



U.S. Department of Justice

*Kenneth J. Gonzales
United States Attorney
District of New Mexico
201 3rd Street NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103*

CONTACTS: *Norman Cairns, Assistant U.S. Attorney, PAO
505-224-1521*

NEWS ADVISORY

**For Immediate Release
June 3, 2010**

**RIO ARriba COUNTY RESIDENT ARRAIGNED ON FEDERAL
PRESCRIPTION FORGERY AND IDENTITY THEFT CHARGES**

Randy Branch, 21, a resident of Rio Arriba County, was arraigned today on a 19-count federal indictment by Chief United States Magistrate Judge Richard L. Puglisi. The first fourteen counts of the indictment charge Branch with using forged and fraudulent prescriptions unlawfully to obtain Schedule II controlled substances, including hydrocodone, oxycodone and dextromethamphetamine. In aggregate, Branch allegedly used forged and fraudulent prescriptions to obtain 900 tablets of hydrocodone, 750 tablets of oxycodone, and 60 tablets of dextromethamphetamine between September 2009 and December 2009. Counts 15 and 16 charge Branch with defrauding two health care benefit programs, one of which was Medicare, into paying for the controlled substances he obtained through forgery and fraud. Count 17 charges that Branch, a prescription drug addict, unlawfully possessed firearms in violation of federal firearms laws. Counts 18 and 19 charge Branch with using the identification of another to fraudulently obtain controlled substances.

On each of the first 14 Counts of the indictment, Branch faces up to four years' imprisonment, up to three years' supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. On each of Counts 15, 16 and 17, Branch faces up to ten years' imprisonment, up to three years' supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. On Count 18, Branch faces a two year term of imprisonment to run consecutive to terms imposed on other counts, up to three years' supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. On Count 19, Branch faces up to twenty years' imprisonment, up to five years' supervised release and a \$250,000 fine.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration with assistance from the Los Alamos Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John Anderson.

An indictment is only an accusation. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.