



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

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21 ARRESTED IN CARRIZO SPRINGS DRUG TRAFFICKING SWEEP

United States Attorney Robert Pitman, DEA Special Agent in Charge Javier Pena and Dimmit County Constable Marion Boyd today announced the arrests of 21 individuals on federal drug charges stemming from a 19-month long undercover investigation targeting cocaine and methamphetamine suppliers in the Carrizo Springs and Big Wells, Texas, areas.

Those arrested include:

Nathaniel Rodriguez, age 21, of Carrizo Springs;
Eduardo Garcia, age 37, of Carrizo Springs;
Michael Castillo, age 37, of Carrizo Springs;
John Paul Talamantes, age 24, of Big Wells, Texas;
Monica Escamilla Talamantes, age 39, of Big Wells;
Leonard Rodriguez, age 21, of Big Wells;
Joaquin Garcia, age 28, of Carrizo Springs;
Martin Cantu, age 48, of Carrizo Springs;
Oscar Moreno, age 37, of Carrizo Springs;
Jason Erik Avila, age 32, of Haltom City, Texas;
Fabian Perez, age 33, of Carrizo Springs;
Anthony David Perales, age 28, of Carrizo Springs;
Jose Angel Valdes, age 27, of Carrizo Springs;
Santo Villa Sepeda (aka "Monster"), age 37, of Carrizo Springs;
Ricardo Villa Sepeda (aka "Kike"), age 46, of Carrizo Springs;
Vicente Sanchez Barrera, age 29, of Carrizo Springs;
Michael Anthony Guajardo, age 21, of Carrizo Springs;
Daniel Longoria, age 45, of Carrizo Springs;
Rogelio Longoria, age 43, of Carrizo Springs;
Antonio Trujillo, age 41, of Carrizo Springs; and,
Francisco Villa, age 36, of Carrizo Springs.

Earlier this week, a federal grand jury in Del Rio returned five separate indictments in connection with this investigation. Charges include conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a school, namely Central Elementary School in Carrizo Springs or Big Wells Elementary School.

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Carrizo Springs drug arrests release

April 19, 2012

Page 2

The defendants are scheduled to have their initial appearances at 9:00am tomorrow in Del Rio before United States Magistrate Judge Victor Roberto Garcia.

If convicted of possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a school, defendants are subject to mandatory minimum federal prison terms—either one year or five years—and up to 40 years imprisonment depending on the amount of controlled substance involved. Each of the remaining charges call for imprisonment of up to 20 years upon conviction.

This case resulted from a joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration together with the Dimmit County Constable's Office. The United States Marshals Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI) and the Texas Department of Public Safety assisted in making today's arrests. Assistant United States Attorney H. Jay Hulings is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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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