



Department of Justice

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METHAMPHETAMINE "SUPERLAB" DEFENDANT GETS LIFE IN PRISON

Atlanta, GA - ALFREDO SANTIAGO MORENO, also known as "CHAGO," 35, of Tepalcatepec, Mexico, was sentenced to life in prison by U.S. District Judge Clarence Cooper today on charges related to the manufacturing of methamphetamine and operation of the meth "Superlab" that DEA seized and dismantled in a residential neighborhood in Smyrna, Georgia, in February 2005. The Superlab, located at 200 Church Road in Smyrna, was the first Superlab discovered in Georgia and the largest ever discovered in the Eastern United States. There is no parole in the federal system.

"This defendant's life sentence highlights the serious and dangerous nature of these methamphetamine crimes," said U.S. Attorney David E. Nahmias. "Meth manufacturers and dealers who pollute and poison our community will be dealt with severely, and those who manage and supervise other criminals will face sentences commensurate with their role."

"Today's sentencing demonstrates the extreme danger faced by the American public with the proliferation of methamphetamine as well as its clandestine manufacture," said Rodney G. Benson, Special Agent in Charge of the Atlanta Field Division of the DEA. "We are committed to investigate methamphetamine organizations nationwide for future prosecutions of this nature as well as to educate the public as to the dangers of this deadly scourge."

According to Nahmias and the documents and information presented in court: In February 2005, DEA agents arrested three defendants, RAMON OSEGUERA-ALANIS, 34, an illegal alien from Michoacan, Mexico; IGNACIO CORTES-VALENCIA, 24, an illegal alien from Michoacan, Mexico; and GUSTAVO LARA-MURILLO, 31, an illegal alien from Colima, Mexico, after tips from confidential sources led the agents to obtain a search warrant for the residence at 200 Church Road in Smyrna. These three defendants all pleaded guilty. ALANIS was sentenced to 40 years in prison; VALENCIA was sentenced to over 21 years in prison; and MURILLO was sentenced to over 17 years in prison.

The evidence showed that once the agents entered the residence, they immediately

discovered a very large methamphetamine lab, capable of processing unusually large quantities of meth. Agents seized 5.2 kilograms (12.4 pounds) of ice methamphetamine, fully manufactured and packaged in one-pound bags for distribution, hidden inside a cabinet in the kitchen. The agents also seized an additional pound of ice methamphetamine from a vehicle parked in the driveway. Inside the basement of the residence, the agents found an array of equipment set up for the manufacturing of meth and reprocessing of the meth into its more potent and addictive form, "ice" methamphetamine.

The agents also found 24 large trash bags stuffed with emptied pseudoephedrine tablet boxes, as well as containers holding approximately 35 pounds of pure d-pseudoephedrine hydrochloride. According to evidence presented during the prosecution of the three defendants, the pure pseudoephedrine appeared to have been extracted from the tablets in the empty boxes, yielding one of the final precursors in the meth manufacturing process. The 35 pounds of pseudoephedrine seized in the basement would yield another 20 to 30 pounds of pure ice methamphetamine. The agents also discovered five 55-gallon containers holding what a lab expert identified to be the liquid byproduct of the meth manufacturing process.

After DEA agents seized the Superlab in February 2005 and arrested MORENO's three accomplices, MORENO fled to California and then to Mexico. In October 2006, MORENO returned to the Atlanta area, apparently believing that DEA's interest in him had subsided with the passage of time. Unbeknownst to MORENO, DEA had continued to actively investigate his actions and DEA agents arrested MORENO on November 3, 2006. MORENO proceeded to trial and was convicted by a federal jury on all counts: conspiring to manufacture and distribute methamphetamine; manufacturing methamphetamine; possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute it; and maintaining a residence for the purpose of manufacturing methamphetamine.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the DEA, the DEA MCS (Marietta, Cobb, Smyrna) Task Force, the Atlanta Police Department, the Roswell Police Department, the City of Clarkston Police Department, and the Georgia Department of Pardons and Parole.

Assistant United States Attorneys Richard A. Rice, Jr., and John Horn prosecuted the case.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at the following web site: www.justthinktwice.com.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404)

581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.