



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Robert Pitman, U.S. Attorney**

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January 31, 2012

**19 ARRESTED IN BIG BEND AREA DRUG DISTRIBUTION OPERATION**

**United States Attorney Robert Pitman and Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge Joseph M. Arabit** announced that 19 individuals, including ringleaders John Michael Guadarrama, age 29, of Sanderson, Texas, and Oscar Fierro, age 43, of Alpine, Texas, have been arrested in connection with a drug distribution operation in the Big Bend area. A complete list of those charged and arrested is attached.

On January 12, 2012, a federal grand jury seated in Pecos returned two separate indictments charging a total of 22 defendants in connection with this investigation. Both indictments were unsealed today by U.S. Magistrate Judge Dwight Goains in Alpine. In one indictment, Guadarrama is charged with one count of being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. The indictment also charges his girlfriend, 23-year-old Clarissa Marie Luevano of Sanderson, with one count of making a false statement during a firearm purchase and one count of transfer of a firearm to a known convicted felon. The indictment alleges that on April 16, 2011, Luevano made a false statement on ATF Form 4473 claiming she was the actual buyer of two .22 caliber pistols and a .22 caliber rifle when in fact, she purchased them for Guadarrama.

The second indictment specifically charges:

- Guadarrama, Fierro, Rene Ortega, age 41 of Fort Stockton, Texas, Luevano, Irene Mirano Alvarado, age 44 and wife of Oscar Fierro, James Horatio Torres, age 37, Justin Gilbert Villanueva, age, 25, John Staessens, age 51 and Katheryn Staessens, age 49, all of Alpine, with conspiracy to possess and distribute less than five kilograms of cocaine within 1,000 feet of a public school or playground, namely Alpine Middle and Elementary schools as well as Medina Park and Baines Park in Alpine;
- Oscar Fierro, Ernesto Cedillo Vega, age 41, Leo Ruben Portillo, age 47, and Antonio Covarrubias, Jr., age 32, Alvarado, and Torres, all of Alpine, with drug distribution within 1,000 feet of a public school or playground;
- Fierro and Alvarado with drug distribution to a person under the age of 21;
- Guadarrama and Luevano with maintaining a fifth wheel vehicle for the purpose of drug distribution;
- John and Katheryn Staessens, managers of the Pecan Grove RV Park in Alpine, with knowingly allowing drugs to be distributed on their property;
- Oscar Fierro, Federico Hernandez, age 48, Eric Keith Payne, age 36, Torres, Manuel David Carrillo, age 42, Joel Rojo Fierro, age 37, Ramona Alaniz Ramirez, age 43, Robert Molinar Ramos, age 56, Christopher Michael Quezada, age 38, all of Alpine, with possession with intent to distribute cocaine;

– more –

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- Miguel Luis Llanez, age 48, Irene Wright Olivas, age 42 and Portillo, all of Alpine, with possession of cocaine and with use of a communication facility (cell phone) in a felony drug offense; and
- David Christopher Hardin, age 39, of Alpine, with two counts of possession of cocaine.

“This investigation, which was conducted in partnership with local law enforcement, targeted the entire distribution network of a cocaine trafficking organization operating in Alpine and the surrounding area. The resulting arrests strike a significant blow to the cocaine trade in this region and will have an immediate, positive impact in local neighborhoods. By working together, federal, state and local law enforcement agencies are making progress in preventing drug trafficking from taking hold in our communities,” stated DEA Special Agent in Charge Joseph M. Arabit.

James Horatio Torres is currently in state custody on unrelated charges. Eric Keith Payne, Robert Molinar Ramos and Christopher Michael Quezada are fugitives in this case. All of the remaining defendants were arrested today by federal, state and local law enforcement without incident.

This investigation was conducted by agents with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force with significant assistance from the Brewster County Sheriff’s Office. Additional assistance was provided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives-El Paso, Alpine Police Department, United States Border Patrol-Marfa Sector, Pecos County Sheriff’s Office, Texas Department of Public Safety Narcotics-Alpine, Homeland Security Investigations Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (HSI ICE)-Alpine and Presidio, United States Marshals Service-Alpine, Terrell County Sheriff’s Office, Fort Stockton Police Department and the Sul Ross State University Public Safety Department. This matter is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James J. Miller, Jr.

Upon conviction: Guadarrama faces a mandatory 15 years in federal prison on the felon-in-possession-of-a-firearm charge, and a mandatory minimum 10 years and maximum of life in federal prison on the drug conspiracy charge; Guadarrama, Luevano, and the Staessens face up to 20 years in federal prison for the maintaining-a-drug-involved-premise charge; Oscar Fierro, Ortega, Luevano, Alvarado, Torres, Villanueva, and the Staessens’ face a mandatory minimum five years up to 40 years in federal prison on the drug conspiracy charge; Oscar Fierro, Alvarado, Torres, Vega, Portillo, and Covarrubias face up to 40 years in federal prison for distribution of a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a school or playground; Oscar and Joel Fierro, Hernandez, Payne, Torres, Carrillo, Ramirez, Ramos, and Quezada face up to 20 years in federal prison for distribution of a controlled substance; Oscar Fierro and Alvarado face up to ten years in federal prison for the charge of distribution of a controlled substance to a person under the age of 21; Luevano faces up to ten years in federal prison for each of the false statement and firearm transfer charges; and, Hardin faces up to one year in prison and a minimum fine of \$2,500 on each count of possession of cocaine. The second indictment also contains a demand of forfeiture of \$35,000 each against Guadarrama and Oscar Rojo Fierro.

**An indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.**

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**INDICTED DEFENDANTS**

**ARRESTED TODAY**

JOHN MICHAEL GUADARRAMA	Age: 29	Residence: Sanderson, Texas
CLARISSA MARIE LUEVANO	Age: 23	Residence: Sanderson, Texas
OSCAR ROJO FIERRO	Age: 43	Residence: Alpine, Texas
RENE ORTEGA	Age: 41	Residence: Fort Stockton, Texas
IRENE MIRANO ALVARADO	Age: 44	Residence: Alpine, Texas
JUSTIN GILBERT VILLANUEVA	Age: 25	Residence: Alpine, Texas
JOHN CHARLES STAESSENS	Age: 51	Residence: Alpine, Texas
KATHRYN SUE STAESSENS	Age: 49	Residence: Alpine, Texas
IRENE WRIGHT OLIVAS	Age: 42	Residence: Alpine, Texas
DAVID CHRISTOPHER HARDIN	Age: 39	Residence: Alpine, Texas
FEDERICO HERNANDEZ	Age: 48	Residence: Alpine, Texas
ERNESTO CEDILLO VEGA	Age: 41	Residence: Alpine, Texas
LEO RUBEN PORTILLO	Age: 47	Residence: Alpine, Texas
MIGUEL LUIS LLANEZ	Age: 48	Residence: Alpine, Texas
ANTONIO COVARRUBIAS, JR.	Age: 32	Residence: Alpine, Texas
MANUEL DAVID CARRILLO	Age: 42	Residence: Alpine, Texas
JOEL ROJO FIERRO	Age: 37	Residence: Alpine, Texas
RAMONA ALANIZ RAMIREZ	Age: 43	Residence: Alpine, Texas

**ALREADY IN CUSTODY**

JAMES HORATIO TORRES	Age: 37	Residence: Alpine, Texas
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**FUGITIVE**

ERIC KEITH PAYNE	Age: 36	Residence: Alpine, Texas
ROBERT MOLINAR RAMOS	Age: 56	Residence: Alpine, Texas
CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL QUESADA	Age: 38	Residence: Alpine, Texas