



Department of Justice

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THREE ATLANTA INDICTMENTS ANNOUNCED **AS PART OF MULTI-STATE “OPERATION PAY CUT” DRUG** **TAKEDOWN**

*ICE, IRS, Other Agencies Seize \$22 Million in Cash, Hundreds of Kilograms of
Drugs, Arrest Dozens in Bust of Mexican Cartel*

Atlanta, GA - Three federal indictments unsealed yesterday in Atlanta charge a total of 41 defendants on multiple counts relating to a large-scale drug distribution and money laundering scheme operating in the Northern District of Georgia and the Southern District of Texas.

In a news conference at ICE's Atlanta office announcing the takedown, United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, “This is another case of a major cartel-related Mexican organization that processed huge amounts of illegal drugs and money through metro Atlanta to many other parts of the country. During this long-term investigation, we took away from the organization about \$22 million dollars in drug money—a record amount for an Atlanta case—and hundreds of kilograms of the organization's cocaine and marijuana. We have now indicted dozens of its alleged members, who face long sentences in federal prison.”

Kenneth Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Atlanta said, “Seizures such as this strike at the heart of the criminal organization by targeting the financial gain that enables their criminal enterprises to flourish. This case is significant and highlights the cooperative effort of law enforcement working together under the David G. Wilhelm Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force to dismantle these dangerous organizations.”

IRS-Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge Reginael D. McDaniel said, “Operation Pay Cut is confirmation that drug trafficking is all about the money. Seizing the dirty cash and the assets of these illegal organizations hits criminals where it hurts the most—it deprives them of their profits.”

According to the three indictments and information presented in court and other public records: This long-term, multi-agency investigation targeted a group of

individuals, indicted and unindicted, who are a part of a cartel-related drug trafficking organization (“DTO”), which is involved in illegal drug trafficking and money laundering in and around Atlanta, Georgia, South Texas, and other areas. Since November 2006, law enforcement has seized approximately \$22 million of drug proceeds, and approximately 223 kilograms of cocaine and more than 16,000 pounds of marijuana. Two auto sales and auto parts businesses, located in Texas, were allegedly used to launder large amounts of cash proceeds from the unlawful drug sales. In one of the seizures, a former Hidalgo County Sheriff’s deputy in Texas, EMMANUEL SANCHEZ, was stopped on Interstate 20 in Georgia in a pickup truck hauling heavy equipment. During the traffic stop, conducted by the Georgia State Patrol, the defendant allegedly showed his law enforcement badge to the troopers in an effort to quickly conclude the traffic stop and questioning. Upon further investigation, law enforcement officers found \$950,000 in cash hidden in the door and other areas of the truck. SANCHEZ immediately left his deputy position. In another traffic stop in Georgia, a large truck hauling livestock was pulled over, and defendants JESUS FLORES Sr., and JESUS FLORES Jr., were questioned. After the livestock was off-loaded, law enforcement officers located a hidden compartment under the livestock, and using the traffickers’ complex pulley system under the floor, police found over \$13 million in cash in drug proceeds.

(NEWS MEDIA NOTE: Six photos of related drug and cash seizures shown at today’s news conference are available electronically by request.)

Named in the indictments in Atlanta are the following defendants:

- GRACIE PRISCILLA MEDINA, a/k/a “Priscilla Rodriguez,” “Priscilla Garza,” and “Angie Garza,” 25, of Brownsville, Texas;
- DANIEL MARILLO, 37, of Brownsville, Texas;
- SALVADOR MARILLO, 42, of Cornelia, Georgia;
- WALTER SANDERS, Jr., age and address unknown;
- DIMAS GONZALEZ a/k/a “El Guerro,” age unknown, of Reynosa, Mexico;
- GUSTAVO LOPEZ a/k/a “El Licenciado,” “Tavo,” 35, of Palmview, Texas;
- LUIS MIGUEL, 31, of McAllen, Texas;
- MARCO ANTONIO GAMBOA a/k/a “El Tigre,” 29, of Pharr, Texas;
- GILBERTO ALMANZA a/k/a “El Comandante,” 44, of Lithonia, Georgia;
- FNU LNU #1 a/k/a “Boni,” age and address unknown;
- JUAN RODRIGUEZ a/k/a “Chayane,” 35, of Atlanta, Georgia;
- FNU LNU #2 a/k/a “Gordo,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #3 a/k/a “Manas,” and “Eric Ortuno,” age and address unknown;
- MARIA CANTU, 22, of Hidalgo, Texas;
- MARIA FELIX, age and address unknown;
- ZULEY SANCHEZ, age and address unknown;
- ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ, age and address unknown;
- ROBERTO CIRIACIO, 39, of Lawrenceville, Georgia;
- JUAN MANUEL QUESADA a/k/a “Meme,” 40, of Brownsville, Texas;
- BRENDA ORTUNO, age and address unknown;
- LUZ MARINA, 39, of Auburn, Georgia;

- NATALIA BEDOYA, 23, of Lawrenceville, Georgia;
- FNU LNU #4 a/k/a “Cejas,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #5 a/k/a “Flaco,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #6 a/k/a “Trino,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #7 a/k/a “Etc,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #8 a/k/a “797,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #9 a/k/a “Fernando,” age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #10 a/k/a “Lucas,” 40, of Atlanta, Georgia;
- EMMANUEL SANCHEZ a/k/a “E. Manuel Sanchez,” “Manuel E. Sanchez,” and “Sheriff,” 48, of Mission, Texas;
- FNU LNU #11 a/k/a “Arturo,” age and address unknown;
- JAIME GRANILLO, age and address unknown;
- JESUS FLORES, Sr., 55, of Mercedes, Texas;
- JESUS FLORES, Jr., 28, of Mercedes, Texas;
- MIGUEL ANGEL TAPIA, age and address unknown;
- FNU LNU #12 a/k/a “TERRY,” age and address unknown;
- CHURROT RAMON HERNANDEZ, age and address unknown;
- ATANACIO MORALES, age and address unknown;
- ROBERTO NOE GARCIA a/k/a “Roberto Robles,” 38, of Lawrenceville, Georgia;
- JACK PADILLA, 31, of Brownsville, Texas; and
- JUAN PEREZ ANGUIANO, Sr. 59, of Robstown, Texas.

The indictment also contains a provision seeking the forfeiture to the United States of all ill-gotten gains from the drug and money laundering scheme, including properties, currency, bank accounts and a vehicle:

Properties:

- 1112 Tupelo Chase Court, Auburn, Georgia;
- 2228 Captain Basler Ave., Brownsville, Texas;
- 7000 and 7010 El Lucero Lane, Palmview, Texas;
- 2524 Camellia Ave., McAllen, Texas;
- 2900-2902 E. U.S. Highway 281, Hidalgo, Texas;
- 927 W Expressway 83, Donna, Texas;
- 1807 W. Griffin Parkway Ave., Mission, Texas;

- 7015 E. 14th Street, Brownsville, Texas;
- 1807 Gladiola Drive, Mission, Texas;
- S FM 1015, Lot 7 & S 25' - Lot 8, Progresso, Texas; and
- 3917 Nightingale Ave., McAllen, Texas.

Cash Seizures:

- Approximately \$11,990 in United States currency seized from JUAN MANUEL QUESADA on or about January 13, 2007;
- Approximately \$950,455 in United States currency seized from EMMANUEL SANCHEZ on or about January 6, 2007;
- Approximately \$5,369,270 in United States currency seized from JAIME GRANILLO

on or about April 22, 2007;

- Approximately \$13,694,995 in United States currency seized from JESUS FLORES SR. and JESUS FLORES JR on or about June 3, 2007; and
- Approximately \$1,874,870 in United States currency seized from MIGUEL ANGEL TAPIA on or about October 10, 2007.

Bank Accounts:

- Five accounts of "GLG Enterprises," GUSTAVO LOPEZ, at Rio Bank;
- Four accounts of GUSTAVO LOPEZ, at Texas State Bank;
- One account of GUSTAVO LOPEZ and an unindicted person at Bank of America;
- One account of an unindicted person at Bank of America;
- One account of GILBERTO ALMANZA at North Dallas Bank & Trust Company;
- One account of GILBERTO ALMANZA and an unindicted person at Bank of America;
- One account of EMMANUEL SANCHEZ at International Bank of Commerce;
- One account of two unindicted persons at Bank of America;
- One account of an unindicted person Chapa at Bank of America;
- One account of GRACIE PRISCILLA MEDINA at Bank of America; and
- One account of GRACIE PRISCILLA MEDINA at Wachovia Bank.

Vehicle

- A 1999 Chevrolet C3500 pickup truck, VIN No. 1GBGC34R1XF051115, seized on April 22, 2007.

The penalties for the drug charges are a mandatory minimum penalty of ten years in prison to life in prison, and the money laundering charges range up to 20 years in prison.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. 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 U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at www.justthinktwice.com.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of ICE and IRS-Criminal Investigation, along with the FBI, DEA, ATF, United States Marshal's Service, Atlanta Police Department, Georgia State Patrol Fayette County Sheriff's Office, DeKalb County Police Department, Coweta Sheriff's Office, Kennesaw Police Department, Newnan Police Department, Whitfield County Sheriff's Department, Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), Clayton County Police Department, and the Marietta-Cobb-Smyrna Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit (MCS).

Assistance in this case has been provided by the United States Attorney's Offices of the Southern District of Texas, and the Northern District of Texas, and the

District Attorney's Offices of Fulton County, DeKalb County, and the Conasauga Judicial Circuit, Dalton, Georgia.

Assistant United States Attorneys Lisa W. Tarvin, Bret R. Williams and Jeffrey Viscomi are 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.