



The United States Attorney's Office

Southern District of Texas

News Release

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FIRST FOREIGN NATIONAL EXTRADICTED FOR IMPORTING AND DISTRIBUTING COUNTERFEIT PHARMACEUTICALS DRUGS IN U. S. SENTENCED TO PRISON

(HOUSTON) -- Randy Gonzales, 40, a citizen of the Republic of the Philippines, was sentenced to prison for his role in a scheme to manufacture, import and distribute counterfeit pharmaceutical drugs in the United States, acting United States Attorney Tim Johnson announced today. Gonzalez pleaded guilty to the federal drug charge in May 2008.

Today, United States District Judge Melinda Harmon sentenced Gonzalez to 20 months in federal prison without parole to be followed by a three year term of supervised release. Gonzalez is in federal custody without bond.

Charged by criminal complaint in June 2006, Gonzales is the first foreign national to be extradited to the United States for conspiring to import and distribute counterfeit pharmaceuticals. Gonzales was extradited to the United States from Bangkok, Thailand on March 26, 2008 and indicted four days later. Gonzales' extradition, conviction and sentence was the result of an investigation conducted by special agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations (FDA). Beginning in July 2005, agents discovered that Gonzales, using email addresses *ac220875@hotmail.com* and *omarichina@hotmail.com* was advertising the sale of Viagra and Cialis pharmaceutical drugs over the internet. Viagra is a pharmaceutical drug manufactured by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals and Cialis is a pharmaceutical drug manufactured by Eli Lilly Company. Viagra and Cialis are considered lifestyle pharmaceutical drugs used to treat erectile dysfunction.

Acting in an undercover capacity and communicating with Gonzalez via email, agents discovered that Gonzales had secreted large quantities of loose counterfeit Viagra and Cialis pills in packages of general merchandise that had arrived in Houston from China. The packages had been sent to Mohammad Gawasmmah, an individual who operated

“RU SOPHISTICATED” a general merchandise store located on the 6800 block of Harwin Drive in Houston. Gonzales told agents Gawasmmah and another individual named Faye Aledous could deliver counterfeit pills. During a year-long investigation, agents made several undercover purchases of counterfeit Cialis and Viagra pills and seized more than 60,000 counterfeit Viagra pills and 15,000 counterfeit Cialis pills. The loose counterfeit Viagra and Cialis tablets were packaged in plastic bags along with bottles and counterfeit labeling. Once the counterfeit pills arrived in Houston, the pills were placed in bottles and the counterfeit labeling was affixed to the bottles. The counterfeit drugs were valued at more than \$776,000.

Mohammad Gawasmmah and Faye Aledous were indicted and have been convicted after pleading guilty to the conspiracy charge in 2007 and are presently serving prison sentences without parole of 20 months and 21 months respectively.

Assistant United States Attorney Samuel Louis prosecuted the case.

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