



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS EL PASO MAN ON  
MARIJUANA TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

***U.S. Border Patrol Agents Found 158 Pounds of Marijuana in Defendant's Tractor-Trailer  
During Routine Inspection at Highway 54 Checkpoint South of Alamogordo, N.M.***

LAS CRUCES – Yesterday afternoon a federal jury sitting in Las Cruces, N.M. convicted Luis Alberto Ugalde-Aguilera, 43, of El Paso, Texas, on marijuana trafficking charges after a two-day trial, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales.

Ugalde-Aguilera, who was arrested on Jan. 26, 2011, and released on a \$10,000 cash bond on Feb. 11, 2011, was remanded into the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled. At sentencing, Ugalde-Aguilera faces a maximum penalty of 20 years of imprisonment and three years of supervised release.

Following their arrests on Jan. 26, 2011, Ugalde-Aguilera and co-defendant Pablo Chavez-Posada, 51, also of El Paso, were charged in a two-count indictment with (1) conspiracy to possess marijuana with intent to distribute, and (2) possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. Chavez-Posada plead guilty to the indictment on June 8, 2011, and was sentenced to time served and two years of supervised release on Sept. 7, 2011.

Ugalde-Aguilera proceeded to trial on June 5, 2012. The evidence at trial established that Ugalde-Aguilera drove a tractor trailer into the U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 54, south of Alamogordo at 11:35 p.m. on Jan. 26, 2011, with Chavez-Posada in the truck's sleeper compartment. When agents performed a "backscatter" x-ray inspection of the truck, the inspection revealed anomalies behind the front passenger seat in the truck's cab. After the agents received Ugalde-Aguilera's consent to search the truck, they found several plastic garbage bags inside a bin behind the passenger seat. After a drug detecting canine alerted to the garbage bags, the agents opened the bags and found 158 pounds of marijuana in vacuum sealed bags.

The jury deliberated for less than an hour before returning guilty verdicts on both counts of the indictment.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Drug Enforcement Administration, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Luis A. Martinez and Mark A. Saltman.

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