



Department of Justice

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California Couple Sentenced for Drug Trafficking and Firearm Offenses

LEXINGTON, Ky. - A couple from Fresno, Cal. has been sentenced to federal prison for drug and firearm offenses. Chief U.S. District Judge Karen K. Caldwell formally sentenced the couple on Wednesday, February 7, 2018.

Jessica Acosta, 29, and Luis R. Morales-Montanez, 27, were each sentenced to 15 years in prison, for possession with the intent to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana. Both were also convicted of possessing nine firearms, during and in furtherance of the drug crimes. Both forfeited ownership of the firearms, \$42,507 in cash, and a 2013 Chevy pickup truck.

In their guilty pleas, Acosta and Morales-Montanez previously admitted that they traveled from Fresno, to Lexington and established a residence on Larkin Road in early 2017. They then possessed with intent to distribute marijuana and cocaine from the residence. They also admitted that the cash found was proceeds of the distribution of drugs and that the 2013 truck and nine firearms were used in furtherance of the distribution of drugs. Additionally, on October 25, 2017, a federal jury convicted both of possessing with the intent to distribute more than half a kilogram of crystal methamphetamine, which they had concealed in another apartment near their Larkin Road address.

Under federal law, both Acosta and Morales-Montanez must serve 85 percent of their prison sentences; and upon release, they will each be under the supervision of the United States Probation Office for five years.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Christopher Evans, Special Agent in Charge, DEA; and Acting Chief of Police Ron Compton, Lexington Police Department, jointly announced the sentences.

These cases were prosecuted as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program that has been historically successful in bringing together all levels of law enforcement to reduce violent crime and make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has made turning the tide of rising violent crime in America a top priority. In October 2017, as part of a series of actions to address this crime trend, Attorney General Sessions announced the reinvigoration of PSN and directed all U.S. Attorney's Offices to develop a district crime reduction strategy that incorporates the lessons learned since PSN launched in 2001.

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