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**DRUG SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 16 YEARS IN PRISON**

PHILADELPHIA - Hector Hugo Tovar-Sanchez, 25, of Cleveland, Texas, was sentenced today to 200 months in prison for his conviction in a drug conspiracy that involved smuggling cocaine into the U.S., including Allentown, from Mexico, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. On February 1, 2011, a jury convicted Tovar-Sanchez, a legal permanent resident of the United States and a citizen of Mexico, of four counts including conspiracy to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine, two counts of distribution of 500 grams or more of cocaine, and one count of distribution of cocaine. Tovar-Sanchez and his co-conspirators were responsible for bringing approximately 17 kilograms of cocaine and approximately 1,000 pounds of marijuana into the Allentown, Pennsylvania area. Additionally, evidence was introduced that Tovar-Sanchez was responsible for supplying an additional 50 kilograms of cocaine to distributors in North Carolina and Delaware. The investigation revealed that the narcotics were being smuggled into the United States from Mexico before being passed along to defendants in San Antonio and Houston, TX. The drugs were transported in U-haul trucks, tractor-trailors, and cars with secret compartments.

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge James Knoll Gardner ordered five years of supervised release and ordered Tovar-Sanchez to pay a \$400 special assessment. Tovar-Sanchez also faces federal marijuana charges in Texas, along with a charge related to the discovery of a sawed-off shotgun in his home in Cleveland, Ohio at the time of his arrest.

This case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations with assistance from the Pennsylvania State Police, the Allentown Police Department, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Maria M. Carrillo.

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