



# Department of Justice

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## **TWO INDICTED ON DRUG TRAFFICKING AND CONSPIRACY CHARGES**

Atlanta, GA - TOM CONTRERAS, 27, and HECTOR SUAREZ-BLANCA, 26, who are believed to be from Mexico, have been indicted by a federal grand jury on multiple drug trafficking charges, including conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 1000 kilograms of marijuana and more than 5 kilograms of cocaine.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of the case, "The indictment handed down today is the result of a coordinated multi-agency investigation that allegedly started in Texas and ended in metropolitan Atlanta, where the defendants were arrested in possession of approximately 2400 kilograms of marijuana and 21 kilograms of cocaine. We will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute these massive drug cases, which pose a significant threat to our community's well-being."

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent In Charge Kenneth Smith said, "This is a significant seizure of both marijuana and cocaine from an organization with direct ties to the Southwest border. Excellent investigative work with our law enforcement partners prevented these drugs from being distributed into the community."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the indictment and a search warrant affidavit: On December 20, 2006, ICE agents and local law enforcement observed a rental truck being driven by CONTRERAS, which had come from a warehouse in Ellenwood, Georgia. The ICE agents noted SUAREZ-BLANCA was driving a car in tandem with CONTRERAS' truck through areas of Atlanta and Gwinnett County. Both defendants allegedly used counter-surveillance techniques in an effort to avoid detection. Agents arrested both defendants in Gwinnett County and discovered approximately 1300 kilograms of marijuana in the rental truck. Subsequent investigation linked the defendants to a house on Arbour Way in Gwinnett County.

Agents then executed a search warrant at the Arbor Way house, where the tandem car driven by SUAREZ-BLANCA was parked inside the garage. There agents found approximately 1100 kilograms of marijuana and approximately 21 kilograms of cocaine

inside the house. Agents also found a firearm and approximately \$24,000 in cash. The total weight of all marijuana seized is approximately 2400 kilograms. Further investigation revealed that the narcotics were delivered to the Atlanta area from South Texas.

CONTRERAS faces a minimum of twenty years and a maximum of life in federal prison, and a maximum fine of \$8 million. SUAREZ-BLANCA faces a minimum of ten years and a maximum of life in federal prison, and a maximum fine of \$4 million.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of ICE, along with the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office and the Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force.

Special Assistant United States Attorney A. Brett Williams is prosecuting the case.

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