



# Department of Justice

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF FEDERAL

### DRUG AND FIREARMS VIOLATIONS IN HENDERSON COUNTY

*Indictments Charging Six Individuals Returned by Federal Grand Jury in Asheville*

*Criminal Defendant Sentenced to More than 26 years in Federal Prison*

ASHEVILLE, NC - Federal bills of indictment charging six individuals from Henderson County, North Carolina with crimes involving federal drug (methamphetamine) and firearms violations have been filed in U.S. District Court in Asheville, announced United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert.

Joining the U.S. Attorney in announcing the indictments are Assistant Special Agent in Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Delbert Richburg, Sheriff Rick Davis of Henderson County, Chief Herbert Blake of the Hendersonville Police Department, and William Farley, Chief, Gaston County Police Department.

Jose Perez-Herrera, Yuri Perez-Herrera, Ricardo Martinez, and Uzziel Cuevas-Mendez, all dwelling in Henderson County, were charged in a federal indictment in February of this year with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute at least 500 grams of a mixture or substance containing methamphetamine, and related charges. The time of the alleged methamphetamine conspiracy according to the charges contained in the indictment was from January 2007 through January 2008. All four defendants are presently in federal custody awaiting trial.

In two additional and separate federal bills of indictment filed in U.S. District Court in Asheville on April 1, 2008, Jose Martinez Jurado and Moises Garza Ramirez were each charged with one count alleging a violation of the federal firearms statutes. Jurado was charged with being illegally or unlawfully present in the United States and knowingly in possession of ammunition, and Ramirez was charged with being illegally or unlawfully present in the United States and knowingly in possession of a firearm.

Jurado and Ramirez were both arrested on March 19, 2008 in Henderson County and have remained in federal custody since that time. Jurado and Ramirez will be afforded initial appearances at a future date on the firearms allegations contained in today's indictments.

DEFENDANTS ARE ENTITLED TO A PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE UNDER THE LAW, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE BURDEN OF PROVING EVERY ELEMENT OF THE CHARGES BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT.

If convicted on the drug conspiracy count, the defendants face a minimum mandatory of ten years to life imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or both.

If convicted on the firearms offenses counts, the defendants face a maximum statutory penalty of ten years' imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or both such fine or imprisonment.

Any sentence received upon conviction will be influenced by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which the Court consults in order to determine each defendant's actual sentence. Sentences are based upon a formula that takes into account the severity and characteristics of the offense and each defendant's criminal history, if any.

The drugs/firearms prosecutions are being handled for the government by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jill W. Rose of the U.S. Attorney's Asheville office.

In a separate federal prosecution issuing from Henderson County, Kevin Michael Leite, 37, was sentenced as a “career offender” to a term of not less than 322 months in federal prison on Friday, March 28, 2008 in U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina at Asheville. Kevin Michael Leite is a lifelong resident of Henderson County. Charged with six separate counts alleging violations of the federal firearms statutes and possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine in April 2007 in U.S. District Court, Leite has been in federal custody since May 9, 2007. In July 2007 Leite entered guilty pleas to two counts alleging possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, to one count alleging possession of 50-200 grams of methamphetamine, and to one count alleging possession of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

The investigation of this case was handled by agents and officers of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Henderson County Sheriff’s Office. Joining U.S. Attorney Shappert in this announcement is ATF Special Agent in Charge Zebedee Graham and Henderson County Sheriff Rick Davis. The prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Corey F. Ellis of the U.S. Attorney’s Asheville office.

U.S. Attorney Gretchen Shappert commended the collaborative work of federal and local law enforcement in their ongoing efforts to eradicate drug trafficking and illegal firearms possession in Henderson County. “Those who conspire to distribute deadly drugs, such as methamphetamine, or who engage in the illegal possession of firearms, need to understand that we mean business. Federal law enforcement will continue to assist our local law enforcement partners to track down and prosecute those who undermine the safety of Henderson County. Individuals who persist in those crimes belong in federal prison,” she said.

Indicted in U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina  
February 6, 2008  
Docket Number 1:08cr14

1. Jose Perez-Herrera, 29, Tuxedo, North Carolina
2. Yuri Perez-Herrera, 26, Hendersonville, North Carolina
3. Ricardo Martinez, 35, Hendersonville, North Carolina
4. Uzziel Cuevas-Mendez, 25, Edneyville, North Carolina

Indicted in U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina  
April 1, 2008  
Docket Number 1:08cr42  
Moises Garza Ramirez, 23, Hendersonville, North Carolina

Indicted in U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina  
April 1, 2008  
Docket Number 1:08cr41  
Jose Martinez Jurado, 31, Hendersonville, North Carolina

Sentenced in U.S. District Court for the Western District of North Carolina  
Friday, March 28, 2008

Kevin Michael Leite, 37, Hendersonville, North Carolina

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