



Department of Justice

**STATEMENT OF THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**MATTHEW W. ALLEN
SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION
LOS ANGELES FIELD DIVISION**

**BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**FOR A HEARING ENTITLED
THE THIN BLUE LINE PROTECTING AMERICA FROM THE CARTELS
PRESENTED**

JUNE 24, 2025

**Statement of Matthew W. Allen
Special Agent in Charge
Drug Enforcement Administration
U.S. Department of Justice**

**At a Hearing Entitled,
Cartels**

**Before the Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate**

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Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the thousands of dedicated professionals of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I also extend DEA's sincere gratitude for this Committee's bipartisan passage of the HALT Fentanyl Act. Your commitment sends a clear and unified message: the United States is serious about confronting the deadliest drug threat in our nation's history.

I serve as the Special Agent in Charge of the DEA's Los Angeles Field Division—a strategically important division when it comes to disrupting the operations of Mexican drug cartels. The Los Angeles Field Division includes not just the counties surrounding Los Angeles, but all of Nevada, Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan.

I began my DEA career in 2002 as a Special Agent in the Los Angeles Field Division, following my time as a police officer in Charleston, West Virginia. While in Los Angeles, I worked in various task force settings before being assigned to the Kabul, Afghanistan Country Office. Upon returning from Kabul, I was promoted to Group Supervisor and served in both the Riverside and Orange County offices within the Los Angeles Field Division. In 2018, I transitioned to the Office of Professional Responsibility as an Inspector, and later advanced to Assistant Regional Director in Mexico City, overseeing operations across Mexico, Central America, and Canada. In 2022, I became the Deputy Special Agent in Charge of the Los Angeles Field Division, and in 2023, I was promoted to Special Agent in Charge. All my experiences have provided me a unique perspective from which to lead the men and women of the Los Angeles Field Division.

What we are facing today in Southern California is not traditional drug trafficking. We are confronting a full-scale infiltration by designated foreign terrorists and transnational criminal organizations—namely, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG).

These groups are not only the world's top producers of synthetic drugs; they are paramilitary criminal empires operating with global reach, corporate-level logistics, and battlefield-level violence.

Cartel Presence in Los Angeles

Los Angeles is not just a transshipment hub, it is an operational base for both the Sinaloa Cartel and CJNG. These cartels exploit Southern California's ports, highways, financial institutions, and communities to facilitate everything from drug production and distribution to money laundering and weapons procurement. Their influence extends into the very heart of our neighborhoods.

Just weeks ago, one of our teams encountered a chilling sight during a raid on a suspected cartel safehouse in downtown Los Angeles. Inside a converted warehouse, just blocks from the DEA's own office—was a floor-to-ceiling mural of Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, known as "El Mencho," leader of CJNG. He was depicted in a bulletproof vest bearing the CJNG insignia—a shrine glorifying perhaps the most violent drug trafficker in modern history. The message was unmistakable: "We are here. We are among you."

It doesn't stop there. The daughter and son-in-law of El Mencho were living in a gated Riverside community, just down the street from the Chief of Police. When we moved in on that location, we seized an estimated \$2.25 million in illicit assets: garbage bags stuffed with Rolex watches, designer handbags, and cash. These cartel figures were living in luxury, embedded in our communities, hiding in plain sight.

They not only live in our communities, but they also sneak their deadly products into our homes under false pretenses. The cartels are producing fake prescription pills laced with fentanyl for as little as 10 cents each and selling them for as much as \$25 per pill on our streets. The profit margins are staggering.

The result is a flood of death. These pills kill tens of thousands of Americans every year, including children and teenagers experimenting with what they believe is a legitimate pharmaceutical.

Los Angeles Investigations Targeting Cartel Leadership

Our division led the investigation of Edgar Fabian Villaseñor-García, a known armed CJNG operative who was recently sentenced to over 20 years in federal prison. Known as "El Monje," Villaseñor-García trafficked at least 450 kilograms of cocaine and 780 kilograms of methamphetamine into the United States—drugs that fueled addiction, violence, and death in American communities. He carried firearms to protect cartel interests, intimidate rivals, and evade law enforcement. His prosecution and sentencing represent a significant victory in the U.S.'s war against CJNG.

We are also proud of our role in targeting the Chapitos network, the deadly faction of the Sinaloa Cartel led by the sons of El Chapo Guzmán. Our Los Angeles-based Strike Force contributed to charges against 28 members and associates involved in every step of the fentanyl supply chain: precursor chemical brokers in China and Guatemala; lab operators in Mexico; drug traffickers;

weapons smugglers; assassins; and money launderers using cryptocurrency, bulk cash, and shell companies to send profits back south.

And while DEA's work focuses on the living threat these cartels pose, we never forget our fallen. Earlier this year, justice was finally served for Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, who was brutally tortured and murdered in 1985. DEA's Los Angeles Strike Force played a key role in bringing Rafael Caro Quintero, the man who ordered Kiki's murder, back to the United States. The operation's success would not have been possible without the Strike Force's collaboration with Mexican officials, some of whom lost their lives that day. As I have said many times before: DEA never forgets. We don't care how long it takes. If you hurt one of our own, we will find you-and we will bring you to justice. That's not just an agency principle, we are a family.

Relentless Violence and Ruthless Retaliation

Cartel violence is not theoretical. It is real, unrelenting, and personal. One of our major CJNG cases involved a key witness who was later executed in Mexico along with his wife. Separately, the daughter of a cooperating witness was murdered soon after the sentencing. This horrific act of revenge underscores the threat these terrorists pose to U.S. security: adversaries who kill without hesitation and who reach across borders with impunity. This is why our work to combat this threat cannot pause. These are enemies who do not retreat—but neither do we.

DEA's Unique Capabilities

Let me be clear: The United States government is well-equipped to dismantle these organizations.

DEA is prepared to bring its unique expertise to bear in that fight. It will leverage its intelligence infrastructure, international partnerships, and operational reach to help track these cartels from the jungles of Colombia to the ports of Los Angeles and beyond.

As the only U.S. law enforcement agency that has singularly focused on transnational drug trafficking at this scale for over 50 years, the DEA confronts this threat daily. From raids and seizures in Los Angeles to investigations that span the United States and abroad; our agents, analysts, diversion investigators, and task force officers are on the front lines of one of America's most urgent national security crisis. We stand ready to unite with our counterparts across the U.S. government to eradicate these organizations.

Title 8

Through Title 8 authority, the DEA actively supports the Administration's immigration enforcement efforts by prioritizing investigations involving violent, illegal criminal actors-particularly those affiliated with Mexican cartels. While maintaining our core mission of combatting drug trafficking, this authority allows DEA to help disrupt transnational networks that traffic both drugs and people, enhancing public safety and national security.

In the Los Angeles Field Division, we've seen firsthand how the same cartels flooding our communities with fentanyl and methamphetamine are also enriching their criminal enterprises by collecting fees from aliens they smuggle into the United States.

Conclusion

DEA's Los Angeles Field Division is proud of the work we've done, but we know more must be done and we are ready to do it in collaboration with our partners across the U.S. government

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions, and to continuing this critical partnership in the fight to save American lives.