



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert Pitman  
Western District of Texas

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2012

CONTACT: DARYL FIELDS  
(210) 384-7440

## **FEDERAL COMPLAINT FILED IN SAN ANTONIO CHARGES FIVE IN MARIJUANA DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY**

*While fleeing from law enforcement, one defendant strikes vehicle killing a child and seriously injuring others*

In San Antonio today, federal authorities filed a criminal complaint charging six individuals with conspiring to distribute more than 1,200 kilograms of marijuana announced United States Attorney Robert Pitman and San Antonio Police Chief William McManus.

According to the complaint, law enforcement officers were conducting surveillance on a suspected drug stash house in the 19000 block of Morin in East Bexar County yesterday afternoon when they noticed a vehicle, a black Chevrolet Suburban, leave the property. Subsequently, a San Antonio Police Officer attempted to conduct a traffic stop on the Suburban as it traveled west on Highway 1604. The driver of the Suburban, 30-year-old David Rodriguez of San Antonio, attempted to evade the officer while traveling at a high rate of speed. Ultimately, the Suburban struck another vehicle, killing a child and seriously injuring others. Inside the Suburban officers discovered approximately 420 pounds of marijuana.

Surveillance also witnessed other vehicles leave the property. Officers recovered approximately 670 pounds of marijuana from them as well as some 1,680 pounds of marijuana from a shed located on the property.

In addition to Rodriguez, the complaint charges the owner of the property, 40-year-old John Salinas of Von Ormy, TX, as well as 27-year-old Michael Gomez of San Antonio, 28-year-old Brock Lassiter of San Antonio and 28-year-old Joseph Whitley of San Antonio in the marijuana distribution conspiracy. All five defendants remain in custody at this time. Upon conviction, each faces between ten years and life in federal prison.

This case was investigated by the San Antonio Police Department with assistance from the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force. Assistant United States Attorney Joey Contreras is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

**A criminal complaint 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.**

#####