



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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DRUG KINGPIN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONTROLLING CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE

PHOENIX - Martin Angel Gonzalez, 43, of Phoenix, pleaded guilty on September 12, 2008 in front of U.S. District Court Judge Stephen M. McNamee to being the leader of a Continuing Criminal Enterprise, Conspiracy to Possess with the Intent to Distribute Marijuana, Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering, and Possession with the Intent to Distribute Marijuana.

Gonzalez had been charged with various drug trafficking offenses related to his leadership of a 12-year conspiracy involving the distribution of over 30,000 kilograms of marijuana and the seizure of \$15 million in assets. Gonzalez's organization imported marijuana from Mexico, packaged it in the Phoenix area, and distributed it to Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Florida, Illinois, Wisconsin, and California. Gonzalez was extradited from Mexico to the United States in 2006. Twenty-five other co-conspirators have pleaded guilty for their involvement in the conspiracy and many will be sentenced in the next few months.

Sentencing is set before Judge McNamee on November 24, 2008. A conviction for a Continuing Criminal Enterprise carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$2,000,000 fine, or both. A conviction for a Possession with Intent to Distribute carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$4,000,000 fine, or both. A conviction for a Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$500,000 fine, or the twice the value of the funds involved, or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge McNamee will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, and the Scottsdale Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Kevin M. Rapp and Jennifer E. Green, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-0264-PHX-SMM
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-239(Gonzalez)

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