



Department of Justice

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DRUG TRAFFICKER RECEIVES 30-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE

Baza Recruited Drivers to Import Drugs from Mexico and Send Drug Money Back to Mexico

Rome, GA - CARACHURE BENICIO BAZA, 28, of Smyrna, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Harold L. Murphy to serve 30 years on charges of drug trafficking and money laundering.

“This defendant played a pivotal role in a large Mexican drug trafficking organization,” said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias. “He was in charge of moving multiple kilograms of cocaine from Mexico to the United States and sending millions of dollars in drug money back to Mexico. The long sentence imposed on this defendant is just punishment for his involvement in bringing poison into our country and profiting from its sale to our citizens.”

BAZA was sentenced to 30 years in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. A jury found BAZA guilty of these charges on November 3, 2008, after a week-long trial.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: BAZA was a member of the “Pineda” Drug Trafficking Organization, which in 2006 moved significant amounts of cocaine from Mexico into the United States and sent the drug proceeds back to Mexico. BAZA headed up a transportation cell within the Pineda Organization. He assisted in purchasing vehicles, which were usually vans that could be outfitted with compartments to use to hide the cocaine and drug money. BAZA, an illegal alien, also recruited drivers to transport the drugs and money. The drivers were U.S. citizens or aliens who had been granted legal status to live in this country. According to testimony presented in court, BAZA paid drivers \$1,000 for every kilogram of cocaine brought from Mexico into the United States. A cooperating co-defendant testified that he made a half dozen trips at the behest of BAZA and that BAZA paid him between \$27,000 and \$35,000 for each of his six trips, which roughly translated to the cooperating co-defendant moving between 27 and 35 kilograms on each trip. BAZA arranged for the shipment of cocaine to Dalton, Atlanta, Nashville, Tennessee, and Pompano Beach, Florida. The investigation,

which involved the court-authorized recording of approximately 13,000 cell phone calls, revealed that the Pineda Organization brought in over 1,000 kilograms of cocaine in 2006 and sent millions of dollars in drug proceeds back to Mexico. More than \$1,000,000 were seized during the investigation. BAZA was arrested on December 11, 2006, while he and a co-defendant were arranging to transport \$289,880 in drug money back to Mexico. BAZA will be deported to Mexico upon completion of his sentence.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at the following web site: www.justthinktwice.com.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Assistant United States Attorneys G. Scott Hulsey and Paul R. Jones prosecuted 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.