



Department of Justice

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Western District of Texas

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FEDERAL GRAND JURY INDICTS SIX IN SAN ANTONIO MARIJUANA DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

Distribution conspiracy resulted in the deaths of two children and involved more than 1,200 kilos of marijuana

In San Antonio today, a federal grand jury returned an indictment against six San Antonio area residents in connection with a conspiracy to distribute more than 1,200 kilograms of marijuana announced United States Attorney Robert Pitman and San Antonio Police Chief William McManus.

The two-count indictment charges 30-year-old David Rodriguez, 27-year-old Michael Gomez, 28-year-old Brock Lassiter, 28-year-old Joseph Whitley, 31-year-old Raul Lozano and 40-year-old John Salinas of Von Ormy, TX, with one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana and one substantive count of possession with intent to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana. The indictment also contains a notice of criminal forfeiture whereby the Government is seeking the criminal forfeiture of defendant John Salinas' rural property and residence.

According to court records, law enforcement officers were conducting surveillance on a suspected drug stash house in the 19000 block of Morin in East Bexar County on September 19, 2012, 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. Rodriguez, the driver of the Suburban, attempted to evade the officer while traveling at a high rate of speed. Ultimately, the Suburban struck another vehicle, killing two children 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.

Upon conviction, each faces between ten years and life in federal prison. **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.**

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.

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