



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

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EL PASO FEDERAL JUDGE SENTENCES DRUG DEALER TO CLOSE TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON

United States Attorney Robert Pitman announced that in El Paso this morning, 40-year-old Hugo Robert Estrada was sentenced to 293 months in federal prison for his leadership role in an El Paso-based narcotics trafficking organization responsible for importing thousands of pounds of marijuana from Mexico.

In addition to the prison term, United States District Judge Philip R. Martinez ordered that Estrada pay a \$5,000 fine and be placed under supervised release for a period of ten years after completing his prison term.

On December 6, 2011, Estrada pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance. Information provided in open court revealed that beginning in December 2007 and continuing until June 2009, the Estrada organization used tractor-trailers to import more than 22,000 pounds of marijuana through various ports of entry. Often the loads of marijuana were wrapped in black PVC tape and concealed in shredded plastic to avoid detection. One of the largest seizures associated with this organization occurred on December 19, 2007, when ICE agents seized over 10,000 pounds of marijuana from a warehouse located in Horizon City, Texas. Another load—more than 6,000 pounds of marijuana—was seized on September 28, 2008, from a tractor-trailer on Interstate 10 in El Paso.

“It's always a good day for HSI El Paso when the hard work and dedication of our special agents results in successful prosecution and incarceration of those who seek to benefit financially from poisoning our society,” said Dennis A. Ulrich, acting special agent in charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in El Paso. “This case exemplifies HSI's commitment to identify, disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations in the name of public safety.”

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