



**R. Booth Goodwin II, United States Attorney  
Southern District of West Virginia**

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CONTACT: Melvin Smith  
800-659-8726\*(304)345-2200  
Melvin.Smith@usdoj.gov

**MAJOR SUPPLIER OF BLACK TAR HEROIN SENTENCED TO PRISON**

***Huntington Overdose Deaths Linked To Drug Source***

HUNTINGTON, W. Va. – A Mexican national was sentenced today to 292 months in prison for his role in the distribution of black tar heroin that has been linked to several drug overdoses in the Huntington, West Virginia area. Joel Adolfo Borjas-Hernandez, 25, previously entered a guilty plea in October 2010, admitting to conspiring with others to distribute at least one kilogram of heroin. At sentencing, the Court determined that Borjas-Hernandez and his drug trafficking organization distributed heroin that resulted in several overdose deaths. As a result, Borjas-Hernandez received a significant sentence enhancement under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

United States Attorney Booth Goodwin stated, "Huntington has suffered a number of tragic deaths from heroin overdoses. We can't bring back the lives that have been lost, but we will do everything in our power to prevent it from happening again. Putting this drug dealer behind bars is a major step in that direction. We are sending a message loud and clear to drug dealers from Mexico and everywhere else that if you come to Huntington, West Virginia, to peddle your poison, there will be consequences."

According to Court documents, in September 2007, law enforcement and medical personnel in Huntington responded to a series of overdose deaths resulting from the ingestion of black tar heroin. Investigators from the Huntington Police Department, Cabell County Sheriff's Office and DEA launched a long-term investigation resulting in the convictions of approximately 20 individuals in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia.

The investigation revealed that people from the Huntington area were travelling to Columbus, Ohio to obtain Mexican black tar heroin from an individual known only as "Carlos." Most of those people obtained the heroin either from Columbus dealers supplied by Carlos' organization, or from runners working for Carlos. Eventually, investigators were able to make purchases of black tar heroin from the organization using informants and undercover investigators. Several witnesses identified Carlos as Borjas-Hernandez.

On June 13, 2009, an officer with the Columbus Police Department stopped Borjas-Hernandez for a minor traffic offense. Borjas-Hernandez was arrested on an illegal immigration charge and held in

Columbus pending deportation proceedings. During this time, an inmate at the facility notified authorities that Borjas-Hernandez was the man known as “Carlos.”

At his plea hearing, Borjas-Hernandez told United States District Judge Robert C. Chambers that throughout his involvement in the organization, he and another man received 15 one ounce bags of heroin at a time from two men in Columbus. Borjas-Hernandez further stated that the two then distributed the heroin to street-level dealers in and around Columbus, Ohio. He further acknowledged that some of those dealers distributed the heroin to individuals from Huntington where the heroin was resold and used.

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