closed, and they went in to arrest him. We will learn more this week. The details of the search warrant will be revealed, as to what items were seized from the house...there are still a lot of unanswered questions.

When asked why a SWAT team was used, he replied,

[P]ossibly because they knew there was a convicted felon in the house so extra precautions were taken. They knew they were going in for someone who was a deported felon and had a criminal record. He could have been considered armed and dangerous.



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There's an increasing number of a cases where federal agents working on the southwest border were caught in smuggling schemes. Most recently, here in the San Diego sector a few years ago there was even an agent who himself was an illegal immigrant. He had falsified his birth certificate and also served in the military, and that's how he got in the Border Patrol, but he was helping immigrants cross the border.

The Border Patrol is concerned about infiltrators in its ranks — people hiring on with them and immediately going to work also for Mexican organized crime groups.

Marosi did not speculate if that is the case with Manzano. He indicated that along the border the number of assaults against agents has decreased, and that the level of violence in northern Baja is decreasing as well.

Ironically, just last week the President signed into law the [Anti Border Corruption Act](#), which requires Border Patrol applicants to undergo a polygraph test before being hired. Marosi observed that the new law should help weed out a lot of corruption.

Photo: U.S. Border Patrol vehicles patrol near the San Ysidro port of entry, late Monday, May 10, 2010, in San Diego: AP Images



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