



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10/24/06

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan/>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

ANOTHER HUGE DRUG BUST IN METRO ATLANTA

DEA and Local Law Enforcement Agencies Arrest Three Men, Then Seize 145 Pounds of "Ice" Methamphetamine and 72 Kilograms of Cocaine in Clayton County House

Atlanta, GA -The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the United States Attorney's Office today announced the filing of a federal criminal complaint against LEONARDO GARCIA-MIRANDA, 30, of Hapeville, Georgia; RAMON LUIS SOTO-MACIEL, 29, and RAFAEL HEREDIA-RAMOS, 42, both residing in Jonesboro, Georgia and all citizens of Mexico, on charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and crystal methamphetamine ('ice'). DEA also seized 145 pounds of ice and 72 kilograms of cocaine in a house in Clayton County searched in conjunction with the arrests.

At a brief news conference at DEA's Atlanta office this afternoon, United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "Once again good cooperative law enforcement work by federal and local agencies has led to a Mexican drug kingpin's losing millions of dollars worth of meth and cocaine. These arrests and seizures remind us that metro Atlanta remains a major drug distribution hub. But we will maintain our focus on attacking these drug trafficking organizations until they decide that they don't want to risk operating in our communities."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Sherri F. Strange said, "Law enforcement efforts have been, and will continue to be, relentless in the pursuit of those traffickers flooding our metro-Atlanta area with 'ice' methamphetamine. As the months pass, and every seizure is bigger than the last, we have become numb to the numbers. The cold hard fact is that small methamphetamine labs have been reduced and DEA will not let international traffickers fill the void. Let every smuggler hear me loud and clear: DEA and our law enforcement partners will not rest until every dope dealing, poison peddling meth distributor is behind bars and our communities are safe."

According to the Criminal Complaint filed in this case, a joint investigation began about a month ago. Yesterday, DEA and DeKalb County Police, made a controlled purchase of approximately 1 kilogram of cocaine from defendant SOTO-MACIEL. A confidential source and defendant MIRANDA, who allegedly brokered the deal, were

stopped shortly after leaving the site of the transaction. The cocaine was recovered and MIRANDA was arrested. A subsequent consent search of MIRANDA's home in Hapeville allegedly resulted in the discovery of approximately 4 ounces of "ice," packaging materials, and a scale used to weigh drugs.

DEA agents continued their surveillance on SOTO-MACIEL after the transaction was completed. After visiting and exiting a house in Clayton County, SOTO-MACIEL was approached by DEA agents. SOTO-MACIEL fled, throwing down a package in the process. He was apprehended and the package recovered. The package allegedly contained "ice." The third defendant, RAMOS, was observed standing in the doorway of the residence from which SOTO-MACIEL had fled. RAMOS was detained. Agents then got written consent to search the house from SOTO-MACIEL and RAMOS, both of whom claimed to live there. In the house, agents allegedly recovered approximately 72 kilograms of cocaine and 145 pounds of "ice."

The estimated retail (street) value of the drugs seized is more than \$27,000,000.

The defendants are expected to make initial appearances today and their preliminary hearings are expected later this week before United States Magistrate Judge Gerrilyn Brill.

Ms. Strange noted that crystal methamphetamine, known as "ice," is a highly addictive form of methamphetamine, a stimulant. On the illicit market it is sold in small, inexpensive dosage units that are smoked or injected. Smoking delivers large quantities of methamphetamine to the lungs, producing effects comparable to intravenous injection; these effects are almost immediate after smoking and very intense. Special Agent In Charge Strange said that "ice" abuse also results in hallucinations and paranoia.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only charges. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

The DEA's Atlanta Field Division Office worked together on this investigation with the DeKalb County Police Department and DeKalb County Sheriff's Office, with the Clayton County Police Department providing valuable assistance.

Assistant United States Attorney Scott Hulsey is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact DEA Group Supervisor Ruth Porter-Whipple at the DEA/Atlanta Office at (404) 893-7128. Further contacts include 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.