



Department of Justice

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DRUG COURIERS PLEAD GUILTY TO TRANSPORTING 173 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE INTO PEACHTREE CITY AIRPORT

Defendants Face Mandatory Minimum Sentences of at Least Two Decades

NEWNAN, GA - JORGE OLIVO, 24, of Roswell, Georgia, and RENE PEREZ, 32, of San Marcos, Texas, both pleaded guilty today to felony charges of conspiring to possess with the intent to distribute 173 kilograms of cocaine that had been couriered by flight from Texas to the Peachtree City Georgia Airport. OLIVO also pleaded guilty to possession with the intent to distribute cocaine and to possessing a weapon in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "Together with our law enforcement partners, we will continue to fight the influx of dangerous drugs into our community. The drugs transported by these defendants could have damaged thousands of lives. Vigilant law enforcement prevented this from happening. Now these defendants face decades in prison."

"Traffickers who seek to use Atlanta as a transshipment point for their narcotics will face the same fate as Olivo and Perez," said Kenneth A. Smith, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Atlanta. "This investigation is the result of the continued cooperation with our law enforcement partners to target narcotics smuggling and money laundering organizations operating in and around Atlanta. The success of this investigation is the direct result of the excellent work and cooperation between ICE, the Fayette County Sheriff's Office, the Fayette County District Attorney's Office, the Peachtree City Police Department and the United States Attorney's Office."

Fayette County District Attorney Scott Ballard said of the case, "I am proud of the cooperation on this case between local and federal law enforcement agencies. It is comforting to know that there are multiple layers of protection for the citizens against drug smugglers."

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: On August 29, 2009, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Atlanta received information regarding a plane that would be arriving that day at Falcon Field airport (KFFC) in Peachtree City, Georgia. Agents observed the Cessna aircraft land at KFFC and then saw the pilot and two passengers, including RENE PEREZ, exit the plane and offload several bags from the aircraft. Agents maintained surveillance as RENE PEREZ and the other passenger were dropped off at a local Best Western hotel along with the bags that had been removed from the plane.

Approximately one hour later, another vehicle arrived at the Best Western hotel driven by JORGE OLIVO. Agents observed OLIVO place the same bags into the vehicle outside. OLIVO then left the hotel area in the vehicle after the bags had been loaded. Peachtree City Police then attempted to conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle operated by OLIVO, but OLIVO observed the marked police car approaching and fled the scene at a high rate of speed. After a lengthy chase, the police apprehended OLIVO and searched the vehicle. The search revealed several bags containing approximately 173 kilograms (over 380 pounds) of cocaine. OLIVO was also found to be carrying a .38 caliber handgun on his person at the time of the stop.

JORGE OLIVO, RENE PEREZ, and others were indicted by a federal grand jury on October 7, 2009. OLIVO pleaded guilty today to three counts of the indictment. He could receive a maximum sentence of life in prison and a fine of up to \$4,000,000. He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years in prison. PEREZ pleaded guilty today to one count of the indictment. He could receive a maximum sentence of life in prison and a fine of up to \$4,000,000. He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison. In determining the actual sentences, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

Sentencing for OLIVO and PEREZ are scheduled for March 23, 2010, at 10 a.m., in Newnan, Georgia, before United States District Judge Jack T. Camp.

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.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Fayette County Sheriff's Department, and is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Fayette County District Attorney's office.

Assistant United States Attorney David E. Suchar is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, Acting 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.