



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas

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THREE INDICTED FOR DISTRIBUTING MARIJUANA VIA THE U. S. MAIL

(BROWNSVILLE, Texas) – An 11-count indictment charging three area residents with conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute kilogram quantities of marijuana and the use of a post office to commit the drug trafficking felony offenses has been unsealed and two of three defendants arrested, United States Attorney Tim Johnson announced today.

Eva Zamora, 45, of San Benito, Texas, a United States Postal Service employee, and Juana Pesina-Sierra, 54, of Los Indios, Texas, were arrested at approximately 5 p.m. yesterday by the United States Postal Service - Office of Inspector General, the United States Postal Inspection Service and the Cameron County Sheriff's Office. The arrests are the result of an eight-month investigation conducted by the above listed agencies along with Drug Enforcement Administration. A warrant remains outstanding for the arrest of a third defendant, Jose Antonio Sanchez, 29, of San Benito, Texas.

Zamora and Pesina-Sierra appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Felix Recio today and have been ordered to remain in federal custody without bond pending an arraignment and detention hearing on Monday, Aug. 24, 2009, at 10:00 a.m.

The indictment, returned under seal by a federal grand jury on Aug. 4, 2009, accuses all three defendants of conspiring with one another to possess with intent to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana between December 2008 and July 7, 2009, five counts of possession with intent to distribute less than 50 kilograms of marijuana and five counts of using the Los Indios post office - a communications facility - in causing or facilitating the commission of the drug trafficking offenses charged.

The conspiracy charge carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years up to a maximum of 40 years imprisonment upon conviction. The five substantive drug trafficking charges carry a maximum punishment of five years incarceration. Using the Post Office to commit a felony carries a maximum penalty upon conviction of four years imprisonment. The drug charges also carry millions of dollars in fines upon conviction as possible punishment.

U.S. Postal Inspectors are increasing their efforts to protect the U.S. Mail from criminal misuse in South Texas. Specifically, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service is focusing on drug traffickers that attempt to use the mail to distribute illegal narcotics out of the Rio Grande Valley, which is a violation of federal law. Postal Inspectors are aggressively working to identify and arrest persons engaged in the mailing of narcotics. Anybody with information on persons responsible for mailing narcotics is encouraged to contact the local Postal Inspector's office at 956/971-1721. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service will pay up to \$50,000 for information leading to the

arrest and conviction of individuals who use the U.S. Mail to distribute narcotics.

*An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence.
A defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted through due process of law.*

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