



Department of Justice

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DEFENDANTS FROM METH "SUPERLAB" IN SMYRNA SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON

Atlanta, GA - Two defendants convicted of operating a methamphetamine "superlab" in a residential neighborhood in Cobb County were sentenced today to federal prison by U.S. District Judge Clarence Cooper. The "superlab," located at 200 Church Road in Smyrna, was the first "superlab" discovered in Georgia and one of only a handful ever discovered on the East Coast of the United States. A 'superlab' is a laboratory capable of producing more than 10 pounds of methamphetamine in a single run.

"The stiff sentences imposed in this case appropriately reflect the dangerous nature of these methamphetamine offenses," said U.S. Attorney David E. Nahmias. "By dismantling this meth superlab, we have eliminated a significant source of meth to the Atlanta area and the entire southeastern United States. This prosecution by no means solves the meth problem in North Georgia, but it again demonstrates our commitment to aggressively pursue those who traffic in meth."

DEA Special Agent In Charge Sherri Strange said of the case, "The conviction and sentencing of those responsible for operating this 'superlab' closes the chapter on their operations in metro Atlanta and it is a good day for justice. It is also a day that the residents of Church Street can feel comfort that their neighborhood is a safer place to live. However, it is not a day that law enforcement can let its guard down and we will continue to be ever vigilant in our efforts to combat meth trafficking."

IGNACIO CORTES-VALENCIA, 24, of Michoacan, Mexico was sentenced to 21 years, 10 months imprisonment. GUSTAVO LARA-MURILLO, 31, of Colima, Mexico, was sentenced to 17 years, 6 months imprisonment. The remaining defendant, RAMON OSEGUERA-ALANIS, 34, of Michoacan, Mexico, will be sentenced at a later date.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the documents and information presented in court: In February 2005, after receiving tips from confidential sources, DEA agents arrested the three defendants, CORTES-VALENCIA, LARA-MURILLO, and OSEGUERA-ALANIS. The agents also obtained a search warrant for the residence on Church Road. Once the agents entered the residence, they immediately discovered the

unusual size and capacity of the meth lab. Inside, agents seized 5.2 kilograms (12.4 pounds) of crystal methamphetamine (“ice”), fully manufactured and packaged in one-pound bags for distribution, hidden inside a cabinet in the kitchen. The agents also seized an additional pound of ice methamphetamine from a vehicle parked in the driveway.

Inside the basement of the residence, the agents found an array of equipment set up for the manufacturing of methamphetamine and reprocessing of the methamphetamine into its more potent and addictive form, ice methamphetamine.

The agents also found 24 large trash bags stuffed with emptied pseudoephedrine tablet boxes, as well as containers holding approximately 35 pounds of pure d-pseudoephedrine hydrochloride, court records show. The pure pseudoephedrine appeared to have been extracted from the tablets in the empty boxes, yielding one of the final precursors in the meth manufacturing process. The 35 pounds of pseudoephedrine seized in the basement would yield another 20 to 30 pounds of pure methamphetamine. Finally, the agents discovered five 55-gallon containers holding what a lab expert identified to be the liquid waste byproduct of the methamphetamine manufacturing process.

The three defendants each pleaded guilty in March 2006 to the three counts alleged in the Indictment: (1) conspiring to manufacture and distribute methamphetamine; (2) manufacturing methamphetamine; and (3) possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute it.

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.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the DEA, the DEA MCS (Marietta, Cobb, Smyrna) Task Force, the Atlanta Police Department, the Roswell Police Department, the City of Clarkston Police Department, and the Georgia Department of Pardons and Parole.

Assistant United States Attorneys John Horn and Richard Rice prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney, 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 <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan/>.