



# Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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**MAJOR DRUG DEALER**  
**ARRESTED ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES**

Jacksonville, FL -- United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill, Mark R. Trouville, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the Miami Division of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Robert Weber, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Tampa Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Thomas Hurlburt, Jr., the United States Marshal for the Middle District of Florida, announced the arrest of Franklyn ESTEVEZ, a/k/a Daniel ESTEVEZ, age 37. ESTEVEZ was arrested on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, as he disembarked from a flight at Miami International Airport that had originated from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

ESTEVEZ is accused of leading, managing, and organizing major cocaine trafficking ventures in the United States and elsewhere. According to the indictment and other court documents filed in Jacksonville federal court, beginning on or about March 2005 through August 2007, in Duval County and elsewhere, ESTEVEZ did knowingly and intentionally conspire to possess with the intent to distribute a controlled substance. It is further alleged that this violation involved five kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing

a detectable amount of cocaine. If convicted, ESTEVEZ, faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison.

On April 4, 2006, the U. S. Coast Guard seized 53 kilograms of cocaine from the stolen sailing vessel "Salako" in the Caribbean Sea near Jamaica. According to statements made by cooperating defendants in the investigation, ESTEVEZ allegedly orchestrated the drug load from Cartagena, Colombia. ESTEVEZ also sought to smuggle other loads of drugs to the U.S. via the Middle District of Florida during the course of the investigation. To date, two defendants have been convicted in connection with in what has been called "Operation Salako" in Jacksonville, FL. A French national, Bernard LONGPEE, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a term of 97 months imprisonment. An Italian national, Manuel IPPOLITI, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to a term of 112 months imprisonment. ESTEVEZ is expected to make his initial appearance later this month before a United States Magistrate Judge in Jacksonville.

The arrest announced today was the culmination of "Operation Salako," a three year joint investigation conducted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida and DEA in Jacksonville, FL, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and Cartagena, Colombia, with the participation of ICE and the French National Police. ESTEVEZ is linked to Consolidated Priority Organization Targets designated by President Bush as "command and control" drug trafficking threats to the United States. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Julie Hackenberry Savell of the Jacksonville Division of the United States Attorney's Office of the Middle District of Florida.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.