

For Immediate Release
July 7, 2011

**EL PASO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL
MARIJUANA TRAFFICKING CHARGE**

LAS CRUCES – Today in federal court, **Oscar Barrera**, 39, of El Paso, Texas, pled guilty to an information charging him with possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute. At sentencing, Barrera faces a maximum penalty of twenty years in prison, followed by three years of supervised release. Barrera, who was arrested on March 22, 2011, remains in federal custody pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Barrera was arrested after Border Patrol agents found marijuana concealed in his vehicle when he was stopped at the United States Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 54 in Otero, County, New Mexico. According to the criminal complaint, while Barrera was driving his Dodge Ram pickup truck in the checkpoint's primary inspection area, a drug-detecting canine alerted to the truck's rear wheel well and undercarriage. After receiving Barrera's consent to search the truck, agents found 180 bundles of marijuana weighing an aggregate of 71 kilograms concealed in an after-market compartment in the undercarriage. At his plea hearing, Barrera admitted that he knew the marijuana was hidden in his truck, and that he was transporting the marijuana to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Border Patrol, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Marisa Lizarraga.

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