

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

jacksoncountycombat.com/taskforce

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Not every police department has the resources necessary to fight drug-related crimes—crimes that know no boundaries, crisscrossing city limits, county lines and state borders. The COMBAT-funded Jackson County Drug Task Force brings together detectives from the county's various police departments and Sheriff's Office to pursue drug dealers across these legal jurisdictions in a coordinated, concentrated and collaborative fashion.

In response to an emerging drug problem, the Jackson County Drug formed the Jackson County Drug Task Force in 1986 as a multi-jurisdictional investigative initiative. Throughout the 1980's, drug trafficking and an active drug culture were a part of daily life throughout Kansas City, Missouri, and much of Jackson County. Illicit drugs, openly traded on street corners such as crack cocaine, methamphetamine and PCP, was commonplace. Drug houses and methamphetamine labs sprung up throughout our county overnight. Initially funding for the Task Force was through private donations and one grant.

In 1989, Jackson County voters approved a new one-quarter of one-percent anti-drug sales tax, later known as the Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax (COMBAT). The tax would support a broad-based attack on drug abuse and drug-related violent crimes. One of the enforcement initiatives of COMBAT funding was the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Renewed for seven-year periods in 1995, 2004, 2009 and 2016 the COMBAT tax now entirely funds the JCDTF, providing the Task Force with an adjusted budget of \$3,571,616 in 2024.

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE MISSION

The County of Jackson has approximately 604.84 square miles. With a population of 700,307 according to the Census Bureau, Jackson County is the second most populous of Missouri's 114 counties, after St. Louis County. The Task Force's focus is Jackson County, which includes all suburban jurisdictions and unincorporated areas. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide a combined and unified response to the drug and narcotics related violent crime problem as it exists in Jackson County.

The Task Force participates with all federal, state and local Kansas City law enforcement agencies however, the primary investigative mission and focus continues to be in Jackson County and the outlying areas of the county, not adequately serviced by other law enforcement agencies. Task Force Detectives work in unison with other agencies' personnel assigned to the Task Force to investigate drug and violent crimes related to the illegal drug trade. These investigations range from Jackson County to anywhere in the continental United States. Task Force Detectives have specialty training in undercover operations, long-term investigations and covert surveillance techniques.

In 2023, the Task Force participated in multiple Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) operations in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Homeland Security. These partnerships allowed the Task Force partial reimbursement for narcotics buy money and overtime costs associated with the OCDETF investigations. The Task Force was actively involved in five OCDETF investigations in 2024.

In 2011, the JCDTF signed with the Missouri National Guard to provide one Intelligence Analyst to assist with long-term investigations. This agreement continued in 2024.

A Task Force Detective obtained a high-level security clearance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to assist in investigations involving large-scale Transnational Criminal Drug Organizations. Additionally, the Task Force is coordinating with the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Force to address the increasing problem of violent crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) with ties to Mexico. These Drug Trafficking Organizations have set up sophisticated distribution networks in Jackson County and are obtaining large amounts of illegal drugs from Mexican-based Drug Trafficking Organizations for distribution in Jackson County.

The Task Force collaborates with treatment providers, social workers, and other community stakeholders in utilizing referral networks and facilitate access to treatment for individuals encountered through the justice system. While law enforcement traditionally has focused on enforcement, increasingly it is recognized that alternative approaches can connect individuals with drug addiction disorders to treatment and support services. Effective strategies require collaboration, addressing root causes, and overcoming stigma and resource limitations.

In those efforts, the Task Force actively participates with "STRIVIN" the Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax (COMBAT) initiative to address violence in Jackson County's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

STRIVIN' hinges on collaboration and brings together educators, elected officials, law enforcement officers, family court administrators, social workers, mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, faith-based leaders and concerned citizens to join forces, pool resources, provide services and find solutions. In working together, the STRIVIN initiative addresses the core issues triggering much of the violence in Jackson County's "hot spots".

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

The Jackson County Drug Task Force is a voluntary law enforcement organization that operates under the direction of an Executive Board comprised of representatives from fourteen (14) law enforcement agencies in Jackson County. Each of these law enforcement agencies signed an Agreement for Law Enforcement Services with the Task Force.

The Executive Board of the Task Force includes the Police Chiefs from each of the participating cities and the Sheriff of Jackson County. A representative from the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation attend the Executive Board meetings in a spirit of cooperation and coordination of investigative efforts.

Seven (7) of the participating law enforcement agencies and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office contribute or "loan" manpower to the Task Force. The Task Force reimburses all salaries, benefits, equipment and other associated costs with personnel assigned to the Task Force. Costs for reimbursement are paid from grants and funding generated by the countywide anti-crime sales tax (COMBAT).

In 2022, in order to provide a more combined and unified response to the drug and narcotic related violent crime problem in Independence the Detectives assigned to the Police Departments Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) were co-located with the Task Force. The Task Force reimburses 50% of the salaries of those DEU Detectives. This partnership continues in 2024.

Participating agencies include:

- **Blue Springs Police** - 2 Investigators (1 vacant)
- **Buckner Police**
- **Grain Valley Police** – 1 Investigator
- **Grandview Police** - 1 Sergeant, 0 Investigator (2 vacant)
- **Greenwood Police**
- **Independence Police** – 1 Sergeant, 1 Investigators (4 vacant)
- **Jackson County** – 1 OIC, 1 Administrative, 1 Property/Evidence Officer
- **Jackson County Sheriff** – 2 Investigators (1 vacant)
- **Lake Lotawana Police**
- **Lee's Summit Police** – 1 Sergeant, 5 Investigators (1 vacant)
- **Lone Jack Police**
- **Missouri State Highway Patrol**
- **Oak Grove Police** - 1 Investigator
- **Raytown Police**
- **Sugar Creek Police** - 1 Investigator

Detectives co-located with the Task Force.

- **Independence Police Drug Enforcement Unit** – 2 Detectives

The Task Force also has two positions on loan from the following:

- **Missouri National Guard Counterdrug Program** – Analyst
- **The Department of Homeland Security** – 1 Special Agent (Part Time)

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

K-9

In 2022, the Jackson County Drug Task Force added Harlow, a 2-year-old German shorthaired pointer, as a part of the Jackson County Drug Task Force team. The Missouri Police Canine Association (MPCA) certifies Harlow as a drug detection K-9 trained “alert” to a variety of illegal drugs and their derivatives.

In 2024, Harlow conducted 35 searches including parcel interdiction with the Kansas City Missouri Police Department at various parcel distribution centers in the metropolitan area and parcel interdiction with the U.S Postal service. Additionally, Harlow has conducted multiple vehicle and residential searches for the Task Force and Police Departments across Jackson County. Harlow’s searches have resulted in the recovery of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, OxyContin, hydrocodone, and Xanax tablets.

With Harlow’s MPCA certification a positive indication by Harlow can be used in affidavits as probable cause when applying for state and federal search warrants.

KANSAS CITY METRO ORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE STRIKE FORCE

The Jackson County Drug Task Force continued the partnership with the Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Force (KCMSF). The Jackson County Drug Task Force is one of four local agencies participating in the KCMSF, along with the Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, police departments and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will be joining forces with multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Department of Homeland Security; the Postal Inspection Service; and Internal Revenue Service.

The Kansas City metropolitan area is near the geographical center of the United States and at the intersection of several of the nation's busiest interstate highways, thus making it a major transit point for the transportation of drugs, firearms, and illicit proceeds to and from significant market areas across the country.

The KCMSF focus will be major criminal organizations, including criminal gangs, transnational drug cartels and other groups engaged in illicit activities that present a threat to public safety. The KCMSF will place special emphasis on addressing the significant methamphetamine threat identified in Jackson County and the Kansas City metropolitan area.

The KCMSF presents a united front against drug trafficking and violent crime throughout the metropolitan area coordinating agents and officers from both Missouri and Kansas with additional investigative resources to better protect our community from the violent scourge of drug trafficking.

Greater Kansas City joins these other metropolitan regions with Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Forces: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, North Texas, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego, San Juan, southeast Michigan and Tampa.

NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTICS IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

The Task Force established a program in which all recovered firearms will be test fired and the shell casings submitted into the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) with the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBS).

NIBIN is a national network system administered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to assist law enforcement in solving firearms-related crimes. IBS is the collection of electronic images of ballistic evidence recovered from crime scenes and test-fired firearms recovered by law enforcement. IBS is a proven investigative and intelligence tool that can assist in the identification of leads that were not previously available, can link firearms evidence from multiple crimes committed with the same firearm and can link firearms evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED/PURCHASED

2024	Grams	Dose	Value
Methamphetamine	255,614.29		\$30,195,516
Cocaine	7,330.88		\$905,239
Cocaine – Crack	92.70		\$12,514
Heroin	6,115.30		\$1,223,060
Fentanyl (total grams)	8,650.07		\$1,727,434
M-30 Pills		58,198	\$1,163,960
MDMA		4,932	\$98,640
PCP	99.20		\$2,182.40
OxyContin		85	\$6,800
Hydrocodone		120	\$9,600
Oxycodone		117	\$9,360
Prescription Drugs		100	\$2,000
Psilocybin Mushrooms	2,514.82		\$55,326
Marijuana	199.80		\$4,995
THX Wax	0		\$0.00

FIREARMS SEIZED/PURCHASED

Long Guns \$500 / each	Hand Guns \$400 / each	Machine Switches/ Machine Guns \$500 / each	Suppressor/ Silencer \$350 / each
31	78	14	4
\$15,500	\$31,200	\$6,500	\$1,400

EXPLOSIVES SEIZED

Explosive Actuated Devices	Explosive Materials	Explosives \$100 / each
0	0	19

TOTAL VALUE OF ALL SEIZED CONTRABAND

Drug values based on adjusted street prices for illegal drugs 2020 Office of National Drug Control Policy Data

\$35,689,184

STATISTICS

	Cases Opened	Cases Closed	Search Warrants	Knock-n-Talks	Presentations	Narcotics Purchases	Money Recovered	Meth Labs Processed	Marijuana Grows Processed
2012	124	206	42	66	10	180	\$411,048	1	3
2013	119	206	92	30	21	408	\$275,876	0	3
2014	74	208	48	48	1	158	\$424,762	0	2
2015	127	199	58	82	1	218	\$330,372	0	1
2016	132	301	61	21	4	170	\$136,261	1	0
2017	92	114	50	10	9	140	\$135,475	0	0
2018	80	110	50	6	8	170	\$302,206	0	2
2019	76	204	54	12	3	123	\$216,246	0	0
2020	76	45	32	0	1	135	\$64,479	0	0
2021	112	192	51	7	1	138	\$733,749	0	1
2022	119	136	41	6	9	156	\$600,582	2	0
2023	110	94	61	12	2	165	\$1,305,207	4	0
2024	108	96	34	0	4	217	\$335,702	0	0

CASE COMPARISON

	Total Cases Presented	Federal Cases	State Cases	Arrests	Warrant Arrests	Detectives Funded	Value of Seized Narcotics
2012	339	250	89	427		13	\$4,116,215
2013	205	128	65	177		11	\$7,568,018
2014	201	106	98	209		11	\$8,894,042
2015	216	122	82	262		12	\$6,530,240
2016	290	215	75	292	222	13	\$5,218,156
2017	213	166	47	269	200	11	\$13,461,484
2018	92	65	27	187	94	14	\$16,149,483
2019	204	172	35	228	106	13	\$30,451,473
2020	192	135	45	159	64	15	\$9,635,079
2021	192	161	31	268	218	16	\$14,984,084
2022	311	246	65	316	75	22	\$25,457,480
2023	109	56	53	229	120	22	\$55,307,090
2024	190	109	81	208	99	20	\$35,451,742

PROSECUTION COMPARISON

Cases presented for prosecution

Federal											
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
128	106	122	215	166	65	172	135	161	246	56	109

State											
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
65	98	82	75	47	27	35	45	31	65	53	81

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

2024

AWARDS

Drug Task Force Wins Award

Outstanding Community Impact Investigation



Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY IMPACT INVESTIGATION Jackson County Drug Task Force

Summary of Investigation

During June 2022, the Jackson County Drug Task Force Initiative received a complaint concerning an individual identified only as "Tiger," who was selling "pills" to middle school and high school students at two suburban Kansas City, MO school districts. An investigation was subsequently initiated, which led to the identity of Tiger Draggoo, who was the leader of a significant interstate drug trafficking organization (DTO) that was distributing large quantities of fentanyl in the Kansas City area. Through continued investigation, investigators gathered evidence and ultimately arrested Draggoo on fentanyl and weapons charges in January 2023. During June 2023, Draggoo was indicted for three counts of distributing fentanyl, which resulted in death. Six other members of the DTO were later indicted for their roles in a drug trafficking conspiracy that included illegal firearms with fully automatic weapons and money laundering.

Narrative: In June 2022, the Jackson County Drug Task Force received a drug complaint on an individual, only identified as “Tiger” who was reportedly selling “pills” to juveniles in the middle schools and high schools in the Grandview and Belton Missouri school districts. During the initial phase of the investigation, detectives identified the suspect as Tiger Draggoo who had an outstanding felony arrest warrant and was residing at an apartment complex with his girlfriend in South Kansas City, Missouri. During the next few months, detectives conducted surveillance at the apartment in an attempt to arrest Tiger on the felony arrest warrant. On several occasions detectives along with uniformed officers attempted to stop and arrest Tiger as he left the residence however, he fled and the pursuits were terminated. While conducting surveillance of the apartment on September 22, 2022, detectives observed Tiger and another male, later identified as Colt Draggoo (brother of Tiger Draggoo), leaving the apartment complex in a vehicle. A uniformed officer attempted to conduct a traffic stop, but again the vehicle fled. A few minutes later, the vehicle returned to the apartment complex where Tiger and Colt entered the apartment. Detectives then observed Tiger carry a large laundry bag from the apartment and place it in the backseat of the vehicle. When uniformed officers and detectives approached, Tiger fled on foot and evaded arrest. Detectives took Colt into custody outside the vehicle and in plain view inside the vehicle, detectives observed a handgun and two small safes. Detectives were able to contact Tiger Draggoo’s girlfriend at their apartment where they observed multiple handguns, assault rifles, pills and US currency in plain view in the living room and kitchen of the apartment. Detectives recovered the property in plain view inside the apartment and gained consent to search the rest of the apartment from the girlfriend and obtained search warrants to open the safes recovered from the vehicle. This enforcement operation resulted in the seizure of small quantities of fentanyl, LSD and marijuana, as well as \$337,090 in US currency, 17 firearms (included 2 machine guns), a money counter and a ballistic vest.

In January 2023, detectives executed a search warrant at Tiger’s Kansas City area residence and seized an additional \$243,245 US currency, 5 weapons and approximately 1 ounce of fentanyl. On that same date, the Belton, MO Police Department turned over in excess of 1 pound of fentanyl (counterfeit M-30 pills) that was seized from the DTO. On January 23, 2023, detectives obtained a federal criminal complaint charging Tiger Draggoo with possessing fentanyl to distribute and illegally possessing firearms. In June 2023, after an extensive investigation, a Federal Grand jury seated in the Western District of Missouri (Kansas City) indicted the head of this DTO, Tiger Draggoo, with three fentanyl overdose deaths of teenagers from Belton, MO.

The investigation continued and on September 27, 2023, a 13-count superseding indictment was returned, replacing the original indictment, which included additional charges and defendants. The indictment charged seven defendants with conspiracy to distribute fentanyl from December 2021 to May 2023. Charges included possession of fentanyl with intent to distribute, possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, possessing an unregistered firearm, illegally possessing machine guns and money laundering.

Based on intelligence developed during this investigation, it was estimated that the Draggoo DTO was distributing approximately 100,000 fentanyl pills (counterfeit M-30 pills) per month in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The fentanyl was delivered via couriers from sources of supply in Arizona and Colorado. During the course of this investigation, Tiger Draggoo had no legitimate source of income.

The determination, tireless efforts and investigative ability of the detectives assigned to the Jackson County Drug Task Force and numerous other agencies resulted in the identification, investigation and ultimately the disruption of a DTO that was responsible for at least 3 fentanyl overdose deaths and was connected to at least 11 other fentanyl overdose deaths. The significant arrests, seizures of drugs, US currency and firearms occurring in this investigation have positively impacted the region and most assuredly saved countless lives in Jackson County, MO and the greater Kansas City Metropolitan area.

As the result of these outstanding investigative efforts, this case merits the HIDTA Award for **Community Impact Investigation**.

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

2024

PRESS RELEASES

Mexican National Sentenced to 25 Years for Leading Meth, Heroin Conspiracy

Friday, February 23, 2024

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KC Man Distributed 250 Pounds of Meth

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man has been sentenced in federal court for leading a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Panfilo Acuna, Jr., 29, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Bough on Thursday, Feb. 22, to 25 years in federal prison without parole. The court also ordered Acuna to forfeit to the government \$550,603, which represents the proceeds he received from the drug-trafficking conspiracy.

On Oct. 13, 2022, Acuna pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin, conspiracy to commit money laundering, 42 counts of money laundering, and one count of international money laundering.

Acuna admitted that he was the leader of a drug-trafficking organization that distributed methamphetamine and heroin throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area from 2016 until his arrest in 2020. Acuna was the primary source of methamphetamine and heroin distributed to a dozen co-defendants in this case. Acuna also admitted he distributed approximately 250 pounds of methamphetamine and laundered more than \$500,000 in drug-trafficking proceeds.

Acuna received methamphetamine and heroin from sources in California and Mexico. Acuna coordinated shipments of bulk methamphetamine and heroin from California to his associates in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Acuna utilized different methods to transport drugs from California to Kansas City, including drug couriers, parcel carriers, and commercial delivery services where drugs would be hidden in furniture and other consumer items. The drugs would then be distributed to a network of street-level dealers in this area who then sold the drugs to other dealers and addicts.

Acuna conducted 1,046 financial transactions between 2015 and 2020, nearly all of them to individuals in California and Mexico, that were related to his drug trafficking. The aggregate amount of money deposited was \$305,109. Other wire transfers were also conducted that totaled \$246,494. Additionally, Acuna transferred \$20,060 to individuals in Mexico through 22 money transfers as part of the conspiracy. The financial investigation revealed his associates also laundered money through a variety of means.

On Oct. 1, 2020, the FBI and the Jackson County Drug Task Force executed a search warrant at Acuna's apartment. Investigators recovered 19 firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunition, magazines, drug ledgers, 10 grams of heroin, and nearly three kilograms of methamphetamine.

Acuna is the ninth defendant to be sentenced in this case. Two co-defendants have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew Moeder and Megan A. Baker. It was investigated by the FBI and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Updated February 23, 2024

Jury Convicts KC Man of Heroin Conspiracy, Illegal Firearms

Friday, March 22, 2024

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man was convicted in federal court today of his role in a conspiracy to distribute heroin and of illegally possessing firearms.

Edgar A. Mejia, 49, was found guilty by a jury of one count each of conspiracy to distribute heroin and possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime.

On Oct. 10, 2022, law enforcement officers searched a 2000 Coachman recreational vehicle that belonged to Mejia. At the time of the search, Mejia was in custody in Oklahoma following his arrest for drug trafficking. Investigators in Oklahoma received information that Mejia had additional drugs and firearms hidden in his Coachman RV, and notified local authorities.

Officers located Mejia's RV parked next to an abandoned residence in the 2300 block of Drury Avenue in Kansas City, Mo. Investigators searched the RV and found, hidden behind a wall in the kitchen, 541 grams of heroin, a Springfield Armory Hellcat 9mm semi-automatic handgun, an American Tactical AR-15-style rifle, and ammunition.

Following the presentation of evidence, the jury in the U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., deliberated for approximately three and a half hours before returning guilty verdicts to U.S. District Judge Greg Kays, ending a trial that began Wednesday, March 20.

Mejia previously pleaded guilty to one count of possessing the heroin inside the RV with the intent to distribute it and one count of being a felon in possession of the firearms recovered from the RV.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Mejia has two prior state felony convictions for possession of a controlled substance and prior federal felony convictions for conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Under federal statutes, Mejia is subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole. The maximum sentence the court could impose is life in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on

the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ashleigh A. Ragner and Robert M. Smith and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica L. Jennings. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force; the District Attorney's Task Force for the 13th Judicial District in Ottawa and Delaware Counties, Oklahoma; Wyandotte Nation Tribal Police Department, Wyandotte, Oklahoma; the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

Updated March 22, 2024

KC Man Charged After Officers Seize 59 Firearms, Including Machine Guns, and Illegal Drugs from Residence

Friday, March 22, 2024

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man was charged in federal court today after law enforcement officers found 59 firearms, including machine guns, along with illegal drugs during a search of his residence.

Roberto Rosales Gonzales, 23, was charged in a three-count criminal complaint filed in the U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo. Gonzales remains in federal custody pending a detention hearing.

On Thursday, March 21, law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at Gonzales's residence. During the search of the residence, officers found 59 firearms of various calibers, including two machine guns, assorted ammunition, a firearm silencer, and an inert hand grenade. Officers also found approximately 114.1 grams of suspected fentanyl pills, approximately 1.3 kilograms of methamphetamine, approximately 31.4 grams of suspected heroin, and more than \$22,000 in cash.

The two machine guns, which were loaded, were identified as a Glock .40-caliber pistol and a Glock 17 9x19mm pistol, each of which contained a switch to convert it into a machine gun.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the federal criminal complaint, an undercover law enforcement operation made several purchases of illegal drugs and firearms from Gonzales prior to the execution of the search warrant.

Following the transactions, the affidavit says, investigators learned that a pistol and a rifle sold by Gonzales had been reported stolen. A National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) evaluation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives indicates that the rifle was a match to shell casings recovered from two shootings.

Today's criminal complaint charges Gonzales with one count of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, one count of possessing firearms, including machine guns, in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and one count of illegally possessing machine guns.

The charges contained in this complaint are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brad K. Kavanaugh. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

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National Integrated Ballistic Information Network

This investigation involved leads generated from the ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). NIBIN is the only national network that allows for the capture and comparison of ballistic evidence to aid in solving and preventing violent crimes involving firearms. NIBIN is a proven investigative and intelligence tool that can link firearms from multiple crime scenes, allowing law enforcement to quickly disrupt shooting cycles. For more information on NIBIN, visit <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/national-integrated-ballistic-information-network-nibin>.

Updated March 23, 2024

Mexican National Sentenced to 20 Years After Officers Seize 144 Pounds of Meth Hidden in Car Tires

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today after law enforcement officers seized 144 pounds of methamphetamine hidden inside automobile wheels in his shed.

Jorge A. Rodriguez-Gonzalez, 42, a citizen of Mexico, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Greg Kays to 20 years in federal prison without parole.

On Aug. 30, 2023, Rodriguez-Gonzalez pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

A confidential source told Independence, Mo., police detectives that he/she purchased methamphetamine from Rodriguez-Gonzalez. On Oct. 11, 2019, law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at Rodriguez-Gonzalez's residence. Officers seized an H&R Pardner Pump 20-gauge shotgun and a TGI Knox 7.62x39-caliber AK-style rifle from the bedroom.

Inside a detached shed, officers found a set of four Toyota wheels and tires. Because the tires seemed extremely heavy, detectives cut one open and found a metal compartment attached to the inside of the wheel. The metal compartment was then cut open and found to contain methamphetamine.

Each wheel and tire was dismantled by investigators, who found methamphetamine inside each of the four tires. Investigators found a total of 144 pounds of methamphetamine in the four tires.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David A. Barnes. It was investigated by the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

Updated April 2, 2024

Independence Man Pleads Guilty to Drug Trafficking, Illegal Firearms

Thursday, April 4, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Faces 15-20 Years in Prison

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – An Independence, Mo., man has pleaded guilty in federal court after law enforcement officers seized 22 firearms and a large quantity of a variety of illegal drugs from his residence and his two campers in Bagnell, Mo.

Jonathan P. Henik, 44, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner on Wednesday, April 3, to two counts of being a felon in possession of firearms, two counts of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, possessing THC with the intent to distribute, two counts of possessing marijuana with the intent to distribute, possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, and possession of an unregistered firearm.

Independence police officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop while Henik, whose driver's license was revoked, was driving a Dodge Charger on Sept. 1, 2021. However, as officers attempted to contact him after he pulled to the side of the road, Henik accelerated at a high rate of speed and fled the area.

On Oct. 5, 2021, officers executed a search warrant at Henik's residence. Investigators found 11 firearms in Henik's bedroom, including two Taurus .45-caliber firearms, a Glock 9mm semi-automatic firearm, a Glock .40-caliber firearm, a Smith & Wesson .40-caliber firearm, a Colt .45-caliber firearm, a CZ 9mm firearm, a Diamond Back .223-caliber firearm, a Freedom Ordnance 9mm firearm, an ATI OMNI .223-caliber firearm, and a KEL-TEC 9mm firearm.

Officers also found two jars of THC wax and drug paraphernalia in the kitchen. Officers found a black duffel bag that contained a Palmetto 7.62 x 39mm firearm, several rounds of ammunition, 105 grams of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia in a closet near the front door.

In the garage, officers found six more firearms, including a Glock .40-caliber firearm, two Glock 9mm firearms, a Sig Sauer 9mm firearm, an SCCY 9mm firearm, a Ruger 9mm firearm, a 9mm extended magazine, a 7.62x39 magazine, and two 9mm magazines. Officers also found 928 grams of methamphetamine, a container of approximately 8.6 kilograms of THC edibles, numerous heat-sealed bags that contained a total of approximately 8.6 kilograms of marijuana, a bag that contained approximately 510.8 grams of marijuana, a bag that contained approximately 166 grams of marijuana,

a bag that contained approximately four grams of psilocybin mushrooms, several prescription medications, approximately 40 pills of suspected MDMA (ecstasy), and a bag that contained approximately four grams of THC edibles.

On Aug. 2, 2023, Henik was arrested on a federal warrant related to the original indictment in this case following law enforcement surveillance at his Sandpiper and Catalina campers parked in Bagnell, Mo.

Officers searched the campers and found two firearms on the table in the living room of the Cataline camper, a loaded Browning Arms Company .22-caliber semi-automatic pistol with a silencer (which was not registered) and a loaded Polymer80 9mm semi-automatic firearm with no markings. In the Sandpiper camper, officers found a large bag of apparent marijuana on the table. In a black bag in the living room, they found multiple bags of apparent marijuana and a plastic bag that contained approximately 145 grams of cocaine. On a dresser in the bedroom, officers found a gun case that contained magazine and live ammunition, seven explosive devices, and approximately four grams of psilocybin mushrooms. In the dresser, officers found approximately 60 grams of methamphetamine.

The total amount of marijuana recovered was approximately 1,723 grams (3.8 pounds).

Officers also searched Henik's Lincoln SUV and found a loaded Heckler & Koch 9mm semi-automatic pistol in the driver's side floorboard, a loaded FMK 9mm semi-automatic pistol, a YETI cup that contained three different types of pills, \$662 in cash in the center console, and a large bag of apparent marijuana in the back hatch.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Henik has prior federal felony convictions for conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine and use of a firearm in connection with a drug offense.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Henik and the government jointly request the court to impose a sentence of between 15 and 20 years in federal prison without parole. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ashleigh A. Ragner. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Mid Missouri Drug Task Force.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from

occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

Updated April 4, 2024

Belton, Raymore Brothers Plead Guilty to Drug-Trafficking, Illegal Firearms

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Both Brothers Face At Least 15 Years in Prison

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Two Cass County, Mo., brothers pleaded guilty in federal court yesterday to their roles in a drug-trafficking conspiracy and to illegally possessing firearms.

Serjio Diaz, 39, of Belton, and Tony Diaz, 41, of Raymore, pleaded guilty in separate appearances before U.S. District Judge Greg Kays. Serjio and Tony Diaz each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine; one count of possessing heroin with the intent to distribute; and one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. Tony Diaz also pleaded guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of firearms. Serjio Diaz also pleaded guilty to one count of money laundering.

By pleading guilty today, Serjio and Tony Diaz both admitted to participating in a drug trafficking conspiracy with others that lasted from approximately January 1, 2019, until June 22, 2021.

On March 18, 2019, a federal agent interdicted and seized a package from Arizona that contained more than 4.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, which was addressed to Serjio Diaz's residence. On the same day, a federal agent also interdicted and seized a package from Arizona that contained more than three kilograms of methamphetamine, which was addressed to Tony Diaz's residence.

During the course of the investigation, investigators conducted 23 controlled transactions with Serjio and Tony Diaz. The transactions occurred between March 26, 2019, and May 26, 2021, and took place in Grandview, Belton, and Kansas City, Missouri. Over the course of these transactions, law enforcement purchased approximately 7,052.1 grams of methamphetamine, approximately 6,036.5 grams of heroin and approximately 468.6 grams of cocaine from Serjio DIAZ and/or his brother, Tony DIAZ, for approximately \$243,900.

On June 22, 2021, law enforcement officers arrested Serjio and Tony Diaz. Following a search of Tony Diaz's residence, officers found approximately 1,128 grams of heroin, approximately 28 grams of cocaine, a Zastava Arms 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle, a Romarm Cugir 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle, and \$5,461 in cash in Tony Diaz's bedroom. Officers also found a Remington Arms .22-caliber rifle in a shed. Following a search of Tony Diaz's vehicles, officers located one pound of suspected marijuana in his Lincoln Navigator SUV, and a Ruger 9mm semi-automatic pistol and

approximately 3.4 grams of marijuana in his BMW X5. Following a search of Serjio Diaz's residence, officers found approximately 8,942 grams of heroin, approximately 166 grams of cocaine, 6 bags of round, blue "M 30" pills containing fentanyl, with an approximate, cumulative weight of 78 grams, a metal hydraulic press, also known as a "Big Red", an electronic scale, a Glock 9mm semi-automatic pistol, and \$82,250 in cash.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Tony Diaz has a prior felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance.

Co-defendant Maria Jasmin Lopez, 24, of Phoenix, Arizona, also pleaded guilty to her role in the drug-trafficking conspiracy and was sentenced on Aug. 1, 2023, to 11 years and two months in federal prison without parole. Co-defendant Vicente Aguilera, 39, of Kansas City, Missouri pleaded guilty to use of a communication facility to facilitate a drug conspiracy and is awaiting sentencing.

Under federal statutes, Serjio and Tony Diaz are each subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years, up to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bradley K. Kavanaugh and Robert Smith. It was investigated by the FBI, the Jackson County Drug Task Force and U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Updated April 10, 2024

KC Man Sentenced for Meth Conspiracy, Illegal Firearm

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man has been sentenced in federal court for his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin and for illegally possessing a firearm.

John A. Caylor, 55, was sentenced by U.S. Chief District Judge Beth Phillips on Tuesday, April 16, to 13 years and six months in federal prison without parole.

On Sept. 20, 2023, Caylor pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin and one count of possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime.

Caylor admitted that he participated in the drug-trafficking conspiracy from Feb. 28, 2020, to Sept. 20, 2022.

Co-defendant Jose Jesus Sanchez-Mendez, 42, a citizen of Mexico who illegally entered the United States, pleaded guilty on Sept. 20, 2023, to his role as the chief local operative of the drug-trafficking organization that distributed methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl sourced from Mexico. Sanchez-Mendez managed the importation, processing, and distribution of hundreds of kilograms of illegal drugs in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

During the conspiracy, Caylor sold methamphetamine and other illegal drugs to a confidential informant on eight separate occasions. Caylor was arrested when he met the confidential informant for a ninth transaction, at which time Caylor was in possession of approximately 29.8 grams of methamphetamine.

Law enforcement officers searched Caylor's hotel room and found a loaded Bersa .380-caliber handgun under a pillow on the bed, approximately 525.3 grams of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia.

Caylor is among 44 defendants charged in this case, and among seven defendants who have been sentenced. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled for Sanchez-Mendez.

On June 8, 2022, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) led an operation that involved 140 officers and agents from 14 state, local and federal law enforcement agencies. Officers made 34 arrests, executed 16 search warrants and seized 84.4 kilograms of methamphetamine, 4.5 kilograms of heroin, 10.4 kilograms of fentanyl, 7.6 kilograms of cocaine, 10.5 kilograms of marijuana, 687 Xanax pills, 3.1

kilograms of unknown pills, a quantity of bulk cash, five firearms, a 3D printer with manufactured ghost gun parts, and a liquid methamphetamine conversion lab.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick C. Edwards and Megan A. Baker. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, IRS-Criminal Investigation, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Olmsted County, Minn., Sheriff's Office, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the FBI, the Clay County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

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KC Metro Strike Force

This prosecution was brought as a part of the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Co-located Strike Forces Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations against a continuum of priority targets and their affiliate illicit financial networks. These prosecutor-led co-located Strike Forces capitalize on the synergy created through the long-term relationships that can be forged by agents, analysts, and prosecutors who remain together over time, and they epitomize the model that has proven most effective in combating organized crime. The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and money laundering organizations that present a significant threat to the public safety, economic, or national security of the United States.

Updated April 17, 2024

KC Man Sentenced for Meth Conspiracy, Illegal Firearm

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

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kilograms of unknown pills, a quantity of bulk cash, five firearms, a 3D printer with manufactured ghost gun parts, and a liquid methamphetamine conversion lab.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick C. Edwards and Megan A. Baker. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, IRS-Criminal Investigation, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Olmsted County, Minn., Sheriff's Office, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the FBI, the Clay County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

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Updated April 17, 2024

KC Business Owner Pleads Guilty to Wiring Drug-Trafficking Profits to Mexico

Monday, July 1, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Co-Defendant Pleads Guilty to \$4.7 Million Meth, Heroin Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The owner of an Olathe, Kansas, business pleaded guilty in federal court today to her role in a money-laundering conspiracy to transfer the proceeds of heroin and methamphetamine trafficking to Mexico. A Kansas City, Mo., woman also pleaded guilty to her role in the drug-trafficking conspiracy.

Ana Lilia Leal-Martinez, 48, a citizen of Mexico residing in Overland Park, pleaded guilty before U.S. Chief District Judge Beth Phillips to participating in a conspiracy to commit money laundering from May 23, 2020, to Sept. 20, 2022.

Leal-Martinez is the owner of Imagen Leal in Olathe, Kan., which offers money transfer services. By pleading guilty today, Leal-Martinez admitted that she accepted drug proceeds from co-conspirators, including Jose Jesus Sanchez-Mendez, also known as "Michoacano," 41, a Mexican national. Those drug proceeds were then sent by wire transfer to individuals in Michoacan, Mexico.

Between Jan. 1, 2022, and June 8, 2022, Leal-Martinez sent wires totaling \$83,850 to Mexico from her business in furtherance of the money-laundering conspiracy. These transfers were structured and sent under assumed names in order to avoid suspicion and detection.

Leal-Martinez, one of 44 defendants indicted in this case, was identified in 2022 after Homeland Security Investigations initiated the investigation of a drug-trafficking organization that distributed more than 335 kilograms of methamphetamine, 22 kilograms of heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl, among other drugs, sourced from Mexico in the Kansas City area. Investigators identified numerous bulk cash smugglers and drug traffickers working for the drug-trafficking organization as part of the \$4.7 million conspiracy.

Co-defendant Flor Gonzalez-Celestine, 54, of Kansas City, Mo., also pleaded guilty today to participating in a \$4.7 million conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin from Feb. 28, 2020, to Sept. 20, 2022. Gonzalez-Celestine participated in four controlled drug buys that were monitored by law enforcement. She sold more than a kilogram of methamphetamine to a confidential

informant and was observed in possession of approximately 2.2 additional kilograms of methamphetamine.

Sanchez-Mendez has pleaded guilty to his role in a continuing criminal enterprise, to his role in the drug-trafficking and money-laundering conspiracies, and to illegally reentering the United States. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled.

Under federal statutes, Leal-Martinez is subject to a sentence of up to 20 years in federal prison without parole. Gonzalez-Celestine is subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick C. Edwards and Megan A. Baker. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, IRS-Criminal Investigation, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Olmsted County, Minn., Sheriff's Office, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the FBI, the Clay County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDEF) operation. OCDEF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDEF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDEF>.

KC Metro Strike Force

This prosecution was brought as a part of the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDEF) Co-located Strike Forces Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations against a continuum of priority targets and their affiliate illicit financial networks. These prosecutor-led co-located Strike Forces capitalize on the synergy created through the long-term relationships that can be forged by agents, analysts, and prosecutors who remain together over time, and they epitomize the model that has proven most effective in combating organized crime. The principal mission of the OCDEF program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and

money laundering organizations that present a significant threat to the public safety, economic, or national security of the United States.

Mexican National Indicted After Officers Seize 54 Kilos of Meth, Fentanyl

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Mexican national residing in Kansas City, Mo., was indicted by a federal grand jury today after law enforcement officers seized more than 54 kilograms of methamphetamine and a large amount of fentanyl from his residence.

Jose Feliciano Cordova Rodriguez, 36, was charged in a three-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo. Today's indictment replaces a federal criminal complaint that was filed against Rodriguez on June 24, 2024, and includes additional charges.

Today's indictment alleges that Cordova Rodriguez participated in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine from Jan. 1 to June 22, 2024. The indictment also charges Cordova Rodriguez with one count of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute and one count of possessing fentanyl with the intent to distribute.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the original criminal complaint, law enforcement officers searched Cordova Rodriguez's residence on June 22, 2024, after surveillance indicated he was involved in a large drug shipment. Officers found five brown boxes that each contained 10 bundles with a total of 54.6 kilograms of methamphetamine. Officers also found a heat-sealed bag in a hole in the wall in the basement that contained 431.1 grams of fentanyl. Officers also found \$12,800 in cash in the basement.

The charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Q. McCarther. It was investigated by the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Updated July 16, 2024

18 Motorcycle Club Members Indicted for Armed Assaults Against Rivals

Thursday, August 15, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Pagan's Motorcycle Club Members Arrested Today in Law Enforcement Operation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Eighteen members and associates of the Pagan's Motorcycle Club have been indicted by a federal grand jury for a series of armed assaults against members of rival motorcycle clubs.

A law enforcement operation conducted today resulted in 15 arrests along with the execution of seven search warrants; two of the defendants were already in custody. More than a dozen law enforcement agencies were involved in the operation that also resulted in the seizure of more than 40 firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunition, body armor and a marijuana grow operation. According to the indictment, Pagan's is a violent criminal organization that engaged in racketeering, an enterprise that involved illegal drug trafficking. Pagan's maintains chapters in numerous states, including multiple active chapters in Missouri and Kansas.

Christopher W. McGowen, also known as "Mac," 40, of Platte City, Mo.; Arthur L. Reynolds III, also known as "Straight Edge," 48, and Jarrod A. Hammer, also known as "Hammer," 45, both of Independence, Mo.; Jeremiah Z. Hahn, also known as "Pass Out," 41, and John J. Hahn, also known as "Krazy Legs," 46, both of Cameron, Mo.; Charles E. Smith, Jr., also known as "Crash," 38, and James W. Prettyman, also known as "Rugby," 42, both of Blue Springs, Mo.; Mark A. Cottman, also known as "One Shot," 49, of Kansas City, Mo.; Bryan S. Fletcher, also known as "Fletch," 48, and Mark A. Crump, also known as "Navajo," 54, both of Lee's Summit, Mo.; Jeffrey S. Hannah, also known as "Got-It," 42, of Grain Valley, Mo.; Eric M. Forsyth, Jr., also known as "EZ," 34, of Oak Grove, Mo.; Robert W. Miller, also known as "Flipper," 46, and Brandon S. Hodge, also known as "Youngblood," 25, both of Joplin, Mo.; Monty L. Mitchell, also known as "Smoke," 58, of Windsor, Mo.; Alan M. Thornton, also known as "Bones," 40, of Holden, Mo.; John Travis Fisher, also known as "T-Bone," 51, of Sapulpa, Oklahoma; and Graham S. Gattis, also known as "Dro," 40, of Panama City, Florida, were charged in a five-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo., on Aug. 7, 2024.

The federal indictment was unsealed and made public today following the arrests of the defendants.

The indictment alleges that Pagan's is territorial and protects its territory from rival motorcycle clubs through violence and intimidation. The primary rivals to Pagan's in Missouri include the Hells Angels, Outlaws, El Forastero, Galloping Goose, Sons of Silence, and the Bandidos. When members of rival motorcycle clubs were in areas Pagan's believed to be under its control, says the indictment, Pagan's threatened and intimidated them with violence. Pagan's tried to eliminate other motorcycle gangs completely from their territory by assaulting, robbing, extorting and sometimes attempting to murder them, according to the indictment.

The indictment alleges a series of assaults were committed as part of Pagan's racketeering enterprise.

McGowen and Jeremiah Hahn are charged together in one count of assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering. The indictment alleges they assaulted a rival motorcycle gang member with a dangerous weapon on May 30, 2022.

McGowen, Reynolds, Smith, Miller, Prettyman, Mitchell, Cottman, John Hahn, Gattis, Forsyth, Fletcher, Hannah, and Hodge are charged together in one count of assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering. The indictment alleges they assaulted a rival motorcycle gang member with a dangerous weapon on Sept. 17, 2022.

McGowen, Jeremiah Hahn, Smith, Fisher, Miller, Prettyman, Mitchell, and Thornton are charged together in one count of attempting to commit assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering. The indictment alleges they attempted to assault a rival motorcycle gang member with a dangerous weapon on Sept. 3, 2022.

McGowen, Reynolds, Smith, Miller, Prettyman, Mitchell, Cottman, John Hahn, Gattis, Forsyth, Fletcher, Hannah and Hodge are charged together in one count of discharging a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. The indictment alleges they discharged a firearm during an assault on Sept. 17, 2022.

Cottman, Hammer, and Crump are charged together in one count of assault resulting in serious bodily injury in aid of racketeering. The indictment alleges they seriously injured a rival motorcycle gang member during an assault on July 20, 2023.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bradley K. Kavanaugh and Robert Smith. It was investigated by the FBI, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Blue Springs, Mo., Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

Today's law enforcement operation included the FBI, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Blue Springs, Mo., Police Department, the Oak Grove, Mo., Police Department, the Lee's Summit, Mo., Police Department, the Greene County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, and FBI national assets and field offices in St. Louis, Mo., Las Vegas, Nev., and Knoxville, Tenn.

Independence Man Indicted for Fentanyl Trafficking, Illegal Firearms

Tuesday, August 27, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Overdose Death of Johnson County Teen Launched Federal Investigation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – An Independence, Mo., man was indicted by a federal grand jury today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and illegally possessing firearms.

Demarkus Q. Shelton, 44, was charged in a 16-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo. Today's indictment replaces a federal criminal complaint that was filed against Shelton on Aug. 2, 2024, and includes additional charges.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the original criminal complaint, the investigation began on Feb. 22, 2024, when a teenager was found dead of an apparent overdose in Johnson County, Mo. Evidence at the scene, including fentanyl and smoking paraphernalia, indicated the victim had been using fentanyl prior to his death. An autopsy was conducted, which cited a cause of death as the toxic effects of fentanyl.

Investigators learned the overdose victim was among several Johnson County youth who allegedly purchased fentanyl from Shelton earlier that same day.

The affidavit cites a series of controlled purchases from Shelton resulting in the seizure of over 95 grams of powder or "raw" fentanyl. As little as two milligrams of fentanyl can be fatal. During the drug transactions, the affidavit says, Shelton was usually armed with a handgun with a drum magazine and/or an AK-47 or AR-style rifle. In one transaction, Shelton allegedly sold the confidential informant a Palmetto State Armory AR model multi-caliber firearm with a 30-round magazine in addition to 22.7 grams of powder fentanyl for \$2,300.

On Aug. 5, 2024, law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at the hotel room where Shelton was arrested on the complaint. Officers found a Taurus .40-caliber semi-automatic firearm and a Taurus .22-caliber semi-automatic handgun.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Shelton, who is on state probation, has prior felony convictions for possession of a controlled substance, burglary, and tampering with a motor vehicle.

The federal indictment charges Shelton with one count of conspiracy to distribute fentanyl, seven counts of distributing fentanyl, six counts of possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and two counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ashleigh A. Ragner. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Updated August 27, 2024

Three Mexican Nationals Charged with Meth Trafficking

Thursday, September 5, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Three Mexican nationals were charged in federal court today after they were caught with more than 56 pounds of methamphetamine during a traffic stop on Interstate 29.

Pedro Alberto Quiroz Ayala, 20, Apolinar Gocovachi Pacheco, 24, and Pablo De Jesus Peralta Anguis, 25, all of whom are citizens of Mexico, were charged with possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute in a complaint filed in the U.S. District Court. They remain in federal custody pending a detention hearing on Tuesday, Sept. 10.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the federal criminal complaint, a Missouri State Highway Patrol trooper pulled over a gray 2011 Acura MDX on Interstate 29, near the N.W. 112th Street exit in Kansas City, Mo., at about 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 3. Ayala, who did not have a valid driver's license, was driving the Acura, with a female juvenile in the front passenger seat and Pacheco and Anguis in the back seats.

When the trooper searched the vehicle, he found a large duffle bag in the third-row seating area that contained approximately 55.6 pounds of methamphetamine. He also found a grocery bag that contained approximately one pound of methamphetamine on the floorboard where the female juvenile had been sitting, and a loaded firearm in the driver's door pouch.

When the four occupants got out of the vehicle for the search, the affidavit says, Ayala and Anguis fled on foot. A manhunt ensued; Ayala was apprehended about half an hour later and Anguis was apprehended after about 12 minutes.

Ayala told investigators they had picked up the drugs at a Walmart parking lot in Omaha, Nebraska. Ayala said he was going to receive \$2,000 for transporting the drugs.

The charge contained in this complaint is simply an accusation, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charge must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brad K. Kavanaugh. It was investigated by the FBI and the Missouri State Highway Patrol

Independence Man Sentenced to 19 Years for Drug Trafficking, Illegal Firearms

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Felon Illegally Possessed 22 Firearms, 7 Explosive Devices

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – An Independence, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today after law enforcement officers seized 22 firearms and a large quantity of a variety of illegal drugs from his residence and his two campers in Bagnell, Mo.

Jonathan P. Henik, 45, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner to 19 years and two months in federal prison without parole.

On April 4, 2024, Henik pleaded guilty to two counts of being a felon in possession of firearms, two counts of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, possessing THC with the intent to distribute, two counts of possessing marijuana with the intent to distribute, possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute, and possession of an unregistered firearm.

Independence police officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop while Henik, whose driver's license was revoked, was driving a Dodge Charger on Sept. 1, 2021. However, as officers attempted to contact him after he pulled to the side of the road, Henik accelerated at a high rate of speed and fled the area.

On Oct. 5, 2021, officers executed a search warrant at Henik's residence. Investigators found 11 firearms in Henik's bedroom, including two Taurus .45-caliber firearms, a Glock 9mm semi-automatic firearm, a Glock .40-caliber firearm, a Smith & Wesson .40-caliber firearm, a Colt .45-caliber firearm, a CZ 9mm firearm, a Diamond Back .223-caliber firearm, a Freedom Ordnance 9mm firearm, an ATI OMNI .223-caliber firearm, and a KEL-TEC 9mm firearm.

Officers also found two jars of THC wax and drug paraphernalia in the kitchen. Officers found a black duffel bag that contained a Palmetto 7.62 x 39mm firearm, several rounds of ammunition, 105 grams of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia in a closet near the front door.

In the garage, officers found six more firearms, including a Glock .40-caliber firearm, two Glock 9mm firearms, a Sig Sauer 9mm firearm, an SCCY 9mm firearm, a Ruger 9mm firearm, a 9mm extended magazine, a 7.62x39 magazine, and two 9mm magazines. Officers also found 928 grams of methamphetamine, a container of approximately 8.6 kilograms of THC edibles, numerous heat-sealed bags that contained a total of approximately 8.6 kilograms of marijuana, a bag that contained

approximately 510.8 grams of marijuana, a bag that contained approximately 166 grams of marijuana, a bag that contained approximately four grams of psilocybin mushrooms, several prescription medications, approximately 40 pills of suspected MDMA (ecstasy), and a bag that contained approximately four grams of THC edibles.

On Aug. 2, 2023, Henik was arrested on a federal warrant related to the original indictment in this case following law enforcement surveillance at his Sandpiper and Catalina campers parked in Bagnell.

Officers searched the campers and found two firearms on the table in the living room of the Cataline camper, a loaded Browning Arms Company .22-caliber semi-automatic pistol with a silencer (which was not registered) and a loaded Polymer80 9mm semi-automatic firearm with no markings. In the Sandpiper camper, officers found a large bag of apparent marijuana on the table. In a black bag in the living room, they found multiple bags of apparent marijuana and a plastic bag that contained approximately 145 grams of cocaine. On a dresser in the bedroom, officers found a gun case that contained magazine and live ammunition, seven explosive devices, and approximately four grams of psilocybin mushrooms. In the dresser, officers found approximately 60 grams of methamphetamine.

The total amount of marijuana recovered was approximately 1,723 grams (3.8 pounds).

Officers also searched Henik's Lincoln SUV and found a loaded Heckler & Koch 9mm semi-automatic pistol in the driver's side floorboard, a loaded FMK 9mm semi-automatic pistol, a YETI cup that contained three different types of pills, \$662 in cash in the center console, and a large bag of apparent marijuana in the back hatch.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Henik has prior federal felony convictions for conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine and use of a firearm in connection with a drug offense.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ashleigh A. Ragner. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Mid Missouri Drug Task Force.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

Updated September 25, 2024

Mexican National Sentenced to 15 Years for Meth Conspiracy

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute more than 60 kilograms of methamphetamine.

Juan Hernandez-Guzman, 31, a citizen of Mexico who is a permanent resident of the United States, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs to 15 years in federal prison without parole. The court also ordered Hernandez-Guzman to forfeit to the government \$13,048 that was seized by law enforcement officers, which represents the proceeds of drug trafficking.

On April 16, 2024, Hernandez-Guzman pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine from April 10 to April 23, 2023.

Police officers executed a search warrant at Hernandez-Guzman's residence on April 23, 2023. Officers found a loaded Glock .357-caliber handgun, which had been modified so that it was capable of firing automatically, and a loaded Glock 9mm handgun, and a non-functioning .22-caliber revolver. Each of the Glock handguns had an extended magazine loaded with 27 rounds of ammunition. Officers also seized \$4,048 in cash. Officers took protective custody of two children who were present.

Officers also found 10.9 kilograms of methamphetamine inside a cardboard box in the back seat of Hernandez-Guzman's Tahoe. The vehicle also contained \$9,000 in cash.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick C. Edwards and Megan A. Baker. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, and the Independence, Mo., Police Department.

KC Metro Strike Force

This prosecution was brought as a part of the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDEF) Co-located Strike Forces Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations against a continuum of priority targets and their affiliate illicit financial networks. These prosecutor-led co-located Strike Forces capitalize on the synergy created through the long-term relationships that can be forged by agents, analysts, and prosecutors who remain together over time, and they epitomize the model that has proven most effective in

combating organized crime. The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and money laundering organizations that present a significant threat to the public safety, economic, or national security of the United States.

Updated October 2, 2024

PRESS RELEASE

Belton Man Sentenced for Drug Trafficking, Illegal Firearms

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Belton, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for leading a drug-trafficking conspiracy and for illegally possessing a firearm.

Serjio Diaz, 40, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Greg Kays to 15 years in federal prison without parole.

On April 9, 2024, Diaz pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine, one count of possessing heroin with the intent to distribute, one count of possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and one count of money laundering.

Diaz admitted that he was the primary organizer of a drug-trafficking conspiracy that lasted from Jan. 1, 2019, to June 22, 2021.

The investigation began on March 18, 2019, when federal agents interdicted and seized a package from California that contained more than 4.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, which was addressed to Diaz's residence. On the same day, federal agents also interdicted and seized a package from California that contained more than three kilograms of methamphetamine, which was addressed to the residence of his brother and co-defendant, Tony Diaz, 41, of Raymore, Mo.

During the course of the investigation, investigators conducted 23 controlled transactions from Serjio and Tony Diaz, utilizing an FBI confidential source. Over the course of these controlled purchases, law enforcement purchased more than seven kilograms of methamphetamine, more than six kilograms of heroin, and 468.6 grams of cocaine from Serjio and Tony Diaz for a total of \$243,900.

In one transaction, for example, the confidential source purchased a kilogram of methamphetamine for \$9,000 from Tony Diaz. In another instance, the confidential source purchased 222.4 grams (7.5 ounces) of cocaine from Serjio Diaz for \$7,000.

On June 22, 2021, law enforcement officers arrested Serjio and Tony Diaz and searched Serjio Diaz's residences and vehicles. Officers found almost nine kilograms of heroin, 166 grams of cocaine, six

bags of pills that contained fentanyl and weighed a total of 78 grams, a Glock 9mm semi-automatic pistol, and \$82,250 in cash.

Officers searched Tony Diaz's residence and found 1,128 grams of suspected heroin, 28 grams of suspected cocaine, a Zastava Arms 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle, a Romarm Cugir 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle, and \$5,461 in cash in Tony Diaz's bedroom. Officers also found a Remington Arms .22-caliber rifle in a shed, one pound of suspected marijuana in his Lincoln Navigator SUV, and a Ruger 9mm semi-automatic pistol and 3.4 grams of suspected marijuana in his BMW X5.

From May 1, 2019, to Dec. 31, 2020, Serjio Diaz deposited 93 money orders, totaling \$82,145, into either his personal bank account or the bank account of his business, Imperial Window & Gutter Cleaning, LLC. Serjio Diaz went to multiple post offices on the same date to purchase money orders; 21 of those purchases occurred soon after a controlled drug purchase was made by law enforcement in this investigation. Serjio Diaz limited his purchase to a maximum of \$2,000 at each post office in order to avoid federal reporting requirements.

Tony Diaz has pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine, one count of possessing heroin with the intent to distribute, one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime, and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled for Tony Diaz.

Co-defendant Maria Jasmin Lopez, 24, of Phoenix, Arizona, also pleaded guilty to her role in the drug-trafficking conspiracy and was sentenced on Aug. 1, 2023, to 10 years and three months in federal prison without parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bradley K. Kavanaugh. It was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the FBI and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Updated October 9, 2024

KC Man Pleads Guilty to Three Fentanyl Overdose Deaths

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Faces 20 Years to Life in Prison for Drug-Trafficking Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to distributing fentanyl, which resulted in three overdose deaths in Belton and Raymore, Mo., as part of a drug-trafficking conspiracy.

Tiger Dean Draggoo, 24, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Roseann A. Ketchmark to one count of conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and three counts of distributing fentanyl resulting in death.

By pleading guilty today, Draggoo admitted that he distributed fentanyl on Sept. 3, 2022, the use of which caused the death of another person. Draggoo admitted that he distributed fentanyl between Aug. 22 and Sept. 13, 2022, the use of which caused the death of another person. Draggoo admitted that he distributed fentanyl between Dec. 7 and 20, 2022, the use of which caused the death of another person.

Draggoo also admitted that the government's evidence of the total amount of drugs he is responsible for distributing or possessing is at least 22,364 pills that contained a total of 2,460 grams of fentanyl.

Victim #1 Fatality

On Sept. 4, 2022, Cass County, Mo., sheriff's deputies found a juvenile, identified in court documents as "Victim #1," deceased in her bedroom. An autopsy report identified "Fentanyl Intoxication" as the cause of death. Investigators determined that Draggoo was selling fentanyl pills to the victim and had supplied her with fentanyl pills on the evening of Sept. 3, 2022.

Victim #2 Fatality

On Sept. 13, 2022, a deceased person, identified in court documents as "Victim #2," was found in the Belton residence where she lived with her mother. A blue pill was found in her bedroom, which was tested and determined to contain fentanyl. An autopsy report identified the cause of death as "Acute Fentanyl Toxicity." Investigators learned that Draggoo was selling fentanyl pills to Victim #2. Draggoo typically would drop off pills near midnight at Victim #2's bedroom window, and cell phone GPS information indicated Draggoo was in the area of Victim #2's residence at approximately 12:20 am on Sept. 13, 2022.

Attempted Arrest of Draggoo

On Sept. 22, 2022, law enforcement officers conducted surveillance of Draggoo's apartment and attempted to arrest him. Draggoo got into a Jeep Renegade driven by his brother, co-defendant Colt Justin Draggoo, 21, of Kansas City, Mo. Officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop of the vehicle, but the vehicle fled. Tiger and Colt Draggoo later returned to the apartment complex, but when an officer drove into the parking lot, Tiger Draggoo ran into the apartment building and was able to escape.

Colt Draggoo was arrested. Officers found a loaded Springfield Armory 9mm handgun sitting on the driver's seat of the Jeep. A laundry bag in the back seat contained two fire safes that had a total of \$184,500 in cash. Colt Draggoo has pleaded guilty to his role in the drug-trafficking conspiracy.

Officers searched Tiger Draggoo's apartment and found 17 firearms, including two machine guns, ammunition of various calibers, \$246,769 in cash, a ballistic vest with plates, a money counter, numerous pills that contained fentanyl, eight suspected LSD tabs, and marijuana. The 17 firearms included a Del-Ton 5.56-caliber rifle (converted into a machine gun), a Glock switch (used to convert a Glock pistol into a machine gun), three Marlin .22-caliber rifles, a Norinco 7.62-caliber rifle, a Mosin-Nagant rifle, an Anderson Manufacturing AM-15 .223-caliber rifle, a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun, an Armscorp USA .308-caliber rifle, a Century Arms 7.62-caliber rifle, a Herbert Schmidt .22-caliber revolver, a New England Firearms .22-caliber revolver, a Kimber 9mm pistol, a Glock 9mm pistol, a Sig Sauer 9mm pistol, and a Metro Arms .45-caliber pistol.

Victim #3 Fatality

On Dec. 20, 2022, Raymore police officers were dispatched to a residence in Raymore regarding a non-breathing female, identified in court documents as Victim #3. Victim #3 was transported to a local hospital where she was pronounced deceased. A small jewelry box in Victim #3's bedroom contained three broken segments of a blue pill that were tested and determined to contain fentanyl. An autopsy report identified the cause of death as "Acute Fentanyl Toxicity." Investigators learned that Tiger Draggoo had been selling fentanyl to Victim #3 since as early as May 31, 2022. The last Facebook Messengers conversation between Tiger Draggoo and Victim #3 occurred on Dec. 7, 2022, when they agreed to meet and an amount of \$50 was agreed upon.

Arrest of Draggoo

Tiger Draggoo was arrested at his residence on Jan. 20, 2023. Tiger Draggoo was in possession of almost \$2,000 in cash in his billfold and pockets. Officers searched Tiger Draggoo's apartment and recovered pills from the toilet. Officers also found suspected psilocybin mushrooms, 144 grams of yellow THC wax, and more than \$62,000 in additional cash. Officers searched Tiger Draggoo's Honda Accord and found three handguns, a Palmetto State Armory multi-caliber rifle, an unregistered short-barreled 12-gauge shotgun, and \$1,250 in cash. Officers searched his girlfriend's Jeep Renegade, which was located at the apartment complex, and found a backpack that contained more than \$82,000 in cash.

Under federal statutes, Tiger Draggoo is subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in federal prison without parole, up to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brad K. Kavanaugh and Robert Smith. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Belton, Mo., Police Department, the Raymore, Mo., Police Department, the Cass County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, and the FBI.

Updated October 16, 2024

Jury Convicts Mexican National of \$4.7 Million Meth, Heroin Conspiracy

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

44 Defendants Indicted in Conspiracy to Distribute Hundreds of Kilos

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Mexican national who worked with a drug-trafficking organization tied to the Cárteles Unidos cartel in Michoacán, Mexico, was convicted by a federal trial jury today of his role in a \$4.7 million conspiracy to distribute more than 335 kilograms of methamphetamine and 22 kilograms of heroin in the Kansas City, Mo., metropolitan area and throughout the United States.

Luis Eduardo Pineda-Zarao, 29, a citizen of Mexico residing in Lebanon, Tennessee, was found guilty of participating in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin from Feb. 28, 2020, to June 1, 2022.

The indictment alleges the conspiracy involved the distribution of more than 335.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, with an average street price of \$300 per ounce, and more than 22.1 kilograms of heroin, with an average street price of \$1,500 per ounce.

During the investigation, federal agents with Homeland Security Investigations conducted two undercover bulk cash pickups totaling \$308,775 and seized \$610,400 in bulk cash, over 56 kilograms of methamphetamine, 5.5 kilograms of heroin, 2.6 kilograms of marijuana, and at least eight firearms, two of which were stolen. Law enforcement officers also seized \$277,863 during a vehicle stop and \$114,863 while executing search warrants at four Kansas City, Mo., residences.

Pineda-Zarao is among 44 defendants charged in this case. Nine co-defendants have been sentenced and 34 co-defendants have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

Following the presentation of evidence, the jury in the U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., deliberated for less than an hour before returning guilty verdicts to U.S. District Judge Greg Kays, ending a trial that began Monday, Oct. 21.

Under federal statutes, Pineda-Zarao is subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick C. Edwards and Megan Baker. It was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, IRS-Criminal Investigation, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Olmsted County, Minn., Sheriff's Office, the Texas Department of Public Safety, the FBI, the Clay County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

KC Metro Strike Force

This prosecution was brought as a part of the Department of Justice's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Co-located Strike Forces Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations against a continuum of priority targets and their affiliate illicit financial networks. These prosecutor-led co-located Strike Forces capitalize on the synergy created through the long-term relationships that can be forged by agents, analysts, and prosecutors who remain together over time, and they epitomize the model that has proven most effective in combating organized crime. The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and money laundering organizations that present a significant threat to the public safety, economic, or national security of the United States.

Updated October 23, 2024

Eastern Jackson County Men Indicted for Fentanyl Trafficking

Thursday, October 24, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Also Charged with Six Machine Gun Conversion Devices

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Two Eastern Jackson County men have been indicted by a federal grand jury for their roles in a conspiracy to distribute fentanyl, with one of the men also charged with possessing six machine gun conversion devices.

Kal J. Nay, 21, of Oak Grove, Mo., and Robert J. Turnage, 20, of Blue Springs, Mo., were charged in a five-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 15, 2024. Nay was arrested yesterday and had his initial court appearance today. Turnage has not yet been arrested.

The federal indictment charges Nay and Turnage with participating in a conspiracy to distribute fentanyl. They are also charged together in one count of distributing fentanyl from May 2 to June 11, 2024.

Additionally, Nay is charged with two counts of distributing fentanyl and one count of possessing machine guns. The indictment alleges that Nay was in possession of six machine gun conversion devices, commonly referred to as "switches," on June 18, 2024.

The charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica L. Jennings. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Updated October 24, 2024

KC Man Sentenced to 15 Years for Fentanyl Conspiracy

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

Fentanyl Trafficking Resulted in the Three Overdose Deaths

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute fentanyl, which resulted in the deaths of three persons.

Luis Manuel Morales, 24, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Roseann Ketchmark to 15 years in federal prison without parole.

On May 8, 2024, Morales pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute fentanyl and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Morales admitted that he was a source of supply of fentanyl pills for co-defendant Tiger Dean Draggoo, 24, of Kansas City, Mo. On occasion, Draggoo also served as a source of supply of fentanyl pills for Morales. Morales also introduced Draggoo to additional sources of fentanyl pills.

Morales sold at least 1,764 pills to Draggoo over 15 separate transactions from Jan. 17 to Oct. 29, 2022, for which he was paid \$2,320 through Cash App and an additional amount in cash. Morales also purchased at least 100 fentanyl pills from Draggoo during this time period, for which he paid \$750. In total, those 1,864 pills contained approximately 205 grams of fentanyl.

Morales and Draggoo conspired to conceal and disguise the nature of the transfer of funds through Cash App by referring to the payments as "rent," "food clothes," "clothes," "food and beer," "food," "apt rent," "reimbursement for mechanic," and "reimbursement car payment."

Morales was on probation at the time that he was supplying Draggoo with fentanyl pills, following his guilty plea in state court to attempted armed robbery after he and another person robbed a victim at gunpoint.

Morales is the first defendant in this case to be sentenced. On Oct. 16, 2024, Draggoo pleaded guilty to his role in the fentanyl conspiracy and to three counts of distributing fentanyl resulting in death. Five additional defendants have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brad K. Kavanaugh and Robert Smith. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and

Explosives, the Belton, Mo., Police Department, the Raymore, Mo., Police Department, the Cass County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, and the FBI.

Updated October 30, 2024

Raymore Man Sentenced for Drug Trafficking, Illegal Firearms

Friday, December 13, 2024

Share

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Missouri

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Raymore, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a drug-trafficking conspiracy and for illegally possessing firearms.

Tony Diaz, 41, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Greg Kays to nine years in federal prison without parole.

His brother and co-defendant, Serjio Diaz, 40, of Belton, Mo., was sentenced on Oct. 9, 2024, to 15 years in federal prison without parole.

On April 9, 2024, Serjio and Tony Diaz each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine, one count of possessing heroin with the intent to distribute, and one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. Tony Diaz also pleaded guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of firearms. Serjio Diaz also pleaded guilty to one count of money laundering.

Serjio Diaz admitted that he was the primary organizer of the drug-trafficking organization during the conspiracy that lasted from Jan. 1, 2019, to June 22, 2021.

The investigation began on March 18, 2019, when federal agents interdicted and seized a package from California that contained more than 4.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, which was addressed to Serjio Diaz's residence. On the same day, federal agents also interdicted and seized a package from California that contained more than three kilograms of methamphetamine, which was addressed to the residence of Tony Diaz.

During the course of the investigation, investigators conducted 23 controlled transactions from Serjio and Tony Diaz, utilizing an FBI confidential source. Over the course of these controlled purchases, law enforcement purchased more than seven kilograms of methamphetamine, more than six kilograms of heroin, and 468.6 grams of cocaine from Serjio and Tony Diaz for a total of \$243,900.

In one transaction, for example, the confidential source purchased a kilogram of methamphetamine for \$9,000 from Tony Diaz. In another instance, the confidential source purchased 222.4 grams (7.5 ounces) of cocaine from Serjio Diaz for \$7,000.

On June 22, 2021, law enforcement officers arrested Serjio and Tony Diaz and searched Serjio Diaz's residences and vehicles. Officers found almost nine kilograms of heroin, 166 grams of cocaine, six bags of pills that contained fentanyl and weighed a total of 78 grams, a Glock 9mm semi-automatic pistol, and \$82,250 in cash.

Officers searched Tony Diaz's residence and found 1,128 grams of suspected heroin, 28 grams of suspected cocaine, a Zastava Arms 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle, a Romarm Cugir 7.62x39mm semi-automatic rifle, and \$5,461 in cash in Tony Diaz's bedroom. Officers also found a Remington Arms .22-caliber rifle in a shed, one pound of suspected marijuana in his Lincoln Navigator SUV, and a Ruger 9mm semi-automatic pistol and 3.4 grams of suspected marijuana in his BMW X5.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Tony Diaz has a prior felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance.

From May 1, 2019, to Dec. 31, 2020, Serjio Diaz deposited 93 money orders, totaling \$82,145, into either his personal bank account or the bank account of his business, Imperial Window & Gutter Cleaning, LLC. Serjio Diaz went to multiple post offices on the same date to purchase money orders; 21 of those purchases occurred soon after a controlled drug purchase was made by law enforcement in this investigation. Serjio Diaz limited his purchase to a maximum of \$2,000 at each post office in order to avoid federal reporting requirements.

Co-defendant Maria Jasmin Lopez, 24, of Phoenix, Arizona, also pleaded guilty to her role in the drug-trafficking conspiracy and was sentenced on Aug. 1, 2023, to 11 years and two months in federal prison without parole.

Co-defendant Vicente Aguilera pleaded guilty to using a cell phone to facilitate a drug-trafficking conspiracy and was sentenced on Nov. 1, 2024, to 16 months in federal prison without parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bradley K. Kavanaugh. It was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the FBI and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

Updated December 13, 2024

JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE COMMITMENT

Jackson County is a primary market area for production, distribution and abuse of dangerous drugs. Although progress has been made in many areas, continued vigilance, enforcement, treatment and education are required. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue its successful tradition through community partnerships and a united, cooperative effort against illegal narcotics.

Although limited by financial and personnel constraints, the Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue to provide the citizens of these communities the professional service that they have come to deserve and expect. The members of this Task Force have made a commitment to this office, the law enforcement profession and the citizens of this community that no information concerning the illegal sales of narcotics will go without proper investigation. With that in mind, we will strive to continue to improve on the quality of service to this community.

The Jackson County Drug Task Force actively solicits tips and information regarding all illegal narcotics activity. Should the information be related to a jurisdiction outside of Jackson County, personnel from this office will assure that the information is passed on to the proper investigative agency. Individuals having information to pass on may contact this office through phone in complaints at 816-655-DRUG or through the TIPS hotline, 816-474-TIPS.

