



Minn. Man convicted of false impersonation

ALBUQUERQUE – James Christopher Benvie, 45, of Albany, Minn., was convicted of false impersonation of a Border Patrol agent when a federal jury brought back a verdict of guilty March 3.

Benvie was a member of a group dressed in camouflage and military-style clothing, with badges, masks, pistols and assault rifles who established what the FBI called a “camp” at the Southwest border in Doña Ana County. He was considered a leader and spokesperson for the group, according to public court records and evidence at trial.

The U. S. Attorney’s Office of the District of New Mexico says Benvie misrepresented himself as a Border Patrol Agent when stopping immigrants he suspected of crossing into the U. S. illegally.

The evidence at trial showed Benvie and other group members stopped six women and children from El Salvador on April 15, 2019, without any legitimate law enforcement authority. Benvie misrepresented himself as a Border Patrol agent and interrogated the immigrants before turning them over to actual Border Patrol agents. On April 17, 2019, Benvie stopped four adults and three children shortly after they crossed the border. Benvie ordered these immigrants to “stop” while misrepresenting himself as “Border Patrol.” Benvie later directed these immigrants to move toward the truck of another member of the group for further interrogation before eventually turning them over to Border Patrol.

“The jury’s verdict in this case affirms the principle that we are a nation of laws and do not tolerate vigilantes who take the law into their own hands by falsely impersonating Border Patrol

Not a Border Patrol agent

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agents,” U.S. Attorney for the District of New Mexico John C. Anderson said.

“The men and women who earned the right to wear the badge of a Border Patrol agent put their lives on the line every day,” Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Albuquerque Division James C. Langenberg said. “The FBI is proud to have worked on this case with these brave agents and will never let their honor be stolen by pretenders who scoff at the rule of law.”

Benvie is currently out of custody awaiting sentencing. He faces up to three years in prison for each offense.

The FBI and U.S. Border Patrol investigated this case. Assistant U.S. Attorneys from the Las Cruces Branch Office are prosecuting the case.