

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

HIGH-RANKING SINALOA CARTEL MEMBER INDICTED IN TUNNEL CASES

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - October 3, 2012

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy announced today the unsealing of a federal indictment against defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos, aka Quirino, aka Quinino, aka Quiri, aka Garanon, aka El Gato, aka Old Man, aka Grenudo, who was charged by a federal grand jury in San Diego with thirteen counts related to two narcotics tunnels found on November 25, 2010, and November 29, 2011 near the international border. Defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos is alleged to be a high-ranking member of the Sinaloa Drug Trafficking Cartel, and was the regional manager for the Cartel in the Baja, Jalisco, and Tijuana areas. On November 25, 2010, Special Agents with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) seized a narcotics tunnel in the Otay Mesa area and seized approximately 35,350 pounds of marijuana. One year later, on November 29, 2011, HSI Special Agents seized another narcotics tunnel in the Otay Mesa area and seized approximately 51,084 pounds of marijuana. Defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos is alleged to have controlled these tunnels.

According to United States Attorney Laura Duffy, the federal indictment charged defendant Sanchez-Villalobos with conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, for importation into the United States, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 959(a), 959(c) and 963; distribution of a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, for importation into the United States and aiding and abetting that offense, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 959(a), 959(c), and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2; conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 846; conspiracy to import a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, into the United States, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 952, 960 and 963; distribution of a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, and aiding and abetting, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1), and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2; importation of a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, and aiding and abetting, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 952, 960, and Title 18, United States Code, Section 2; construction and financing of a cross-border tunnel, and aiding and abetting, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 555(a) and 2; and use of a tunnel to smuggle a controlled substance, specifically, marijuana, and aiding and abetting, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 555(c) and 2. Based on the charges in the Indictment, the United States District Court for the Southern District of California issued a warrant for the arrest of defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos.

According to Mexican officials, defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos was arrested by Mexican authorities on or about January 18, 2012. The United States subsequently requested his extradition from Mexico. Defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos is currently in extradition proceedings in Mexico.

According to court documents, defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos is alleged to be the highest ranking member of a drug trafficking organization responsible for constructing and utilizing cross-border tunnels to import marijuana into the United States. Defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos oversaw the movement of marijuana from southern Mexico to northern Mexico, and the storage of the marijuana in various stash houses prior to its importation into the United States. According to court documents, defendant Jose Sanchez-Villalobos also managed the construction of the cross-border tunnels that crossed from the territory of Mexico into the territory of the United States, required frequent progress reports from his subordinate co-conspirators, determined who was able to smuggle marijuana through the tunnels, as well as the quantity of marijuana that would be sent through the tunnels, and charged fees to drug traffickers for their use of the tunnels.

United States Attorney Laura Duffy praised the hard work of law enforcement officials on both sides of the international border whose collaborative efforts resulted in the indictment unsealed today.

DEFENDANT

Jose Sanchez-Villalobos

Case Number: 12CR0493MMA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

	Description of Charges	Maximum Penalties	
Count 1	Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances For Purpose of Unlawful Importation Into The United States	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 959(a), 959(c), 963
Count 2	Distribution of Controlled Substances For Purpose of Unlawful Importation Into The United States and Aiding and Abetting (November 25, 2010 tunnel)	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 959(a), 959(c) 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 3	Distribution of Controlled Substances For Purpose of Unlawful Importation Into The United States and Aiding and Abetting (November 29, 2011 tunnel)	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 959(a), 959(c) 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 4	Conspiracy To Distribute	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 841(a)(1) and 846
Count 5	Conspiracy To Import	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 952, 960 and 963
Count 6	Distribution of Controlled Substance Aiding and Abetting (November 25, 2010 tunnel)	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 841(a)(1) 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 7	Distribution of Controlled Substance Aiding and Abetting (November 29, 2011 tunnel)	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 841(a)(1) 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 8	Importation of Controlled Substances Aiding and Abetting (November 25, 2010 tunnel)	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 952 and 960 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 9	Importation of Controlled Substances Aiding and Abetting (November 29, 2011 tunnel)	10 year minimum mandatory to life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	21 U.S.C. 952 and 960 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 10	Construction and Finance of Tunnel (November 25, 2010 tunnel)	20 years maximum in custody; 3 years of supervised release, \$250,000 fine	18 U.S.C. 555(a) 18 U.S.C. 2

Count 11	Construction and Finance of Tunnel (November 29, 2011 tunnel)	20 years maximum in custody; 3 years of supervised release, \$250,000 fine	18 U.S.C. 555(a) 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 12	Use of Tunnel (November 25, 2010 tunnel)	life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	18 U.S.C. 555(c) 18 U.S.C. 2
Count 13	Use of Tunnel (November 29, 2011 tunnel)	life in custody; 5 years of supervised release, \$1,000,000 fine	18 U.S.C. 555(c) 18 U.S.C. 2

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Homeland Security Investigations - formerly Immigration and Customs Enforcement
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

San Diego Tunnel Task Force

United States Border Patrol Agency

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