

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

*United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

Eighteen Charged With Drug Trafficking Violations

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - September 28, 2009

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced today the unsealing of seven separate indictments charging 18 individuals with narcotics and firearms violations. The 18 defendants are alleged to be members of drug distribution organizations operating in San Diego, California and elsewhere. The indictments were the result of an investigation named "Operation Red Sky," an approximately six-month long investigation. Operation Red Sky is an Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation with both state and federal prosecutions.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's Mobile Enforcement Team (DEA MET) and the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) focused on the Skyline neighborhood of San Diego, with an emphasis on the Skyline Piru street gang and their major drug sources of supply.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Rebekah W. Young, who is prosecuting the case, the defendants have been charged with distribution of cocaine, distribution of crack cocaine, distribution of methamphetamine, distribution of marijuana, and felon in possession of a firearm. Many of the charges carry a ten-year mandatory minimum sentence and a maximum sentence of life in prison.

DEFENDANTS

Case Numbers

Alfredo Morales
Zabie Sahial
Ivan Orozco
Felix Diaz
Juan Avendano-Carrasco
Ernesto Alonso Cardenas

09CR3395-DMS

Yukon Branch
Johnny Montes
Anthony McGowan
Shawn Holiday
Salvador Palomara

09CR3393-BTM

Merrill Harvey
Ronald Davis

09CR3396-L

Howard Anton Smith

09CR3394-JM

Muslah Abdulhafeez

09CR3398-H

Shannon White

09CR3397-JM

Marlo Quincy Jones
Michele Barber

09CR3399-H

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

- Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) – Distribution of Crack Cocaine
- Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) – Distribution of Methamphetamine
- Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) – Distribution of Cocaine
- Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) – Distribution of Marijuana
- Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1) – Felon in Possession of a Firearm

AGENCIES

Drug Enforcement Administration
San Diego County Probation Department
Naval Criminal Investigative Service
San Diego County District Attorney's Office

San Diego Police Department
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
U.S. Marshals Service

An indictment is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.