



# Department of Justice

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## **FATHER AND SON SENTENCED TO 22 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR DRUG CONSPIRACY**

*Both convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 237 kilograms of cocaine and over 70 pounds of "ice" methamphetamine*

Atlanta, GA - JUAN CARLOS ACUNA, 24, and his father, JUAN IBARRA ACUNA, 49, both of Bremen, Georgia, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell, Jr., on charges of conspiring to distribute approximately 4.5 million dollars worth of drugs, including over 520 pounds of cocaine and over 70 pounds of "ice" methamphetamine. These charges stemmed from a large drug seizure that was made on September 13, 2004, that also involved the seizure of 4.6 million dollars in cash that was found in a hidden compartment of a tractor-trailer that was used in the drug scheme.

JUAN CARLOS ACUNA was sentenced to 22 years in prison, to be followed by five years of supervised release. JUAN IBARRA ACUNA was also sentenced to 22 years in prison, to be followed by five years of supervised release. The two defendants were convicted on the drug conspiracy charges by a federal jury sitting in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 13, 2006.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of today's sentence, "The sentences demonstrate that the people who conspire and assist in the trafficking of cocaine, methamphetamine, and other dangerous drugs will be punished severely for their actions, even if they do not handle the drugs themselves." United States Attorney Nahmias further commented, "Through good law enforcement work, over nine million dollars of drugs and drug proceeds have been taken from the hands of those that seek to poison our community and our country with these destructive substances."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: The jury found each defendant guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine and ice in connection with a seizure of a tractor-trailer parked inside a warehouse in Mableton, Georgia. The warehouse was leased to JUAN CARLOS ACUNA and the evidence also showed that JUAN IBARRA ACUNA operated an auto

repair business out of that same warehouse at the time of the seizure. DEA Task Force members had been alerted to the truck coming to the Atlanta area through an a tip that was provided to law enforcement.

The evidence also showed that members of the conspiracy had rented and used a nearby “stash house” for the storage of the cocaine and ice. Three other members of the conspiracy, JAIME ANGEL TORRES, FRANCISCO SANCHEZ-BENITEZ, and ALEJANDRO BENITEZ-LOPEZ, previously pled guilty and received prison sentences ranging from 15-25 years for their participation in the drug scheme. All five of the defendants were indicted on November 10, 2004.

This case was investigated by Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force Agents. DEA Special Agent in Charge Sherri Strange commented, “The sentencing of the Acunas effectively eliminates another multi-million dollar illegal wholesale drug trafficking operation from the metro-Atlanta area. A small victory for law enforcement, but a safer place for Atlantans to live and work. DEA and its law enforcement partners will continue our efforts, one organization at a time, if necessary, to disrupt the foothold that these large scale drug operations have in Atlanta. We will not quit until the last one has given up on Atlanta.”

Assistant United States Attorney Garrett M. Heenan prosecuted the case.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at the following web site: [www.justthinktwice.com](http://www.justthinktwice.com).

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Gentry Shelnett, Chief, Criminal Division, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).