



Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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For Information Contact Public Affairs  
SANDY RAYNOR  
Telephone: (602) 514-7625  
Cell: (602) 525-2681

## **MEXICAN NATIONAL SENTENCED TO 5 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR POSSESSING FIREARM DURING DRUG CRIME**

PHOENIX – Andres Eduardo Zazueta-Castro, 23, of Sinaloa, Mexico, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt to five years in federal prison. Zazueta-Castro pleaded guilty on October 21, 2008 to Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Drug Trafficking Crime.

On June 26, 2008, law enforcement officers found Zazueta-Castro in possession of three firearms in a home in Phoenix. About 75 grams of cocaine base (crack cocaine) were located in a car in the garage of that house. The key to that car was in Zazueta-Castro's pocket and he admitted that his fingerprints would be found in the hidden compartment where the drugs were found. Two scales, a mixing agent and a drug ledger containing about 15 names and amounts were found in common areas of the house. Cash totaling \$12,500 in varying denominations was also found in the house. Zazueta-Castro solely possessed a Smith & Wesson 9mm pistol, and jointly possessed a SWD 9mm pistol and a Ruger .223 caliber rifle. In addition, Zazueta-Castro had entered the United States illegally.

In addition to his sentence, Zazueta-Castro was ordered to forfeit \$12,500 in currency, the drug scales, three firearms and the car where the drugs were located.

This case is a result of Project Safe Neighborhoods, an illegal firearms enforcement program. The effectiveness of Project Safe Neighborhoods in the District of Arizona is based on the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to cooperate in a unified offensive led by U.S. Attorney Diane J. Humetewa. Through ongoing partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, like the one in this case, U.S. Attorney Humetewa is implementing a series of strategies that are contoured to fit the specific firearms crime problems throughout Arizona.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Arizona Department of Public Safety and the Phoenix Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Theresa Cole Rassas, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-0691-PHX-PGR  
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