



U.S. Department of Justice

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**FEDERAL GRAND JURY IN LUBBOCK INDICTS
CONVICTED FELON ON DRUG AND GUN CHARGES**

U.S. Attorney Credits Project Safe Neighborhoods for Arrest

United States Attorney Richard B. Roper announced that on Wednesday, January 12, 2004, a federal grand jury in Lubbock, Texas, indicted Richard Mendoza, a 36-year-old Lubbock man, and a self-admitted member of the Texas Syndicate, a Texas prison gang, on charges outlined in a four-count federal indictment. Mendoza, who was just released from federal prison one year ago, was arrested on Wednesday on those charges after he ran from police, assaulted two police officers and tried to pull a firearm on the officers. He remains in federal custody and faces additional federal firearms charges involving the circumstances of the arrest.

Count One of the indictment charges Mendoza with possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, and if convicted on this charge, Mendoza faces a maximum statutory sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a \$1,000,000 fine. Count Two of the indictment charges Mendoza with possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and if convicted on this charge, Mendoza faces a statutory sentence of not less than five years and up to life imprisonment, and a \$250,000 fine. Counts Three and Four of the indictment charge Mendoza with one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and one count of possession of ammunition by a convicted felon. Each of these two counts carries a maximum statutory sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

U.S. Attorney Roper stated, "Project Safe Neighborhoods is a tremendous opportunity for the combined forces of federal, state and local partners to turn neighborhoods back over to law-abiding citizens. This office, working side by side with federal, state, and local law enforcement, has created a unique PSN strategy tailored to fit the gun crime problems in the area.

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Thanks to PSN, armed career criminals, like Mendoza, are being removed from our communities and neighborhoods and locked away in federal prisons where they can look forward to spending a very long time.”

An indictment is an accusation by a federal grand jury and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty.

United States Attorney Roper praised the coordinated efforts of local, state, and federal law enforcement, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Lubbock Police Department and the Lubbock County District Attorney’s Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tanya Pierce, of the Lubbock, Texas, United States Attorney’s Office.

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