



# Department of Justice

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## **THREE SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR DISTRIBUTING MARIJUANA VIA THE U.S. MAIL**

(BROWNSVILLE, Texas) – A former U.S. Postal Service employee and two others were sentenced to prison today for using the post office to distribute marijuana, United States Attorney José Angel Moreno announced today.

Eva Zamora, 45, of San Benito, Texas, a former United States Postal Service (USPS) employee, along with Juana Pesina-Sierra, 54, of Los Indios, Texas, and Jose Antonio Sanchez, 29, of San Benito, Texas, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Hilda Tagle. All three defendants were arrested and charged in August 2009 as a result of the efforts of USPS - Office of Inspector General (OIG) with the assistance of the United States Postal Inspection Service and the Cameron County Sheriff's Department.

Zamora, who pleaded guilty in November 2009 to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, was held responsible for distributing a total of 711.75 kilogram of marijuana between December 2008 and August 2009. The amount of drugs was based upon a calculation made by the court considering 16 parcels seized by USPS - OIG agents which had been processed by Zamora at the post office and 57 similar parcels she was videotaped processing. Each package contained an average of 9.75 kilograms of contraband. Today, Judge Tagle sentenced Zamora to 57 months in federal prison to be followed by a four-year-term of supervised release.

“Narcotics trafficking through the U.S. Mail is a serious federal offense,” said Max Eamiguel, Executive Special Agent-in-Charge, Office of Inspector General, USPS Southwest Area Field Office. “Special Agents of the Postal Service’s OIG vigorously investigate postal employees who use their position to facilitate a criminal enterprise and betray the trust of the American people. Fortunately, these incidents are not common and the overwhelming majority of the 600,000 postal employees are honest and hard working. With the prosecutive support of the United States Attorney’s Office, we intend to send a clear message to any employee who commits a postal crime.”

Pesina, who was determined to have occupied a managerial role in this “contraband by mail” scheme, was held responsible for 645.20 kilograms of marijuana during the same time period. The amount of drugs was based upon 16 parcels seized by USPS - OIG agents in which she was a participant in the mailing process and for the 51 similar parcels she is videotaped mailing. Each package contained an average of 9.75 kilograms of contraband. Additionally, 11 kilograms of marijuana were seized at her home. Judge Tagle sentenced Pesina to 70 months in federal prison

to be followed by a four-year-term of supervised release.

Both Zamora and Pesina have been ordered to pay a total of \$1,075.57 in restitution to the USPS. The third defendant charged in this case and sentenced today is José Sanchez who was held accountable for 304.95 kilograms of marijuana. That sum was based upon 16 seized parcels containing an average of 9.75 kilograms of marijuana and 24 similar parcels in which he was involved and were videotaped. Sanchez was sentenced to 37 months in federal prison to be followed by a four-year-term of supervised release.

All three defendants were arrested as a result of the efforts of USPS - OIG. Zamora and Sanchez have been in federal custody since their August 2009 arrest and will remain in custody to serve out their prison terms. Pesina was permitted to remain on bond pending the issuance of an order to surrender to a Bureau of Prisons facility to be designated in the near future where she will serve her sentence.

Anyone having information regarding a postal employee involved in a crime, is asked to contact the USPS-OIG at [hotline@uspsoug.gov](mailto:hotline@uspsoug.gov) or 1-888-USPS-OIG (1-888-877-7644).

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. Anyone having information on persons engaged in using the U. S. Mail to distribute 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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