

2009-2013

Phoenix Drug Kingpin Sentenced to 20 Years for Directing Criminal Enterprise

In January 2009, the DEA Phoenix Field Division and the U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona announced the sentencing of drug kingpin Martin Angel Gonzalez. Martin Angel Gonzalez, 43, of Phoenix, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for operating a large drug trafficking ring out of Phoenix.

U.S. District Court Judge Stephen M. McNamee also imposed a \$10 million monetary judgment against Gonzalez, who pled guilty to being the leader of a Continuing Criminal Enterprise, Conspiracy to Possess with the Intent to Distribute Marijuana, Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering, and Possession with the Intent to Distribute Marijuana.

Gonzalez was charged with various drug trafficking offenses as part of a 70-count superseding indictment related to his leadership of a 12-year conspiracy involving the distribution of over 30,000 kilograms of marijuana worth more than \$33 million. Twenty-five other co-conspirators were also charged and pled guilty for their involvement in the conspiracy.

During the investigation, agents seized approximately 5,000 pounds of marijuana and more than \$15 million in organizational assets. These assets included cash, investment accounts, bank accounts, vehicles, jewelry, and real estate properties. Gonzalez's organization imported marijuana from Mexico, packaged it in the Phoenix area and distributed it to Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Florida, Illinois, Wisconsin, and California. He distributed marijuana to his associates across the country using commercial trucks, cars and commercial shipping companies. Gonzalez was arrested in Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico, with the assistance of Mexican federal law enforcement authorities. He was extradited from Mexico to the United States in 2006.

Extradition of Miguel Caro-Quintero (2009)

Caro-Quintero took control of the family drug trafficking organization responsible for trafficking multi-ton quantities of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana into the U.S. after the arrest and imprisonment of his brother, Rafael Caro-Quintero, who previously led the organization. Rafael Caro-Quintero and Miguel Angel Felix-Gallardo were the masterminds behind the kidnapping, torture, and murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena in 1985.



Miguel Caro-Quintero



Federal and Local Law Enforcement Working Together in Connecticut

In February 2009, the DEA Bridgeport, Connecticut Resident Office (BRO) received a call from the Danbury Police Department following the discovery of the body of Edward Rivera in a remote area of Danbury, CT. The BRO responded to Danbury and assisted with the investigation. As a result of the investigation by DEA, the Danbury Police Department, and the U.S. Marshal Service, it was discovered that Rivera had been kidnapped from his address in Bronx, NY, robbed of 68 pounds of marijuana, murdered, and driven 60 miles to Danbury, where his body was dumped in a wooded area. The vehicle used to transport Rivera was found at a salvage yard in the Bronx.

On March 1, 2009, the stolen marijuana was recovered in a wall trap in the bedroom of defendant Andrew Zayac. Zayac was later convicted of the murder, kidnapping, and robbery of Rivera in federal court. Zayac's co-defendant, Heriberto Gonzalez, was convicted on drug charges, tampering with evidence, and obstruction of justice. From phone records obtained during the investigation, a connection was made to a marijuana and steroid trafficking group in Danbury. A Title III investigation was initiated with ties to the Bonnano Organized Crime Family and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club. The operation resulted in 12 federal arrests and the seizure of 200 pounds of marijuana, large quantities of steroids, and cash, vehicles, and real property totaling \$750,000.00.

United States Reaches \$1 Million Settlement with Kino Hospital in Tucson

The DEA Tucson District Office announced a settlement with Kino Hospital in Tucson, AZ in March 2009 stemming from an audit and an investigation conducted after doses of controlled substances were discovered missing from the hospital in early 2004. Kino Hospital committed to fund \$1,000,000 over five years to establish a three-prong drug abuse prevention initiative to benefit the Tucson area community.

One part of the campaign was designed to educate parents and teachers of teenage students in southern Arizona on the signs and symptoms associated with the abuse of prescription drugs. The education campaign was developed and implemented in southern Arizona middle schools and high schools by the Pima County Department of Health.

The second initiative financed by Pima County was for the development and operation of an arrestee drug usage data collection program. This program allowed Pima County to track trends in drug usage, providing data to aid in assessing the viability of treatment efforts, law enforcement tactics, and general crime analysis.

The final of the three programs was for the development and operation of a drug treatment program to be implemented within the Pima County jail system. The purpose of this program was to provide immediate access to drug treatment for Pima County inmates on a voluntary basis.



Operation Blade Runner

Operation Blade Runner (2009)

A traffic stop conducted by the Utah Highway Patrol in Salt Lake City in February 2009 resulted in the seizure of 83 kilograms of cocaine. Law enforcement determined the cocaine was destined for a location in eastern Washington, where it was to have been loaded onto a helicopter in exchange for a load of B.C. bud marijuana. When the helicopter touched down outside of Lone, Washington, DEA was waiting. Samuel Lindsey-Brown, 24, of Revelstoke, British Columbia, was arrested after he attempted to off-load 12 large duffel bags containing 426 pounds of marijuana. During the course of the investigation, a DEA Special Agent working undercover infiltrated the organization and arranged to receive 300 pounds of B.C. bud marijuana and to deliver 20 kilograms of cocaine to be smuggled into Canada.

On March 5, 2009, the group attempted the exchange with the undercover DEA Special Agent using a helicopter in North Idaho. A Kelowna, British Columbia man landed the helicopter in Northern Idaho and was arrested after unloading 174 pounds of B.C. bud marijuana.

Through information sharing between the U.S. and Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) identified the landing site in Canada. The RCMP arrested two men from Chilliwack, B.C. and seized 150 pounds of marijuana and approximately 40,000 ecstasy pills. Additional search warrants served in Nelson, Salmon Arm and Malakwa, B.C. resulted in the seizure of six guns and two arrests. Together, DEA and the RCMP arrested nine subjects and seized over 750 pounds of marijuana, over 80 kilograms of cocaine, six weapons, and two helicopters.

4-Star General Accompanies DEA

In March 2009, General David McKiernan, the U.S. Commander of all NATO and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, accompanied DEA agents on a search warrant execution near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. General McKiernan was the first 4-star General to accompany DEA agents in the field in Afghanistan. DEA FAST and DEA Kabul Country Office agents executed the operation



General David McKeirnan with DEA ASAC Selby Smith, who organized General McKeirnan's participation on this operation.

and seized 900 kilograms of morphine. General McKeirnan became a friend of DEA in Afghanistan and was instrumental in providing military assistance for DEA operations.

DEA Aids Colombians Against the FARC

In June 2009, the DEA Bogota Country Office Narco-Terrorism Group began assisting the *Cuerpo Tecnico de Investigaciones (CTI)*, the Colombian judicial investigative branch, and the Colombian Army in their manhunt to capture indicted FARC Supreme Commander Guillermo Leon Saenz Vargas a.k.a. Alfonso Cano. Though he had been a DEA target for some time, it was Alfonso Cano's 2009 rise to the supreme leadership position, that made him DEA's number one FARC target.

For two years DEA and other U.S. Government agencies, along with elements of Colombian Military Intelligence, Colombian Army Special Forces, CTI, and the Colombian National Police pursued and targeted Alfonso Cano in a sustained series of intelligence driven military offensives. Dubbed Operation Odyssey, the offensive was designed to systematically attack Alfonso Cano's security and logistical support to push him out

of his traditional operating zone. Ultimately, Alfonso Cano's hideout was pinpointed and in the early morning hours of November 4, 2011, the Colombian Air Force bombed the location while hundreds of elite Colombian Army Special Forces troops descended from helicopters to surround the mountainside hideout. Alfonso Cano was killed in action as he tried to sneak through the Army Special Forces security perimeter under cover of darkness dressed in civilian clothes. This event marks the only time in Colombia's 48-year fight against FARC that the Supreme Commander of the FARC was killed.

Physician Accused of Multiple Crimes in Massive Prescription Drug Case

In July 2009, the DEA Phoenix Field Division and the Arizona Attorney General's Office announced the filing of felony charges and the Maricopa County Superior Court's

issuance of a \$10 million seizure warrant against a Nevada doctor who allegedly wrote illegal drug prescriptions for patients at a clinic he operated in Mohave County. He also allegedly collected \$3.5 million in fraudulent insurance claims, including \$2.5 million from the State of Arizona.

The 14 felony counts against Dr. Albert Szu Sun Yeh, 44, of Las Vegas, included conspiracy, assisting a criminal syndicate, money laundering and improperly administering narcotic drugs. In a separate indictment, seven felony counts were filed against Dr. Yeh's physician assistant, Bryan V. Espinosa, 54, of Henderson, Nevada.

Dr. Yeh, who was licensed to practice in both Nevada and Arizona, maintained a practice in Las Vegas and saw Arizona patients only on Tuesdays at his Pain Wellness Center in Golden Valley, Ariz., a town with a population of about 5,000 near Kingman. He would typically write more than 100 prescriptions each Tuesday the center was open. The warrant served during the operation led to the seizure of \$3.9 million in multiple bank accounts, investment accounts, real estate and other property belonging to Dr. Yeh.



DEA SAC Elizabeth W. Kempshall with Arizona Police Chiefs.



Dr. Yeh's Pain Wellness Center in Arizona.



DEA remembers three fallen agents in Afghanistan.

DEA Loses Three Heroes in the Line of Duty

On October 26, 2009, three DEA special agents and seven U.S. military service members tragically lost their lives during operations in western Afghanistan.

During the early morning hours of Monday, October 26, 2009, SAs Michael E. Weston, Forrest N. Leamon, Chad L. Michael, other DEA SAs, U.S. Special Forces, and Afghan military counterparts, were executing Afghan search warrants at a bazaar in Afghanistan’s rugged Badghis province. This bazaar was a safe haven for insurgents and contained significant quantities of narcotics, improvised explosive devices, and weapons used against Coalition Forces. This operation supported the Government of Afghanistan’s Rule of Law efforts to disrupt the material support of the Taliban by drug traffickers in western Afghanistan.

After a successful counter narcotics/counter insurgency operation, (which included an hour-long firefight with insurgents), the DEA agents, U.S. military personnel, and Afghan counterparts were departing the target area on a U.S. military helicopter when it crashed, killing SA Weston, SA Leamon, SA Michael, and seven U.S. Special Forces personnel.

The crash also injured 26 other personnel, including DEA Group Supervisor Patrick McDarby. GS McDarby received numerous injuries during the incident but continued to assist with extracting injured personnel out of the crashed helicopter. All of the injured and deceased were recovered from the crash site and returned to base.

OCDETF Strike Force Opens in Phoenix

On October 1, 2009, Deputy Attorney General David W. Ogden, along with U.S. Attorney Dennis K. Burke, Acting Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Kenneth Melson, Drug Enforcement Administration Deputy Chief of Operations Dave Gaddis, and other federal and local officials unveiled the new Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Strike Force site in Phoenix, AZ.

DEA Reopens Country Office in Uzbekistan

Given the need to address the Afghan drug trade and Uzbekistan’s increased efforts to address counter-narcotic issues, the Government of Uzbekistan accredited DEA special agents to the U.S. Mission in Tashkent, and in October 2009, DEA formally re-opened the Tashkent Country Office.

In recognition of this new era of bilateral cooperation, then DEA Assistant Administrator and Chief of Intelligence, Anthony Placido, traveled to Tashkent, Uzbekistan to attend meetings with high-ranking Uzbek officials. Afterwards, U.S. Ambassador Richard Norland held a reception in honor of Mr. Placido’s visit. Distinguished Uzbek guests included the Chairman of the National Security Service, the Minister of the Interior, the Chairman of the State Customs Committee, the General Prosecutor, and the first Deputy Foreign Minister.

Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey

Over 9,000 pounds of medicine, with a street value of over \$35 million, was collected during Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey in November 2009. This was a first in the statewide day of disposal of unused, unwanted, and expired medicine. This statewide effort was spearheaded by the DEA New Jersey Division and the Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey (PDFNJ) with support from many other local and statewide prevention and enforcement organizations.

More than 440 local police departments and sheriff departments across all of New Jersey’s 21 counties hosted collection sites, where New Jersey residents came out in force to rid their homes of unused, unwanted, and expired medicines.

Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey accomplished two goals—first and foremost, it generated unprecedented attention to the issue of prescription and over-the-counter medicine abuse, and secondly, it caused tens of thousands of New Jersey residents to look at their medicine cabinets as a potential source for young people to access highly addictive and potentially deadly drugs.

Operation Medicine Cabinet New Jersey evolved into the nation-wide program entitled National Take Back Initiative.

Compton's Prescription Drug Diversion Investigation

In 2009, the DEA Oklahoma City Diversion Group received intelligence that a group of individuals were involved in trafficking oxycodone in Norman, OK. A prominent businessman, Stephan Compton, his wife, their three sons and others were involved in the drug trafficking activities. In October 2009, a wire intercept was initiated on two of the Compton's cellular telephone lines.

As part of the scheme, the Comptons used others to acquire oxycodone tablets for them through scheduled doctors' appointments where prescriptions were obtained. The individuals were paid by the Comptons in exchange for the oxycodone tablets and were even driven to their doctors appointments and pharmacies to fill the prescriptions. Once obtained, the oxycodone tablets were stored at various locations in Norman and Noble, OK.

In December 2009, six search warrants were executed and 42 individuals were arrested in a coordinated takedown of the Comptons illegal pill distribution organization. As a result of the enforcement action, another investigation into the physicians who supplied the Compton organization was immediately initiated. In March 2012, in the U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma, one of the main source physicians, Amar N. Bhandary, was indicted on 53 counts of knowingly and intentionally distributing and dispensing controlled substances. On April 26, 2012, Bhandary was arrested in Frankfurt, Germany by German authorities.

DEA Detroit Takes Out Adarus Mazio Black

In December 2009, DEA Detroit Field Division Task Force Group Eight concluded a five-year complex drug homicide investigation, which ended the reign of Adarus Mazio Black. The investigation had begun in August 2004 after the bodies of two Mexican drug traffickers were found in a Detroit back alley. It was later determined the Mexican drug traffickers were killed at the direction of Black after he became aware they were attempting to establish a competing cocaine and marijuana distribution network in Detroit. In March 2005, Group Eight linked Black to the murder of a federal government witness who was preparing to testify against Detroit-based drug dealers, including Black. The federal witness was shot in the head at point blank range as he left his luxury car rental business. In May 2007, Group Eight linked Black to the brutal slaying of two charter bus drivers who were murdered before they could cooperate and speak about their involvement in the seizure of \$4.2 million in bulk currency linked to Black. The bus drivers were shot multiple times in the head after they were lured back to Detroit.

Group Eight built a drug conspiracy and a CCE case against Black. On May 29, 2009, Black was convicted of conspiracy to distribute cocaine, conspiracy to distribute marijuana, continuing a criminal enterprise, escape, and obstruction of justice. On December 14, 2009, Black was sentenced to life in prison.

They're Guilty: Memphis Resident Office Concludes Racketeering Investigation

Craig Petties was the head of a major Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) based in Memphis, TN. The Petties DTO was



On January 18, 2008, CPOT Craig Petties (left) arrived in Memphis via DEA aircraft, escorted by Memphis RO TFO Therman Richardson (right).

supplied with cocaine by CPOT Arturo Beltran-Leyva and his associate, Edgar "La Barbie" Valdez. The Petties DTO was an extremely violent organization that operated in the Memphis area for several years and was responsible for at least five homicides. The Petties DTO was also responsible for the importation of thousands of kilograms of cocaine over several years and was widely regarded as the largest cocaine source of supply in the Memphis area. This violent organization was a major criminal enterprise with activities ranging from purchasing cocaine from CPOT targets in Mexico, to street level trafficking in Memphis and elsewhere. Due to their connections with the Sinaloa Cartel, the prices the Petties organization paid for cocaine were far below the amount paid by other groups in Memphis. This organization also provided weapons to the Beltran-Leyva organization in Mexico.

In January 2008, Petties was arrested in Queretaro, Mexico by units of the Mexican military. All of the significant members of this group were indicted in U.S. District Court in Memphis, with six members indicted in a Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) case. In December of 2009, Petties pled guilty to an indictment that included the RICO charge, five counts of violent crime in aid of racketeering activity and to several drug and money laundering charges. All members of the Petties DTO pled guilty or were found guilty on various federal charges in the Western District of Tennessee.

Project Coronado

In October 2009, DEA announced the successful culmination of Project Coronado, a 44-month multi-agency law enforcement investigation targeting the La Familia Michoacana drug cartel. The effort was the largest single U.S. strike against Mexican drug cartels to date. Over the course of two days, 303 individuals in 19 states were arrested in a series of takedowns by federal, state, and local law enforcement. More than 3,000 agents and officers operated across the United States to make the arrests during the two-day takedown; 62 kilograms of cocaine, 729 pounds of methamphetamine, 967 pounds of marijuana, 144 weapons, 109 vehicles, and 2 clandestine drug labs were also seized.

In total, Project Coronado led to the arrest more than 1,180 individuals and the seizure of approximately \$33 million in U.S.



currency, 1,999 kilograms of cocaine, 2,730 pounds of methamphetamine, 29 pounds of heroin, 16,390 pounds of marijuana, 389 weapons, 269 vehicles, and two clandestine drug labs. Then DEA Acting Administrator Leonhart said at the culmination of Project Coronado, “This organization, La Familia, the newest of Mexican cartels, is directly responsible for a vast majority of the methamphetamine pouring into our country across our South-west Border, and has had a hand in fueling the cycle of violence that is wracking Mexico today.”

Operation Heavy Cargo

DEA Operation Heavy Cargo, which targeted a drug trafficking organization using commercial aircraft to transport cocaine to the United States, concluded in September 2009. This DTO began operating in or about 1999 and was responsible for smuggling over \$19 million worth of cocaine into the United States. The operation revealed that employees of American Airlines would ensure suitcases loaded with kilograms of cocaine were smuggled onto American Airlines aircraft and transported to different cities in the U.S. Twenty-three airline employees were arrested in Puerto Rico and Miami, with \$18 million in property seized throughout Puerto Rico.

Operation Xcellerator

Operation Xcellerator, which culminated in February 2009, targeted the very violent and dangerously powerful Sinaloa drug cartel and led to the arrest of more than 750 individuals on narcotics-related charges. More than 23 tons of narcotics were seized as part of this 21-month multi-agency law enforcement investigation. Individuals indicted in the operation were charged with a variety of crimes, including engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise by violating various felony provisions of the Controlled Substances Act, conspiracy to import controlled substances, money laundering, and possession of unregistered firearms.

Operation Xcellerator led to the arrest of 755 individuals and the seizure of approximately \$59.1 million in U.S. currency, more than 12,000 kilograms of cocaine, more than 16,000 pounds of marijuana, more than 1,200 pounds of methamphetamine, more than eight kilograms of heroin, approximately 1.3 million pills of ecstasy, more than \$6.5 million in other assets, 149 vehicles, three aircraft, three maritime vessels, and 169 weapons.

Global Operation Targets Illegal Importation of Pharmaceuticals

In November 2009, DEA, along with the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, part of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, coordinated the involvement of agents and officers from DEA, ICE, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and arrested numerous suspects involved in Internet sale of counterfeit and illicit medicines.

Agents and officers targeted over 7,000 suspect packages at international mail centers resulting in 724 packages being detained for further examination and seizure. In addition to these examinations, the FDA issued 22 warning letters about illegal activity occurring on 136 independent websites. To date, 90 of those websites or domain names have been permanently suspended.

DEA Announces Arrest of Top La Familia Cartel Member

On August 3, 2009, DEA announced the arrest of Miguel Angel Berraza Villa, a key member of La Familia Michoacana and one of Mexico’s most ruthless and violent drug cartels. Mexican police had detained Berraza, a.k.a. “La Troca” and Salomon Figueroa-Harrison, a cartel associate, in Apatzingan, Michoacan, Mexico.

La Troca was identified as a significant meth trafficker based in Apatzingan, Michoacan. DEA and Mexican law enforcement officials had identified him as the individual who took over the cartel duties after Arnoldo Rueda Medina, a.k.a. “La Minsa,” was arrested in late July by the Secretaria de Seguridad Publica.

New Rules Governing Internet Pharmacies Go Into Effect

In April 2009, DEA released new regulations implementing the Ryan Haight Online Pharmacy Consumer Protection Act of 2008. These regulations helped to prevent the illegal diversion of powerful controlled substances by means of the Internet. The Ryan Haight Act, named for an 18-year-old who died after overdosing on a prescription painkiller he obtained on the Internet from a medical doctor he never saw, was enacted on October 15, 2008 through the joint efforts of his mother, Francine Haight, and members of Congress, with the support of the DEA.

The statute amended the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) by adding several new provisions:

- New definitions, such as “online pharmacy” and “deliver, distribute, or dispense by means of the Internet;”
- A requirement of at least one face-to-face patient medical evaluation prior to issuance of a controlled substance prescription;
- Registration requirements for online pharmacies;
- Internet pharmacy website disclosure information requirements; and
- Prescription reporting requirements for online pharmacies.

Associate of International Arms Dealer Monzer Al Kassar Found Guilty

On March 18, 2009 Tareq Mousa Al Ghazi, 62, an associate of international arms dealer Monzer Al Kassar, was found guilty of charges relating to a conspiracy to sell millions of dollars’ worth of weapons to the FARC—a designated foreign terrorist organization—that would be used to kill U.S. officers and employees in Colombia.

Between February 2006 and June 2007, Al Ghazi and Al Kassar agreed to sell thousands of machine guns, millions of rounds of ammunition, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and surface-to-air missile systems to the FARC. During a series of recorded telephone calls, e-mails, and in-person meetings, Al Ghazi and Al Kassar agreed to sell the weapons to two individuals who were in fact confidential sources working with DEA. The confidential sources represented that they were acquiring these weapons for the FARC to use in attacks directed at U.S. helicopters in Colombia.

DEA Launches New Educational Website for Parents

In February 2009, DEA launched a new educational website for parents, www.GetSmartAboutDrugs.com. The website was



DEA Chiefs of Intelligence

developed as a resource for parents and caregivers to help them identify drug abuse, prevent children from using drugs, and find resources for substance abuse prevention. The site was designed to speak to parents and caregivers of middle school, high school, and college-age children in an informative and non-technical manner.

Acting Administrator Michele M. Leonhart stated, “DEA wants to share our knowledge about drugs with parents, teachers, and all those who care about keeping our children safe. In this fight, information is power, and DEA’s new website has current, accurate, and practical information about how to spot signs of abuse, identify drugs and paraphernalia, and how to talk to teens about drugs. With just a few clicks parents will be confident and ready to help their kids resist drugs.”

DEA Chiefs of Intelligence Testify on Capitol Hill

Over the past five years, DEA Chiefs of Intelligence Anthony Placido and Rodney Benson had many opportunities to testify in front of the U.S. legislature, highlighting the fact that the DEA intelligence program has been relied upon by U.S. lawmakers in combatting both domestic and foreign law enforcement issues. These numerous examples of being called on to testify for lawmakers included testimony by Chief of Intelligence Placido on March 17, 2009 regarding “Law Enforcement Responses to Mexican Drug Cartels” as well as testimony by Chief of Intelligence Benson on October 4, 2010 regarding “Is Merida Antiquated? Part Two: Updating U.S. Policy to Counter Threats of Insurgency and Narco-Terrorism.”

Operation Vaqueros (2010)

On April 27, 2010, the DEA Sierra Vista Resident Office along with other federal, state, and local officials, announced arrests and charges against a Mexican drug trafficking organization responsible for moving at least 40,000 pounds of marijuana through southern Arizona. The DTO employed advanced counter-surveillance, ramp trucks to overcome vehicle barriers at the border, and hidden vehicle compartments.



Methods of Concealment

Seven federal wiretaps approved in the OCDETF investigation, dubbed Operation Vaqueros for the “Cowboy” attire worn by members of the DTO, were unsealed by order of the U.S. District Court. Twelve people were indicted on federal conspiracy



charges. In the course of the investigation, 26 people were indicted on federal charges, and 13 on state charges.

The 36-month investigation yielded 39 state and federal indictments, and 34 arrests, including one employee of the Cochise County Attorney's Office who was arrested on state charges for providing confidential information to one of the drug traffickers in exchange for money. The remaining 27 defendants were load drivers for the trafficking organization and were prosecuted for drug trafficking charges in federal and state courts.

Baltimore's Black Guerilla Family

Between April 2008 and July 2010, members of DEA Baltimore District Office Group 57, the office's Special Investigations Group, joined with the Baltimore Police Department, the Maryland Division of Corrections, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Maryland and the Baltimore City Attorney's Office to attack a violent nationwide prison gang known as the Black Guerilla Family (BGF). BGF conducted its affairs through a pattern of criminal activity including narcotics trafficking, robbery, extortion, bribery, retaliation against a witness or informant, money laundering, and commercial robbery. BGF members used violence and threats of violence to coerce incarcerated persons to pay protection money to BGF, to enforce the BGF code of conduct, and to increase their control of the Baltimore City drug trade and the underground "prison economy" throughout Maryland correctional facilities.

Group 57 linked the drug trafficking activity of this violent prison gang to the international CPOT organization of Beltran-Leyva during DEA's Operation Xcellerator. A total of 24 phones were intercepted throughout all three phases of the Title III investigation. The Investigators and Intelligence Analysts supporting the investigation uncovered an emerging money laundering technique when BGF members used Greendot prepaid debit cards to launder the proceeds of their illegal activities.

The case netted 47 federal/state arrests, and the seizure of more than 43 kilograms of cocaine, one kilogram of heroin, cash, assets, firearms, and ballistic vests. Working in concert with the Maryland Division of Corrections, cellular telephones, weapons, and a variety of narcotics and prison contraband were confiscated. During the course of the investigation, Group 57 identified and arrested several corrupt prison employees who worked directly with the BGF.

Operation Tormenta del Manglar (2010)

On July 2, 2010, the DEA Quito Country Office and the Ecuadorian National Police Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) coordinated a search operation in the San Lorenzo, Ecuador area to locate a fully submersible vessel under construction in a remote mangrove swamp (manglar) region between San Lorenzo, Ecuador and the Ecuador-Colombian border. The search resulted in the seizure of a 74 foot long camouflaged, painted, fully functioning submarine. This effort was dubbed Operation Tormenta del Manglar by the Ecuadorian National Police SIU and was the first



Operation Tormenta del Manglar

seizure of a clandestinely constructed, fully operational submarine built to facilitate drug trafficking.

The "Hunt for Red October," as it was called by Special Agents in the Quito Country Office, had begun in early 2010, when the DEA Cartagena Resident Office provided information to the Quito Country Office about a Colombian drug trafficking organization constructing a submarine. It was believed the submarine was being built in the area north of San Lorenzo, Ecuador along the Ecuador-Colombia border.

The Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) was not discouraged by the seizure and immediately started to plan the construction of a replacement submarine in Colombia. With the members of the organization identified and their meeting locations under surveillance around the clock, DEA's Colombian counterparts were able to determine the new location where the second submarine was being constructed. After completing the second submarine, a specialized tactical unit of the Colombian Navy executed an operation that led to the seizure of the second fully constructed submarine, 3,000 kilograms of cocaine, two cocaine laboratories belonging to the DTO, and several firearms.

With the seizure of the second submarine, the Cartagena Resident Office and the Miami Field Division began the process of indicting 22 members of the DTO. Colombian law enforcement arrested 21 of the DTO members with the intention of extraditing them to the U.S. During this time frame, the Cartagena Resident Office learned the DTO was building a third submarine. The Bogota Country Office received separate information from a source regarding the location of the third submarine under construction. The third submarine was discovered and destroyed by the Colombian National Police Jungla Unit and Agents from the Bogota Country Office.

DEA Oakland's Operation Burnout (2010)

Since the 1980's, the Burn Out Family Mafia gang had distributed at least two kilograms of heroin and two kilograms of

cocaine per month in East Oakland, California, and were also involved in assault, murder, and illegal credit card activity. The DEA Oakland Resident Office and the Oakland Police Department began this investigation in 2010. The gang proved to be a violent organization, terrorizing citizens through fear and intimidation, and the unfolding case included high-speed car chases, shoot-outs with police and rival gang members, fraud, and drug trafficking.

On June 28, 2010, Agents from DEA's Oakland Resident Office, along with numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies arrested 20 individuals, resulting in the dismantlement of the Burn Out Family Mafia gang.

DEA conducted judicial intercepts which led to the identification of the primary gang leaders and their participation in drug activity, violence, and illegal credit card activities. Additionally, Agents gathered information regarding four cold-case shootings and cold-case homicides that were provided to the Oakland Police Department for further investigation. Agents intercepted calls that linked defendants to shootings targeting rival gang members.

This 24-month SOD-supported PTO investigation resulted in the arrest of 94 individuals on various state and federal charges and the seizure of 23 guns, \$10,000 in U.S. currency, and four fraudulent credit card manufacturing systems linked to the Ukraine and Russia, with thousands of U.S. victims. Undercover and informant-based drug buys conducted during the course of the investigation also contributed to the federal drug indictments.

DEA New Orleans Targets Ideal Pharmacy (2010)

Members of DEA New Orleans Tactical Diversion Squad Group 14, along with counterparts from DEA's Atlanta, Caribbean, San Diego, and Seattle Field Divisions, as well as state and local counterparts, assisted in the execution of five state arrest warrants and nine state search warrants for members of a drug trafficking organization headed by Carlton Charles in May 2010. The DTO bought and sold large quantities of drugs and distributed the drugs without valid prescriptions in New Orleans and throughout the United States through multiple rogue Internet pharmacy fronts.

TDS Group 14 targeted the illegal drug distribution operations of the Ideal Pharmacy Care, Inc., Esplanade Pharmacy, a brick and mortar location in New Orleans, and Web Marketing Services, also of New Orleans. The DTO head was Carlton Charles, whose pharmacy license was revoked by the State of Louisiana, but who had put the various businesses in the names of friends and family

members who had valid pharmacy licenses. DEA's audits of Ideal Pharmacy between 2006 and 2010 found significant unaccounted shortages of the drugs hydrocodone, alprazolam (Xanax), and promethazine with codeine. The street value of the thousands of missing dosage units from the audits totaled approximately \$4.4 to \$5.9 million.

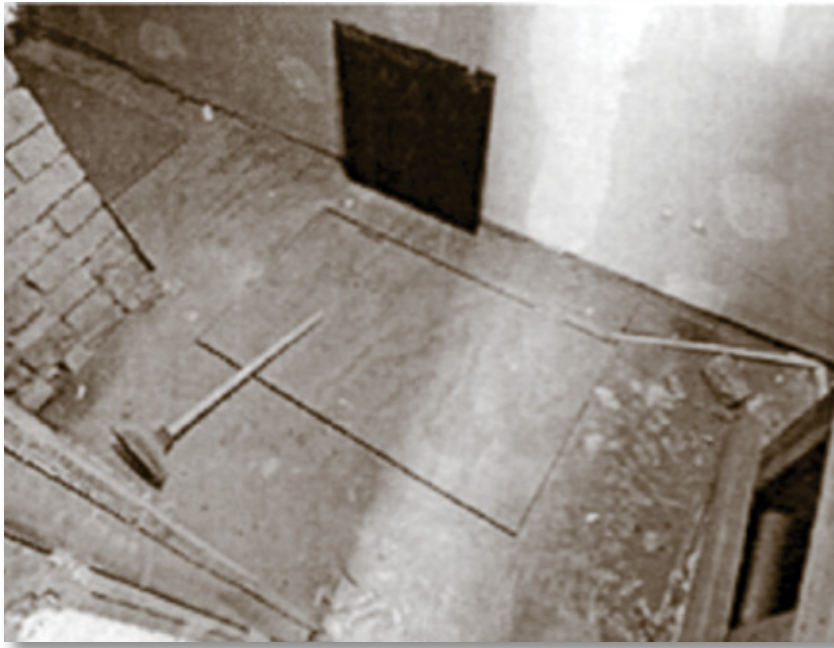
During the round-up, Agents seized two firearms, approximately \$60,000 in U.S. currency and financial instruments, 12 computers, a money counter, numerous smart phones and thumb drives, three vehicles, 30 residential properties, approximately 90,000 non-controlled tablets, approximately 5,000 controlled substance tablets, 22 pints of promethazine with codeine (found in a floor trap), and approximately 17 bank accounts valued at



This casket was found at a location being used by the DTO to package drugs to ship all around the country; the TDS group has not been able to determine why the casket was there.



Diversion Investigator Rita Esquivel-Blatt assists with the seizure of narcotics from one of the search warrant locations.



Above and right: During the execution of a search warrant, agents discovered a closet. Inside were several boxes of drugs. After removing the drugs, Agents discovered a trap door in the floor covering a storage space containing boxes of pint size bottles of promethazine with codeine.

approximately \$3 million. The subjects arrested were charged with criminal offenses including money laundering, racketeering conspiracy, and multiple crimes involving controlled substances, including drug distribution near a school.

Indictment of the “American Drug Lord”

In August 2010, DEA’s Atlanta Field Division culminated a multi-agency OCDETF, RPOT, and CPOT investigation code named Operation Multiplicity with the arrest of American citizen turned violent Mexican drug lord Edgar Valdez-Villareal in Mexico. Valdez-Villareal was known as “La Barbie” for his good looks. Until his capture, “La Barbie” was one of the most ruthless drug traffickers in Mexico, working for the Arturo Beltran-Leyva drug trafficking organization as a top enforcer. His rise and fall as a drug lord was documented in the September 2011 issue of Rolling Stone magazine. In addition to La Barbie’s arrest, this investigation resulted in the indictment of 21 additional co-conspirators, several of whom were sentenced to over 30 years in prison, as well as the seizure of over \$7,000,000.00 in U.S. currency and 187 kilograms of cocaine.

Fighting Pill Mills in Georgia

DEA’s Atlanta Field Division saw the writing on the wall when Florida became the nation’s hot spot for the illegal distribution of prescription pills. Anticipating the passage of stricter Florida legislation targeting the indiscriminate distribution of highly addictive narcotics, the Atlanta Field Division recognized the four state region, and specifically Georgia, would be the next battleground.

DEA Atlanta took a multi-disciplined approach coordinating Diversion, Intelligence, and Enforcement to prepare for an influx of “Pill Mills.” The Atlanta Division then stood up a Tactical Diversion Squad, proactively coordinating with state and local agencies and licensure boards to develop an attack plan. Consistent with cooperation at the state, and local levels, the Atlanta

Division led a three-pronged approach of education, legislation, and enforcement to tackle the increase in pill mills. Intelligence Analysts collected and implemented shared databases to identify the brokers behind the clinics. Presentations to law enforcement, legislators, healthcare professionals, and local citizens resulted in greater awareness and response.

Some local counties and their citizens responded with moratoriums against pain clinics in their neighborhoods. Legislation was passed in Georgia to implement a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. Additional legislation was passed placing specific requirements on pain clinics and their owners. Laws in Georgia regarding Schedule II prescriptions increased the requirements to prevent forgery and abuse. The TDS quickly targeted the most egregious clinics that opened in the Atlanta area. Many quickly closed their doors and moved away. Some stayed and have since been served with Immediate Orders to Show Cause actions, search warrants, administrative warrants, and some were arrested.

Operation Four Horsemen (2010)

In the first decade of the new millennium, Atlanta became a major command and control location for major Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Atlanta’s strategic location within the southeastern part of the United States and its role as a commercial and banking center for the south permitted legitimate businesses to thrive. Simultaneously, the increase in Hispanic population in the southeast (both legal and illegal) allowed Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) to blend into the economy and accelerated the rise of Mexican organizations as the primary distributors of cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, and heroin.

As a result of the increasing presence of Mexican DTO command and control functions, the Atlanta Divisional Office initiated OCDETF Operation Four Horsemen, which identified and targeted an importation, transportation, and distribution DTO that spanned multiple states, and reported to three high rank-



8.9 Million dollars seized in December 2008 during “Operation Four Horsemen.” Pictured above from left to right, front row: IA Pierre Mangones, TFO Mike Johnson, SA Denise Garcia, TFO Mike Blevins, SA Mark Hadaway, SA Tom Jackson, GS David Stephens. Back row: SA Brian Shields, TFO Alex Scott, SA Darren Krawczyk, SA Ralph Lorio, and SA Shacy Frye.



Baltimore District Office’s Special Agent Edward Marcinko (left) and Hagerstown Resident Office Task Force Officer Guy McCartney (right) lead Felicia “Snoop” Pearson from her residence, following Pearson’s 2011 arrest on drug conspiracy charges. Pearson was already “famous” for her role as an enforcer in the television series, “The Wire.”

ing members of the Mexico based Hector Beltran-Leyva (HBL) Cartel, a designated CPOT. The investigation revealed Atlanta, Georgia was the primary distribution point for the organization, with additional connections to McAllen, Texas; San Antonio, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Raleigh, North Carolina. The investigation identified two primary cells operating in Atlanta, Georgia and Laredo, Texas that operated in a similar fashion, receiving multi-kilogram shipments of cocaine that arrived in tractor trailers from Mexico. After the drug traffickers received their cocaine shipments, they shipped millions

of dollars in United States currency back to Mexico by concealing the money in tractor trailers and other vehicles.

The investigation, which culminated in August 2010, resulted in the total seizure of 973 kilograms of cocaine, 1,445 kilograms of marijuana, and over \$31 million in drug proceeds. Additionally, 24 individuals in the Northern District of Georgia, as well as 34 persons in the Southern District of Texas, were indicted and arrested. This investigation included over 100 federal court authorized wire intercepts initiated by DEA agents in the Northern District of Georgia.

Advertising for Traffickers

In 2010, a radio advertisement on a local Wilmington, North Carolina Hispanic radio station resulted in the recruitment of a well-placed source into the Enrique Mendoza-Figueroa drug trafficking organization. The investigation quickly expanded to a Priority Target and CPOT-linked investigation utilizing federal wire intercepts and extensive confidential source and undercover activity. This case was the focus of the DEA Wilmington Resident Office in 2011 and represented how a high-level domestic trafficking organization impacts multiple DEA divisions. The investigation resulted in the seizure of \$9,744,997.00, 134 kilograms of cocaine, 5,883 pounds of marijuana, 13 pounds of methamphetamine, 14 firearms and 31 arrests including the July 2012 arrest of drug trafficking organization leader Enrique Mendoza-Figueroa.

Art Imitates Life in Baltimore

Ask most Baltimore-based DEA agents what it’s like to work in Baltimore, and the answer is usually, “Watch The Wire.” The police work, the dope dealers, and the politics are as close to real-life Baltimore as you can get.

In August 2010, DEA Baltimore’s Group 52 (Heroin Task Force) was approached by the Baltimore Police Department along with the State and U.S. Attorney’s Offices with a request to join forces against drug traffickers

Dana Bowman, Donald “AZ” Wright, and Shawn Johnson. These three individuals were initially identified as partners in a poly-drug organization supplying heroin, cocaine, crack, and marijuana throughout the city’s Eastern District.

Group 52 agents began intercepting the first of what would be 16 cellular lines belonging to members of the Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) in October 2010. As expected, dozens of buyers, sellers, and suppliers were identified from the inner city of Baltimore, to New York where the DTO’s heroin and cocaine sources were, to San Diego where the high-grade marijuana origi-



nated. The group included Dominican suppliers, Mexican traffickers, local targets of the U.S. Attorney's Violent Repeat Offender program, thugs, hookers, and people from all walks of life. However, no one attracted as much attention as one caller, known on the phone as "Doggie," who was eventually identified as Felicia "Snoop" Pearson.

Of particular note to the investigators were Pearson's discussions about warehousing drugs for the DTO. In another turn, when a DTO member was kidnapped and held for ransom, the kidnappers were directed to Pearson's home to get the payment. Pearson had been involved in violent drug-related conduct in the past and was previously sentenced to state prison for murder. After her release, she became one of the "stars" on *The Wire*, where she played the role of someone involved in drug dealing and as "an enforcer." The producers of *The Wire* obtained the services of Baltimore area drug dealers as actors and "technical advisers."

In March 2011, the wiretaps ended with the execution of 49 search warrants. More than 500 law enforcement officers participated in the warrant executions and the arrests of the more than 70 people indicted on federal and state charges. Guns, heroin, marijuana, and crack were seized. Assets totaling more than \$200,000 were forfeited. The media showed up at only one location, for the arrest of a solitary female—Felicia Pearson. To listen to the reports, Pearson was the most important member of the DTO. In fact, while every federal and state defendant pled guilty or was found guilty in trial, the only person's plea and sentencing that was covered live by any news source was Pearson's.

Targeting a Mexican DTO in South Carolina

In August of 2010, DEA's Columbia District Office commenced an investigation focusing on a multi-ton marijuana importation organization based in Columbia, SC. The group was directly linked to the La Familia cartel and maintained tight contact with Mexican organizers. Over 8,000 pounds of marijuana were tied to this organization. The Columbia District Office monitored two warehouses via court authorized audio and video surveillance orders and numerous pen registers. This marked the first time the office had utilized closed circuit cameras as part of a Title III investigation in the United States District Court of South Carolina. The investigation completely dismantled the organization, culminating in the arrests of 15 individuals, the seizure of \$1.2 million in bulk currency, and the seizure of 5,500 pounds of marijuana and 3,922 ecstasy tablets.

DEA Investigation of CVS Results in Largest Fine in CSA History

After Mexico banned the sale of pseudoephedrine in mid-2007, Los Angeles and Las Vegas experienced an epidemic of "smurfing," a practice where individuals make multiple purchases of pseudoephedrine in small amounts with the intent to aggregate the purchases for use in the illegal production of methamphetamine. Smurfers discovered that CVS, unlike other large chain



Pseudoephedrine smurfing resulted in the largest fine in CSA history.

retail pharmacies, allowed customers to make repeated purchases of pseudoephedrine that exceeded federal daily and monthly sales limits. For more than a year, CVS failed to change its sales practices to prevent criminals from purchasing excessive amounts of pseudoephedrine at its stores.

CVS Pharmacy, a subsidiary of CVS Caremark Corporation, failed to ensure compliance with laws limiting sales of pseudoephedrine, which allowed criminals to obtain a key ingredient used in the manufacture of methamphetamine from CVS stores located primarily in Los Angeles County; Orange County, California; and Clark County, Nevada. Between September 2007 and November 2008, CVS supplied large amounts of pseudoephedrine to methamphetamine traffickers in Southern California, and the company's illegal sales led directly to an increase in methamphetamine production in California.

The investigation into CVS uncovered thousands of violations of the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005, which limits the amount of pseudoephedrine that a customer can purchase in one day. In 2007, CVS implemented an automated electronic logbook system to record individual pseudoephedrine sales, but the system did not prevent multiple purchases by an individual customer on the same day. CVS eventually changed its sales practices to prevent these illegal sales, but only after it became aware of the government's investigation.

CVS agreed to pay a \$75 million civil penalty, and agreed to forfeit the remaining \$2.6 million in profits. The \$75 million portion of the settlement represents the largest civil penalty ever paid under the Controlled Substances Act. In addition, CVS entered into a separate five-year compliance agreement with DEA.

Aaron Jenkins Drug Trafficking Organization

In December 2010, DEA Laredo District Office Group D-73 initiated a case against the Aaron Jenkins drug trafficking organization, which consisted of previously convicted felons distributing marijuana and cocaine and return drug proceeds back to Mexican drug cartels.



Above and below: Aaron Jenkins drug trafficking organization.



The success of this investigation is evident by the historical linkage to dozens of narcotic and money seizures and the conviction of all cell leaders/organizers. Group D-73 developed this investigation from a chance encounter that an opportunist undercover agent had with drug trafficker Aaron Jenkins in Austin, Texas, in January 2010. Jenkins was on supervised release for the distribution of 20 pounds of cocaine.

The Undercover Agent (UA) advised Jenkins that he was from Laredo, Texas and owned a fictitious trucking company. Over the course of the investigation, nine separate UC agents, two pen registers, a four kilogram cocaine flash, seven separate UC meetings, surveillances, toll analysis, financial investigations, search warrants, consent searches, arrest warrants, ping orders, mobile tracking devices, 122 recorded consensual conversations, SMS messages, undercover email accounts, UC bank accounts, and T-III intercepts were all utilized.

DEA Laredo identified and prosecuted all cell leaders, including leader Aaron Jenkins. Jenkins members were linked to multiple weapons, \$2,155,000 in drug proceeds, 30.8 pounds of cocaine, and 4,250 pounds of marijuana seized throughout the United States.

Project Deliverance (2010)

In June 2010, DEA announced the culmination of Project Deliverance, a 22-month investigation targeting the transportation infrastructure of Mexican drug trafficking organizations in the United States, especially along the Southwest border. The day before the announcement, 429 of the 2,266 total arrests took place across 16 states through coordination between federal, state and local law enforcement.

During the enforcement action, \$5.8 million, 17 pounds of methamphetamine, 112 kilograms of cocaine, 2,951 pounds of marijuana, 141 weapons, and 85 vehicles were seized. In addition to 2,266 total arrests, Project Deliverance led to the seizure of \$154 million, 1,262 pounds of methamphetamine, 2.5 tons of cocaine, 1,410 pounds of heroin, 69 tons of marijuana, 501 weapons, and 527 vehicles over the course of the operation. Acting Administrator Leonhart stated, "Project Deliverance inflicted a debilitating blow to the network of shadow facilitators and transportation cells controlled by the major Mexican drug cartels. The stakes are extraordinarily high, and this massive operation is a milestone in our tireless assault on these violent drug cartels."

Controlling Synthetic Marijuana

Beginning in 2009, DEA received an increasing number of reports from poison centers, hospitals, and law enforcement regarding these products. The products had been marketed as "legal" smokeable herbal blends providing a marijuana-like high. The products consisted of plant material coated with research chemicals that mimic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, and were sold at a variety of retail outlets, in head shops, and over the Internet. These chemicals, however, are not approved by the FDA for human consumption, and there is no oversight of the manufacturing process. Brands such as "Spice," "K2," "Blaze," and "Red X Dawn" had been labeled as incense to mask their intended purpose.

On July 9, 2012, President Obama signed the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act. The Act adds cannabimimetic agents, including 15 specific cannabimimetic agents by name, to Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. Included among these cannabimimetic agents are five synthetic cannabinoids that had previously been controlled by DEA under a temporary emergency scheduling order since March 2011.

Multi-National Operation Nets \$55.9 Million Heroin Seizure in Afghanistan

On October 29, 2010, a multi-national DEA operation led to the seizure of \$55.9 million in heroin at four clandestine laboratories located in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. The nearly one metric ton of narcotics was seized as a result of a large-scale joint narcotics enforcement operation by DEA, Afghan, and Russian anti-drug agents in Afghanistan. In addition to seizing 932 kilograms of heroin and 156 kilograms of opium, a large quantity of precursor chemicals and materials were also confiscated.

No Quarter Given by Raleigh DO

In 2011 and 2012, the DEA Raleigh Resident Office targeted the Jorge Acosta-Muro drug trafficking organization in an investigation dubbed Operation "No Quarter." Indeed, "No Quarter" was given by the Raleigh Resident Office, and the investigation resulted in the arrest of over 60 individuals and the seizure of 127



kilograms of cocaine, 31 pounds of crystal methamphetamine, 200 pounds of marijuana, 32 grams of heroin, over \$1.5 million in U.S. currency, 25 firearms, and personal and real property valued at more than \$2 million. Operation “No Quarter” led to the indictment of “El Commandante 4,” a Gulf Cartel leader and a chief lieutenant for CPOT Jorge Eduardo Costilla-Sanchez, a.k.a. “El Coss.”

Shutting Down a Pill Pipeline

In April 2011, the DEA Bridgeport Resident Office Southwestern HIDTA Task Force and the Stamford Police Narcotics and Organized Crime Unit initiated an investigation of a multi-state oxycodone drug trafficking organization. Based on information from an informant, Michael McGilvary of Florida was identified as the main source of oxycodone supply to several Connecticut distributors. McGilvary was transporting thousands of oxycodone pills from South Florida to cities throughout Connecticut during 2010 and 2011. The oxycodone was transported to the Northeast via commercial airline and bribes were paid to multiple Transportation Security Administration employees within the Westchester County, NY airport and the West Palm Beach, FL airport.

Payments were made directly to the TSA employees to assist this DTO in circumventing security measures and allowing the illegal transportation of oxycodone and currency. Bribery payments were also made to a Westchester County, NY police officer for assisting the DTO in bypassing airport security. In addition, a Florida Highway Patrol officer participated in protecting members of this DTO. The investigation concluded with the arrest of 20 individuals, including numerous public officials. Over 10,000 oxycodone pills and assets totaling \$221,000 were seized.

Targeting Heroin in St. Louis

In July 2011, the DEA St. Louis Mobile Enforcement Team collaborated with 12 St. Louis area police departments to develop and execute a comprehensive enforcement strategy designed to target the dangerous heroin trade in that region.

Between July and September 2011, DEA Special Agents, along with those local departments, attacked all levels of the heroin trade, culminating in the execution of 10 search warrants, the seizure of significant quantities of heroin and cocaine, and the arrest of 75 individuals.

St. Louis Case Results in the Arrest of La Familia Cell Head

In June 2011, St. Louis Division Group 31 arrested 29 members of an international cocaine trafficking group directly connected to the Mexico based La Familia organization. Ten of those arrested were from St. Louis and the remaining were located in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Texas. Intelligence developed during this case led to telecommunication intercepts in three DEA field divisions.

During the course of this case agents seized more than 50 kilograms of cocaine, 13 pounds of heroin, 530 pounds of marijuana, and nearly \$2 million.

Operation Bad Attitude (2011)

In April 2011, the DEA Seattle Field Division’s HIDTA Integrated Task Force Group dismantled the Jacob Stuart international marijuana and cocaine trafficking organization, dubbed Op-

eration Bad Attitude. The DTO was responsible for the monthly distribution of approximately 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of high-grade Canadian and domestic indoor grown marijuana, and 100 to 200 kilograms of cocaine throughout the U.S. and Canada. Semi-trucks with hidden compartments were used to smuggle the marijuana into the U.S. from Canada. The marijuana was then unloaded and sorted in a warehouse in Kent, Washington and distributed across the country to California, Illinois, Missouri, Georgia, and New Jersey.

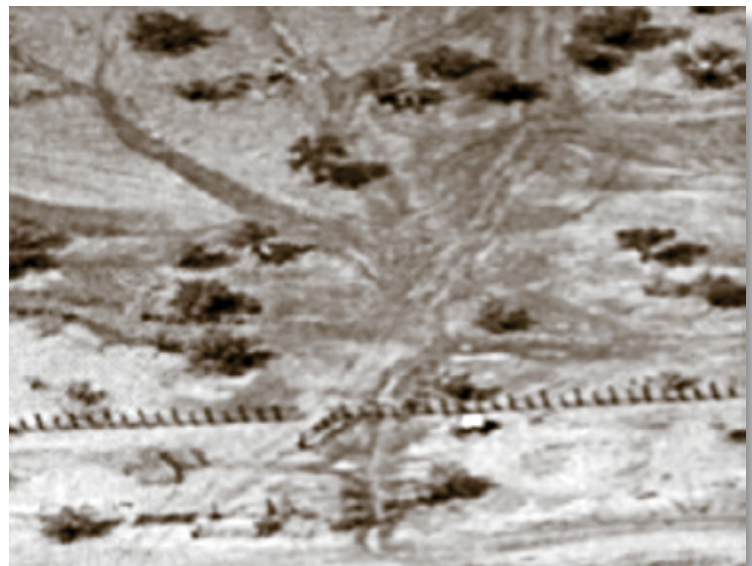
Michael Murphy served as a chief pilot for the DTO, flying marijuana and cash across the country and hiring other pilots to fly the drugs. The DTO utilized a total of six different private airline pilots and four airplanes to transport their illicit drugs and drug proceeds. Proceeds from the marijuana distribution were used to purchase cocaine from Southern California. The cocaine was then transported to British Columbia for distribution. The smuggling organization had ties to the Hells Angels outlaw motorcycle gang in British Columbia, Canada.

The investigation led to the arrest of 25 individuals on federal drug charges and the seizure of over 2,300 pounds of marijuana, 136 kilograms of cocaine and \$3,625,459, to include three private aircraft used by the DTO.

Attacking Valencia Rodriguez Organization in Tucson

In 2008, Jesus Valencia Rodriguez was identified as the Mexico-based gatekeeper working for the Caborca-based Paez-Soto cell of the Sinaloa Cartel. Valencia-Rodriguez was responsible for coordinating importation of multi-ton quantities of marijuana and illegal aliens from Mexico into the United States through the San Miguel Gate area and the smuggling of bulk drug proceeds and assault weapons back into Mexico. The San Miguel Gate area is a remote U.S./Mexico border location on the Tohono O’Odham Indian Reservation in Arizona. The reservation allows tribal members to pass freely between the United States and Mexico.

Beginning in May 2008, law enforcement intelligence linked over 150 drug seizures totaling approximately 28,000 pounds of marijuana to the Valencia-Rodriguez DTO. In February 2010, law enforcement officials also seized 41 assault weapons in the San Miguel vicinity that were en-route from Phoenix, Arizona to Valencia-Rodriguez in Mexico. The Valencia-Rodriguez organiza-



San Miguel Gate on the Tohono O’Odham Indian Reservation.



Residence in Choulic Village-Tohono O'Odham Indian Reservation.



Drug and Alien Smuggling Routes

tion used compartments in vehicles, ramped vehicle loads, concealed tire loads, and backpackers to facilitate drug transportation operations in the remote desert area.

In May 2011, DEA's Tucson District Office OCDETF Strike Force, along with the Arizona Attorney General's Office and the Tohono O'Odham Nation Police Department, announced the arrests of 27 of 46 suspected members of the Jesus Valencia Rodriguez drug trafficking organization, working on behalf of the Mexican Sinaloa Cartel, on charges of illegally conducting an enterprise, conspiracy, transportation of marijuana for sale; money laundering; participating in a criminal syndicate; smuggling of human beings; and use of a wire communication or electronic communication in a drug-related transaction.

DEA Tijuana Helps Dismantle Arellano-Felix Organization

The Arellano-Felix organization (AFO) was one of Mexico's most powerful and violent criminal enterprises in Mexico for over two decades. The AFO is alleged to have been responsible for several hundred murders, to include the assassination of Catholic Cardinal Juan Posadas-Ocampo in 1993. The organization was named for the brothers in charge: Benjamin, Ramon, Eduardo,

Javier, and Rafael Arellano-Felix. Based in Tijuana, the AFO at one time had tentacles throughout Mexico, Colombia, and the U.S. The organization emerged in the late 1980s and dominated cocaine and methamphetamine smuggling into the U.S. for over two decades. The AFO also engaged in kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and money laundering. Over the course of more than 10 years, DEA Tijuana agents dismantled the AFO by arresting its top lieutenants and systematically debilitating its infrastructure.

In February 2002 Ramon Arellano-Felix, the brutal and notorious enforcer of the AFO, was assassinated by rival cartel members in Mazatlan, Sinaloa.

In March 2002, DEA Tijuana shared information with Mexico that led to the introduction of an undercover Mexican military officer into the organization, leading the Mexican military to a location in Puebla where Benjamin Arellano-Felix was arrested.

DEA/TIJUANA
THE END OF AN ERA: DISMANTLING THE ARELLANO-FELIX DTO

REWARD
of up to **\$5,000,000.00 USD**
(per brother)



ARELLANO-FÉLIX
HOTLINE
Toll-Free from USA
1-800-720-7775



Collect/Direct from Mexico
001-858-277-4215
All calls answered by U.S. Agents
All calls confidential
Email: afotips@usdoj.gov

REWARD
of up to **\$2,000,000.00 USD**
(for each)

For information leading to the arrest or conviction of AFO Fugitives

















The Arellano-Felix Brothers, Top (from left to right): Ramon, Benjamin and Rafael. Bottom: Javier (left) and Eduardo (right).





In April 2004, DEA Tijuana executed Operation Crossfire that resulted in the arrests of 43 high-ranking Mexican law enforcement officials in a single sweep. Every officer arrested had been meticulously recruited by the AFO to perform specific functions for the organization, to include murder, kidnapping, protection, and drug distribution. The 43 arrested in Operation Crossfire included the Tijuana Police Chief, the State Deputy Attorney General, and the Commander for State Judicial Police.

In June 2004, DEA Tijuana launched Operation United Eagles and arrested three of the highest ranking AFO lieutenants along with their protection details and money launderers. The most noteworthy arrestees in this Operation were plaza bosses Alberto “Cris” Simental-Garcia, Efrain “El Efra” Perez-Pazuengo, and Jorge “Macumba” Aureliano-Felix.

In August 2006, as a continuation of Operation United Eagles, AFO chief Javier Arellano-Felix and several of his top lieutenants were arrested aboard a luxury fishing boat named “Doc Holiday” off the coast of La Paz, Baja California Sur by the U.S. Coast Guard.

In October 2008 Eduardo Arellano-Felix, the last remaining Arellano-Felix brother, was arrested in Tijuana. He remains incarcerated while awaiting extradition to the United States. After the arrest of Eduardo, leadership of the AFO fell to Fernando “El Inge” Sanchez-Arellano, a nephew of the Arellano-Felix brothers, and his operations lieutenant, Armando “Gordo” Villareal-Heredia.

On July 9, 2011, DEA Tijuana agents, in conjunction with DEA Hermosillo agents and the SSP/SIU, located and arrested DEA fugitive Armando Villareal-Heredia in Hermosillo, Sonora.

DEA Tijuana has assisted host nation counterparts and the DEA San Diego Division Office in conducting hundreds of other AFO arrests, seizing multi-ton quantities of drugs and millions of dollars, and destroying numerous clandestine tunnels in furtherance of the dismantling of the Arellano-Felix Organization.

Operation Evolution (2011)

St. Louis Field Division Group 37 began an investigation targeting the heroin, cocaine, and marijuana trafficking activities of the Viconto Johnson and Quentin Thompson drug trafficking organization. Thompson had been an associate of the Black Mafia Family during its heyday, but was incarcerated when Group 37 opened its case. Being imprisoned did not stop Thompson from conducting his drug trafficking venture with Viconto Johnson and others in St. Louis. While at a halfway house, Thompson began making plans to ship large quantities of drugs from the Western United States to the Mid-West.

In July 2010, investigators learned that Johnson sought to equip a vehicle with a concealed compartment in order to ship cocaine from Arizona to Missouri. Agents received authorization to intercept Johnson’s telephone and learned that in November 2010, he planned to send this vehicle to Arizona to obtain the cocaine. The wiretap indicated that the car would be driving back on Christmas Eve 2010. Investigators obtained a seizure warrant for the trap car and drove out to Colorado to intercept it. On a cold and snowy Christmas Eve, agents seized the vehicle while the driver was occupied in rural Colorado. When the vehicle was searched pursuant to a search warrant, investigators seized eight kilograms of cocaine secreted inside a sophisticated hydraulic concealed compartment.



Above and below: Operation Evolution



In the summer of 2011, the case culminated in search warrants of various properties associated with this group. The searches yielded approximately three kilograms of heroin and about \$600,000 in assets, about \$200,000 of which was expensive jewelry. Later that summer, St. Louis Division Groups 32 and 37 arrested all of the principle players in this case.

Juarez Cartel’s Chief Enforcer Captured

Since 2010, DEA Ciudad Juarez agents, in conjunction with a Sensitive Investigative Unit of the Mexican federal police (SSP/SIU), had been investigating Jose Antonio “Diego” Acosta-Hernandez in his role as the leader of La Linea, an enforcement arm of the Juarez Cartel. A former police officer, Acosta-Hernandez was arrested on July 29, 2011 (pictured). Acosta-Hernandez had been working directly for “El Pariente,” a high-ranking member of the Juarez Cartel and close associate of cartel leader Vicente Carrillo-Fuentes.



Jose Antonio Acosta-Hernandez

As “chief enforcer” for the cartel, Acosta-Hernandez was instrumental in instigating the bloodshed that has engulfed Ciudad Juarez in the ongoing turf war between the Juarez and Sinaloa cartels. Furthermore, Acosta-Hernandez was responsible for ordering daily assassinations, kidnappings, extortions, and attacks against Sinaloa Cartel members, civilians, and law enforcement personnel. Acosta-Hernandez was also responsible for ordering the placement of several narco-banners in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua City, threatening DEA agents for assisting Mexican law enforcement agencies in their investigation of the Juarez Cartel.

Operation OG Style (2009)

In August 2009, officers from the Phoenix Police Department’s South Mountain Precinct noticed an increase in neighborhood narcotics complaints and the violent crime often associated with that type of activity. As their investigation moved forward, several criminal street gangs were identified and appeared to be working together to further their lucrative illegal drug operation. Due to the complexity of the investigation, a partnership was formed with DEA and the Arizona Attorney General’s Office. Investigators monitored these suspects, identified gang leaders and the primary subjects who were purchasing, manufacturing and distributing crack cocaine throughout the South Mountain area.

Twenty simultaneous search warrants were served across the valley as part of this undercover operation coined “Operation OG Style.” Dozens of arrests occurred and large property seizures took place.

Operation Crank Call (2011)

On December 20, 2011, DEA’s Phoenix Field Division along with the Tempe Police Department, the Arizona Attorney’s General and the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office announced the culmination of a 15-month long investigation regarding an extensive trafficking cell associated with the Sinaloa Cartel headed by Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman and Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada-Garcia.” Tempe Police Detectives initiated the investigation after a Tempe Police Patrol Officer proactively contacted a subject upon observing an illegal drug transaction taking place in his patrol area. Both subjects were arrested; one of the subjects was later identified as a delivery driver for a drug trafficking organization (DTO) that delivered methamphetamine to several customers in Tempe, as well as other customers residing in Maricopa County.

Based on the information from the Patrol Officer’s investigation, Detectives from the Tempe Police Special Investigations Bureau (SIB), Special Agents from the Phoenix Division DEA Strike Force Group 2, and prosecutors from Maricopa County Attorney’s Office and Attorney General’s Office initiated a joint undercover investigation into the DTO. Tempe Police Detectives received information that the Phoenix DEA was investigating common elements of the DTO, and the joint investigation, dubbed Operation Crank Call was initiated.

The investigation resulted in 203 arrests, 43 search warrants, 44 firearms, \$7.8 million dollars in cash, 650 pounds of marijuana, 435 pounds of methamphetamine, 123 pounds of cocaine, and 4.5 pounds of heroin.



Weapons and money seized during Operation OG Style.



Saucepan containing residue of crack cocaine during Operation OG Style.



Cash seized in Operation Crank Call.



38th Street Gang Round-Up

On February 1, 2011, DEA announced the culmination of the 38th Street Gang roundup. This operation targeted the 38th Street Gang, one of the oldest in California that had a devastating impact on the communities of South Los Angeles. It was alleged that the 38th Street Gang continually engaged in the distribution of methamphetamine, cocaine, and crack cocaine, and participated in numerous violent acts across the community. Nearly 800 law enforcement officers took part in the raid that arrested nearly 60 individuals. During the operation, law enforcement seized approximately seven kilograms of cocaine, one pound of methamphetamine, 23 firearms, and approximately \$250,000 in cash.

Fifty of the defendants were charged with violating the federal RICO Act by acting on behalf of the gang and participating in murders, murder plots, attempted murders, narcotics trafficking, robberies, extortion, and witness intimidation. The racketeering count alleges 250 overt acts, many of them violent crimes, including assaults on rival gang members and law enforcement officers. Most of the defendants in the racketeering case faced sentencing to life in federal prison.

Operation Pill Nation (2011)

DEA's Operation Pill Nation targeted clinics that operated as pill mills, offering patients prescriptions for oxycodone and other controlled substances where there was no legitimate medical purpose and not within the usual course of professional medical practice.

Those involved were planning to distribute and dispense more than 660,000 units of the Schedule II narcotic oxycodone. To distribute the drugs, the doctors marketed the clinics through more than 1,600 Internet sites and required immediate cash payments from patients for a clinic "visit fee." They then directed the patients to obtain MRIs that they knew to be inferior. The defendants then over-aggressively interpreted the MRIs in order to justify prescriptions. They also falsified patients' urine tests for a fee to justify the highly addictive pain medications. Money laundering was also occurring among those involved.

Operation Pill Nation consisted of over 340 undercover buys of prescription drugs from over 60 doctors in more than 40 "pill mills." The operation concluded in February 2011 and netted 22 arrests and seized over \$2.2 million in cash and 70 vehicles, including numerous exotic cars.

Project Delirium (2011)

Project Delirium was a 20-month series of nationwide investigations that targeted the La Familia Michoacana cartel. La Familia, a violent Mexican cartel, are most known for their trafficking of methamphetamine into the United States and unspeakable violence on both sides of the border. Information sharing between the DEA and Mexican police resulted significant arrests and seizures of drugs and money in Mexico.

Project Delirium culminated in July 2011 and resulted in 1,985 arrests, the seizure of \$62 million in currency, the seizure of approximately 2,773 pounds of methamphetamine, 2,722 kilograms of cocaine, 1,005 pounds of heroin, 14,818 pounds of marijuana, and \$3.8 million in other assets.

NTCC Visit to the El Paso Intelligence Center

On June 16, 2011, over eighty members of the North Texas Crime Commission (NTCC) visited the El Paso Intelligence Cen-

ter (EPIC). The group, led by DEA Dallas Division Special Agent in Charge (SAC) James Capra and EPIC Director Arthur Doty, toured the EPIC facility, received an overview of EPIC's mission and vision, as well as details on several intelligence programs that support law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and the world.

Operation Fire and Ice (2011)

With the June 2, 2011, culmination of Operation Fire and Ice, DEA announced that as a result of an international money laundering and drug conspiracy investigation with its genesis in East Boston nearly five years prior, federal law enforcement authorities were charging 20 individuals and seizing 48 bank accounts across the United States. This was a multi-national operation that over four years involved DEA's Boston Field Division, along with the DEA's Bogotá, Guatemala, Mexico, Curaçao, and Rome, Italy foreign offices. These offices were investigating the narcotics and money laundering trafficking conglomerate identified as La Oficina de Envigado.

Beginning in 2008, the DEA conducted undercover money pick-ups in Rome and elsewhere, resulting in the seizure of approximately 225 kilograms of cocaine in Rome, and the arrest of 25 individuals in Italy on drug trafficking and money laundering offenses. DEA Boston and Curaçao also investigated the money laundering activities of La Oficina de Envigado in Aruba. On April 14, 2010, a federal grand jury in Boston returned an indictment charging two residents of Aruba. On May 19, 2011, a federal Grand Jury in Boston returned an indictment charging 20 individuals from Colombia, Venezuela and Massachusetts with drug trafficking and money laundering offenses.

DEA Helps Foil Iranian Terror Plot

An elaborate scheme to murder the Saudi Ambassador to the United States with explosives was foiled in October 2011, thanks to the work of a DEA-led investigation. Two individuals were charged with conspiracy to murder a foreign official, conspiracy to engage in foreign travel and use of interstate and foreign commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire, conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosives), and conspiracy to commit an act of international terrorism transcending national boundaries.

The criminal complaint alleged that from the spring of 2011 to October 2011, Manssor Arbabsiar, a 56-year-old naturalized U.S. citizen holding both Iranian and U.S. passports, and Gholam Shakuri, an Iran-based member of Iran's Qods Force, which is a special operations unit of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) that is said to sponsor and promote terrorist activities abroad worked together on the plot. Arbabsiar allegedly met on a number of occasions in Mexico with a DEA confidential source who has posed as an associate of a violent international drug trafficking cartel. According to the complaint, Arbabsiar arranged to hire DEA's confidential source and his accomplices to murder the Ambassador, and Shakuri and other Iran-based co-conspirators were aware of and approved the plan with \$100,000 wired to a U.S. bank account as a down payment for the killing.

First Intelligence Division Awards Ceremony

On December 14, 2011, the first DEA Intelligence Division Awards Ceremony was held at DEA Headquarters to recognize



First DEA Intelligence Division Awards Ceremony

Intelligence personnel for outstanding achievements, exceptional performance and years of government service. Intelligence Research Specialist Stephanie Murphy (pictured above) received special recognition for 45 years of federal service, including 36 years with DEA. During her opening remarks, DEA Administrator Michele Leonhart acknowledged the Intelligence Division's unflinching efforts on behalf of the agency and its remarkable contributions to the DEA mission. James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, served as the keynote speaker for this event. It was Director Clapper's first visit to DEA, during which he told the audience "DEA punches way above its weight and the more you do, the more I admire the agency."

Two of the notable awards presented during the ceremony included the IACP-SPRINT Excellence in Law Enforcement Research Award for the Operation Breakthrough/Carbon-14 Dating Study and a National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Citation to the Consolidated Counterdrug Database Community/Threat Reporting and Forecasting Unit.

New Domestic Strategic Intelligence Unit and Document/Media Exploitation Section

The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012, signed into law by the President on November 18, 2011, provided funding to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for the closure of the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) and the reassignment of NDIC functions to other DOJ entities. As a result, the Attorney General directed DEA to assume NDIC's high priority strategic intelligence reporting function and the document and media exploitation (DOMEX) function. Upon the transition of these functions to DEA in June 2012, the newly created Domestic Strategic Intelligence Unit (NWWD) and Document/Media Exploitation Section (NSE) were staffed with former NDIC intelligence analysts and technical personnel, along with current DEA intelligence analysts.

The establishment of NWWD allows DEA to enhance its production of national-level strategic drug intelligence in order to provide policymakers with the most current information on availability, demand, production, cultivation, transportation, and distribution, as well as the effects of drugs on abusers

and society. DEA will produce the National Drug Threat Assessment on an annual basis for policymakers, law enforcement personnel, and treatment providers at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels. This assessment will draw upon a broad range of information sources to describe and analyze the drug threat to the nation. Additionally, DEA will produce national level topical assessments, on an as needed basis, regarding specific drug threats. These recurring strategic products will draw upon DEA information and reporting from law enforcement, intelligence, and public health sources, along with open source information.

Document/Media Exploitation is a unique program that allows intelligence analysts to quickly process vital information obtained from investigative files, as well as documents and electronic media seized during the execution of search warrants and subpoenas. This evidence is then organized and analyzed to reveal associations, assets, and methods of drug traffickers in support of criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The DOMEX function has proven its effectiveness in approximately 1,000 investigations since 1993. Many of the largest investigations supported by the DOMEX program have a digital component, which includes the exploitation of computers, PDAs, blackberries, cell phones, and digital cameras. This electronic media exploitation has proved to be an extremely valuable component of the overall DOMEX effort.





Sinaloa Cartel Death Squad Leader Sentenced to Life in Prison

On January 6, 2012, Sinaloa Cartel hit squad leader Rafael Figueroa-Merino, a.k.a. “Anibal,” was sentenced in El Paso to multiple terms of life in prison following his guilty plea to federal charges of engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise. Figueroa, a legal permanent resident of the United States and chief assassin for Sinaloa Cartel lieutenant Jose Antonio Torres-Marrufo, was arrested in El Paso upon entering the United States from Mexico in April 2011.

Once in DEA custody, Figueroa admitted his involvement in numerous acts of violence in furtherance of the Sinaloa Cartel’s battle with the Juarez Cartel for control of the lucrative Ciudad Juarez drug trafficking corridor, including the May 2010 kidnapping and murder of three individuals, one a United States citizen, who were attending a wedding at a church in Ciudad Juarez. Figueroa also admitted his involvement in a rare case of cross-border violence in which a trafficker was kidnapped from Horizon City, Texas in September 2009 and taken to Ciudad Juarez, where he was tortured and killed for his role in the transportation of a load of marijuana that was seized in the United States. In addition, DEA’s investigation linked Figueroa to the importation of 1,000 kilograms of cocaine for which he provided security.

Following his arrest, information provided by Figueroa led to the arrest of a co-conspirator in El Paso and a large seizure of weapons and ammunition hidden in a home in Ciudad Juarez.



Pictured is a 50 caliber found in the arsenal in Ciudad Juarez.



Pictured are DEA and U.S. Marshal Agents escorting Escajeda.

Rikin Escajeda Extradited and Convicted (2012)

On March 1, 2012, Jose Rodolfo Escajeda, aka “Rikin,” was sentenced in El Paso to 35 years in prison following his guilty plea to a 2006 indictment charging him with marijuana and cocaine trafficking. Escajeda and his brother, Oscar Alonso Escajeda-Candelaria, were leaders of a drug trafficking organization that controlled the smuggling of drugs from the Valle de Juarez, which is situated east of Ciudad Juarez along the Rio Grande, to the United States.

Escajeda was extradited from Mexico to the United States on December 11, 2010, and later admitted to smuggling over 100,000 kilograms of marijuana into the United States on behalf of the Juarez Cartel from 2003 through 2008. During that time period, Escajeda, who was known for using intimidation to control smuggling routes in the Valle de Juarez, worked with high-level members of the Juarez Cartel to collect the taxes on drug loads and bribe Mexican officials. He also personally paid millions of dollars in drug proceeds to Juarez Cartel leaders. In January 2006, employees of Escajeda were involved in a high-profile confrontation with Texas law enforcement authorities at Neely’s Crossing on the Rio Grande in Hudspeth County while attempting to smuggle marijuana into the United States using Mexican military-style vehicles.

Oscar Alonso Escajeda-Candelaria was extradited from Mexico to the United States in April 2009 and sentenced to more than 27 years in prison in April 2010.

We Were Soldiers

Agents from DEA’s Laredo, Texas; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Columbia, South Carolina; and Charleston, South Carolina Offices, along with various federal, state, and local law enforcement officers arrested Kevin Corley and seven other individuals on March 24, 2012.

Since 2011, Corley had met numerous times with undercover law enforcement officers who posed as members of the Los Zetas drug cartel. Over the next several months, Corley continued to communicate with undercover agents via text messaging, phone calls, and emails regarding the services he could provide the cartel as a result of the training, experience, and access to information and equipment afforded to him as an active duty U.S. Army of-



Undercover meet in Laredo on March 24. Left to right: Samuel Walker, Jerome Corley, TFO Joe Benavides, SA John Leonard, Shavar Davis, and Kevin Corley.



ficer. Corley revealed that weapons could easily be stolen from military posts, and thoroughly explained military tactics and told undercover agents he could train 40 cartel members in two weeks.

During a conversation between Corley and an undercover agent in December 2011, Corley explained that he had one team prepared to help train cartel members and another to conduct “wet work” (murder-for-hire) at the direction of the cartel. Corley told agents he would accept cocaine in lieu of a fee for his service, but ultimately agreed to accept \$50,000 and five kilograms of cocaine for a full team. Corley also offered to refund the money if the victim survived. At the same meeting, Corley negotiated to purchase and escort 500 pounds of marijuana.

On January 14, 2012, Corley, Marcus Mickle, Calvin Epps, and Jerome Corley traveled to Laredo, Texas to escort the 500 pounds of marijuana to South Carolina. The tractor trailer transporting the shipment was pulled over and the marijuana was seized during a traffic stop in La Salle County, Texas. In the weeks following this seizure, Corley and his co-conspirators continued to contact undercover agents regarding the seized marijuana load and to discuss the possibility of future transactions with the agents.

On March 5, 2012, Corley delivered two AR-15 assault rifles with scopes, an airsoft assault rifle, five allegedly stolen ballistic vests, and other miscellaneous equipment to an undercover agent in Colorado Springs, Colorado. At the meet Corley and the undercover agent discussed Corley bringing his team to Laredo, Texas to conduct the contract killing and retrieve the 20 kilograms of cocaine on March 24, 2012. Corley told the undercover agent he had bought a new Ka-Bar knife to carve a “Z” (for “Zeta”) into the victim’s chest and was planning on buying a hatchet to dismember the body.

On March 24, 2012, Corley and his team traveled to Laredo, Texas to meet with undercover agents and perform the contract killing. They were arrested and operation resulted in the dismantlement of Corley’s marijuana and cocaine trafficking organization. Three individuals, including Corley, were arrested in Laredo, two were arrested in Columbia, and three other members were arrested in Charleston.

Rowland Heights, CA Doctor to be Tried for Murder in Three Overdose Deaths

In 2007, DEA Riverside, California began an investigation into the prescribing practices of Dr. Lisa Tseng, a Rowland Heights, CA Doctor of Osteopathy. DEA Riverside coordinated this investigation with the Medical Board of CA and conducted numerous undercover patient visit operations targeting Dr. Tseng.

In August 2010, as a result of Schedule III narcotic prescriptions gained as evidence during the undercover patient visits, DEA Riverside along with the Medical Board of CA and the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department executed a federal search warrant on Dr. Tseng’s medical clinic in Rowland Heights. DEA Riverside also worked with the DEA Office of Chief Counsel and served an Immediate Suspension Order upon Dr. Tseng and her DEA Certificate of Registration, thereby stopping Dr. Tseng’s ability to write narcotic prescriptions.

In March 2012, as a result of the DEA investigation and evidence obtained from the search warrant, Dr. Tseng was arrested and charged by the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office with second-degree murder in three overdose patient deaths, and 20 felony counts of prescribing drugs to patients with no legitimate medical indication.

In June 2012, a preliminary hearing was conducted and a Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge ordered Dr. Tseng to stand trial for the three second-degree murder charges and the additional 20 felony counts. This was the first time the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office has filed murder charges against a doctor because of allegedly reckless prescribing practices.



Pictured are DEA and FBI Agents taking Acosta into custody in the U.S.

Juarez Cartel Enforcer Extradited and Convicted

On April 5, 2012, Jose Antonio Acosta-Hernandez, a.k.a. “Di-ego,” the top enforcer for CPOT Vicente Carrillo-Fuentes’s Juarez Cartel, was sentenced in El Paso to seven terms of life in prison following his guilty plea to federal charges of racketeering, drug trafficking, money laundering and murder. The murder charges related to the March 2010 triple homicide in Ciudad Juarez of U.S. Consulate employee Lesley Enriquez, her husband El Paso Country Sheriff’s Office Detention Officer Arthur Redelfs, and Jorge Salcido, the husband of another U.S. Consulate employee.

As the leader of La Linea, the Juarez Cartel’s enforcement arm, Acosta admitted to directing or participating in more than 1,500 murders since 2008, making him responsible for much of the bloodshed in the Juarez Cartel’s battle with Joaquin Guzman-Loera’s Sinaloa Cartel for control of Ciudad Juarez’s lucrative drug trafficking corridor. Acosta was extradited from Mexico on March 16, 2012, to face the U.S. charges.

Tracking the Sinaloa Cartel’s “Chapo” Guzman

Joaquin Archivaldo Guzman-Loera, variously known as “El Chapo,” “El Senor,” “The Man” or “The Lord,” was born on April 4, 1957, in Badiraguato, Sinaloa, Mexico. This area is known as the “Golden Triangle” (Sinaloa/Durango/Chihuahua), a region central to Mexico’s marijuana and opium poppy cultivation industry. Guzman-Loera’s father had connections in the Sinaloa capital of Culiacan through narco-trafficking “pioneer” Pedro Aviles-Perez. In the late 1970s, Hector “El Guero” Luis Palma-Salazar gave Guzman-Loera his first break and placed him in charge of transporting illegal drugs from the Sierra Madres to the U.S. southwest border. In the early 1980s, Guzman-Loera was introduced to Miguel “El Padrino” Angel Felix-Gallardo who put him in charge of logistics, coordinating airplane flights, boat arrivals, and trucks coming from Colombia into Mexico. After Felix-Gallardo’s capture, Guzman-Loera took control of the Sinaloa Cartel.

On June 9, 1993, Guzman-Loera was captured in Guatemala and extradited to Mexico on drug trafficking, criminal association, and bribery charges. On November 22, 1995, he was transferred to the Puente Grande maximum security prison. After wielding influence over everyone in the prison, including the facility’s director, Guzman-Loera was able to escape.

Guzman-Loera is one of the most wanted criminals in the world. To many in the organized crime world, he is considered a ghost who has become a legend. The Sinaloa Cartel, comprised of Guzman-Loera, Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada-Garcia, and Juan “El Azul” Esparragosa-Moreno, controls a vast drug distribution empire that spans six continents. The Sinaloa Cartel is the single largest supplier of illegal drugs (cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and methamphetamine) to the United States. Guzman-Loera has been ranked by *Forbes* magazine as one of the most powerful people in the world every year since 2009. He was also listed by *Forbes* as the 10th richest man in Mexico in 2011.

Guzman-Loera has multiple indictments on drug conspiracy charges in the United States and there is a \$5 million reward for his capture. DEA North & Central Americas Region (NCAR) in cooperation with the Government of Mexico launched numerous enforcement operations against Guzman-Loera and his associates.

On February 13, 2012, Consolidated Priority Organization Target (CPOT) Jaime Herrera-Herrera and an associate, Felipe Naranjo-Sevilla, were detained in Culiacan, Sinaloa, by the Policia Federal Preventiva in possession of approximately 202 kilograms of methamphetamine. The Mazatlan office, in conjunction with the DEA Washington Field Division and the Secretaria de Seguridad Publica (SSP)/Sensitive Investigative Unit, had been targeting the Herrera-Herrera Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO) since 2007. Herrera-Herrera is the leader of a Sinaloa Cartel-aligned DTO responsible for trafficking thousands of pounds of methamphetamine and hundreds of kilograms of cocaine on a monthly basis from the interior of Mexico through Arizona and California ports of entry to United States cities.

In February 2012, NCAR personnel provided actionable intelligence to SSP personnel advising that Guzman-Loera was in a residence in Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur. SSP launched an enforcement operation that resulted in the arrests of close associates of Guzman-Loera. As a result, several high powered assault rifles with grenade launchers, several cellular telephones, ammunition, and personal items that belonged to Guzman-Loera were seized. DEA Intelligence advised that Guzman-Loera was able to evade SSP personnel through the help of one of his associates.

On May 24, 2012, NCAR personnel provided actionable intelligence to Secretaria de la Marina (SEMAR, Mexican Navy) personnel advising that Zambada-Garcia and possibly Guzman-Loera would be at Rancho Aguaje in Badiraguato, Sinaloa. SEMAR launched an enforcement operation, which resulted in a gun battle between SEMAR and Sinaloa Cartel members. As a result, several high powered assault ri-



Joaquin Archivaldo Guzman-Loera



Seized items from the Sinaloa Cartel.

flashes with grenade launchers, several cellular telephones, ammunition, and personal items that belonged to Zambada-Garcia were seized. DEA Intelligence advised that Zambada-Garcia was able to evade military personnel through the help of one of his associates and fled to the east into the mountainous region bordering Durango. The hunt continues.

RX Take-Back Days and Disposal Programs

The Drug Enforcement Administration and government, community, public health and law enforcement partners launched a nationwide prescription drug “Take-Back” initiative that sought to prevent increased pill abuse and theft. Through the initiative, DEA collected potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs for destruction at sites nationwide. This initiative addressed a vital public safety and public health issue. Many Americans were not aware that medicines that languished in home cabinets were highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. were increasing at alarming rates, as were the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies showed that a majority of abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, many Americans did not know how to properly dispose of their unused medicine, often flushing them down the toilet or throwing them away—both potential safety and health hazards.

Less than a month into the DEA prescription drug “Take-Back” campaign, over 2,700 sites had joined the effort nationwide. That number grew to 5,300 sites for the second Take-Back Day in April 2011. Americans participating in DEA’s previous Take-Back Days turned in nearly 1.6 million pounds—almost 774 tons—of prescription drugs, most recently at almost 5,700 sites operated by nearly 4,300 of the DEA’s local law enforcement partners. During this effort Congress

passed the Safe and Secure Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which amends the Controlled Substances Act to allow users of controlled substance medications to dispose of them by delivering them to entities authorized by the Attorney General to accept them. The Act also allows the Attorney General to authorize long term care facilities to dispose of their residents’ controlled substances in certain instances.

On December 21, 2012, DEA published its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the Disposal of Controlled Substances in the Federal Register. The proposed regulations seek to implement the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010. This rule proposes requirements to govern the secure disposal of controlled substance medications by both DEA registrants and what the Controlled Substances Act refers to as “ultimate users” of these medications (patients and animals). The proposed regulations seek to expand the options available to collect these medications from ultimate users for the purpose of disposal, to include take-back events, mail-back programs, and collection box locations.

The proposed regulations contain specific provisions that allow law enforcement agencies to voluntarily conduct take-back events, administer mail-back programs, and maintain collection boxes; allow authorized manufacturers, distributors, reverse distributors, and retail pharmacies to voluntarily administer mail-back programs and maintain collection boxes; and allow authorized retail pharmacies to voluntarily maintain collection boxes at long term care facilities.

Operation Snake Oil (2012)

On June 29, 2012, Vincent Colangelo, a Florida pill mill ring-leader convicted in an OCDETF/PTO investigation, dubbed Operation Snake Oil, was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison. Colangelo pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute and dispense oxycodone without a legitimate medical purpose and outside the scope of legitimate medical practice, money laundering, and filing a false federal income tax return. As part of his plea agreement, he forfeited five properties worth over \$2.5 million dollars, \$911,951 in U.S. currency from seven bank accounts and safe deposit boxes, and 52 luxury vehicles, jewelry, and vessels worth over \$6 million dollars.



Flanked on either side by two seized Lamborghinis, the Miami TDS Squad with some of the numerous seized high value vehicles.



Left to right: Miami FD SAC Mark Trouville, SA Jeff Womack, GS Jeannette Moran, SA Joseph Gill, and ASAC Kevin Stanfill pose with some of Colangelo's seized vehicles.

This 33-month investigation revealed that Colangelo's drug trafficking organization operated seven pain clinics and one pharmacy in South Florida, making approximately \$30,000 per day at each clinic. Between October 2008 and February 2011 these pill mills were responsible for prescribing or dispensing millions of dosage units of controlled substances to patients without legitimate medical need. Colangelo would advertise on Craigslist to recruit doctors who were willing to prescribe maximum amounts of oxycodone and Xanax to patients with minimal medical consultation. Colangelo's doctors often saw over 100 patients per day, and they were paid approximately \$75 per patient. Thirteen doctors were identified in this investigation and are pending indictment along with other co-conspirators. Four co-defendants have already been sentenced.

Operation Snake Oil marks the first Miami Tactical Diversion Squad initiative to combat the prescription drug epidemic and the rise of rogue pain clinics in South Florida.

Digging Up Drug Tunnels

In July 2012 Agents from DEA's Yuma Resident Office executed a search warrant inside a one-story non-descript building in San Luis, Arizona. They discovered the U.S. entrance to a tunnel that stretched 240 yards underground to an ice plant across the border in Mexico. The tunnel's entrance was in a storage room hidden beneath a large water tank. From the floor, the tunnel plunged more than 55 feet into the ground. Its walls stood more than six feet high. The shaft of the passageway measured four feet wide at the San Luis entrance. The tunnel was equipped with lighting and a ventilation system.

When agents entered the San Luis business, it was empty and largely unfurnished. Found on the floor next to the tunnel entrance were numerous 55 gallon drums filled with dirt and soil excavated from the vertical shaft as well as large plywood boxes believed to be used to cover the pallets of drums for later removal from the location. As DEA agents

searched the business, the Mexican Military made entry into the ice plant business across the border in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, where they located the tunnel's other entrance. Mexican authorities found numerous bags of dirt stacked to the ceiling in the room where the tunnel's entryway was located.

Since January 2012, DEA agents had been conducting surveillance on the business after observing possible suspicious activity that indicated the site was being used as a potential stash location. On July 6, 2012, agents learned that the Arizona Department of Public Safety had stopped a black Ford F-150 pick-up on Highway 95 on a traffic violation. Inside the bed of the truck, DPS officers discovered 39 pounds of methamphetamine. Information gleaned from the stop led the vehicle back to the business location in San Luis, AZ.

Based upon the results of the vehicle stop coupled with DEA's active investigation, agents obtained a search warrant to enter the business location. Three suspects were taken into custody in connec-



Cross-border tunnel discovered in San Luis, Arizona.



Entryway to the tunnel on the U.S. side.

tion with the tunnel. The San Luis passageway is the only known completed and fully operational smuggling tunnel ever uncovered in the Yuma, Arizona area. Between 2002 and 2012, 89 cross-border tunnels were discovered in Arizona and 50 in California.

Operation No Pain All Gain (2012)

In August 2012, Special Agents, Task Force Officers, and Diversion Investigators from DEA's Detroit Field Division worked together to arrested Babubhai Patel, a criminal organization leader, and 25 other individuals. The effort resulted in the dismantlement of Patel's pharmaceutical drug trafficking and health care fraud organization. For three years, Patel, a non-practicing pharmacist, operated a large-scale drug distribution and health care fraud network in Detroit, Michigan that hid his ownership and control of 26 area pharmacies through the use of straw owners. Patel paid doctors to write prescriptions to patients with Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance without a legitimate medical purpose. The doctors then directed participating patients in the scheme to fill the prescriptions at one of Patel's many pharmacies where insurers received controlled medication and were billed for other non-controlled medications that were never dispensed.

The Patel organization was responsible for dispensing more than six million dosage units of opiate painkillers and depressants throughout southeast Michigan, as well as fraudulently billing \$37.7 million to Medicare and \$20.8 million fraudulently to Medicaid. In addition to the arrests, this 3-year SOD-supported PTO/OCDETF investigation, dubbed Operation No Pain All Gain, resulted in the seizure of \$300,000 in U.S. currency, several firearms, assets totaling \$4.1 million. Based on DEA intelligence, an additional \$2 million in assets has been seized by the FBI. Six pharmacies surrendered their DEA registrations as a result of this operation.



High-Ranking Member of the Juarez Cartel Captured

On April 17, 2012, the Juarez Cartel suffered a significant blow to its leadership structure when Mexican federal police, aided by DEA, arrested Luis Guillermo Castillo-Rubio a.k.a. "El Pariente" in Queretaro, Mexico. Castillo-Rubio is considered a close ally of Juarez Cartel head Vicente Carrillo-Fuentes, and was allegedly responsible for overseeing the training of would-be assassins for the cartel's enforcement gangs, La Linea and the Barrio Aztecas.



Luis Guillermo "El Pariente" Castillo-Rubio

At the time of his arrest, Castillo-Rubio was in charge of all Juarez Cartel activities in the state of Chihuahua and worked directly under organizational leader Vicente Carrillo-Fuentes. Castillo-Rubio oversaw daily operations on behalf of the Juarez Cartel, including the movement of drug shipments, acts of violence, official corruption, and financial activities. As the highest-ranking member of the Juarez Cartel captured to-date, Castillo-Rubio's arrest represented a major blow to the organization.



DEA Administrator Michele M. Leonhart receiving the Order of Merit of Duarte, Sanchez, and Mella Grand Officer Award from Dominican Republic President Leonel Fernandez-Reyna at the Presidential Palace on Friday August 31, 2012. The award was presented to Administrator Leonhart for her effort and commitment to battling global drug trafficking and in particular the support and close working relationship that exists between the Dominican Republic DNCD and the DEA Caribbean Field Division's Santo Domingo Country Office.



Synthetic Drug Takedown

In 2010, poison centers nationwide responded to about 3,200 calls related to synthetic “Spice” and “bath salts.” In 2011, that number jumped to more than 13,000 calls. Sixty percent of the cases involved patients 25 and younger.

On July 26, 2012, agents from DEA’s Phoenix Field Division along with various state and local law enforcement agencies executed 17 search warrants and seized more than more 4,000 pounds of synthetic drugs. This was the first-ever law enforcement action against the synthetic designer drug industry responsible for the production and sale of synthetic drugs that are often marketed as bath salts, Spice, incense, or plant food. More than \$3 million in assets were also seized.

More than 3,322 pounds of synthetic cannabinoids, (K2, Spice) and over 733 pounds of synthetic cathinones, (bath salts) and the ingredients to produce an additional 300 pounds were seized. Over 239 pounds of suspected psilocybin mushrooms were also seized.

There was a growing use of, and interest in, synthetic cathinones (stimulants/hallucinogens) sold under the guise of “bath salts” or “plant food.” Marketed under names such as Ivory Wave, Purple Wave, Vanilla Sky, or Bliss, these products are comprised of a class of dangerous substances perceived to mimic cocaine, LSD, MDMA, and/or methamphetamine. Users reported impaired perception, reduced motor control, disorientation, extreme paranoia, and violent episodes. The long-term physical and psychological effects of use are unknown but potentially severe.

These products became increasingly popular between 2010 and 2012, particularly among teens and young adults and those who mistakenly believe they can bypass the drug testing protocols that have been set up by employers and government agencies to protect public safety. They are sold at a variety of retail outlets, in head shops, and over the Internet. However, they have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for human consumption or for medical use, and there is no oversight of the manufacturing process.

DEA used its emergency scheduling authority to combat both synthetic cathinones and synthetic cannabinoids temporarily placing several of these dangerous chemicals into Schedule I of the CSA on March 1, 2011. Congress has also acted, permanently placing cannabimimetic agents, including 15 specific cannabimimetic agents by name, two synthetic cathinones by name and nine synthetic phenethylamines to Schedule I of the CSA.



Above and below: “Bath Salts” products sold as Amped Up. Containers of “Spice” labeled as Mary Jane, Private Reserve.



Operation Pill Nation 2 (2012)

With the August 16, 2012 culmination of “Operation Pill Nation 2,” DEA announced that seven doctors, three clinic owners, and one of their relatives had been charged with racketeering and other criminal charges in South Florida. In addition, seven vehicles and eleven weapons were seized. DEA began to investigate these individuals in August 2009 based on a complaint from a former employee. The former employee informed investigators that after he left the clinic’s employment, he was requested to retroactively sign a power of attorney granting the owners of the clinic the authorization to sign his DEA Order Forms—forms that permit a doctor to order controlled substances. The former employee became suspicious when he did not recognize the DEA number on the “power of attorney” which was presented for his signature. The investigation revealed that without authorization, one of the

defendants had applied for a DEA registration number using the former employee's personal identification. Another doctor paid for the application. Once approved and a DEA registration number assigned, the employer opened an account with a pharmaceutical wholesale company and ordered 13,400 oxycodone tablets for dispensing from the clinic.

Between April 2010 and July 2012, undercover agents visited the clinic on multiple occasions. Law enforcement received a total of 55 prescriptions for controlled substances, including oxycodone, and other non-controlled substances.

Operation Log Jam (2012)

On July 26, 2012, DEA announced the culmination of Operation Log Jam, resulting in the arrest of more than 90 individuals and the seizure of more than five million packets of designer synthetic drugs, as well as \$36 million in cash. This operation was a multi-agency operation with state and local law enforcement in more than 109 U.S. cities involved. Log Jam targeted every level of the synthetic designer drug industry, including retailers, wholesalers, and manufacturers.

DEA Administrator Leonhart remarked, "Although tremendous progress has been made in legislating and scheduling these dangerous substances, this enforcement action has disrupted the entire illegal industry, from manufacturers to retailers. Together with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, we are committed to targeting these new and emerging drugs with every scientific, legislative, and investigative tool at our disposal."

Operation Adam Bomb (2012)

On April 16, 2012, DEA announced the culmination of Operation Adam Bomb, a multi-national operation which resulted in the arrest of eight people who all face federal drug trafficking and money laundering charges due to their creation and operation of a "secret" on-line narcotics market place known as The Farmer's Market which sold a variety of controlled substances to approximately 3,000 customers in 34 countries and 50 states. Also arrested were seven other individuals associated with the online market. At the time of their arrest, law enforcement seized hashish, LSD, MDMA, as well as an indoor psychotropic mushroom grow, and three indoor marijuana grows.

The 12-count indictment charges that each of the defendants was a member of a conspiracy to distribute a variety of controlled substances world-wide through the use of on-line marketplaces that allowed independent sources of supply to anonymously advertise illegal drugs for sale to the public. Operators of the on-line marketplaces provided a controlled substances storefront, order forms, on-line forums, customer service, and payment methods for the different sources of supply. These marketplaces had multiple sources of supplies offering various controlled substances, including LSD, MDMA, fentanyl, mescaline, ketamine, DMT, and marijuana. Between January 2007 and October 2009 alone, two defendants processed approximately 5,256 on-line orders for controlled substances valued at approximately \$1,041,244 via these on-line controlled substances marketplaces.

Project Below the Beltway (2012)

The December 6, 2012 culmination of Project Below the Beltway, a two-year series of investigations that targeted the Sinaloa Cartel, the Juarez Cartel, and other violent street gangs, was part

of ongoing initiative against the cartels and their distribution network in America. These cartels are believed to be responsible for laundering millions of dollars in criminal proceeds from illegal drug trafficking activities.

Project Below the Beltway was comprised of investigations in 79 U.S. cities and several foreign cities within Central America, Europe, Mexico, South America and elsewhere. The investigation resulted in 3,780 arrests, and the seizure of 6,100 kilograms of cocaine, 10,284 pounds methamphetamine, 1,619 pounds of heroin, 349,304 pounds of marijuana, \$148 million dollars in U.S. currency, and \$38 million dollars in other assets.

Juarez Drug Cartel Leader Sentenced to More Than 10 Life Terms

In April 2012 the Juarez Drug Cartel's leader in Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico pled guilty in El Paso, Texas, and was sentenced to life in prison for his participation in drug trafficking and numerous acts of violence. Jose Antonio Acosta-Hernandez, 34, aka "Diego," "Dienton," "Diez," and "Bablazo" of Chihuahua, had been extradited to the United States from Mexico in March 2012. He pled guilty to four counts of racketeering, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering.

Acosta-Hernandez admitted that in approximately 2008, he became the leader of La Linea's armed enforcement wing and acted as the VCF's plaza boss in Chihuahua and Juarez. Acosta-Hernandez admitted that he directed or participated in more than 1,500 murders since 2008. Immediately after the guilty plea hearing, Acosta-Hernandez was sentenced to seven concurrent life terms, three additional consecutive life terms, and 20 years in federal prison.

